

Stopping misinformation is about more than speech. It's about algorithms. | Marketplace

By Molly Wood

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What you see on social media isn't there by accident. It's there because of an algorithm, the programs that use data to decide what content will keep you online for the longest possible time — so that you'll see and click on more ads. These algorithms are right up there with the secret recipe for Coke, in business terms, but they're also the secret formula that helps misinformation, conspiracy theories and fake news to spread so fast and so far.

Congress this week had a hearing to try to understand this dynamic and, maybe, to try to regulate it. It's a topic for "Quality Assurance," where I take a second look at a big tech story. I spoke with Ina Fried, chief technology correspondent for Axios. The following is an edited transcript of our conversation.

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