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START AUDIO

[0:00:07]

Interviewer: Okay, so you’re happy to begin?

Akpan: Yes, I’m okay.

Interviewer: Great. Okay, so on page four of your book we sent, you got the digital version, it shows the different times of day when you were accessing online information and news. So, I just want you to have a look at that and first of all reflect on whether you think that’s an accurate portrayal of your online news habits. Then secondly just give some kind of context to that. So, maybe go through the day and explain the different times when you might engage with news online and how you might do that.

Akpan: Yes. Thank you very much. According to the charts, I accessed news and information mostly at night. That is true, because during the day I’m at work, trying to get things done. The only time I’m usually free is during my lunch break. This could happen anywhere from 12:00 to 1:00, or 1:00 to 2:00. I pick up my phone. I go into the- I might- If I’m scrolling through my newsfeed, I might see the news pop up. Sometimes, I might want to investigate, look up more information about the news if it’s something that catches my interest.

Especially around sport, entertainment and a little bit of politics, [if you understand 0:01:57]. So, at night, why it looks like I access the news at night is because when I’m back from work, from usually around 5:00 to 6:00, when I’m [done taking the 0:02:16] \_\_\_ and I put on my TV and I’m on my phone. I’m scrolling through social media, trying to keep up with my friends and trying to follow some events online.

[ \_\_\_ 0:02:33] I’m scrolling, I get to- Then I’m more concentrated on my phone, so I get to see more news. It’s also a tendency for me at that period to research more often on that news, try to seek more information, especially when something catches my interest.

Interviewer: Okay. So, have you noticed a regular pattern as you’ve described in the way you consume online news? Has this been the same for a while, or have you noticed any changes over time?

Akpan: This is mostly how it has been, because I usually wake up very early. I wake up usually between around 5:00 to 6:00, and [30 minutes 0:03:23] of time a week, I go through my phone and try to refresh my feeds. So, that’s you see some activity during the early mornings. Yes, and also as I’m going from work, and maybe when I’m sitting on the train and bus going to work, to keep myself busy and also to keep my mind engaged, I’ll pull out my phone and I’ll be on social media [trying to scroll up 0:03:51]. So, pretty much that has been my habit, but it usually changes during the weekend.

Because Saturdays and Sundays, it’s usually not essential for me to wake up early. So, there might tend to be disparities during the weekend, but similarities in the weekdays.

Interviewer: Yes, great. So, the book also shows, as you highlighted a couple of, some certain topics that you tend to be drawn to. So, what do you think it is that makes you gravitate towards these topics?

Akpan: Okay. First of all, I’m a football fan and an avid supporter of Manchester United. Also, I consider Liverpool and Manchester City as our local rivals. So, when news from these come up, things to keep my interest- It might be news [ \_\_\_ 0:05:13] if there’s a play transfer, or maybe the performance of the team during the weekend. It may be a [new injury]. Some sort of- This sort of news. I tend to be drawn because I want to know what’s- I want to keep-

But it’s not every time I can attend the games physically and most times on Sundays I tend to [slip off 0:05:44] during late afternoons, when the games might be going on. So, I usually rely on social media to get updates as regards these teams. So, as for contemporary issues, that have to do with politics and all that, I think I see more of that news during the weekdays when I’m in the office. So, those are times when I tend to see more of this kind of news.

Interviewer: Okay, great. So, how often would you say that you encounter online news that you suspect is fake or misleading in some way?

Akpan: Most of the time, I’ve learnt to- Because a lot of things happened during the times we had the pandemic. During the Ebola pandemic and also the COVID pandemic. Misinformation resulted in quite a lot of deaths. Just some untested [series of 0:07:06] cures that were talked about during the time. It was read on social media and all these things cost more harm than good.

So, I’ve learnt to filter news that doesn’t come from prominent handles. I read them with a pinch of salt. The BBC [and the rest 0:07:27] \_\_\_ [results], because they have been around for quite a while and they’ve built a reputation for a very long time. So, at least- They might not be saying 100% of the truth, but 80% of the time, they might be correct.

