



Gruppe 1: Personalisierte Suchergebnisse

Most of us assume that when we google a term, we all see the same results – the ones that the company’s famous Page Rank algorithm suggests are the most authoritative based on other pages’ links. But since December 2009, this is no longer true. Now you get the result that Google’s algorithm suggests is best for you in particular – and someone else may see something entirely different. In other words, there is no standard Google any more.

It’s not hard to see this difference in action. In the spring of 2010, while the remains of the Deepwater Horizon oil rig were spewing oil into the Gulf of Mexico, I asked two friends to search for the term “BP”. They’re pretty similar – educated white left-leaning women who live in the north-east. But the results they saw were quite different. One saw investment information about BP. The other saw news. For one, the first page of results contained links about the oil spill; for the other, there was nothing about it except for a promotional ad from BP. Even the number of results returned differed – 180 million for one friend and 139 million for the other. If the results were that different for these two progressive east-coast women, imagine how different they would be for my friends and, say, an elderly Republican in Texas (or, for that matter, a businessman in Japan).

With Google personalised for everyone, the query “stem cells” might produce diametrically opposed results for scientists who support stem-cell research and activists who oppose it. “Proof of climate change” might turn up different results for an environmental activist and an oil-company executive. A huge majority of us assume search engines are unbiased. But that may be just because they’re increasingly biased to share our own views. More and more, your computer monitor is a kind of one-way mirror, reflecting your own interests while algorithmic observers watch what you click. [...]

The basic code at the heart of the new internet is pretty simple. The new generation of internet filters looks at the things you seem to like – the actual things you’ve done, or the things people like you like – and tries to extrapolate. They are prediction engines, constantly creating and refining a theory of who you are and what you’ll do and want next. Together, these engines create a unique universe of information for each of us – what I’ve come to call a filter bubble – which fundamentally alters the way we encounter ideas and information. Of course, to some extent we’ve always consumed



media that appealed to our interests and avocations and ignored much of the rest. But the filter bubble introduces three dynamics we've never dealt with before.

35 First, you're alone in it. A cable channel that caters to a narrow interest (say, golf) has other viewers with whom you share a frame of reference. But you're the only person in your bubble. In an age when shared information is the bedrock of shared experience, the filter bubble is a centrifugal force, pulling us apart.

40 Second, the filter bubble is invisible. Most viewers of conservative or liberal news sources know that they're going to a station curated to serve a particular political viewpoint. But Google's agenda is opaque. Google doesn't tell you who it thinks you are or why it's showing you the results you're seeing. You don't know if its assumptions about you are right or wrong – and you might not even know it's making assumptions about you in the first place. My friend who got more investment-oriented information about BP still has no idea why that was the case – she's not a stockbroker. 45 Because you haven't chosen the criteria by which sites filter information in and out, it's easy to imagine that the information that comes through a filter bubble is unbiased, objective, true. But it's not. In fact, from within the bubble, it's nearly impossible to see how biased it is.

50 Finally, you don't choose to enter the bubble. When you turn on Fox News or read *The New Statesman*, you're making a decision about what kind of filter to use to make sense of the world. It's an active process, and like putting on a pair of tinted glasses, you can guess how the editors' leaning shapes your perception. You don't make the same kind of choice with personalised filters. They come to you – and because they drive up profits for the websites that use them, they'll become harder and 55 harder to avoid.

Textauszug aus: Pariser, Eli (2011): *The filter bubble: what the internet is hiding from you*. London: Viking.