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## Context to the nugget

Kartik speaks about how we need to be mindful of the risk of being exposed to a certain type of content or view point as the algorithms are solving for engagement and are likely to show content that we are likely to gravitate towards. He speaks about some of the mechanisms he employs to ensure that he builds diversity of thought in his head as he goes about processing the world around him.

## Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): FAANG. We talk a lot about diversity of thought in leadership teams and in Board rooms, but how do we drive diversity of thought in the living room? How should we think about the efficiency of an algorithm giving us what we want, what we are likely to want versus opening up our minds to newer ideas?

Kartik Hosanagar (KH): Right, I think that issue becomes particularly relevant in political news content as you were mentioning elections and so on where people's opinions are being shaped by the information they consume on digital platforms. I think, there are aspects of that, that are related to algorithms and there are aspects that go beyond algorithms. Let me start with the algorithmic portion certainly if you look at platforms like Facebook, there is news feed algorithm that is trying to figure out what kind of news posts you will engage with and what to show you? At any given point you log into Facebook there are thousands of different posts that Facebook could show you and it's based on your past engagement, which of your friend's post do you engage with? What topics do you engage with? All of that feeds into an algorithm that decides what to actually show you? And there is no doubt that there is an echo chamber there that we tend to see more and more what we are already engage with and so that diversity of thought might be stymied when the algorithms are trying to personalise our experience, I think the algorithm clearly is trying to maximise the engagement and it's going to show you the stuff that you would demonstrably engage with and so that's not surprising, but I think there are things that we all could do, I think certainly it is everyone has seen or heard of situations where a friend posts something on Facebook which you disagree with and what happens sometimes is people unfriend the other person and if we start doing that then I think that diversity of thought goes away and it's sometimes important to get exposed to other viewpoints similarly people don't engage or click on content that shares a different perspective so I think it's important for us all to try and make sure we get out of this filter bubble that the algorithms put us in and sometimes we cause it ourselves by unfriending people, who have a different viewpoint or not engaging with their post or content and that becomes pretty important so one of the things that I did after this happened during the 2016 election was, I usually used to go to two new sites, New York Times and Times of India to consume my news and now I have increased that set to about 5,6 news sites so I am looking at news stories from that are right leaning that are left

leaning that are more moderate to just get other perspectives and I think it's important to try and do that and then of course as I said there are things that are beyond the algorithm. Things like, you know on WhatsApp, there's so much fake news circulating on WhatsApp and most of it is not because of algorithm, it's saying hey this is what you should see but a friend of yours on some groups in WhatsApp circulated the news and mostly it's people not verifying the truthfulness of what they are sharing and they consume it and sensational stories get shared more and more and so there's actually research studies that show that the top fake news stories are circulated more and seen by the people more than the top true news stories, because the fake news stories are more sensational and so people share it more and more and that's the huge problem for democracy itself because we are making voting decisions on information that is just baseless and so, I think we need to also have growing awareness that the internet is not like the newspaper the newspaper has editors has a curation process and even that process leads to accusations of bias but you think about the internet, people can put whatever they want over there so we just need to also wake up and be more savvy when we see something sensational just go outside go to the browser, verify the truthfulness of the information before you circulate it those kinds of things are important, so all of these steps are important in terms of making sure we have a diversity of perspective but also truth in those perspectives.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: This is a non-trivial problem of our times I guess. In the few days leading up to the election, it was fascinating to see the volume of fake news that was circulating in the various media about various parties. While there are no easy answers here, I guess the big takeaway for me is that earlier if you were a passive consumer of opinion or content, you would generally be ok because you got this from a curated place that will check for veracity. But now if you are indifferent and passive, there is a high risk of being taken down a misleading path. So, the onus is on each one of us to be deliberate about what where we consume news, opinions and do basic research before we share it with others. Forwarding as received, I find to be quite lame. In my earlier innings as a search consultant, if somebody I know just forwarded a CV along, I would not open that email. Because that doesn't tell me anything. But if the person had a view point and I trusted the view point, then it made sense.

DJ: Thank you for listening. Please visit [playtopotential.com](http://playtopotential.com) for more content. You could visit the curated playlists section for specific bite sized nuggets that are captured by themes some of which might be relevant for you. You can also find the podcast offline on platforms like Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify and more.

## End of nugget transcription

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## Kartik Hosanagar - Nuggets

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## About Deepak Jayaraman

Deepak seeks to unlock human potential of senior executive's / leadership teams by working with them as an Executive Coach / Sounding Board / Transition Advisor. You can know more about his work [here](#).

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Podcast Transcript [44.04 Kartik Hosanagar - Diversity of thought in the drawing room](#)

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