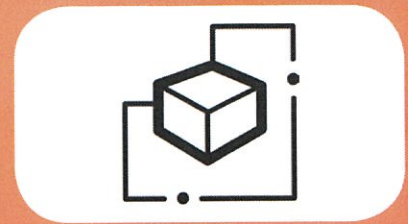


# ALGORITHMS



Age rating according to app provider

**An algorithm is a step by step method of solving a problem. It is commonly used for data processing, calculation and other computer related and mathematical operations. An algorithm is also used to manipulate data in various ways, such as inserting a new data item, searching for a particular item or sorting an item.**

When using websites such as YouTube you may have found yourself going down a rabbit hole; what begun as Guitar Chords 101 has now become '5 times people got golden buzzers on "Britain's Got Talent" 2018'. This does not happen by chance. More than 70 percent of time spent on YouTube is spent watching what the algorithm recommends.

In short, social media algorithm's suggest personalized content that is most relevant to a users interests. This is the case for most apps and websites offering the same service in a quest to keep their product 'sticky'.

## How does this affect us?

Algorithms have changed the way we use social media, particularly the length of our usage. The most pressing issue is that of wanting to see more; a fear of missing out. This can either mean wanting to see something more intense, more dramatic, more violent, more funny or simply an anxiety of not satisfying a curiosity. The white lie we tell ourselves of 'just one more video/photo/post' is where algorithm's prey. But with 300 hours of content uploaded to YouTube every minute for example, just seeing everything is simply unattainable.

## Challenges

Addiction is the biggest issue seen on websites that implement suggestive algorithms. New recommended content constantly stimulates your brain making you want to stay and view as much as possible.

A viewer may often view a video and after it has finished, it may offer something related (but just different enough) that it stimulates the brain making the user engage further. This is the beginning of an addictive cycle that can continue, and only grow stronger.

## Tips

- Acknowledge that the website you are viewing is possibly using social algorithms
- Set firm deadlines, as to not go overtime
- Find time for breaks inbetween device time

App Fact Sheets available from the Carly Ryan Foundation. Please email: [info@carlyryanfoundation.com](mailto:info@carlyryanfoundation.com)