Day 18
Evaluating information
Wisdom of the crowd
Online Degrees - Scams
Making decisions about technology
Daunting amount of information on the web, much of this information is not correct

Search engines are replacing librarians, but Web sites are ranked by popularity, not by expert evaluation

Wisdom of the crowd – the more who contribute, the more accurate the results

If millions participate, the results will be useful

Wisdom of the Crowd (WWTBAM): TV studio audiences provided the correct answer 91% of the time... but not always.

https://jackiefoxdotnet.files.wordpress.com/2013/10/millionaire-oh-no.jpg
Wisdom of the Crowd
Responsible Judgment

Wikipedia

- Written by volunteers, some posts are biased and not accurate
- Although anyone can write, most people do not
- Those that do typically are educated experts

Alterations possible:

Edits to Wikipedia pages on Bell, Garner, Diallo traced to 1 Police Plaza

3/2015,
Responsible Judgment

Wisdom of the crowd
Problems of unreliable information are not new
The Web magnifies the problems
Rating systems are easy to manipulate
Vulnerable viewers
Less educated individuals
Children
Responsible Judgment

0 We can use our judgment to narrow the information stream.
0 But too much narrowness can lead to extremes by making it easy for people to avoid seeing alternative opinions → CONFIRMATION BIAS

https://www.ted.com/talks/eli_pariser_beware_online_filter_bubbles?language=en
Global Struggles for Dominance: Noam Chomsky o...
"The US is indeed powerful. But it's nothing like what is often believed," says ...
TRUTH-OUT.ORG | BY C.J. POLYCHRONIOU

In this latest exclusive interview for Truthout, Noam Chomsky challenges prevailing viewpoints about terrorism in Europe and assesses the threat of nuclear war.

Major ISIS Recruiter Arrested In Libya... Here's His...
Arrested AGAIN, to be exact ...
CONSERVATIVE TRIBUNE.COM | BY V GAXENA

A major recruiter for the Islamic State group was just arrested in Libya. That's when we found out he had a MAJOR connection to President Obama that the Democrats don't want us to know about. This is going to change a lot of people's minds about one major
Update 1/2017

Mass Appeal

Facebook is taking a clear step to dismantle the Facebook echo chamber

By last year, Facebook had clearly accomplished just that. A Pew survey in May found that 66% of American Facebook users and 44% of all US adults got their news on the site. And during the US presidential election in November, Facebook ranked behind only Fox News and CNN as the “main source” of news for voters.

Evaluating Technology

ABDICATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

0 People willing to let computers do their thinking
0 Reliance on computer systems over human judgment may become institutionalized
Computer Models

Evaluating Models

How well do the modelers understand the underlying science or theory?

Models necessarily involve assumptions and simplifications of reality in certain conditions.

How closely do the results or predictions correspond with the results from physical experiments or real experience?
Online degree programs

0 Academic degrees can be earned by connecting to the internet and completing coursework rather than physically attending classes on campus.

0 Some degrees require blended courses: some online, some in person.

0 Good for many reasons: ...
Online degree programs

Marketed to less educated individuals/minimum wage workers.

Hundreds Linked to Diploma Mill
Government, Military Probed For Violators

By Valerie Strauss
Washington Post Staff Writer
Thursday, July 31, 2008

Scores of people in Maryland, Virginia and the District are on a list compiled by federal investigators of more than 9,600 people who might have purchased fraudulent high school diplomas and college degrees, including some who appear to work in government and the military.
FTC Action Halts Online High School Diploma Mill That Made $11 Million Selling Worthless Diplomas to Students

FOR RELEASE

September 19, 2014

TAGS: deceptive/misleading conduct | Finance | Finance | Bureau of Consumer Protection | Consumer Protection | Education

At the Federal Trade Commission’s request, a U.S. district court in Florida has temporarily halted a diploma mill that allegedly grossed more than $11 million from marketing and selling fake high school diplomas online to consumers nationwide.
"People who buy diplomas from diploma mills are not victims; they are co-conspirators… People who fall prey to shoddy trade schools, they are victims. They think they are going to a real school, and they get ripped off. But people who pick up the phone and call and order themselves a master's degree in nursing know they are not nurses."

- Barmak Nassirian, lobbyist, Association of Collegiate Registration Admissions Officers

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/collegeinc/interviews/nassirian.html
Massachusetts AG sues ITT Tech for allegedly exploiting computer network students

“These students were exploited and pressured to enroll with the promise of great careers and high salaries, but were instead left unable to repay their loans and support their families,” AG Healey said in a statement. “Our office has a history of going after predatory for-profit schools and will not stand for students in Massachusetts being treated simply as a source of income.”