

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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December 15, 2017

Dr. Catherine Tucker
Sloan Distinguished Professor of Management Science
MIT Sloan School of Management
100 Main Street, E62-536
Cambridge, MA 02142

Dear Dr. Tucker:

Thank you for appearing before the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology and the Subcommittee on Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection on Wednesday, November 29, 2017, to testify at the joint hearing entitled "Algorithms: How Companies' Decisions About Data and Content Impact Consumers."

Pursuant to the Rules of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the hearing record remains open for ten business days to permit Members to submit additional questions for the record, which are attached. The format of your responses to these questions should be as follows: (1) the name of the Member whose question you are addressing, (2) the complete text of the question you are addressing in bold, and (3) your answer to that question in plain text.

To facilitate the printing of the hearing record, please respond to these questions with a transmittal letter by the close of business on Tuesday, January 9, 2018. Your responses should be mailed to Evan Viau, Legislative Clerk, Committee on Energy and Commerce, 2125 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 and e-mailed to Evan.Viau@mail.house.gov.

Thank you again for your time and effort preparing and delivering testimony before the Subcommittees.

Sincerely,



Marsha Blackburn
Chairman
Subcommittee on Communications
and Technology



Robert E. Latta
Chairman
Subcommittee on Digital Commerce
and Consumer Protection

cc: The Honorable Michael F. Doyle, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Communications and Technology

The Honorable Janice D. Schakowsky, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection

Attachment

Additional Questions for the Record

The Honorable Robert E. Latta

1. Your research has demonstrated that economic factors can provide for different outcomes than perhaps even the creators of the relevant algorithms might have intended. Assumptions might be built into the algorithm about what does or does not count, but the output might not be reliable or intended due to unforeseen factors not built in the model. Can a regulatory technique be fashioned to solve these types of problems, or is it another way of saying that highly complex systems at this juncture in time will tend to produce unexpected results?
2. What impact have proscriptive regulations, such as those promulgated under the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, had on investment and creation of content for children?

The Honorable Gregg Harper

1. Can you tell us some of the considerations consumers make when deciding to exchange private information for services, and the degree to which existing disclosure rules factor into those decisions?

The Honorable Michael C. Burgess

1. In your testimony, you state that "algorithms may appear biased." In your research, how does algorithmic bias manifest itself – how do you measure issues of bias or fairness?
2. If an algorithm tends to produce results that were not intended by its creator, what is the likelihood that fact will be discovered and corrected?

The Honorable Adam Kinzinger

1. Given that companies tend to have extensive and rather transparent privacy policies, does more disclosure tend to make consumers more reluctant to use a particular service or site?