

Introduction

My Capstone Project and the STS Research Paper both look at how social media algorithms affect our political talks, but they do it in different ways. My Capstone Project goes into the details of how these algorithms work and their impact on society by focusing on how different places like the US and the EU handle them. In this part of my project, I try to understand how these algorithms work technically and what that means for how we share and see political information. Meanwhile, my STS Research Paper zooms out to see the bigger picture asking how these algorithms might be changing democracy and the way we talk about politics. It takes a broad view, considering how technology interacts with society and politics. Together, both of my projects offer a full look into how important technology, especially social media algorithms, is in shaping our political discussions and how we understand democracy.

Summary of Capstone Project

My Capstone Project looks into how social media decides what we see and talk about when it comes to politics. It explores how these hidden rules, known as algorithms, can shape our opinions and talks about politics. I specifically look at how things are different in the US compared to the EU because they have different rules about this stuff.

At first, social media just showed us posts in the order they were made. But now, it's all about showing us things we're likely to interact with, which sounds good but can lead to problems. For example, we might end up only seeing opinions that agree with ours or false information that gets a lot of attention because it's shocking or controversial.

By comparing the situation in the US and the EU, and looking closely at how these algorithms decide what we see, my project tries to understand the good and the bad of this system. I also suggest some ideas on how we can make online political talks better and more fair. These suggestions are for the people who make laws about these things and the ones who design social media platforms. The goal is to help everyone have healthier and more open discussions about politics online, making sure all sorts of voices get heard.

Summary of STS Research Paper

In my STS Research Paper, I explore how the rules behind what posts we see on social media known as algorithms, affect our democracy. These algorithms can end up creating echo chambers where we only hear opinions like our own, spreading false information, and making people more divided in their political views.

To understand this better, I used a combination of looking at data and applying theories, such as the Actor-Network Theory which helps us see how humans and technologies interact and shape each other. My main point is that these algorithms should be more transparent and take into account the needs of all users during their design. This way we can help prevent the negative effects they can have, like making us less willing to listen to each other or believe false information.

The paper explains why this matters to everyone, not just those who are into technology or politics. When social media influences so much of what we see and believe, it must show us a wide range of views and accurate information. I suggest some ways we could make these

algorithms better such as making sure they're not just showing us what they think we'll click on but also what we need to know to be well-informed. This could lead to healthier and more open political discussions, helping democracy thrive in today's digital world.

Concluding Reflection

Working on my Capstone Project and the STS Research Paper at the same time highlighted for me how technology and society interact, especially in political discussions. It wasn't just about understanding the technical details of social media algorithms, it was also about seeing their impact on society and how they shape our political conversations and influence our views. This approach taught me how important it is to mix ideas from different areas to solve problems today, showing that we should think about both the tech solutions and how they impact people's lives.

Writing my Capstone and STS has shown me that to solve tough problems, we need to know about technology and also understand how it affects society. For example, it's not just about making a clever algorithm. We need to check if it's fair, who gets heard more because of it, and if it helps us get along or causes more disagreement. By looking into how technology works and how it affects people, I've learned how important it is to use ideas from different fields to make sure the technology we create is good for everyone. This shows that seeing the big picture is key to making the world a better place.