

How algorithms shape our online experience – Middle & Senior Years:

DECODING THE ALGORITHM

Part 1: Looking at my home page

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Use the grid below to examine the algorithm at work in your personal social media feed.

My top 5 personal interests on- and off-line:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Social media app chosen:

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The LEAST represented interest on my home page (this is what's being **filtered** out):

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The MOST represented interest on my home page (this is how you're being **matched** to information):

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Three categories of videos throughout my home page (this is how information is being **sorted**). Note: These may not line up with your listed interests above!

1.
2.
3.

Three videos that don't seem to belong (this is what the algorithm has **predicted** you will like):

1.
2.
3.

Part 2: Reflection

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1. What did your answers reveal about how much (and what) the app seems to "know" about you? What does this suggest about the kind of data being used to shape your online experience?

2. How might the algorithm influence what you think is popular, important, normal, or worth paying attention to? In what ways might this shape your beliefs or habits over time? How could you use the algorithm to improve your life?

3. What are the possible benefits and drawbacks of having content chosen for you in this way? When does personalization seem helpful and when might it become limiting or manipulative?

4. How might repeated exposure to similar kinds of content affect the way you see the world or other people? What perspectives, communities or ideas might become more visible to you, and which ones might become easier to miss?

5. After doing this exercise, how much control do you think you really have over what you see online? What responsibility belongs to you, and what responsibility belongs to the platform or algorithm?