Interviewer: Okay, I think we’ll come back to that in a moment. But just staying on the idea of this type of- Rather than the stuff you trust, but staying on the idea of this misleading or fake news, what sorts of things would prompt you to check the accuracy of something you read online?

Akpan: I guess it really depends on what it’s about. If it is just [ \_\_\_ 0:08:30], I wouldn’t really bother to check. If it is some celebrity gossip, I really wouldn’t check, because it’s really a waste of my time really chasing such news. But if it’s something that has to do with a policy, or probably [ \_\_\_ 0:08:49], I might be tempted to try to look for more information as regards authenticity of a particular…

But for me, it involves actual human life, so I guess that’s what’s important. But something that has to do with a [ \_\_\_ 0:09:11] gossip or celebrity stuff like that, I won’t really put in the work to verify.

Interviewer: Okay. So, you talk about the type of stories that would make you check the accuracy of something and some that you just wouldn’t bother with, because you don’t think it’s important. That’s fine. So, what is it about though any story you do think is important that might make you check the accuracy of it? What sorts of things might make you feel suspicious?

Akpan: Well, if it’s coming from unverified handles, especially ones that are known to make controversial statements in the past, those sorts of things prompt me to want to verify. But if it’s from a prominent handle, usually there is less need to carry out verification. Because you might- Not only human bias, you might- You believe it without carrying out all the ground checks, or fact checks before putting out something because they know- To try- Because the [thing 0:10:31] it’s going to have on their image if it turns out to be false or misleading.

Interviewer: Okay. So, if you do suspect something is misleading or fake, rather than relying on- Like you said, you might rely on the fact you might trust a certain source have done the checks on your behalf, so you trust that at that point. But if there is something that you’re suspicious of, what methods might you use to verify the accuracy of something that you’ve read?

Akpan: Well, usually, I might have to perform a broader Google search to see if an article probably leads to a reputable news source. But if the article I see keeps leading me to questionable sources on websites, I’d probably judge my own opinion on the news to be misleading, or of no effectual importance.

Interviewer: Okay. So, you’re doing a Google search for some related terms and what you’re looking for in that search are some trusted sources to show up in that search.

Akpan: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. So, I guess that’s one way of doing this. But have you ever in any other ways sought out any news or information in order to cross-reference or check anything that you’ve read online?

Akpan: Yes. Most of the news in print is obviously already online, especially for big media houses. So, those sources that I [said I wanted it to be matched to 0:12:50] would be disreputable news sites. That’s why I’m performing the search, to see if there’s a link on the story on their own website. Something like that.

Interviewer: Okay, so again, you’ve got these trusted news sources and you would hope to find information about that particular issue or topic on those sites.

Akpan: Yes.

Interviewer: That would be a way of you verifying- Okay. So, could you talk a bit more about what some of those sites may be? So, you said about big news houses and you’ve mentioned one or two already, but could you just be clear about, where would you first go? What would be your first place you’d go to check a piece of information you’ve seen?

Akpan: Let’s look at it this way. If I was to see from a random Twitter account that [Meghan Markle has 0:13:52] \_\_\_\_, my first point of action would be probably to copy that link as it is, then place it on Google search. Then from the resource I get on the first pages, I would see if other reputable sources carry- I mean if it’s true for someone of such standing, it’s going to be big news. So, if it’s true, most of the reputable outlets are going to have [wind 0:14:31] of the stories. But if all that’s [carried] is maybe blog sites or some gossip sites, then it’s probably rumours, or propaganda.

Interviewer: Okay. So, what are these reputable sites? What are the ones that would come to mind straight away that you’d want to see? What you’re describing as, ‘The reputable sites.’

Akpan: I’m sorry, come again. I didn’t get it clearly.

Interviewer: So, you’re mentioning that there are some reputable or trustworthy sites. News sources, news publishers.

Akpan: Yes.

Interviewer: Which are the ones that are the trustworthy ones for you?

