

Current Status of Algorithm Abuse on Internet Platforms and Suggestions for Governance

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Abstract: With the rapid development of digital economy and digital technology, the status of algorithms in the development of Internet platforms is further highlighted, profoundly changing the resource allocation and platform operation mode, constituting one of the core drivers of the rapid expansion of Internet platforms. While the platform improves its market position with the advantage of algorithm, it is also accompanied by the risk of algorithm abuse, which seriously affects consumer decision-making, damages consumer rights and interests, and destroys the fair Internet platform market competition order. In this regard, government departments have introduced a number of laws and regulations to regulate the healthy development of platform algorithms, and joint efforts have been made to promote the governance of Internet platform algorithms, which has pointed out the direction for the diversified governance pattern of algorithms in China, and the governance of algorithms has entered a new stage. However, algorithm abuse still occurs frequently and is more hidden and complex. Therefore, this paper conducts a study on the current situation of algorithm abuse on Internet platforms to provide valuable policy recommendations for promoting the compliant application of platform algorithms and maintaining the healthy and orderly development of platform algorithms.

Keywords: Internet platforms, Algorithm abuse, Algorithm governance.

1. Introduction

The Opinions of the State Council of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Building a More Perfect Institutional Mechanism for Market-Based Allocation of Factors, released on March 30, 2020, juxtaposes data with other factors of production for the first time, pointing out that the cultivation of data factor markets should be accelerated. However, the huge amount of data does not automatically play its key role and needs to be processed by algorithmic technology to maximize its value. Algorithms realize the possession, processing and result output of data with the help of arithmetic power and architecture, and increasingly become a power tool for deploying resources and constructing network order and ethical rules [1]. Algorithms as a means of Internet platform operation and development, there are two sides to any technology, the positive effects of promoting development and the hidden risks and pitfalls behind it. In order to maintain their daily operation as well as innovation and development, Internet platforms, driven by the goal of profit maximization, have consciously designed and utilized unreasonable algorithm technology behaviors, unable to balance the relationship between technology development and social ethics, and triggered a series of algorithm abuse behaviors.

2. Current Status of Algorithm Abuse on Internet Platforms

The processing of huge amount of data exceeds the manual computing ability, the combination of algorithm and data forms a new social power, the power of social resource allocation is gradually transferred to algorithm, and algorithm gradually rises as a new type of power [2]. In essence, algorithmic power belongs to technical power, and its constituent elements include strength base, willingness to use and transformation ability. The power base is reflected in the gradually improved functional system of algorithms, such as

classification, search, sorting and self-optimization [3]. It is with these functions that algorithms have the ability to process large amounts of data and exercise the power of autonomous decision-making, which is needed in the era of digital economy. For one thing, algorithms can influence human decisions or even intervene in human decisions because of their own computational advantages; for another, the combination of algorithms and public power can greatly improve the efficiency of public power [4]. Companies with core technology have the ability to control other companies through the application of technological resources to achieve their own will [5]. Strictly speaking, the use of algorithms carries the will of man and is the realization of his will in different degrees. Therefore, the will to use algorithms within the digital economy can be briefly summarized as the pursuit of maximizing operating profits by platform companies in order to maintain their own daily operations. Based on the understanding of the willingness to use, the conversion ability can be understood as the degree of realization of "will" into "reality".

Algorithmic power is a "double-edged sword". Properly used, it is undoubtedly a "sharp sword" that promotes social and economic development and benefits the public. However, with the support of a strong power base and efficient transformation capability, and driven by the strong will to pursue interests, algorithmic power is at risk of abuse by platform operators, which becomes a "blunt sword". The fusion of algorithm technology and capital enhances the power of capital controllers, interferes with user behavior, and lays the hidden danger of algorithm abuse. In the field of digital economy, the platform uses algorithms to process data and take advantage of its own resources, causing the risk of abuse of algorithms in the process of repeated reinforcement.

