INTRODUCTION

The current political climate has established divisive parties that are inflexible in seeing the viewpoints of their opposing parties. The government shutdown that has recently occurred is a pertinent example of this stubbornness on the behalf of both parties. The way that this event was reported on, however, outlines a potential cause for the divide. The media today, through programmatic and voluntary methods, creates a “filter bubble” around individuals that only shows users information and opinions that are similar to their own. This bubble does not allow for discussion and henceforth innovation to occur due to the large and unbridgeable sociopolitical divide that results from these filter bubbles.

ABSTRACT

The research from this study identifies the partisan nature of filter bubbles on Twitter and considers the subsequent impact on those caught in these content loops. The study establishes the aforementioned baseline of partisanship in both major political parties in the United States by analyzing the Twitter feeds of eight accounts with previously identified rigid political party alignments.

METHOD

Eight Twitter accounts of news outlets, house leaders, and presidents of the U.S. were analyzed using the Twitter Advanced Search Tool to discern the origin of said bubbles. All tweets from these accounts were pulled from 1/1/2016 to 1/1/2018 then analyzed using a targeted partisan keyword analysis in order to evaluate the level of adverse opinions appearing in the feed of the users following these accounts, as well as how these opinions were presented.

The research sought to answer the degree to which the eight accounts presented partisan unilaterism of content within their content distribution.

FINDINGS

The strong skew towards inflammatory word usage in both major political parties identifies a competitive style of communication that seeks to belittle and invalidate the opposing party. The usage of this language on social media is presenting an online environment in which diverse ideas are ridiculed or entirely avoided through the usage of tools such as the block and unfriend buttons. This avoidance of ideas is thoroughly reinforced by the partisan nature of the tweets presented and the lack of contradicting ideas presented from both parties.

CONCLUSION

The inflammatory rhetoric discovered on this particular social media venue identifies a tangible divide between both parties that is causing a greater sociocultural shift in which open discussion is avoided at all costs.

For further research, other platforms should be included and analyzed in order to present a more whole demonstration of the current environment surrounding political discussion and selective communication.

REFERENCES

