
The Concept Of Algorithm Management In A Gig Economy

Algorithm management is a system where algorithm rather than humans decide how business operations should be performed. It was introduced as an attempt to explain how gig economies such as UBER manage their workers. There are different types of algorithms like the taxi algorithms, the call-me algorithms, the rent-a-car algorithm, the bus algorithm etc. All four of these algorithms are meant to accomplish exactly the same goal, but each of these will do it in a completely different way. Each algorithm has a different cost and a different travel time. Algorithms are usually chosen based on the circumstances, for example: Taking a taxi is probably the fastest way to reach a particular destination but it is also the most expensive way and taking the bus is definitely less expensive, but also a whole lot slower. In computer programming, there are often many different ways algorithms to accomplish any given task. Each algorithm comes with its own set of advantages and disadvantages in different situations.

Although algorithm management in a gig economy may often paint a vision of a Utopian future, the transition will be a long and arduous process which may never see the light of day and end up disheveling everything. Those developing algorithm management say it creates new employment opportunities, better and cheaper consumer services, transparency and fairness in parts of the labour market that may be categorised by inefficiency and opacity human bosses, however the summer of wildcat strikes in London's gig economy shows that some workers are beginning to chafe against the contradictions of being their own bosses since they might be free to choose when to work but they cannot choose how to work which not only effects them psychology but also affect their competency outside a gig economy since getting used to not using your own brains in the work you do may as well be an important contributor towards taking us to dystopia. Human relations is the process of training employees, addressing their needs, fostering a workplace culture and resolving conflicts between the different employees or between employees and management.

Different people have different needs and hence expecting algorithms to consider the needs of all people may not be the best idea. Face to face communication allows us to know our subordinates better and hence it is easy to contemplate their needs to encourage them to work harder but algorithms present a more generalized way to contemplating peals needs which may not always encourage the workers to work hard but in a lot of cases having every step monitored may just end pressuring them and in turn worsen the working environment. Estimates suggest a fifth of employers in Europe had access to wearable tech in 2015, while in the US as many as 72 per cent of CVs are not seen by the human eyes. Amazon, Unilever, Deloitte, Tesco and most other major corporates have dipped their toe in the water of algorithm management, yet not everyone is happy with this trend. One of the main reasons for resilience

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is the fear that it will lead to a kind of Digital Taylorism, taking scientific management principles to another level of intrusions. The academic Phoebe Moore has warned us of threats to people's work-life balance due to algorithms because it can lead to a hyper employed culture, which is something the scientific principles were made to avoid in the first place. Findings of a recent ethnographic study of long-distance truck drivers show that electronic monitoring led to them feeling pressure not to take mandatory breaks and this may as well be the first step towards a dystopian economy.

There are algorithms like power video surveillance in interviews or ones which identify appropriate content in emails, risk creating a culture of guilty until proven innocent. In 2015, a California worker took her employer to court after she was allegedly dismissed for uninstalling a cell-phone app that tracked her whereabouts 24 hours a day. The plaintiff claimed that her manager used the device to monitor her driving speed outside of work hours. Algorithms such as these can easily offend a person and make them question their sense of privacy.

In a work environment where scientific principles allowed people to have freedom at work by making decisions and having authority for those decisions, algorithms are a serious threat to people's autonomy and sense of control. For example, delivery drivers' daily rates and schedules are completely mapped out by algorithms which deduces their sense of control over their own actions and this might as well be as good as turning them into robots that listen to what is told is using their brains.

But perhaps the biggest grievance is that whether they even work. Many of them are yet to be tested and are often found to be spotty and prone to wild fluctuations. In her book *Weapons of Maths Destruction*, Mathematician and tech polemicist Cathy O'Neil reports on how a performance algorithm used in New York City education system scored the same teacher 6/100 in one year and 96/100 the next, without a change in their teaching style.

For Critics such as Guy Standing, One man's flexibility is another man's insecurity. The gig economy is fueling a "precariat" class of workers denied the protections of traditional jobs, he says. Algorithms provide "fantastic opportunities for rapacious exploitation" of people who are already at the bottom of the labour market. "They can monitor and make sure they only pay for the time they really want to pay for, and have people available at all times, waiting on call." In my opinion an important part of the reason why Taylor came up with the principles was to avoid exploitation of workers in any way and give them what they deserve but companies are using algorithms as an excuse to pay their employees only for work that they really want to pay for and not the work that they deserve to be paid for.

Technology cannot be described as a uniform mass of tools but rather a multitude of devices that have different consequences for workers. Much depends on how algorithms are developed,

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including how data is collected, how the collected data is analysed and how the results are interpreted and acted upon. It cannot be denied that human judgement plays an equal role as the technology itself. Hence, it can be argued that algorithms may be a perception of a few people that cannot be completely trusted to drive us to utopia. Moreover examples like the Obama campaign in the light of its political aftermath, the war on terrorism and the 300,000 persons protests in Rio almost clearly show that algorithms are not good at expanding beyond the immediate present to give us solutions for long-term political, economic and social challenges we confront.

It could also be deemed unwise to completely lament the rise of algorithm management without acknowledging that there are a lot of flaws in the modern workplace at the position it stands today. Workers today are stressed or unhappy with their jobs, worried about being treated unfairly or being dismissed without a good reason. Most offices and factories are messy, biased and unfair in some way and some are just downright miserable. Hence, even though I think that algorithm management may drive us towards dystopia it cannot be completely blamed on the algorithms as the modern workplace environment has its own little contribution to it.

We need to carve out a space for the right kind of technology to be deployed on our terms. Letting the algorithms run us completely would not only make us lazy but it will also make our brains blunt which in turn will result in dystopia. However, walking hand in hand with technology in the right manner and making it work with the flaws and strengths of the society may take us a long way towards utopia.

In conclusion, I would like to say that algorithm management in a gig economy is more likely to cause dystopia, especially with the pertaining work environment. They are often used by employers to employ their workers and moreover, its intensity does affect the employees a great deal. Completely relying on algorithms in the future would mean a complete destruction of the employees' brains, privacy and peace of mind while they are working. Even though these things have already started to happen a great deal it is only expected to grow much more with the increase of algorithm management in the gig economy. However, if the working environment of this modern world were to change and its algorithms are used in a definitive proportion along with being used in the right manner we may be able to stop this run towards dystopia. As ever, it is not the technology that we must fear the most, it is also the societies and the cultures that they are placed in.

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