

# Example of eli pariser: ted talks critical thinking

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In his session at Ted Talks, Eli Pariser discusses the way the internet is filtering information for us. The data that reaches us is not in our control. According to Eli Pariser, there are invisible algorithms that are sifting out data depending upon our previous history on the internet. This was initially the role of newspaper editors and journalists before technology came. The internet is focusing an individual's direction according to its own interpretations about our likes and dislikes. This raises questions about the ethics guidelines followed by those regulating the web.

Eli Pariser talks about internet filtering. This indicates that people are not exposed to everything. People are under the wrong impression if they think that the web is standardized. There are several organizations which are working towards personalizing the information that is visible on our browsers. Pariser refers to this as the filter bubble. “ Your filter bubble depends on who you are, and it depends on what you do” (Pariser, 2011). (Poulter, 2012). The image demonstrates how the filter bubble is acting. We lie in the center and all the information revolves around us but outside a specific boundary. The information that you are able to see has been altered and personalized according to your interests. Filtering may save the user from a lot of hassle of selecting the relevant information. People may get what they require in a more efficient way if filtering is in place. However, if the user is constantly exposed to just one perspective it would become his/her belief. These beliefs may not always be correct.

In times when the newspaper was one of the major sources of information, journalists and editors were responsible for giving out information that they thought was relevant. They played a crucial role in building people's

perceptions. Even though times have changed and technology has surpassed humans, in one way we are still stuck in 1915. The only difference today is that human algorithms are now replaced by robotic algorithms. The work that journalists were criticized for is now largely performed by the web. Since, these are invisible their actions go by unnoticed. Rather than providing a balance of information these algorithms provide an information overload. As users are unaware of these algorithms they are unable to determine what is wrong with the information they see.

As journalists and editors were criticized for their actions of providing only one-sided information, a code of ethics had developed. “ In fact, you couldn’t have a functioning democracy if citizens didn’t get a good flow of information that the newspapers were critical because they were acting as the filter, and then journalistic ethics developed” (Pariser, 2011). As journalists and editors are humans, it is easy to criticize them. Adding on, people were aware of being exposed to one-sided information. With online algorithms people are unaware and there is no code of ethics for these algorithms.

Eli Pariser has helped in creating awareness about this issue of invisible filters operating online. It has led me to search a particular topic on the web from different perspectives because just one search attempt will not provide the accurate data. By giving proof of differing search results on “ Egypt”, Pariser has demonstrated the seriousness of this dilemma. If people are unaware of how they are limited to the information they receive then any viewpoints they may currently hold about a particular issue may be questionable. People need to be able to understand the work of these online

filters. This would enable them to bring about a change similar to that which led to development of a code of ethics for newspaper journalists.

## References

Poulter, N. (2012, November 20). Beware of Personalised Search and Online Filter Bubbles!. State of Digital. Retrieved March 9, 2014, from <http://www.stateofdigital.com/beware-of-personalised-search-and-online-filter-bubbles/>