



Algorithms Are Necessary & Beneficial To Online Experiences

What Is An Algorithm?

An algorithm is a set of steps for solving a problem or completing a task.

Why Are Algorithms Important?

Algorithms are everywhere. They make the modern internet possible— whether it's sending email, shopping, messaging your friends, watching a recommended tv show, or playing a generated playlist (to name a few).

Many Algorithms Interact to Protect Users And Enhance Their Experience

For example— a single email you send will interact with many different algorithms to protect you and others, as well as provide enhancements and benefits to the recipient.

No single algorithm determines what content users see and how it is ultimately displayed.

How Algorithms Benefit Users





Many Algorithms Work Together To Protect Consumers From Potentially Harmful Content



The use of algorithms to serve content to users is beneficial and essential to most online services. Take sending an email, for example. Once you hit send, several helpful algorithms go to work to protect and assist both the sender and the recipient



Screen sender's domain or IP address for known scammers



Display emails and highlight the unread



Scan for viruses or malware



Check for phishing URLs



Screen attachments against systems that contain a known hash or other content ID values



Link the email to a thread of conversation by associating it with prior emails



Add links to email text as shortcuts for recipient for addresses, phone numbers, dates



Analyze email for indicators of SPAM



Users create or influence algorithms through settings and product interactions



Creating rules to send certain emails to folders



Starring important emails on criteria like the subject line



Blocking email from specific senders



Companies have strong incentives to develop enforcement mechanisms that balance effective enforcement and important counterspeech. They work constantly to fine tune their algorithms to keep pace with changing tactics of bad actors, making frequent adjustments (as often as daily or even multiple times a day if a new challenge arises).

Since no single algorithm determines what content users see and how it is ultimately displayed, policy proposals that expose the use of algorithms to liability risk may unintentionally disrupt the many systems in place that protect consumers from potentially harmful content.

About Internet Association

Internet Association represents over 40 of the world's leading internet companies. IA's mission is to foster innovation, promote economic growth, and empower people through the free and open internet. For more information, visit www.internetassociation.org