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Interviewer: Page 4.

Hanna: Yes.

Interviewer: On the page numbers on this, you have these times of day.

Hanna: Yes.

Interviewer: What I just wanted to ask you was first of all does that look like what you expected it to look like in terms of your times of day? Second of all, could you just talk me through that, kind of, typical day and what you do and how you are accessing news, what sorts of things you are accessing at those times of day?

Hanna: Yes. I think I probably expected it to be more in the evening than the afternoon. But I don’t know when the afternoon cut-off is, so it just really depended on when I got back from work. But yes, normally I don’t really look at the news. You know when you get the breaking news stories coming through from BBC? It’s always never actually any breaking news? I do tend to click on them just to see what’s happening.

But otherwise it’s mainly like I’ll come back from work and sit down and have a little scroll and try and get away from social media and look at the actual BBC and see what’s happening.

But yes, so it is scrolling. I’m never, like, actively searching for something unless something has popped up and I want to learn more about it. It’s just kind of what comes up.

I’m very aware that’s probably biased to what the BBC then wants to show at that time.

Interviewer: You said unless you get a push notification in the morning you tend to not really engage with news, and primarily after you finish work and you get home?

Hanna: Yes. It’s normally after I finish work or like in an evening just as I’m trying to wind down for the night.

Interviewer: Okay. You mentioned getting notifications from BBC. Do you have the BBC app? Is that where they are coming from?

Hanna: Yes. I did turn them off for a while because it was… I can’t remember when it was but it was all just kicking off about absolutely nothing. But no, I’ve got it back on just to see, trying to stay engaged with what’s happening in the world as best I can.

Interviewer: Okay. You mentioned staying away from social media. You mentioned the way you’ve changed the way you get notifications from the BBC app over time. In terms of your news consumption and the way you consume news how has that changed over time in terms of has it increased or decreased over time?

Hanna: I mean to be fair most of the time if I get news it’s in the morning with the radio. But that wasn’t what we were looking at for this unless I completely misunderstood. Normally, yes, first thing in the morning is when I would listen to it and hear what is going on.

I think I’m just more like, over time as I’ve grown up it’s been able to focus on what I find interesting rather than what’s just thrown at me. The teacher strikes were really prominent to me because I’d been teaching before. I wanted to learn more about what was going on, what people were getting, even though I’m out of it now.

Yes, just sort of realising what I find interesting and where I’ve had enough of hearing about things when it’s the same things over and over again and trying to walk away from that.

I used to spend a lot… Like my news was on Facebook and just seeing what comes up. But then it’s all your really rubbish news sites where it’s all just clickbait. Yes, that’s why I’ve been trying to get away from social media with that because it’s all the rubbish news that means nothing and the title gives you more than what the story actually gives you.

Interviewer: Do you find yourself typically reading whole articles, reading just headlines? How does that kind of work generally?

Hanna: Normally skimming the headlines and then if there is something in the headline that grabs my attention I will go in and read the top summary part. Then skim through it unless it’s something that I’m really interested in and then I’ll read the whole thing. But it’s normally just a light skim.

Interviewer: Okay. On that note in the book we’ve kind of identified what we considered your main interests during this two week period on page seven, and then there’s also some kind of key words. What kind of draws you to those issues and topics? What is the sort of thing that would make you go beyond the headline and read a bit more? Which is kind of the same question I suppose.

Hanna: I think just if it feels, like for the current events if it feels relative to me or it’s going to impact me in some way I’ll more likely read on with it. With the celebrity stuff in there it’s just if it’s a celebrity that I’m like quite well aware of, otherwise I’m not too bothered about them.

I think the two stories that came up I was looking through because I’d completely forgotten about them, was like Daniel Radcliffe and Drake Bell, and it was celebrities that I grew up with. I was just more curious about what was happening.

Yes, if it’s something that has like an impact on me in some way, or I feel like it might impact me in some way then I’ll read into it. Or if there is like an almost personal connection. Not that I know Daniel Radcliffe but like I watched him on the screen for a while. (Laughter) That kind of pulls us in.

