

Facebook Boosts News Feeds of Top 100 Media Outlets in Secret Political Experiment

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Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

What is the point of a social network that doesn't share your content with friends and followers? Oh, yeah, for profit, government spying, emotional experiments and now, political manipulation.

Since they went public, Facebook has been playing with their algorithms to prevent "viral" content from occurring naturally in favor of charging users to show content to their followers. This profit-seeking strategy destroyed the only thing that made Facebook useful. Now it seems to serve as little more than an oversized telephone or IM app. But underneath, in the shadows, it's still so much more than that.

Mother Jones [reports](#) that Facebook has been conducting stealthy political experiments on users, including tweaking the news feeds of almost 2 million users to boost articles shared from the top 100 media outfits. The purpose was to test voter turnout in the 2012 election.

As Huffington Post [summarizes](#):

Facebook quietly tweaked the news feeds of 1.9 million users before the 2012 election so they would see more "hard news" shared by friends.

That change may have boosted voter turnout by as much as 3 percent, according to a little-known study first disclosed Friday by Mother Jones.

For the study, news articles that Facebook users' friends had posted appeared higher in their feeds — the stream of status updates, photos and articles that show up when you first sign on to the site. The researchers wanted to see whether increasing your exposure to news stories shared by friends before an election would convince you to vote.

Facebook said the news stories being shared were general in nature and not political. They came from a list of 100 top media outlets from the New York Times to Fox News, according to the Mother Jones story, written by Micah Sifry, a democracy activist.

Lost in the reporting about this voting experiment is how dangerous it is to only boost establishment news feeds for political outcomes. What if they switch to only boosting GOP or Democrat news feeds? Could they sway elections?

We already know they can sway users' emotions without their knowledge.

As Huffington Post points out:

The revelation of the voter experiment comes four months after the social network was criticized for conducting a separate psychological experiment on about 700,000 users.

More on this study in the short video below:

Illegal or not, these experiments will likely continue in secret. Incidentally, it is well known that Facebook was funded by the CIA's "not for profit" venture capital firm [In-Q-Tel](#) leading many to believe it's a data collection hub for the U.S. government.

Facebook has clearly demonstrated that they dictate what you see in your news feed, not your social media friends. And they intend to continue to manipulate you in secret. Most troubling is that they're targeting your emotions and political reality.

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