Takeout platform based on big data technology to implement the user "kill" operation, members and non-members, ios system users and Android system users are different in terms of commodity prices and commodity delivery costs; short video platform using the

recommendation algorithm to push false, vulgar information to users, unreasonable addition of user tags, resulting in The short video platform uses the recommendation algorithm to push false and vulgar information to users, unreasonably adds user tags, and generates "addictive recommendations"; social platform search and e-commerce platform recommendations are precisely matched and so on are all behaviors of platform abuse of algorithm. The dividends brought by the abuse of algorithms to the Internet platform will strengthen the platform's progress of algorithm research and development, innovative algorithm technology, and play a powerful role in promoting the development of China's Internet technology. However, in order to chase more dividends, the abuse of algorithms will certainly be non-decreasing but increasing, further disrupting the order of China's Internet market environment. Therefore, if the platform algorithm abuse is not regulated in time, the difficulty of choosing between "innovation and development" and "strict governance" will be aggravated.

As the role of the algorithm, users should know whether they are abused by the algorithm in the first time. However, the technical barriers of the algorithm, the asymmetry of consumer information, and the lack of choice of the user who only passively accepts the rules of the platform in the whole process lead to the fact that the user does not immediately know that he or she is being abused by the algorithm, resulting in the phenomenon of "algorithm abuse → user unknown → more abused by the algorithm". The government as the governor of the algorithm, the "power base" of the algorithm naturally separates the two, and the "willingness to use" of the algorithm leads to the lack of clarity in the implementation rules of the algorithm and the uncertainty of the effect of the algorithm by the government, coupled with the lack of relevant technical The distance between the two is gradually widened, and the governance of algorithm abuse has lagged far behind the development of algorithm technology, and there is a disconnect between governance and development. As a user of algorithms, one of the direct reasons for the abuse of algorithms is to obtain more profits. As users fail to perceive their own abuse by algorithms in time and the disconnect of governance, the willingness of platforms to obtain profits is intensified, resulting in the acceleration of the frequency and deepening of the scope of abuse.

3. Internet Platform Algorithm Abuse Governance Recommendations

As we can see from the previous article, the key to the governance of Internet platform algorithm is the algorithm itself and the main body related to the application of the algorithm, so we can build a multi-faceted co-governance model of the algorithm from these two aspects. At the stage of algorithm design, the platform writes the rules that are beneficial to its own interests into the algorithm and consciously uses the "algorithm black box" to pursue the maximum benefit; at the stage of algorithm use, the platform deliberately hides the harmful consequences brought by the algorithm. Platforms have the responsibility to disclose relevant algorithm information, but the extent of disclosure

needs to be further considered to avoid too much disclosure to infringe on platform trade secrets and too little disclosure to prevent effective governance of algorithm abuse. The government, as the leading authority of algorithm governance, is promoting the transparency of algorithms through relevant laws and policies as well as industry regulations, which shows that the main issue now is not "whether the algorithm is transparent", but "the degree of transparency of the algorithm". Although excessive algorithm transparency can reduce the cost of understanding algorithms by government departments and increase the level of understanding of algorithms by users, for platforms, algorithm technology is a core competitiveness, and excessive disclosure leads to leakage of trade secrets, copying and imitation by competitors, and inhibits technological innovation of their own enterprises. Therefore, the extent of algorithm information disclosure and how to ensure that corporate trade secrets are not compromised after disclosure remains a key issue for government departments to consider. In order to make users actively participate in the governance process of algorithms, it is necessary to increase the transparency of algorithms to users and improve their understanding of algorithms, which also makes "algorithm transparency" a kind of "understandable algorithm transparency".

4. Summary

Overall, the frequent occurrence of algorithm abuse in the Internet platform market has seriously damaged the order of fair competition in the market and hindered the healthy and orderly development of the Internet platform. Despite the introduction of corresponding policy documents, algorithm abuse is still frequent in reality, and with the continuous iteration of algorithms, unfair competition will become more hidden. The multi-faceted cooperative governance can effectively solve the governance dilemma at this stage, gradually improve the algorithm governance system, promote the formation of a comprehensive algorithm governance pattern, and create a good development environment for the platform algorithm.

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