Interviewer: Okay. Then how often…? We’ve got a crane going on outside. Never mind.

How often do you encounter stuff online that you think is misleading or even completely fake?

Hanna: Every day really. If we are going down like the social media angle then I think it is your clickbait titles that pull people in, which tell a story that’s not really there. It’s something that I’ve done a little bit of like, not research into it but looking into how to make something like a clickbait title for the work that I’m doing to see what drives people in.

But it’s that fine line between being clickbait and being relevant to what you are doing, or what you are going to be selling or asking people to do afterwards compared to a lot of your like, The Mirror for example, or other things that are on Facebook where it’s just completely irrelevant or it’s just trying to be shocking to get you in.

When you actually read it, it’s kind of got nothing to do with what it says. I’m trying to think of examples but I can’t right now. I’m sure if I went onto Facebook there would be something there right now though.

Interviewer: What was the thing you mentioned, the Nerve or something on Facebook?

Hanna: What did I say on Facebook?

Interviewer: I think you gave an example of one of the news sources that would tend to use this clickbait.

Hanna: Oh, it’s just I’m looking at the one here, The Mirror.

Interviewer: Oh, The Mirror. Okay. Great.

You’ve mentioned kind of these clickbait articles, clickbait headlines that you might become a bit suspicious of. But I guess including that or in a more general sense what would prompt you to check the accuracy of something you saw online? What methods would you use to check the accuracy of something?

Hanna: I think it depends on the topic of it. If it’s down to just like celebrity news I think that’s where you get most of your clickbait stuff. I’d probably start looking at the comments to see is it worth me going into it? Because a lot of people read it and then they get angry about it and write about it in the comments.

Or then just moving past the title or whatever it’s about. I’m sick of celebrities right now. Maybe going onto their social media to see if they’ve posted anything about it or if it’s actually relevant.

But again I’m not overly concerned about the celebrities. Again if it was like a news title from a news source that I wasn’t really aware of that did either like provoke me in some sense, either positive or negative I’d be likely to then do a Google search of it or see if the BBC said anything about it.

Interviewer: Okay. You mentioned the thing that might provoke you to check the accuracy would be like if it provokes you?

Hanna: Yes.

Interviewer: Could you just talk a little bit about what you mean by that? Or just maybe give an example?

Hanna: I’m sorry I’m really struggling to think of examples.

Interviewer: It is early in the morning.

Hanna: (Laughter) Yes. I’ve just sat in a hour long meeting as well and I’m like, “Oh brain, work.” Let’s think.

Interviewer: Because you mentioned the word provoking, so I guess is it something that you see…? I don’t know. I guess I need, yes, what kind of thing, what other word could you use then I guess provoking? Would it be something that shocks you?

Hanna: I think, yes, something that’s a bit shocking or something that it’s sort of pushing the boat out with things. If it’s anything to do with sort of defaming someone’s character or like actions that people have done. I think recently I’ve been looking at all the stuff that’s going out about Philip Schofield. There was a lot of stuff out about that before he officially came out.

I then spent the time watching more reports and videos about where people were getting their source from, because I was like, “Oh, he seems like quite a nice guy.” Then obviously it has come out that some things aren’t as positive as we thought they were.

That would probably be something that provoked me where it was quite in your face about what he’d done before anything had come out. Again, defaming of his character that no one had sort of seen before.

Interviewer: Okay. You mentioned you would kind of look for where this stuff was coming from, as in sources. How might you do that? What does that kind of look like? If you read something and you think, you know, “This isn’t quite right.” Or whatever, how do you do that checking? What are the sources you refer to?

Hanna: I get a little bit of a Google search and then there are always people, it sounds really bad but there are always people on TikTok who seem to have all the stories. They do like five part videos, which I do tend to get sucked into. Then whatever comes out of that I’ll search either people’s names or other things to see where this came from.

It’s more just like lapping up as much information as is out there and then trying to balance out what has been said and what I trust and what I think is relevant or not.

Interviewer: Okay. You might do a Google search or a TikTok search on the subject matter.

Hanna: Yes.

