

Audience Capture: Rethinking Influencer–Audience Relationships within the Alternative Influence Network

PARTNERS AND EVENTS

Media companies partnered with Rubin and important events that affected his career and relationship with his audience.

AUDIENCE INFLOW AND OUTFLOW

The figure shows how the majority of Rubin's viewers commented in the same year, while only a small amount kept commenting in the following ones. This might suggest the arrival of a new audience each year.

- Outflow for the year 2013
- Outflow for the year 2014
- Outflow for the year 2015
- Outflow for the year 2016
- Outflow for the year 2017
- Outflow for the year 2018

CO-COMMENTING CHANNELS

On which other channels do Rubin's commenters comment?

- Progressive channels
- Reactionary channels

This figure illustrates how Rubin initially attracted an audience that primarily commented on the progressive TYT channel. By 2016, however, we observe an infiltration of more conservatively engaged audiences.

INTERACTIONS WITH COMMENTERS

Insight into how Dave Rubin uses the comments section. In the beginning, he replied to many comments, but this became less in 2015. Announcements get the most likes from viewers.

Comment like count

- 0.0
- 2933.0

Category

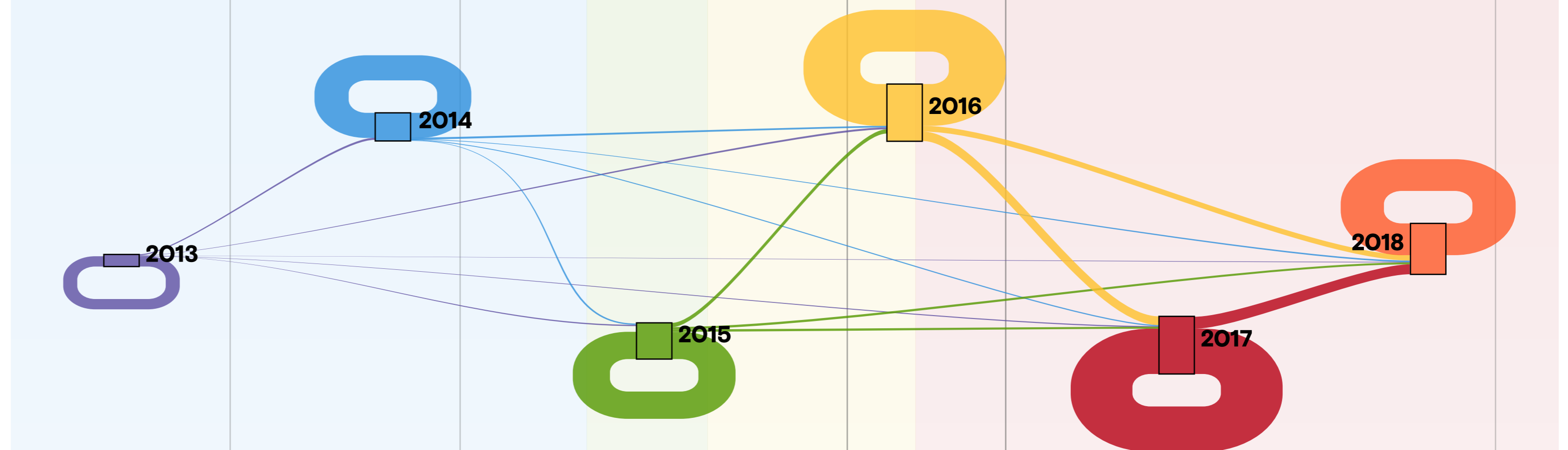
- Explanation
- Preview
- Engagement request
- Donation request
- Directing to another video
- Thank you
- Thank you for a comment
- Announcement
- Reply to a comment
- Welcoming
- Youtube
- Other

