

Internet and the Formation of Echo Chamber

This paper discusses one of the epistemic consequences of using the Internet as an epistemic mechanism: the formation of echo chambers. In the first part of the paper, I will adopt the concept of predictive processing (Clark, 2013; 2016; 2023) to argue that the special characteristic of the Internet will disrupt the balance between top-down and bottom-up processing, leading to a trap in an echo chamber (Nguyen, 2020). I will then analyze the echo chamber formed online by distinguishing conceptual from non-conceptual content in the cognitive experience of information processing. I will argue that the change in the non-conceptual content of information processing online is the key to understanding the formation of echo chambers, which contributes to an illusory self-evaluation of the epistemic agents and a blurry boundary between the agent's preconception and reality. Based on the analysis above, I will then analyze the difficulty for an individual epistemic agent to escape from the echo chamber online in a rational way. I will argue that the problem lies in the external structure of the Internet as an epistemic mechanism instead of whether the epistemic agent being trapped is rational or not.