Akpan: There’s the BBC. There’s Al Jazeera. There’s the Economic Times. There’s the Guardian. There’s the Independent. So, these are reputable news sources for me.

Interviewer: Yes, and what do you think it is about these that makes them trustworthy to you?

Akpan: They’ve been around for quite a long time. A long while. They’ve been serving us news in print before the digital revolution. So, I think they’ve managed to get some form of credibility over the years.

Interviewer: Great. I wonder, have you ever instead of going to other news sources used any specific fact-checking sites? Such as FactCheck.org or Snopes to verify information.

Akpan: No, not really. I was not even aware there were those.

Interviewer: Okay, fine. So, I’m looking at your responses to news and you react to things, you reply, you share. You do a range of activities, it seems. So, I’m just going to focus on sharing first. What factors do you consider before deciding to share some information or news online?

Akpan: Well, it really depends. If it’s something I feel is newsworthy or breaking, then it’s something that I will probably share. Maybe like news of an oil spillage, the coronation of King Charles. I would share news like that, to try to get a wider audience and a wider reach.

Interviewer: Okay, so one of the factors you could consider is whether it’s big news, I suppose.

Akpan: Yes, if something [alerts 0:18:18] my- What I might be interested in.

Interviewer: Okay. But if you are going to share a news article on social media or in a messaging app to friends or family, would you generally do any kind of fact-checking, or verification first?

Akpan: Yes, it depends on- Like I said, it depends on the source of the news. If it’s… If I’m on [ \_\_\_ 0:18:51] the news is from BBC UK, I probably don’t need to fact-check very much. I will just send it out. It’s the BBC. But if it’s from a random handle, or maybe [ \_\_\_ 0:19:06] reputation for [truths], I might do a little check to kind of try to verify the authenticity before I push it to others. Then it goes- I wouldn’t want to willingly and unwillingly spread misinformation.

Interviewer: So, I also wonder then if- Have you ever shared something to friends or family, or on social media, that you later found out turned out to be false?

Akpan: Yes. One can really never be too careful, because lots of times we’re on some reputable news site and get caught up with trending issues. Then [it all turns out 0:20:01]… It’s quite unfortunate for everybody, but then it is what it is.

Interviewer: So, when you’re thinking of a time when that happened, how did you establish- After you’d shared it, how did you establish it was false?

Akpan: Well, truthfully, it’s usually not every time I reach out to [ \_\_\_ 0:20:26]. I just generally assume that… You might [find] that it’s [posted] independently.

Interviewer: Okay. So, I’m going to just talk a little bit now about the impact on yourself around accessing online information and news. So, have you ever changed your mind- Can you think of a time when you’ve ever changed your mind about a particular issue or person, based on news or information you read online?

Akpan: There are a couple of- Yes, a couple of times, especially with politicians.

Interviewer: Yes. So, can you give an example please?

Akpan: Well, yes, let’s see if there’s an example that stands out. Okay, I think it was this one issue with the prime minister during the COVID, where we were on lockdown and he- Then I thought he was… He did a lot of big talks about the regulations about COVID, trying to put effort to stop the pandemic. I was kind of a big believer, but when the news came out of him breaking his own rules by attending the party or something like that, I was [infuriated 0:22:18].

Because I had a lot of arguments with friends in that period, because I know that period his ratings were going down very much so. I was trying to… Amongst my colleagues and friends, [I knew that 0:22:37] he was- Every country was facing the same issue and he was giving his best. But that was infuriating. Because he kept me in my own house, locked down. I couldn’t do much. “You go out to do this.” “[If you say so 0:23:00], yes.”

Interviewer: So, what was that experience like for you then? So, you said you were at one time maybe defending the prime minister to friends, friends that were maybe critical and you were being defensive. Then you found out some information and then you changed your opinion. So, yes, what was that experience like and what happened around that time?

