NEWS SITE CREATED TO BREAK DOWN ONLINE ECHO CHAMBERS

A US-based website is designed to encourage its readership to empathise with those on the other side of the fence.

The internet, despite promising to broaden our horizons, can serve to narrow them. In the wake of Brexit and the US elections, we have seen several innovations designed to encourage internet users to engage and debate with those outside of their tribe. One such innovation is a video platform which emboldens users to participate in live video debates with those outside their networks, and now The Perspective is a current affairs website encouraging readers to engage with opinions opposite to their own.

The Perspective covers current events and classic debates, exposing readers to content they might not otherwise see. Features are designed to encourage users to consider contradicting views that might otherwise feel threatening. Users can read, vote, comment and play. The website includes a number of interesting features such as Trending Perspectives, which sources contradictory content on current affairs, displaying it side by side. Essentials are original articles, which present two sides of a classic debate, researched and written in a way that appeals to the values of those who might be opposed to it. Another feature is The Perspective Challenge, a gamified platform where readers attempt to have an influence on the viewpoint of someone they know.

Our use of social media often means we are only ever exposed to others who are similar. We get our news from sources that agree with us in the first place. In short, we exist in what is commonly termed, the echo chamber. Although users can now experience the internet in a more personalised way, they are also increasingly insulated and divided from each other. The Perspective offers users
an opportunity to break out of the social media echo chamber. Will we see more innovations of this kind, designed to force us to confront other people?