MAGNETIC

Algorithms & editors – the importance of the human connection for advertisers
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The internet has handed everyone with a modem the key to a treasure-trove of information so vast no one person could ever hope to explore it in their lifetime. 300 hours of new videos are uploaded to YouTube every minute; 500 million tweets are exchanged worldwide every day and there are 17,600,000 search results for 'cat meme' on Google. So the question for users has been: with so much content available, how do I get to the good stuff?

Traditionally this was the role of editors, trained professionals educated in the school of journalistic ethics that dates back to 1907 in the UK. However, in 2016 we face a new prospect: we have entered an age of invisible algorithmic editing of the web. Google uses 57 signals to personally tailor your search results; Facebook's News Feed stories are filtered according to user engagement and news brands are experimenting with personalised homepages optimised towards past behaviour. As Eric Schmidt puts it 'it [is becoming] very hard for people to watch or consume something that has not in some sense been tailored for them'.

In this Brave New World, machine learning and algorithms join the dots in ways that no human could. History's biggest library seemingly has no place for librarians. The problem is that the algorithmic librarians of the present do not have the same ethical codes of their predecessors. The result is the content we are served is predetermined to validate things we already know and confirm existing beliefs. We each operate in our individual digital filter bubbles (Eli Pariser) that become increasingly personalised and threaten to limit our exposure to new information. Algorithms also offer little protection from the relentless onslaught of amateur gurus, which the internet has proliferated like nits at an oversubscribed nursery. Anyone can launch the latest 10 minute miracle work out or quinoa-based diet plan. Algorithms can discern the popular from the obscure but they cannot always determine the credibility of the information being perpetuated, which can have a damaging effect on trust.

The strength of algorithms is making the web convenient, satisfying our requirement for quick and easy information. However, sometimes we are looking for more than that; we want to consciously invest time in discovery. Magazines provide exactly this environment. Whether you're into knitting or neuroscience; film or fly-fishing, there's a magazine that caters for your passion. Magazines provide serendipity and

the opportunity for rewarding accidental discovery. They do not offer up the easy answer on a silver platter but instead inspire to discover more.

Magazine content is written and edited by people with a shared passion for their subject in a way no machine can replicate. This shared human passion fosters a connection between writer and reader, bringing with it a sense of implicit recommendation.

The internet could not function on human input alone but the curation of content by human editors fosters an environment where advertising forms an important part of the content that audiences are seeking new information from.

Technology is changing our world in incredible ways and increasing algorithmic sophistication continues to open up a world of information to us but for now at least, there is no substitute for the human passion and discovery that editors provide.