Akpan: At the time, citizens were losing faith in our politicians, in our representatives. Most believed that most of our representatives are just all talk and it’s really for themselves and not really for the citizens. I was amongst the few that were keeping faith that maybe finally there is someone who tries to put the citizens first. But after that experience, it’s just shattered my faith in the politicians. I’m just more passive now. I just hope for the best from- I don’t really [go hard on defending 0:24:24] anyone really. They could [switch up] on you later, at a future date, at a later date.

Interviewer: That’s interesting. So, you we just discussed there talking to friends about issues in the news and things like that. So, I just wonder if you could speak more generally about, do you discuss news with friends and/or your family?

Akpan: Not every news really. Just some news like a few of national importance. Like the news when the teachers were striking, or when the nurses were threatening to go on strike, or when the NHS was embarked on strike action. Just this sort of news. Just about maybe the coronation of King Charles. So, this sort of news, I will discuss with some colleagues of mine.

When it comes to football especially I might discuss it with my friends, just for banter’s sake, or for solidarity’s sake. It could be for just regular young men or football banter. But if it’s something like entertainment, maybe movies or something, I might really discuss it with anybody, because it’s pointless to me.

Interviewer: Yes. So, do you think- You said you discuss football with friends and you discuss some topics with colleagues. Are there any topics or subjects that you read about, but probably that you wouldn’t discuss with family or friends? Are there any reasons why there are some things you wouldn’t discuss?

Akpan: Generally, just in my family- I just have a different relationship with my family and I have a different relationship with my colleagues at work. Sometimes, it’s not me bringing all the news. One of my colleagues is like, “Oh, yes, this news I read last night.” We will critique the news and we’ll talk about it. Exchange ideas and all that. That is just how it is in the [office 0:27:12]. At home, we talk about different things. We kind of take the politics out.

Interviewer: Yes, okay. So, just going back, you say in your workplace it’s not unusual to talk. “Did you see the news last night? Did you read about this?” and people chat. Is that a shared thing? Do people tend to agree on topics? Or is there a lot of debate?

Akpan: Yes, we are human beings. It’s not every time that we agree on topics. At times, you can come and say, “The sky is blue.” Someone will have a different opinion to you. It’s what makes us humans. There are always differing opinions.

Interviewer: Yes. So, the book also shows that you have got the majority of the news that you shared with us via social media.

Akpan: Yes.

Interviewer: So, I just wonder how you feel about the role of social media in disseminating news and information?

Akpan: To be frank with you, if we are being truthful…

Interviewer: Yes, please.

Akpan: [Crosstalk 0:29:00] \_\_\_ on social media. I think more people read the news on Twitter than the ones in the news prints. Even [in the 0:29:15] \_\_\_ I mean. Most of the traffic these news sites gets on their website is usually from Twitter. It’s because they’ve seen an article and clicking the links. ‘Go to see the full article.’ So, we can’t really deny the role of social media in the dissemination of information. [It goes through 0:29:32] \_\_\_ [truths].

Interviewer: Do you think the fact that- This news through social media rather than direct from the source, does that affect how you might trust in the information you encounter? If it comes from social media alone, or if it comes from a news website.

Akpan: [Most of my news comes from 0:30:07] my social media. I usually find the news source themselves and their social media account. Maybe I might come across it maybe from the retweets of maybe someone I’m following, or one of my followers. Or maybe someone tags me to read or something like that. So, I will come across news more on my social media than I would if I was going to independently search for news.

Interviewer: Yes. So, another point of the way you respond to news is, yes, you will reply and also react. So, could you talk a little bit about that? What kinds of ways do you reply? What sorts of stuff do you reply to? Then the same for reacting.

Akpan: Yes, okay. I might be reacting to the news- I’m reacting with an emoji. Or I’m replying [ \_\_\_ 0:31:18], or I might be engaging in comments on the [particular] \_\_\_ engaging with a comment. A comment under it. So, that’s how I would interact.

Interviewer: Okay, so when you say, “Leave a comment under it,” do you mean within Twitter, or on the article?

Akpan: Within Twitter.

Interviewer: So, generally, when you’re commenting on new stories- So, generally, you say most of the stuff you read is from a news site. So, for example, the BBC might have a news story on their website and they’ll put something on Twitter that links to that story.

