**Synopsis**

What is my idea?  
To find a subject to write about can be quite difficult when there is few to no limits on what you can write about. The only ”limit” is the overall subject, which is software, which is still very broad, since software is basically all around us. A lot of people now a days use some kind of software in their everyday activities. Some people use it as the first thing in the morning, when they have set an alarm on their phone, maybe they are also checking up on various social media apps, or maybe their emails or text messages, and most people go through the same routine just before falling asleep. Not to mention that many peoples work, school or free time is dependent on a lot of software as well. My point is, that software now a days plays a crucial part in our lives, and because of this, it is very important that we remain critical towards the software that we use and are aware of how it might affect our view on the world.   
But because of software being such a broad subject, it was quite difficult to choose how to narrow it down to one subject. I however, chose to focus on something that interests me a lot, which is when we use software for entertainment. This could be things as Netflix, Spotify, Instagram, Snapchat or other social medias.

The reason why I chose to focus on software and when it is used as entertainment, it is because I find it interesting how something that might seem very innocent, such as posting pictures on Instagram, watching movies or listening to music, still holds many values such as political and cultural values, and that they will have an effect on what your taste is and how you perceive the world you live in.

So basically, my overall idea is to explore how entertainment-software influences us and what effect it has on the users.

Off course I will have to further narrow down the problems I want to address. While exploring which entertainment-software I wanted to work with, I came up with various ideas to some of the different entertainment-software. However, there was an overall subject that could be used in connection with a lot of the software. Big data and datafication are often used in entertainment-software and it might have an impact on what movie we choose to watch, what music we are listening to or who me follow on social media. On Spotify, the first songs that shows when you click on an artist, are the ones that has been listened to by most people, and by doing that, those songs will most likely also be the ones that new listeners chose to listen to. On Instagram you can experience somewhat the same thing on your timeline. Here, Instagram will prioritize what they think you should see first, which often results in the bigger and more popular instagrammers’ posts showing, rather than your friends.

Another way that some of the entertainment-software controls what gets to your attention, is by making recommendations for you, based on what you have previously seen. This might affect what kind of movies you chose to watch.   
  
One thing that these two things has in common, is that an algorithm chooses what will appear on your screen, whether it is when you are listening to music, watching Netflix or scrolling through your newsfeed when you are bored.

It will be necessary to examine these algorithms further, to better understand exactly what these algorithms are designed to highlight and prioritize and what is not seen as important. By getting a better understanding of these algorithms, I will also be able to get a clearer impression of how they might impact what values they convey to their users.

My impression, based on where I am in the process right now, is that these algorithms often prioritize quantity instead of quality for the user. This could either be a deliberate aspect of the algorithm or simply because the algorithms need to be developed further to suit the different users personal taste better.

So, the problem so far is, how does entertainment-software affect our use of the entertainment-software?

I will however, narrow it down to Instagram and their use of algorithms, since it is a platform with more than 800 million active monthly users[[1]](#footnote-1) and with a age span from 13-65+ [[2]](#footnote-2).

But for now, that will be my main question. But other questions can also be asked in connection to this.

Why did some of the entertainment-software implement these algorithms to begin with? Who do they benefit the most? Is it the personal user, the creator of the content or is it the platform itself? Or maybe even a fourth part?

I will also use Benjamin Grosser’s text “What Do Metrics Want?” when exploring this subject. His text is about how capitalism is so incorporated in our society, that the need for a large amount of likes exceeds the need for few but “valuable” likes. More is better than few, and we judge our own life based on numbers.

He also talks about Facebook and how likes are an important factor when using Facebook. He also suggests using a Facebook Demetricator, that removes all the numbers from your Facebook profile, so you will not be able to see how many friends people have or how many likes their profile picture has.

This could also be an interesting view on Instagram. What if you removed all the numbers such as likes or followers? What would happen to the way people use Instagram? What if you could randomize your explore page so it was not based on what you had previously been searching for or looking at? Or what if your timeline was either randomized or chronological, which it actually once was?

To explore some of these questions, Benjamin Grosser’s arguments and observations would be interesting to apply to Instagram and their algorithms. However, Benjamin Grosser is quite critical towards Facebooks appreciation of numbers and their somewhat capitalistic values, it would be interesting to also take a more positive look at these numbers and algorithms. By doing that we could question whether there could also be some advantages for everyone, in using these algorithms and numbers?

If I do choose to carry on with this specific subject, I will need to explore how these algorithms work and to find further information on how they impact the users and Instagram. I will also need to find other sources than Benjamin Grosser, preferably someone less critical towards the huge amount of numbers on social media. In general, I will need to find more material on the subject.

1. (https://www.statista.com/statistics/253577/number-of-monthly-active-instagram-users/) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. (https://www.statista.com/statistics/248769/age-distribution-of-worldwide-instagram-users/) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)