

Algorithmic Voids

Much of the activity within networked life is being subjected to machine learning algorithms in order to train and predict behavior of the physical body. These algorithms anticipate behavior, tastes, desires and are more and more often choosing what is seen on the internet. But currently there's a cognitive void, as scientists that create these algorithms don't fully understand what's happening within the space of training algorithms and the end results and choices algorithms make.¹ There are portals in homes and in pockets that collect and transmit data to the void that is an AI "mind", which is increasingly forming digital perception. Time is disrupted in digital space by these voids. Feeds have become disjointed conglomerations that gives no projection of linear reality causing heightened anxiety. The algorithm can only survive with updated data, without it it becomes null and can't evolve.

The human body as a data source is an important asset to corporations, governments and algorithms. Perhaps the greatest irony is that these systems need consumer data to be trained and training them increases CO2 emissions, which in turn pollutes and destroys customers. Some training emits more carbon than multiple automobiles.² These algorithms and their data also live on distant physical objects, servers and computers that are mysterious on their own, which consume more and more vital energy. There is a contradictory feedback loop: data is given and collected, the algorithm train themselves and pollute, bodies become affected.

Without a change in behavior or investment in solutions, what future can we envision within this virtual and analytical black hole? How can consumer bodies survive impending carbon overload? Will convenience override privacy? How will we be able to live in harmony with these systems? The following three pages consider these questions in the form of a speculative proposals.

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1) <https://www.technologyreview.com/s/604087/the-dark-secret-at-the-heart-of-ai/>

2) <https://www.technologyreview.com/s/613630/training-a-single-ai-model-can-emit-as-much-carbon-as-five-cars-in-their-lifetimes/>

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