DAVE RUBIN'S YOUTUBE TIMELINE, 2013–2018

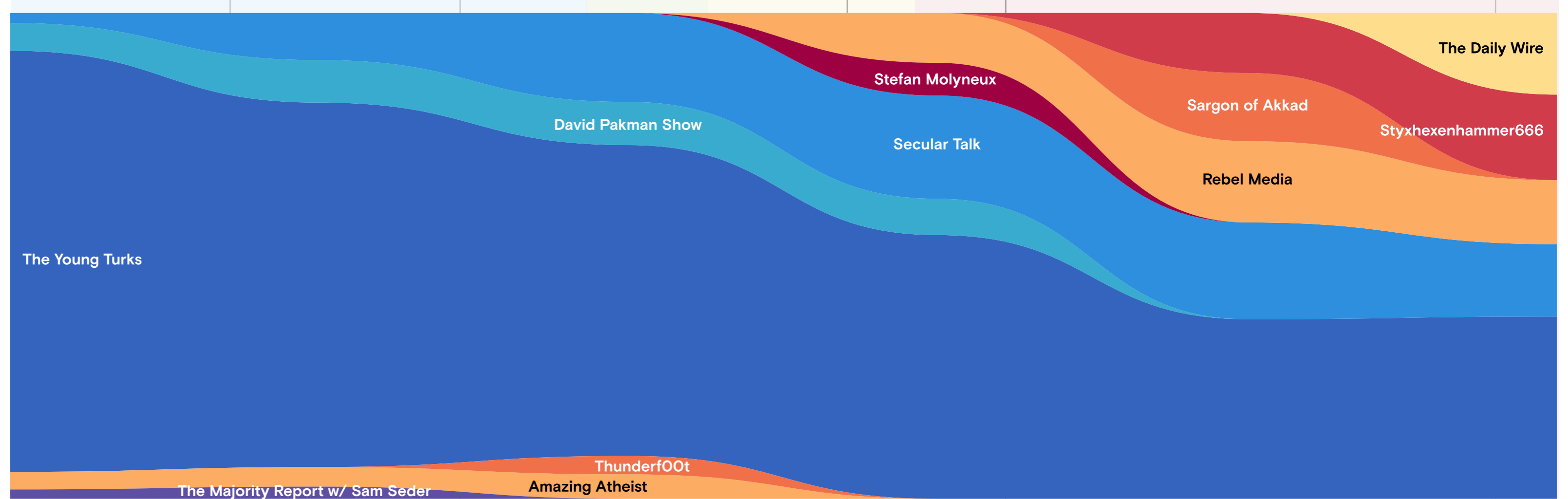


Key events: Dave Rubin is ENGAGED!, Ben Affleck, Sam Harris and Bill Maher Debate Radical Islam, The Real Threat of a Donald Trump Presidency, How to Stop Trump, Don't freak out about Donald Trump, From The Rise of Trump and the New Political Center Direct Message, Dave Rubin Returns To The Grid After 34 Days! Guest Host Ben Shapiro

