



The Silent takeover of Social Media Algorithms

It may feel like you choose what you see online, but social media algorithms decide most of it for you. They quietly control your feed and influence what you think and notice.

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Introduction

Social media has now become integrated in our lives. We spend hours on Instagram, Tik Tok, and Facebook since the moment we get up in the morning to the moment we go to sleep. I even recall that one day I opened Instagram to check something on the spot. I expected that it would take five minutes-but before long, I found myself nearly an hour later. It was at that point that I began to wonder: why is it so difficult to stop scrolling? The solution is something that is not considered by a majority of us: algorithms. These systems are invisible in that they determine what we see on our screens. They observe our behavior: what we enjoy, what we observe and even what we leave out.

"That is, we are not altogether selecting what we see, a big part of it is being selected on our behalf."

Technology Overview

The algorithms of social media are designed with a single purpose: to retain the user as long as possible. They gather information about what we do like, comment, share, and even the duration of watching a video. On this information they begin to present us with similar material repeatedly. To illustrate, when you like funny videos, they will gradually fill up in your feed. When you engage with political or news posts, they will begin to show up more often. This is an intimate experience but it also implies that we are only exposed to a few content. These algorithms are dominant in Pakistan, where the use of social media among youths is extremely high. They do not only determine what we see, but also opinions, trends, and even our thoughts.

Key Findings & Impact

1. Filter Bubble & Limited thinking

Among the largest consequences of such algorithms is the formation of a bubble. Within this bubble, there is mostly content that conforms to our interests and beliefs. In the long run, this may constrict our thinking without our conscious awareness.

2. Time Waste & Daily Life Impact



The other significant problem is time consumption. The algorithm continues to provide us with stimulating content, so we can easily spend a lot more time on the Internet than we initially wanted. This may influence our life studies, sleep and even relationships.

3. Personal Experience

I have observed this not only in me, but also in my friends. We sit on the computer hoping to read or learn something valuable - but are distracted by reels and videos.

4. Positive side & Opportunities

But it is not that bad. Opportunities are also presented by algorithms. Numerous small creators, freelancers, and businesses in Pakistan have increased their audience without investing in advertisements.

Therefore, the effect of algorithms may be harmful but can also be positive - everything depends on the way of their usage.

What's Next?

In the future, the algorithms of social media can only get better. They will learn how to know the users better and will make better predictions than ever before. Although it may enhance user experience, there are critical issues regarding privacy and control. We as users must be more aware. We should not just absorb the content but challenge it and make an effort to research alternative perspectives. Social media is merely a means at the end of the day. The actual question is - are we running it, or it is running us?

About the Author

Abu Huraire is passionate about software engineering. He has a strong interest in artificial intelligence and social media technologies. He focuses on how digital systems and algorithms influence user behavior and online experiences. He can be reached at chhuraire225@gmail.com.

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