Akpan: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes, and then you might-

Akpan: Someone will- It will be [a mutual 0:32:14] who will retweet it.

Interviewer: Yes, so what would prompt you to either retweet something, or to comment on something? What sorts of things would you tend to retweet or comment on?

Akpan: Like if it’s football news. If it’s news that has to do with the environment, [degradation 0:32:35]. Only if it’s something that has violence. Especially gun violence in the US, or something like that. I’ll react to, reply and comment.

Interviewer: Yes, okay, that makes sense. So, we’ve got these trusted news sites and even though you’re on social media, you’re still relying on these traditional news producers, like the BBC and the newspapers. What I’m wondering is, have you ever stopped following a news source or website because you no longer trusted it?

Akpan: I’m struggling to remember. I can’t really remember.

[Break in conversation 0:33:40 - 0:33:54]

Hello?

Interviewer: Hello. Yes, you cut off a bit there. You just said you struggle to remember. Then you went, “I can remember…” and then you cut.

Akpan: No, I couldn’t remember for sure. It’s not [ \_\_\_ 0:34:09]. [I’ll go to] \_\_\_ just to do these \_\_\_ [bringing] the news source \_\_\_. It doesn’t mean I consciously stop [ \_\_\_ 0:34:27] something. It’s just happens due to the algorithm.

Interviewer: Okay, that makes sense. So, let’s think about this algorithm and these other kinds of new technologies. So, do you think that the rise of these kinds of AI technologies and things like that, have affected the way that you trust stuff you read online?

Akpan: Well, not really. [ \_\_\_ 0:35:05] understood the craze about AI. I’ve been seeing it come up in articles, in news and all that. But I’ve not- I don’t really see the hype and the buzz, or the fear about AI taking over. It’s the humans who are going to control these machines. So, I don’t really see them [ \_\_\_ 0:35:30] major obstruction, in my opinion.

Interviewer: Okay. So, just staying on that, AI systems are able to do deep fakes. Fake videos and things like that. Do you think- Sorry, go on.

Akpan: Really?

Interviewer: Yes. Are you aware of the idea of a deep fake?

Akpan: Yes, I think I read an article sometime about it, but…

Interviewer: Okay. I was just going to say, do you think you would be able to tell the difference between something that was generated by AI, something fake or something genuine?

Akpan: Well, obviously I have to see [ \_\_\_ 0:36:26], because- I can’t tell you that. Maybe I can’t tell you that, “Yes, I can.” It might be that I can’t. So, I have to first see what AI can do before I can say [authoritatively 0:36:47] that I can either differentiate it or not.

Interviewer: Okay. So, you talked a little bit about the algorithm. Maybe you didn’t see some new sources anymore, because of the algorithm etc. So, we can talk about that kind of newsfeed algorithm as personalisation. I was just wondering- My question is, how comfortable are you with that kind of algorithmic generated newsfeed? The fact that it has been curated for you, are you comfortable with that idea?

Akpan: Well, I’ll be frank with you. Since [it took a while 0:37:41] to understand what’s going on. [I really] understand what goes on with whole \_\_\_ and the \_\_\_. I just [mean] \_\_\_ on my timeline. Sometimes, the content is [to taste 0:38:00, some of them. Sometimes, it’s just [off point]. So, I just kind of make do with it.

Interviewer: Have you ever been concerned about the use of your personal data by news websites or apps?

Akpan: [ \_\_\_ 0:38:23] but, no, I usually don’t give consent to use my cookies on my session. So, I wouldn’t know how true the [concerns] \_\_\_.

Interviewer: Sorry, I’ve lost- I keep losing the audio.

Akpan: Yes, okay, I will [ \_\_\_ 0:38:49]. I usually don’t consent to cookies on news websites, but I don’t know their privacy practices. So, I can’t really say for sure if my privacy [ \_\_\_ 0:39:07] [with them].