Interviewer: You would find, you know you mentioned some people do like five part videos on TikTok or whatever. Would you just type something into TikTok and whoever has done a kind of explainer video or whatever, you would just go to that? Or would there be certain TikTok accounts that you would go to?

Hanna: It’s normally just what comes up on the ‘For you’ page. It’s scarily accurate sometimes. It’s normally it will be someone will come up and I’ll watch that video. Then obviously it triggers more of the same types of videos that come up until you find someone who has gone in-depth.

Or if you click on it further there’s a little option that’s like regularly searched things that have come from that video. You click on that and it takes you to more videos that are all within there. That’s probably, I wouldn’t actively say go searching on TikTok. I wouldn’t actively go searching but if something comes up I would sort of be directed down that rabbit hole.

Interviewer: Okay. You said it was scarily accurate. Are you saying, for example if there is a big story all over the place like Philip Schofield, you wouldn’t need to search. You would just go to TikTok and something would be there about that in your feed perhaps?

Hanna: Yes. Like it wouldn’t be my first point of call but then when I’m on TikTok in the evening it would probably come up. Then I’d sit and spend a little bit longer looking into it.

Interviewer: Great. Maybe not as an instant reaction.

Hanna: No.

Interviewer: But you might then, the topics that you’ve read through the day, you might then kind of, as you were saying, go down rabbit holes of them.

Hanna: Yes, and then once you’ve gone down that one rabbit hole it just shows you all the same stuff afterwards. You get a little bit stuck with it.

Interviewer: Okay. Great. Would you think, you know, are you doing that research as an active thing, like thinking, “I must find out about Philip Schofield.” Or are you just kind of going, “Whatever happens to be on the TikTok feed, oh that’s interesting. Because it’s the evening this is the time of day when I do a bit of, I’ll just read things and go a bit deeper.”

Hanna: Yes, more the second option. It’s just quite passive. But I think that’s probably like who I am anyway with news. Like I’m sort of passively taking it in rather than actively searching and want to do stuff about it.

Interviewer: Okay. The data book also shows those kinds of ways you’ve responded. You just mentioned there, you know, you are quite passive in terms of how you read news.

Hanna: Yes.

Interviewer: But have you ever kind of taken an action or have you ever made a decision based on something that you’ve read in online news articles?

Hanna: I mean it has influenced things. When I was buying my flat and all the interest rates were going up it influenced where I was looking and how I was going to behave with that. I think when there was a lot of stuff about Brexit going on and it was just a massive mess that’s when I was like I would sign a petition about something or share a petition.

There have been a few things that have come up where if there has been a petition relevant to it I would sign it and share it. Not often, so there were probably only a handful of times I’ve actually done it. That would probably be like the main action. Otherwise it might be like sharing it with either friends or family and being like, “Oh, have you seen this?”

But yes, very little that I would probably do a lot about.

Interviewer: What factors would you consider before deciding to share something? Whether it’s a petition or a story or anything, what might you think about before you decide to share that?

Hanna: I would do probably a little bit of background, what’s actually going on with it. I would think about how much is it provoking me or angering me. Do I have anyone in my contacts who would probably find it interesting to do something about it as well? I don’t see the point of me sharing something if it’s only relevant to me and no one is going to do anything about it.

Or if people are just going to be like, “Oh.” Like scroll past it.

Interviewer: You mentioned a little bit there about it, but I guess if you are going to share a news article on either social media or just in a messaging app to friends and family would you ever do any kind of background checking or fact checking on that stuff first?

Hanna: If it’s friends and family probably not. If it’s through like WhatsApp or messaging I probably wouldn’t. I would just send it on. If it was something that was being shared on my social media pages I probably would. Just because I don’t want to put something out that’s then linked to my name that I actually don’t know much about.

Interviewer: Okay. Have you ever shared something online that turned out to be false or misleading?

Hanna: The only thing I can think is there is a thing that went around on Instagram a few years ago where it was like, “Share a photo of your pet or plant a tree.” But too many people shared photos of their pet so they couldn’t plant any trees. But that was the only thing I was quite happy to share a photo of my pet anyway.

No, I think otherwise no, I don’t. Not that I’m aware of anyway.

