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SCHOOL OF COMPUTING
Faculty of Engineering

Project Proposal Form MCSD 6215
Semester: 1 Session: 1

SECTION A: Project Information

Program Name: Masters of Science (Data Science)

Subject Name: Project 1 (MCS241002)

Student Name: Alexander Tan Ka Jin

Metric Number: MCS21

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Project Title: Metamorphosis from Conspiracy: Analysis of how users break free from information cocoons

Supervisor 1: cocoon

Supervisor 2 / Industry Advisor (if any):

SECTION B: Project Proposal

Introduction:
Misinformation is a prevalent effect on social media sites. Often, scientific misinformation and political misinformation is spread through various channels and sites such as X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Youtube and TikTok. Engagement with such videos and content from prominent super-spreaders of misinformation may lead to recommender algorithms suggesting more content from the same or similar super-spreaders a phenomenon known as information cocoons. This proposal focuses on TikTok, a platform that allows users to quickly engage in short, minute long videos and how engagement in informative videos leads to recommender algorithms sculpting a personalized environment that reinforces more radical forms of misinformation.

Problem Background:
Recommender Algorithms are algorithms that choose information and media that suits the user's preferences. Most popular social media sites like Reddit, Youtube and Instagram utilize these algorithms to allow users to see content that they may prefer with the benefit of increasing user engagement with the platform by filtering out media that users may not prefer. Recommender algorithms are divided into two types, content-based filtering and collaborative filtering. Content-based filtering identifies the media that a user has previously engaged with, and find media that is like these media. Collaborative filtering identifies what a user engages with and suggest content based on other people that share similar interests. These algorithms have long incorporated machine learning in their identification of user patterns. Both algorithms eventually form what are known as information cocoons which are personalized digital environments that

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