

Recommender systems (RSs) are a family of algorithms that recommend information to a user based upon predicted preferences of the individual using the system. These systems have become a vital part of the world's most used social media applications. For example, TikTok's continuous feed of short-form videos is made possible by a complex recommender system which determines what is likely to keep a user engaged with the application based upon the user's previous habits with the system. Given that RSs gather data about user's habits and inclinations, Kantian conceptions of inclination, heteronomy, and autonomy are useful for the normative evaluation of social media RSs. This paper will argue that the recommender systems that underpin the world's most used social media applications, are, from a Kantian perspective, systems of heteronomy, by virtue of the way they feed the user's own inclinations back to themselves to nudge or addict the user in certain ways. Social media RSs therefore assist the user in treating *themselves* as less than rational. A counter argument may be offered that social media RSs acknowledge the users' autonomy by treating the users as rational agents who can set one's own preferences through use of the system. This paper will argue that this counterargument fails when discussing currently existing social media RSs, by showing that the algorithms, by virtue of their structure, do not treat users as rational agents.