BBC LEARNING ENGLISH
Take Away English 隨身英語
Algorithms and online shopping
演算法對網購體驗的影響

詞彙: online shopping 網購

For many of us, online shopping has made the process of purchasing goods a far simpler and more **fluid** process. No longer do we have to **head to** the shops to **browse** and **peruse** various objects, **wandering round** endless **aisles**, before finally **settling for** the first thing we saw. These days, we find the item we want or need online, **click on** it, and check out its **description** and **user reviews**. If it **fits the bill**, we send it to our **basket** and pay. There seems to be **a wealth of options at our fingertips**. But how do we know the options that **pop up** in front of us really are the best deals. And how might **algorithms** help or **hinder** us?

Algorithms, simply put, are mathematical instructions which tell the computer how to solve problems. When shopping is involved, what is the problem they solve? Well, the algorithms instruct the computer which **adverts** to show and which products a user is most likely to **splash the cash** on. By analysing things we've previously bought or looked at, the algorithm can predict what **goods** we're most likely to be **enticed** by. For some people, the idea of something guessing your preferences could sound a bit intimidating. But first, let's look at the positives.

Time is an important thing – something we don't want to waste too much of. By telling the computer to show us adverts for things we are interested in, it can save us a lot of time **sifting through** things or services that don't match our criteria. They can also help us find the best deals.

However, there are some people who have concerns about the impact of algorithms on our shopping experience. It is possible that algorithms may only select options from a limited number of **brands**, or may favour products from certain companies. There are also concerns that we aren't always shown the cheapest or best deal, even though that's what we're searching for. Finally, some algorithms generate ads which tell you there are only a limited number of items you're interested in left. They might just be there to manipulate you.

So, the takeaway from this is that algorithms are here to stay, and it's wise to know they exist. Whenever you're shopping, be it online or off, make sure to **shop around** for the best deals. The first thing you see might not always be the best for you.

詞彙表

fluid	流暢的
head to	前往（某地）
browse	隨便看看、流覽
peruse	流覽
wander round	逛來逛去
aisle	（商場、超市貨架間的）走道
settle for	無奈選擇，只好接受
click on	用滑鼠點擊
description	（商品）描述
user review	用戶評價
fit the bill	符合要求
basket	（網購結帳前商品所在的）購物籃
a wealth of options	選擇眾多
at one's fingertips	觸手可及
pop up	突然出現
algorithm	演算法
hinder	阻礙
advert	廣告
splash the cash	花大筆錢，揮霍
goods	商品
entice	引誘，吸引

sift through	篩選
brand	品牌
shop around	貨比三家

測驗與練習

1. 閱讀課文並回答問題。

1. In online shopping, where do we send our items before we pay?

2. What are algorithms?

3. How does an algorithm predict what you might buy?

4. How can algorithms help us save time?

5. What sort of algorithm-generated ads may try to manipulate you?

2. 選擇意思恰當的單詞或片語來完成下列句子。

1. I don't want to have to _____ endless receipts looking for the right one.

sift through	pop up	deal	basket

2. Are you trying to _____ me with that low price?

aisles	entice	hinder	click on

3. I don't want to buy anything. I'm just _____.

entice	basket	browsing	pop up

4. You're not helping at all. Are you trying to _____ me?

entice	description	sift through	hinder

5. I have been walking round these _____ looking for something for hours.

hinder	click on	description	aisles

答案

1. 閱讀課文並回答問題。

1. In online shopping, where do we send our items before we pay?

We send items to the basket before paying.

2. What are algorithms?

Mathematical instructions which tell a computer how to solve a problem.

3. How does an algorithm predict what you might buy?

By analysing what you've previously looked at.

4. How can algorithms help us save time?

By showing us the best deals.

5. What sort of algorithm-generated ads may try to manipulate you?

The ones that show us there are limited numbers left.

2. 選擇意思恰當的單詞或片語來完成下列句子。

1. I don't want to have to **sift through** endless receipts looking for the right one.

2. Are you trying to **entice** me with that low price?

3. I don't want to buy anything. I'm just **browsing**.

4. You're not helping at all. Are you trying to **hinder** me?

5. I have been walking round these **aisles** looking for something for hours.