Interviewer: Okay. So, this idea that people’s newsfeeds are curated by algorithms- What I’m talking about is personalised newsfeeds. What do you think are the main impacts of personalised news feeds on the type of information that people are exposed to?

Akpan: Well, I think it just involves more than just your interests or things you pick out for yourself. I think it also has to do with the broader interests of people. Maybe your followers and your mutuals. People you follow and people that follow you. So, I think your interests and their broader interests are just mixed up. So, it creates that experience. So, you cannot really say for sure that it’s your personalised experience.

Interviewer: Okay, but the idea that there is some kind of curation going on, there is some element of, “We think you’re interested in this. We think you’re interested in this type of information, so we’re going to put that on your feed,” do you think that will have an effect on the type of information people see and don’t see?

Akpan: Yes, of course.

Interviewer: Yes. What do you think the impact of that is on people?

Akpan: Well, if news contains [content linked 0:41:20] to your personal preferences… So, I think it’s good in a way that you keep getting information to feed your interests. [However], I’m just gets in [shattered] pieces of different [ \_\_\_ 0:41:41]. So, it’s going to get clunky and disorganised. \_\_\_ [very big] \_\_\_. It’s just \_\_\_ and you don’t be anywhere you truly stand. Well, if you know from the [get-go 0:41:57] you keep getting content that is aligned with your interest-

That’s what socialising is supposed to be. Talking with people whose interests align with yours. So, I guess that I [also 0:42:14] \_\_\_ [it does need] \_\_\_ [problem] social media was [trying to sort].

Interviewer: Okay, so it’s about saving people time by putting them in touch with people with similar interests.

Akpan: Yes.

Interviewer: So, to you, what are the impacts of that? So, what are the impacts of seeing information that you’re interested in and seeing the posts of other people that are similar to you? What do you think are the medium or long-term impacts of that?

Akpan: Long-term impact is that it makes you talk with more people. Explore more opportunities. Get to explore similar varieties of what interests you. You get different perspectives. I guess that’s- Like they say variety is the spice of life. So, I think in- So, in a nutshell, I think it’s good, in my own opinion.

Interviewer: Okay. So, how do you feel about the level of objectivity in online news reporting? Do you think the online news reporting has the same level of objectivity as other forms of news, such as newspapers or TV?

Akpan: I just think online media just makes it easier, faster to disseminate information this way, to a wider group of people. That means a larger percentage of the population are [ \_\_\_ 0:44:40] and are not willing to step out of their houses to go and get newspapers. Like paper prints. Most of the Gen Zs now are not going to do it. Even the Millennials struggle with print [when you 0:45:00] talk about the upcoming generation. So, I think social media plays a [potential] role in dissemination of information.

Interviewer: So, you think overall it’s a strongly positive thing, online news.

Akpan: Come again?

Interviewer: Overall, you feel it’s a real positive thing, online news.

Akpan: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. So, just thinking about news more generally, do you think it’s important that news producers are transparent about their sources and methods of reporting?

Akpan: It depends on the kind of news. If it’s an exposé or investigative reporting, that [seeks to investigate 0:46:08] maybe a breach on the part of this kind of news. Then disclosing the source of the content with [the source]. It can put them in a very vulnerable position. You understand? So, it will be, yes, necessarily to name the sources. But if it’s more like a citizen’s news group, like news [ \_\_\_ 0:46:44] to the source, I see no harm in [making] the source [more].

Interviewer: I guess less on those anonymity things, but just the source of the information. So, not necessarily a named person, but at least be more transparent about if they’ve found out this stuff online, or if it was one of their reporters.

Akpan: Yes, they should be transparent if it’s something they got online. If it’s not something in fact- If it’s something they’ve not fact-checked, maybe they got it from another reputable news outlet, so they can just reference that. ‘According to this news outlet, this is…’ Sort of a disclaimer in the event something goes wrong.

Interviewer: Okay. So, I think we acknowledged a little bit that there’s a kind of- People in general are becoming less trustful of media.