Interviewer: How did you establish that that thing was false in the end? I guess, yes. You were like, “Share this and we’ll do this thing.” How did you discover that that wasn’t the thing, like that was false?

Hanna: The people who started it put a post out being like, “We’re overwhelmed. We can’t do this.” Then that just got shared around with everyone.

Interviewer: Okay. Did they plant any trees in the end?

Hanna: I don’t think so. I think they might have donated something but it was like millions of trees that they were told they were going to plant and they were like, “Nah. We’ll plant like 10.” I don’t know how much they actually decided to plant but they changed the whole action course of it.

Interviewer: Can you remember which organisation this was?

Hanna: I don’t think it was an organisation. I think it was just two people who did it in a whim.

Interviewer: Okay. It wasn’t people I related to, a group or an institution or anything? It was just people?

Hanna: I don’t think so. I’ll have a little Google.

Interviewer: Just while you are looking, just related to the question I think, have you ever changed your mind about an issue or a topic, or even a person based on some information you’ve encountered online?

Hanna: I mean yes with Philip Schofield. I think yes, I’ve heard snippets from podcasts that have come out where people have been very rude or mean about other people. It’s made me just like unfollow and delete everything about them. But it’s always been like your sort of celebrities, whether that’s A, B, C, D, E list celebrities.

Yes. I think the only other thing is like people who are actually sharing certain things that I disagree with who have been a very close family friend has maybe changed the way I view a friendship sometimes with them.

Interviewer: Okay, so primarily it’s about behaviours of people rather than topics or issues. You change your mind about people because of the things you’ve mentioned. Has it ever been the case around a kind of topic or an issue too though? Do you think you’ve ever held an opinion about something, then you’ve read something online that’s completely changed your perspective about something?

Hanna: Not that I can think of off the top of my head, because again I tend not to click into the news stories if I don’t feel it’s relevant to me or if I don’t feel some sort of personal connection to it. Normally if I have some sort of personal connection to it it’s because I’ve either done work with it in the past or research with it in the past. Yes, so not that I can think of off the top of my head would be the answer to that.

But that’s not to say that it won’t happen at some point.

Interviewer: Yes. That’s fine. In your book here we’ve got that 60% odd of the time you did nothing after reading something. But then quite a big chunk, so maybe something like 20% of the time you said that you went on to discuss that with people.

Who do you discuss stuff you’ve read online with? Friends or family? Could you just talk a little bit about how those conversations would typically go?

Hanna: Yes. I mean with family it would be sharing the article with them. Most recently I think it was like Al Pacino announced that he was having another baby at 84. We discussed whether we thought people should still be having kids at 84.

Otherwise it would be like in work because the people I work with are all very up to date with things that are going on. It would just be a conversation around lunchtime or just sitting in the office, like, “Oh, did you see that?”

But a very relaxed discussion. It wouldn’t be an in-depth debate. It would just be like, “Oh, did you see it?” “Yes.” “What are your thoughts?” “Alright, moving on.”

Interviewer: Great. Sharing an article with family members and then discuss, is that all in a messaging app?

Hanna: Yes, that would all be over WhatsApp where everyone is. But yes, I think if we are in person it’s just because I’m away from my family, like quite a bit away so I wouldn’t be with them to be able to be like, “Here, have a look at that.” It would all be over WhatsApp.

Interviewer: You would share something on WhatsApp, like was it Robert DeNiro?

Hanna: Yes, there’s Robert DeNiro and there’s Al Pacino and they are all just at it right now.

Interviewer: Okay. You might share a link to a story in WhatsApp. The intention behind that or you would know doing that would cause a bit of chat, discussion, debate in the WhatsApp group.

Hanna: Yes. It would all be like, whatever is shared it would provoke someone in the family. I think there was something about police officers having to make sure they had no facial hair at one point. We shared that with my brother because he was a police officer. We were like, “Oh, it’s a good thing you don’t have any hair anyway.”

It’s just like little things to provoke people, more having fun at it than having deep conversations. I think if it was to be a heavy conversation it would be something in person or over the phone.

