Algorithms and Facebook

Handout

Graphic by Tech Crunch (2014)

Search engines and social media platforms use **complex algorithms** that shape what we see online. Based on data collected and mined about us, relevancy scores are assigned to 'posts' and 'entries' using a systematic ranking of what we are likely to prefer.

Algorithms, such as the infamous one used in Facebook's news feed, seek to predict whether we will 'like' a given post and then profile users and classify users on this basis.

Then social media users are sorted into distinctive groups that makes the role of advertising more specific and customisable in order for social media companies to generate revenue. From this we see things we already believe in and view content from people who are like us.

Who controls your Facebook feed – and why they keep changing it (January 3, 2016) by Will Ormus, The Slate. See: **http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/cover_story/2016/01/how_facebook_s_news_feed_algorithm_works.html**

"The like button wasn't just a new way for users to interact on the site. It was a way for Facebook to enlist its users in solving the problem of how best to filter their own news feeds. That users didn't realise they were doing this was perhaps the most ingenious part. If Facebook had told users they had to rank and review their friends' posts to help the company determine how many other people should see them, we would have found the process tedious and distracting. Facebook's news feed algorithm was one of the first to surreptitiously enlist users in personalising their experience—and influencing everyone else's."