Akpan: Yes, there are media [houses 0:47:58] that are beginning to become lazy. A lot of journalists don’t want to do the necessary work. They won’t put in the work. They just- They are \_\_\_ journalists that run news from a small blog or online gossip sites. It’s just run as if they did an actual investigation and it’s not supposed to be so.

Interviewer: Yes. So, yes, there’s that- There is distrust coming from that and there’s also an element of, I think, as you mentioned a little bit, people only saying things that they all really want to say and not really saying other sides of arguments. So, I just wonder if you think in that kind of world, this online world where a lot of people are accessing news through social media and there’s a bit of growing distrust in the media, what steps do you think news producers can do to increase their credibility and trustworthiness?

Akpan: Well, the main thing they can do is to put in the work, to verify the authenticity of news before it is being published. To actually- Don’t just run the news because you feel it’s a breaking news. Take the time to fact-check it. Take the time to confirm all necessary sources before putting it out there for public consumption. Don’t just be about the headline and to sell, or about click-baiting.

I think because- I think if you put in the work and make yourself to be a verifiable source of information, in time you get the audience and then the profits.

Interviewer: Yes, thanks. So, I’ve almost come to the end of what I wanted to talk about. I’ve just got a couple more questions. So, I just wanted to go back to this idea of the AI generated content and the idea of fake videos and fake images. So, how do you think the development of these things will affect people’s ability to work out if something is real or not in the future?

Akpan: Like I say, I’ve not really had experience enough with AI to [authoritatively 0:51:03] speak on the topic. No, but based on the current knowledge that I have about it, I don’t think it’s really something to be worried about. Maybe as I come across more information about it, my stance might change. But for now, I don’t really see threats as a lot of people have been putting it down to be.

Interviewer: Okay. So, I’ve finished with the questions from the list now, but I just want to go to your data that were produced in this. So, on this graph on page six, there’s your trust scores versus your familiarity scores. There seems to be a really strong correlation between- You tend to trust sources you’re more familiar with, but you do still read a lot of things that you’re not familiar with and don’t trust. So, how does that come about? Could you maybe talk a bit about it and give some context to this information?

Akpan: Well, when I might pick up news from a familiar source, it might be trending news. Like during the elections that happened in this country, in Nigeria, during that period there were a lot of controversies generated and a lot of sources carried a lot of news about it. At these kinds of periods, I might- Most of the news might tend to align with what the major headlines also put out. So, I might just reference it because it aligns with what the other reputable sources put out, or maybe authenticated.

Interviewer: Okay. So, you would tend to encounter these things through social media that you’re unfamiliar with and trust less, but you would still have a look at them and see what was going on.

Akpan: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes, and this element of what we’ve produced about you, it says you’re a sports enthusiast, you’re socially conscious, you’ve got an economic awareness etc, a political awareness. Did you feel that this was an accurate representation of you, or did you find any of it out of character, or confusing?

Akpan: Yes, about economic awareness, I’m not very good with numbers. So, I tend to be very interested in economic data, but it doesn’t mean I’m very versed to give a solid opinion on the economy. But besides that, I think every other thing kind of checks out.

Interviewer: Yes, okay. Good. Thinking about these inferences about you- So, based on the news you sent us, we were able to make these kinds of inferences. Do you think that’s something that you think is an accurate portrayal of you? Or do you think it was a lucky guess? Or do you think it’s- Yes, I guess, what are your thoughts on that process of us saying, “Based on this data you’ve sent us, we can tell things about your character,” I suppose?

Akpan: You didn’t get it 100%, but you were able to make semi-accurate guesses about my personality. I could say you were about 75% to 85% correct about what my interests are, despite just giving you very little data. I’m impressed.

Interviewer: Do you think it was a fair thing to do based on such little amount of data?

Akpan: Yes, it was okay.

Interviewer: Okay. Great. So, I think that’s about it from me, unless there are any other aspects of what we’ve talked about or any other aspect of you doing the diary study that you think we haven’t covered. Is there anything else you think we need to discuss?

Akpan: Not at all.

Interviewer: Great. Well, all that’s left is for me to stop the recording.

END AUDIO

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