
DEFINE “NEUTRAL”

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See generally James Grimmelman, *Some Skepticism About Search Neutrality*,
in THE NEXT DIGITAL DECADE: ESSAYS ON THE FUTURE OF THE INTERNET
(Berin Szoka & Adam Marcus eds., TechFreedom 2010)

Three mantras

- * *Search is subjective*
- * *Promoting Peter means demoting Paul*
- * *It's the users, stupid*

THEORIES OF NEUTRALITY

Equality

- * Scott Cleland: “Second, Google’s ultra-secret search algorithm [sic] reportedly has over 1,000 variables/discrimination biases which decide which content gets surfaced, so it can be found and monetized, and which content gets effectively hidden ‘at the back of the arena.’”
- * This is nonsense; the *point* of search is to make distinctions
- * *Promoting Peter means demoting Paul*

Objectivity

- * Foundem: “Throughout Foundem’s three and a half year penalty, Foundem continued to rank normally in Yahoo and Bing.”
- * What is the objectively correct #1 result for “apple”?
- * *Search is subjective*

Bias

- * AT&T: “Google’s algorithms unquestionably *do* favor some companies or sites.”
- * Who decides which biases matter?
- * Search is subjective

Traffic

- * StudioBriefing: “We are in no position to battle Google on this. And without Studio Briefing being included in Google search results we cannot draw sufficient readers to remain viable.”
- * If the bus stop moves, the corner deli has no right to complain
- * *It's the users, stupid*
- * *Promoting Peter means demoting Paul*

Relevance

- * Foundem: “the principle that search engines should have no editorial policies other than that their results be comprehensive, impartial and *based solely on relevance*”
- * It’s easy to tell relevance-enhancing stories
- * *It’s the users, stupid*

Self-Interest

- * Consumer Watchdog: “Google now inserts results from Google Maps into the first page of results from most Google searches, driving enormous traffic toward Google Maps and away from competitors.”
- * They say this like it’s a bad thing
- * *It’s the users, stupid*

Transparency

- * Foundem: “Search Neutrality can be defined as the principle that search engines should be open and transparent about their editorial policies ...”
- * Three words: Search. Engine. Optimization.
- * *It's the users, stupid*

Manipulation

- * Foundem: “By introducing special treatment for particular site names manually fed to the algorithm (such as ‘whitelists’), objectivity is lost, and the opinion becomes undeniably subjective.”
- * Google makes targeted changes, so nu?
- * *Promoting Peter means demoting Paul*
- * *Search is subjective*
- * *It's the users, stupid*

CONVERSATION
