

Project Two: Analyzing the Ethical Impact of Algorithms: Exploring Positive and Negative Perspectives

Today, the modern age is completely under the influence of algorithms in the technology we use and the social media we consume. This raises ethical concerns about how much influence companies should have over user choices. Algorithms are lines of code that use formulas to track what you interact with online and predict what content you are most likely to enjoy, further increasing engagement on their respective platforms. This dynamic creates a feedback loop. The more someone consumes a certain type of content, the more they are served similar material based on their behavior and preferences. While this keeps people engaged and more active on the platform, it can also lead to negative consequences like creating echo chambers, limiting exposure to diverse perspectives, and making it easier for misinformation to spread. According to Fondation Descartes, "Two phenomena resulting from the functioning of the Internet are often accused of contributing to this situation: 'filter bubbles' and 'echo chambers.'" In this article, we introduce these two notions, often mentioned in the media but rarely well understood, as well as some criticisms that have been leveled towards them" ("Filter Bubbles and Echo Chambers"). It is important to be aware of both the positives and the negatives of these effects so that society as a whole can develop systems that mitigate the harmful impacts without sacrificing the positive and essential tools these platforms provide.

Algorithms help users in many ways, and most of the time, they enhance the overall user experience. These technologies make it easier for users to come across content they enjoy and also introduce them to things they might not have found otherwise. They help cut down the amount of time people waste trying to search for things they like, and they also give creators more opportunity than ever before to make content and know it will find an audience that resonates with it. According to the UK government, algorithms also allow businesses and public services to run more efficiently. When managed responsibly, algorithmic processing can enhance user

experience, boost innovation, and offer major benefits to individuals, companies, and communities. From a personal point of view, I have discovered many great and engaging YouTubers who share hobbies and topics I enjoy, and I think it is largely because of these predictive algorithms that connect me to new communities. I think from a utilitarian perspective these algorithms are very ethical, and people who support this point of view would say that these technologies advance humanity because of their revolutionary impact on human communication.

These algorithms that predict our behavior and serve content have made it easier to find online communities, make platforms more engaging by serving content the user enjoys, minimize time spent searching for content, and provide business opportunities for creators to make all sorts of content, as these algorithms make it easier for them to build an audience. However, these advancements have brought their own negative consequences and have recently made people question if the negatives of these technologies outweigh the positives. These negative consequences and the abuse of data would make someone under the stricter Kantian perspective not pleased with these technologies. They would say that these companies are treating humans as nothing more than data objects and that using their sensitive information so dismissively is a huge ethical violation. According to Nancy Dekadia, Kantianism is a type of ethics created by Immanuel Kant that states that ethics are an end in themselves and that breaking them, even for the good of a greater or other cause, is still an ethical violation. Creating more incentive for people to be online has led to a decrease in physical interaction, which leads to increased depression and loneliness. It has also created an environment where echo chambers form media spaces where content is not challenged and viewers are simply confirmed in their beliefs rather than being shown information or ideas in a balanced way. Finally, there is the big ethical question of how much personal information is being collected on us just to serve content more efficiently. A check needs to be in place by an entity such as the government to make sure not only that our rights are protected, but that people are literate enough to avoid getting misinformed or trapped inside an echo chamber.

In conclusion, while new technologies like social media and algorithms have made the internet experience more efficient and engaging, it comes at a price. If the government and society let algorithms get out of control, there could be negative consequences that erase the benefits the internet and social media were supposed to provide. If no one is properly informed or genuinely connected anymore, then it defeats the purpose of these technologies, and they become nothing more than a quick way to entertain ourselves and get dopamine rushes, and nothing more.

Work Cited

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