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0.85

IN-BETWEEN

A tool to navigate our complex relationship with algorithms and developments in technology

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A decorative header consisting of multiple overlapping, wavy lines in a light pink color, creating a sense of movement and depth.

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**Commissioned by UKAI Projects and the Goethe-Institut Toronto
as part of the Goethe-Institut's Algorithmic Culture project.**

A decorative footer consisting of multiple overlapping, wavy lines in orange and grey colors, mirroring the style of the header but with a different color palette.

Introduction/Why I made this

When I was younger, I was always taught to get my information from multiple sources, whether by my teacher, or my dad telling me that each news outlet, or article, or advertisement, had bias. We expect the news to be objective and unbiased because we use it to learn and understand what's going on in the world.

Growing up as a child of an immigrant and a third generation Canadian, I was reminded of the divide in the information we're presented with, that there are multiple views to the same story and to be able to form my own opinion, I needed to be able to look at something from a diverse set of social, economic, and political viewpoints, while keeping my own experience in mind.

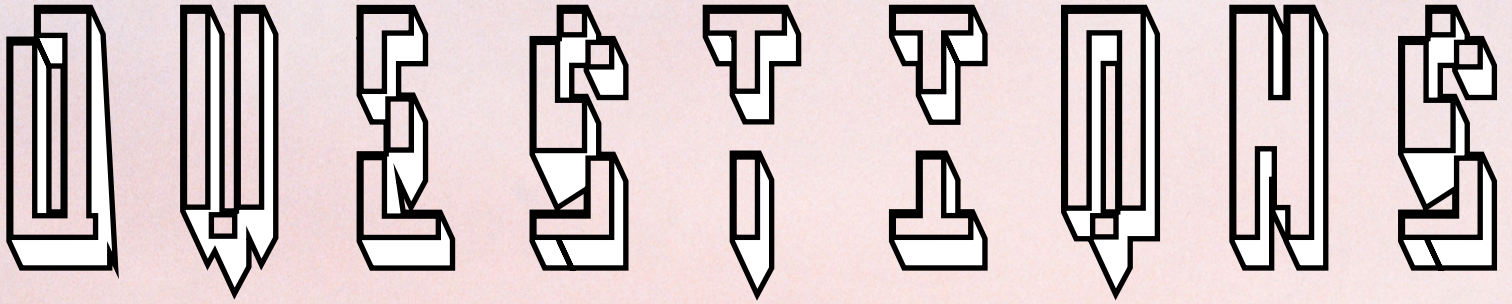
I grew up on the internet for most of my teenage years, and that felt the same. It was great finding a community of like-minded individuals who shared in my values and beliefs, but I was wary of it. It was great to be accepted, but I knew that there were others who didn't see the same things as I did.

As algorithms became more prevalent, I was excited and scared by what they could do. I love technology and all the wonderful things it has helped me create. But I'm worried about the harm it can cause. I often feel like I am between two worlds.

Talking to others who have their own experiences with AI technology and algorithms and hearing their positive and negative feelings towards them has made me feel better. Learning about how they work has made me feel more in control.

I created this zine as an entry point into a broader conversation about how technology is affecting us and as an informative starting point into algorithmic culture and the role it plays in our lives. I wanted to hear from people about their lived experiences around algorithms, technology, and our community.

In this zine you'll find a brief introduction into algorithmic culture as well as questions I asked my peers about their own experiences with technology. I encourage you to pass this on and continue the conversation!



Do you believe that algorithms are inherently good or bad?

What are some examples of how Algorithms and AI technology have directly effected your life? (positively or negatively)

How have you personally navigated the changes in AI and algorithm technology?

Do you think that being presented with curated content is helping or hindering our growth?

How has technology made you feel closer to, or further away from your community?

Is there a lack of diversity in the information we view and the content we consume? Why or why not?

I posed these questions to my peers and members of my community. Before viewing their answers, I encourage you to think of your own answers and personal experiences with algorithmic culture.

WHAT IS AN ALGORITHM?

What is an Algorithm?

An algorithm is a step by step procedure used for calculations, data processing, and automated reasoning. It is a list of instructions and rules that a computer follows in order to complete a task. The tasks can vary wildly, but in its essence this is what an algorithm is defined as. There are traditional algorithms as well as machine learning ones, that take previous data and decision making examples in order to provide predictions, recommendations, and suggestions.

PROS AND CONS

Algorithms can be a powerful tool in organizing data and creating a positive change in the way we solve problems. They help us organize the increasing amounts of information and content available and give us connectivity by recommending things based on our interests. They help optimize processes and are incredible tools in research.

They can also be a dangerous factor in increased social conflict and can divide rather than unite. Most algorithms today are written to optimize efficiency and profitability without much thought about the possible societal impacts. They can amplify divisions that already exist.

Pros & Cons

Navigating the impact



This zine is a catalyst for communication but is also meant as a tool to help map and visualize the relationships of power surrounding algorithms.

These questions are meant to help analyze algorithms that we encounter to assess the intentions behind them and what communities they affect.

There is a difference between having a general knowledge of the things that affect our lives and have an understanding of how they directly impact ourselves and others. This is meant to help us be more thoughtful about the AI systems in place.

Think of each section as it relates to the algorithm.

Who is the community that this is targeted towards and most impacts?

What is its function? How is data collected? Who interacts with the Algorithm? What do they do with it and why?

Who funds the program? Who benefits? What interests led to the creation of this?

What motivates the people within this system? What belief systems are upheld, whether intentional or not?

A N S W E R S

“The tasks that we ask (algorithms) to do reflect the viewpoint and values of the person making them”

“Technology is an expression of the world we live in. Instead of blaming the algorithms we should be questioning how we use them”

“Sometimes I feel alienated and disconnected from reality it makes it hard to think about how other people view the world when you are constantly shown your own opinion it doesn't feel like others exist.

“Being brought together with like-minded people who share in your beliefs and values can make you feel accepted and like you are a part of a community.

The internet can also introduce you to a lot of new things. It may not introduce someone to something completely outside their comfort zone, but maybe something that is just on the edge of their interests and beliefs, and the more they interact with it, the more similar things are shown.

ALGORITHMS

"I've tried really hard to stay connected in real life. I've found it hard but sometimes the mass of information and content online is overwhelming, so I stay grounded by exploring my neighbourhood and sitting and talking with friends and neighbours."

"When your job relies heavily on technology and playing into the algorithm, it can be exhausting and rewarding. You can find some genuine connections with people who are excited about your ideas but integrating yourself into a model that doesn't promote authenticity can be discouraging."

Algorithms don't promote growth because they are not organized to present you with information that contradicts your preconceived ideas and beliefs.

"There is a lack of diversity because algorithms heighten already present social divides. They promote biases prevalent in the data."

To participate in a community discussion, and recognize others experiences.

Scan the QR code below to answer the questions posed earlier.



Part of my frustration with algorithm recommendations is that its so difficult to find something new and exciting that I wouldn't have already known about.

I decided to make a digital post it note board to connect with my community and find new suggestions from real people.

If you've ever felt like it was difficult to find new things to explore (or even if you haven't) please add a post it note with your suggestion and see the ones others have left as well!

You can add whatever you'd like: music, movies, community events, family owned shops, hiking spots, places and things that mean something to you and you'd like to share.

Scan the QR code below to participate:



Think of it as a non individualized collection of recommendations and an opportunity to experience something you might not have come across otherwise!

Thank you to everyone who made this zine a reality.