Interviewer: Is that the typical thing that you would share in WhatsApp groups? Something that’s a bit fun that might get a bit of light debate?

Hanna: Yes, just a bit light-hearted.

Interviewer: Would you stay away from sending more serious I guess stuff in WhatsApp groups?

Hanna: Yes, especially with my brothers, because one of them is very serious and you wouldn’t get out of that conversation alive. Yes, no, there are certain topics I would definitely stay away from. Politics especially I would stay clear of unless I’m speaking with Mum and Dad.

But if it’s the big family chat with my brothers and sisters on WhatsApp I would stay away from politics with them.

Interviewer: Is that because there might be disagreements? Or is that just because of like you said, some people would just get really, have too much to say?

Hanna: It’s just because one of my brothers would have too much to say. It would just have an awkward atmosphere for a few weeks in the family chat. It’s just not worth it.

Interviewer: Okay. Enough said.

You mentioned and it says in your book that there are certain news sources that you rely on more than others. Yes, could you just talk about which ones you do rely on more, most, and has this changed over time?

Hanna: Yes. I mean I think we sort of touched on it at the start. Like the BBC app is where I get most of my news. I listen to BBC radio in the morning. The only other time is occasionally if I come in and I’ve only got 15, 20 minutes I’ll pop the TV on and just put the news channel on. It would either be BBC or ITV news that’s on there.

No, it’s normally them just because, I mean especially because BBC is meant to remain impartial. It’s kind of your most unbiased news source. I think if I wanted something where I knew it was going to go in a certain direction then I would search for news from that sort of source where they are going to be a little bit more opinionated.

Interviewer: Okay. Just to start with the BBC and then I’ll move on to that second point. You say you access the BBC, radio, TV and you’ve got the app. Would you also go to the BBC on the social media, the TikTok, Facebook, Twitter, whatever as well?

Hanna: Not really. No, I think I’m mainly on the news app or the radio or the TV. Because I feel like any of their news articles point you towards the app anyway. Everything is just in there so it’s worth just being in there and searching for anything I would want, or just having a scroll and finding out what’s there.

Interviewer: You mentioned that you kind of sometimes would go to find alternative perspectives or views. What might that look like? What sort of issue or topic might make you do that and what would be those alternative sources, hypothetically or a real example?

Hanna: I mean it’s probably less common I think probably the most recent example. It’s not a news source but it would be like The Chronicle had put something out about The Geisha Bar & Restaurant shutting in, where is it? Sandyford? Jesmond?

Then there was a whole statement, so I then went onto Geisha’s Instagram to see what they were saying about it. They were very opinionated because obviously it had been a big hoo-ha with the council.

But, I mean I’m trying to think. I’m not actively going anywhere I think with teacher strikes, again because that sort of doesn’t impact me anymore but it did. I would then go onto like your union websites and see what they are saying about it, or their social media and see what’s being said that way.

But yes, I can’t really think of anything else.

Interviewer: No, that makes sense. Then you are talking about going to the sources, I mean to the business or the union or the institution in order to get a perspective I guess from the horse’s mouth. I guess that’s similar to what you said around the celebrity news earlier. You said you might go to their social media kind of whatever it’s called page.

Hanna: Okay.

Interviewer: Okay. Based on all this stuff you said I’m kind of getting an idea of this already, but how do you feel about the role of social media in disseminating news and information? Does this affect your trust in the sources that you encounter?

Hanna: Yes, I mean I don’t trust most of the sources I see on social media because you know that they can actively push news sources to certain people that they think it’s going to be relevant or they think it’s going to cause some sort of action to happen or sway their mind about stuff.

Again it’s always those that are clickbait articles where it’s very biased towards a certain thing. Yes, social media news, I think it has a massive opportunity to get news out to people who don’t necessarily read it. Like I’m not an active news taker, like searching for news.

But I think for those who are completely out of it as well it’s a brilliant way. You are on it anyway scrolling so to get some news that way. It’s just them being very aware of the fake news stories and how biased the news sources are that you’re reading.

I think it can be quite dangerous if it’s the wrong thing in the wrong hands.

Interviewer: How do you determine if a source is trustworthy when you are on social media?

