WHY THE PAST 10 YEARS OF AMERICAN LIFE HAVE BEEN UNIQUELY STUPID

I came across this article on Twitter this week and was struck by many of the points. The idea that as we have evolved our social medial platforms, we have empowered the worst of society, and amplified their behaviors has become increasingly evident. Read the original article here: https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2022/05/social-media-democracy-trust-babel/629369/

> It's been clear for quite a while now that red America and blue America are becoming like two different countries claiming the same territory, with two different versions of the Constitution, economics, and American history. But Babel is not a story about tribalism; it's a story about the fragmentation of everything. It's about the shattering of all that had seemed solid, the scattering of people who had been a community. It's a metaphor for what is happening not only between red and blue, but within the left and within the right, as well as within universities, companies, professional associations, museums, and even families.
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> FROM THE DECEMBER 2001 ISSUE: DAVID BROOKS ON RED AND BLUE AMERICA

Additional Excerpts:

> By 2013, social media had become a new game, with dynamics unlike those in 2008. If you were skillful or lucky, you might create a post that would "go viral" and make you "internet famous" for a few days. If you blundered, you could find yourself buried in hateful comments. Your posts rode to fame or ignominy based on the clicks of thousands of strangers, and you in turn contributed thousands of clicks to the game.
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> **This new game encouraged dishonesty and mob dynamics**: Users were guided not just by their true preferences but by their past experiences of reward and punishment, and their prediction of how others would react to each new action. One of the engineers at Twitter who had worked on the "Retweet" button later revealed that he regretted his contribution because it had made Twitter a nastier place. As he watched Twitter mobs forming through the use of the new tool, he thought to himself, "We might have just handed a 4-year-old a loaded weapon."