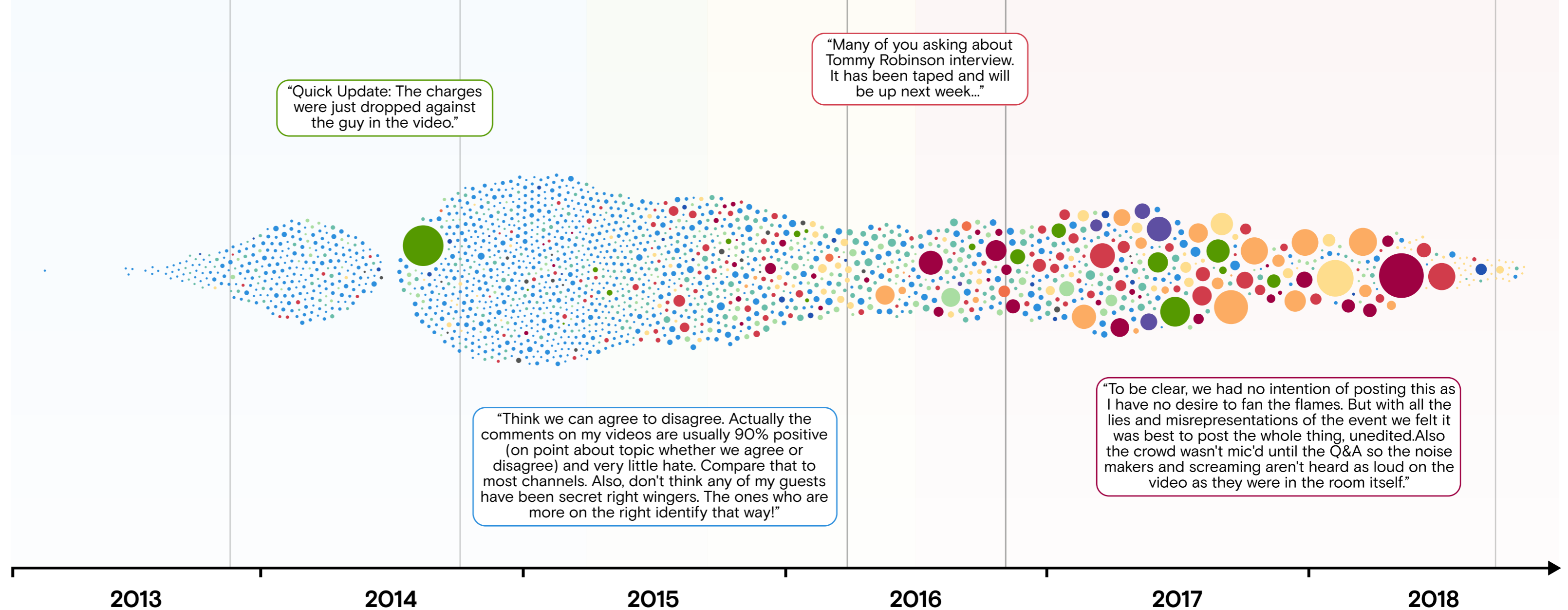
INFLOW AND OUTFLOW OF DAVE RUBIN'S COMMENTERS



TOP 5 CHANNELS CO-COMMENTED ON BY DAVE RUBIN'S COMMENTERS



DAVE RUBIN'S COMMENTS AND INTERACTIONS



METHODOLOGY AND DATASET

This project utilized a historical dataset compiled by Dutch journalists, which includes metadata from more than 1,700 political YouTube channels over ten years (Tokmetzis et al., 2019). Our main case study focused on Dave Rubin, who has been accused of being radicalized by his audience (Fisher, 2023). From the dataset, we captured all videos posted from 2013 to 2018 (N = 1,862), the active years of The Rubin Report. We retrieved all audience comments on these videos (N = 826,610) and processed the videos to capture their transcripts. To avoid relying on YouTube's native transcription tool we retrieved the videos programmatically and transcribed them utilizing the open-source Whisper model to compile a corpus of text (N = 10,154,833 words).

Utilizing the 4CAT: Capture and Analysis Toolkit, we adopted a quali-quantitative approach to investigate the reciprocal relationship between Rubin and his audience. First, we identified the key publishing partners Dave relied on, providing a background for subsequent findings. Second, we used bi-gram detection on transcripts and comments to locate and compare key issues in content production and engagement from 2013 to 2018. These insights guided a closer examination of one core issue: gay marriage. Additionally, we performed statistical analyses to assess correlation and causation between the appearance of terms in the transcripts and the comments. Third, we contextualized these findings with key videos over time, revealing important events. Fourth, we mapped the engagement metrics over time. In a second phase, we analyzed the influx and outflow of audience members, assessing consecutive commenting years and investigating other channels these audiences were commenting on. Finally, we performed an in-depth analysis of Dave Rubin's own engagement in the comment section.

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