Hanna: Normally by the name of the source it’s come from that’s recognisable, and then, “What do I know about that name or that source?”

Like do they have any sort of history or… I can’t think of the word. But are there any connotations that come with that brand or that company that you should be aware of?

If I’m not aware of the brand then I’ll probably not believe what it has to say.

Interviewer: When you talked about the source were you talking about the BBC, or were you talking about individuals?

Hanna: The source being like the page that it’s come from. Like your Buzzfeed or, I can’t think of anything else that comes up there, but all your really quick little articles that are just there to get attention and to give you the very basics of what’s going on.

Interviewer: Do you think you would consider any other things in deciding whether to trust something? Rather than the source, might the person who shared it online or the person that shared it with you in WhatsApp or anything like that come into it?

Hanna: Yes I suppose who it’s coming from, if it’s someone who just shares everything on social media I wouldn’t necessarily look at it. But if it’s someone that I trust or like I know, not how their brain works but I like know that they wouldn’t just be pushing stuff out for the sake of it, then yes I probably would trust where it came from.

Interviewer: Would that be online? Say there was an unfamiliar source, so a news agency that you’d never heard of. But if somebody who you trusted shared that you’d be happy to trust that in most cases?

Hanna: Yes. I’d be likely to read it and sort of make my judgement from the way that it’s written I think. It would still come down to the article, how it’s written, how much opinion I feel is in there. It might lead to me, depending on how I feel about the news article or what it is or how relevant the topic is, I might then go on and do a little bit more digging about what it’s actually about.

But if I don’t feel like it’s talking to me then I’d probably just read it and leave it.

Interviewer: Have you ever stopped following a certain news source or a certain person who shared a news source because you no longer trusted it through these kinds of processes?

Hanna: No, not that I can think of. I’ve like stopped following people because they share a lot of things I don’t agree with. But not because I don’t trust where their information is coming from. Like I think the stuff that they were sharing was very biased towards their opinions and it was something I just didn’t want to see a lot of. I’ve unfollowed them that way.

But not, yes, it more comes down to the bias I think rather than if it’s trustworthy or not.

Interviewer: Yes. Makes sense. Do you think your trust in news and information sources online has been affected by recent events such as big disinformation campaigns but also around things like deep fakes or AI generated content?

Hanna: I would say not recently, but probably in the last like 10, 15 years, yes. I think I was very much when I was younger I would just believe anything that was on Facebook or whatever. But I think that comes with experience of realising not everything is true.

I think the whole Facebook scandal really basically came out and said, “Yes, we actively push things towards people who…” Was it with like Trump selection where they would look at people and push things to people who could be swayed?

It kind of made me then take everything with a pinch of salt that I then saw on Facebook afterwards because of it. In that sense yes. But I wouldn’t say that was, I mean it was kind of recent but not overly recent.

Interviewer: Do you think the development of these new technologies has affected your ability to verify if something is true then?

Hanna: Like AI technologies?

Interviewer: Yes, or also just the stuff we talked about around the disinformation campaigns. Do you think that, you know you’ve said that you trust it less, but do you think it’s affected your ability to verify if something is true if you do engage with it?

Hanna: I would be inclined to say no, depending on how far into that topic I want to go. Yes, I think it comes down to I’d probably go back to BBC and search it or do a Google search to sort of verify what’s been said if I really wanted to or felt it was relevant.

Interviewer: Yes. I guess it’s lumped in with trust in a sense for you, just generally a bit suspicious of it anyway so there are no ways that you would verify that anyway apart from away from that source I guess.

Hanna: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you think you are able to tell the difference between authentic images, audio and video, or kind of fake ones?

Hanna: No. I think I’d like to think that I can but ultimately no would be the answer to that.

Interviewer: Okay. How comfortable are you with the use of algorithms to personalise your news consumption experience?

Hanna: I quite like it. I think there’s a lot of, “How much are they listening to? How much do they know?” But like at the end of the day it makes my experience more enjoyable. If I’m doing a lot of search on food recipes then I know that my algorithm is going to change to show me lots of other food recipes. That makes me quite happy.

