

The Twenty-First Century Bazaar of Ideas

In order to ensure the amplification of voices and free speech, student journalists must allow the open flow of ideas via social media platforms; in essence, every idea -- even the most commonly rejected ones -- must be accepted into the marketplace of ideas.

Apropos of the new epoch in communication, the majority of young Americans catch wind of current affairs through their social media feeds; overall, one-in-five Americans use social media as a primary source.¹ A distinguishing factor between traditional methods of media circulation (i.e. newspapers) and social networking sites is that the latter provides a tailored experience. The culprit in these cases are algorithms, which developers exploit in order to ensnare users into using their sites for longer periods of time.²

Consequently, social media users aren't subject to a diversity of thought; rather, they are fed a stream of largely homogenous sources that reflect a singular school of thought. Not only does this fail to take into account the many nuances of our current political sphere, it strains relations between parties; paradoxically, 64% of Republicans and 75% of Democrats view one another as 'closed-minded.'³

One of the hallmarks of free speech -- and arguably democracy -- is the ability to freely exchange a spectrum of viewpoints. An acclimation to ideological echo chambers hinders one's ability to participate in such an exchange. It's the job of student journalists to bridge this gap and create a dialogue; ultimately, the job to amplify voices hitherto unheard.

Ethically, student journalists also bear the responsibility of refuting misinformation when they see it; and still, misinformation needs to be addressed and debunked rather than derided and dismissed.

In many ways, the press are the leaders of our free world. They wield the ability to sow societal discord or deter it; start conversations or curtail them; share important discoveries or conceal them. One of the many freedoms that our press protects is an ability to share a colorful myriad of viewpoints and extract new realizations from them; in short, the responsibility to cultivate a dialogue lies within the heart of journalism. Once the American people open themselves up to discussion, their diverse outlooks could pave the way for viable solutions. In that sense, student journalists are more than just mere writers; they are the safeguards of twenty-first century innovation.

Works Cited

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