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I pledge my honor that I have abided by the Stevens Honor System.

Alfie Evans Case: Response

In January 2018, due to backlash from the 2016 election, Mark Zuckerberg and Facebook enhanced their algorithm to show less news and advertisement in people's feeds, but more personal posts. This stemmed from many users being unhappy with the way Facebook operated through the 2016 election and all the "fake news" claims occurring all over the application. Due to this change people saw more of what their friends and families shared and posted such as in the case of the Alfie Evans Group. Alfie Evans was a little boy in the UK who was on life support and gained considerable media attraction through facebook. Due to people constantly sharing his story on the social media app, groups of supporters rushed to his aid offering help and advice to the family.

With all of this media traction however, came controversy. Alfie Evans was going to be pulled off of life support and many people did not agree with that. Upwards of 200 people protested outside the hospital Alfie Evans was at, trying to get into the hospital to stop the doctors from pulling the plug. After the doctors took Alfie off of life support, followers were able to track Alfies condition through facebook posts from the family. Sadly about a week after being taken off of life support, Alfie passed away and the supporters disbanded. This extreme example of compassion and support demonstrated Facebook's new algorithm and how well it worked.

Questions

- 1) One of the positive effects from the Alfie Evans case was that Facebook's new algorithm worked well and seeing posts from family members and friends does more good than seeing ads.
- 2) One of the negative effects was that it opened up a bunch of people to be targeted by political groups. Since all these people shared a similar idea, big groups and companies could target these people on the Facebook page.
- 3) I believe Facebook could have anticipated this effect. When seeing posts from family or friends, you are more inclined to read into them and take interest than a post from a large company or an ad. This would result in more people sharing and the post branching out.
- 4) I don't typically agree with people who post about very personal issues going on with their family. I think it is unfair to the child, who has no say in what is going on, to be a viral sensation because of his parents. Also all these doctors do not deserve to receive massive backlash from the public just for doing their jobs. This whole situation should have been a personal one in my opinion.