Or if I’m searching about specific things or want to learn more about specific things I quite like that it just figures it out for me and starts showing me stuff.

The only time it gets annoying is when I’ve had enough of that thing and I can’t get rid of it from my algorithm.

Interviewer: What would you do in that circumstance? You are kind of going, “Thanks algorithm. I love this stuff. I don’t have to do any work. You are showing me it all. Isn’t that great?” But then you decide, “I’m bored of this now.” What do you do?

Hanna: Just try not to engage with it. Try and scroll past it as quickly as, or don’t click on it. Yes, just try and not engage with it and hope that it picks up that I’ve had enough. Which it normally does.

Interviewer: Yes. I was going to say that’s worked for you in the past?

Hanna: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. Have you even been concerned about the use of your personal data by the news sites or apps?

Hanna: No, because I work with data, people’s data. I know where the rules are with it. If someone was to breach what I felt was breaching my personal data, GDPR, I kind of know where to go with it. I think we all overthink about what our data is and what it tells about us. I don’t think me scrolling or looking at certain things is going to impact. Like people aren’t going to be able to find out, “She lives here. She does this day to day. She enjoys this.” Like it’s not going to tell a whole life story about me.

It’s just going to tell you my interests. I’m quite an open book anyway so I’m not overly bothered.

Interviewer: Have you ever been concerned that, you know you mentioned the Trump Facebook thing, so do you have any concerns around this personality data? It’s not your address and your bank details, but do you have any concerns about that data on you being collected?

Hanna: No not really. At this moment in time no would be my answer to that. If something was to change in the future maybe my opinion might change of that, but yes at this moment in time no it doesn’t bother me.

Interviewer: Is that because you think you kind of can protect yourself from that? Or is it that you think it’s not an issue?

Hanna: I don’t think you can protect yourself from it. I think we are just too far down the rabbit hole for us to not have that data on us. Like a lot of us have been on social media for the past, what, 10, 15 years. It’s too little too late at this point.

Interviewer: What do you think are the main impacts of this algorithmically formed personalised news feeds on the type of information that different people are exposed to?

Hanna: That’s where I think it can be dangerous depending on who it targets. For me I’m not bothered because I’m quite comfortable with where I can find things out or quite sure what to believe and what not to believe. But I think the problem comes with people who sort of take everything at face value and can be quite easily swayed with what they see is where there is the danger to it.

As the algorithm obviously picks up what people are interacting with they are going to get more and more of that. It’s sort of pushing people in a direction that they might not necessarily have gone in or might not be healthy for them.

I know there has been stuff I’ve seen on TikTok quite a lot where people sort of joke about suicide. I find it very… I don’t think it’s something that should be there because there will be people who are engaging with it who it’s then all that they’ll see.

When I’ve tried to report it before to TikTok they’ve been like, “It doesn’t go against our community guidelines.” In that sense, a mental health sense I think it can be dangerous in a political sense, or it can be dangerous. But at the end of the day I think everyone has just got to be…

It’s teaching people more about how to be aware of biased things or suspicious things and where to go to either get away from it or to get help for certain things. I think we need to focus more on the education of others of what’s being shown, because we ultimately can’t stop what is shown on social media.

Interviewer: You mentioned the two types of danger. You mentioned there is danger for people’s mental health and wellbeing from, I guess, being exposed to upsetting things. You also said it would be dangerous politically. Would you mind just kind of unpacking that a little bit?

Hanna: I guess something I’m not 100% on like knowledge wise myself, but it’s just from watching everything that went on with Trump and sort of brainwashing people into…

Even with Brexit I think you could probably see it, like brainwashing people into thinking that migrants are taking jobs for example and that we should get rid of them. Then it pushes into that racial element, is where it becomes again harmful to other people. Like what’s that going to trigger people to say or how is it going to trigger them to behave in public? The impact that will have on those around them.

Interviewer: I guess there are kind of people writing stuff online that is designed to persuade people to think a certain way about immigrants for example or whatever. People are going to kind of, some people are going to see that and some people aren’t.

But how do you think the personalisation algorithms are linked with that? Like how does that make it worse or how does that affect it?

Hanna: I think just like what I said before, it probably makes it worse because once you interact with something you are going to see more of it. It’s sort of like brainwashing and bombarding people with that information until they can’t really get away from it. Which sort of escalates everything.

Interviewer: You said that you trust the BBC more than privately owned news organisations or whatever. Why is that?

Hanna: Because they are meant to be unbiased. Like I’m very aware there are people who are getting bribed and it’s not completely unbiased. But I think because it is meant to remain impartial and just deliver the facts is where I trust it.

I think in the sense of delving deeper into things the BBC probably wouldn’t be trusted because as soon as they start delving they become biased towards certain areas. I think on the surface level I trust them the most.

But for digging deeper I don’t think they would give you all the facts.

Interviewer: Do you think that state broadcasters like the BBC are or should be subject to different regulations and standards than ones that get their revenue from advertising or other ways?

Hanna: I think probably, yes, in order to keep that title that they are impartial. But I think ultimately you are not going to know everything are you?

Interviewer: Yes. I am keeping an eye on the time.

Hanna: That’s alright.

Interviewer: In this world that we’ve just been talking about of the online news and the way people engage with stories and things like that, and you know, I guess a kind of changing in the way people trust the media, what steps do you think that the media companies and broadcasters can do to maintain credibility and trustworthiness?

Hanna: I think still deliver those hard-hitting facts. Like whether it’s going to impact you or not. I think there was a lot of stuff that came out, again I’m not completely up to date with everything, but I think there was stuff that came out about the Head of the BBC receiving bribes from people in parliament.

Then the story didn’t go anywhere because obviously it was defame them slightly. I think it’s sharing the news no matter how it makes you look. But again at the end of the day you are not going to do that. If it makes you look bad you don’t want to share it.

Interviewer: How important do you think it is that news sources are transparent about their sources? Does it affect your level of trust when you read something?

Hanna: I think it should be very important. The problem comes when their sources don’t want to be announced. When they say, “Oh, we have a source.” It’s like, “Well who is it? What is the connection?”

I think it is important but it also comes down to the privacy of the source is where you are going to get the crossover with how trustworthy it’s going to be or not.

Then you’ve got then the doubt. I mean the doubt in my head would then be people who are giving their names out as a source. Are they giving it, like what’s the reason they are giving their name out or giving this part of the story? What do they gain from it?

Interviewer: What about, I mean obviously the word source, we kind of think about a person, this is the source. But what about in a more general sense, just transparent about how their sources in terms of where the information is coming from for their stories that they report on. Or maybe their kind of methods of reporting as well. Do you think there is room to be transparent about that and how could they be?

Hanna: Yes, I think the more transparent you are the more you trust someone, like whether it’s a news or business. You always trust the people who are very like to the point and clear with where they have got everything. I mean I don’t know how they would do it. But I would say it’s very important for credibility.

Interviewer: Great. Well that’s my last question. Is there anything that I should have asked that I didn’t?

Hanna: No, not that I can think of. I’m just very aware that I’m putting my views into about what, “Other people would think this.” It’s my opinion on what other people might think or how they might behave, so again what I’ve been saying is probably biased towards me and what I know and how I’ve worked and grown up.

Interviewer: Well yes absolutely. I mean that’s the point of speaking to loads of people. Trying to understand the ways people make sense of information.

Just before we go could I just ask, did you have any kind of thoughts about actually doing the dairy part of the study? Like how did you find actually physically doing that part of the study? Did it have any other effect on you when you were doing it?

Hanna: I think it promoted me to look at the news more and engage with it more. The only thing I found difficult was having to put in the time that you looked at it, because there would be certain things, like the link that I looked at, there were things I think I looked at, at work but hadn’t been able to put, like I wasn’t on the diary. Then I couldn’t find the link again.

That was the only sort of frustration point, is knowing the exact time you did it and finding the link if I had seen it and then missed it. But otherwise yes, I think it sort of pushed me to engage a little bit more than I normally would.

Interviewer: Okay. Well I’ll stop recording. Somehow.

END AUDIO

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