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# Youth Juries: What we learned from you

Report for Young People

2017-2018

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# Thank You!

The UnBias team would like to thank all who took part in a Youth Jury. We have really enjoyed working with you!

We would also like to thank the UnBias Youth Advisory Group for their wonderful contribution and thoughtful feedback in reviewing the content and design of this report.

Below is a summary of the Youth Jury findings.

We hope that you enjoy reading it!

# What did we do?

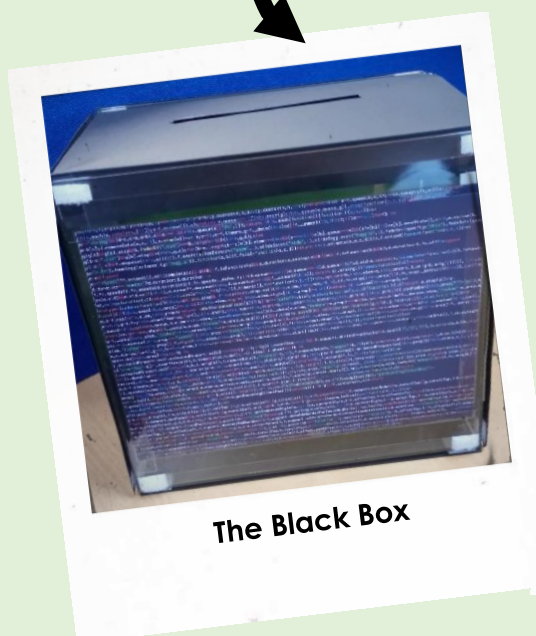
The team ran a total of 27 Youth Juries between 2017-2018 with children and young people, who were mostly aged between 13-17 years of age. We ran the Youth Juries in various places, including at some of your schools or colleges, Broadway Cinema, The Video Game Arcade, Nottingham Central Library and at our University campuses. In total, over 250 children and young people took part.

Each Youth Jury ran a little differently, depending on the ages of those that participated. The first half of the Youth Juries that we ran (we call these Wave 1) were largely discussion based around different scenarios. The second half (Wave 2) were more activity focused.

### In general, each Youth Jury discussed the following:

- What young people use the internet for.
- What an algorithm is, how it works and what information it might collect about the user.
- What types of information (e.g. your phone number) you are willing and not willing to share with companies.
- Examples of online algorithm bias - we asked you what you thought about these examples, how you thought they might have happened and what (if anything) should be done about them.
- Your recommendations for what actions should be taken to make the internet more child-friendly.

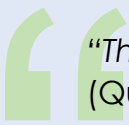
**Remember these from some of the Youth Juries?**



## WHAT DID THE TEAM DO NEXT?

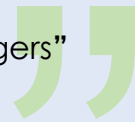
We looked more closely at what you said during the Youth Juries, and at your answers to the questionnaire that you filled out before and after the Jury. After that, we wrote lots of reports! See further below in the 'Outcomes' section for a closer look at the report details.

## THINGS THAT YOU LEARNT FROM THE YOUTH JURIES



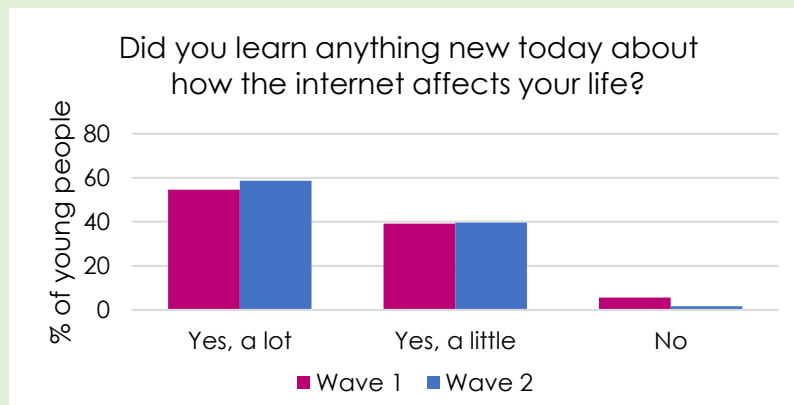
*"This helped me understand what I'm signing up for online"*  
(Questionnaire Feedback).

*"Really fun and makes you think about the internet and its dangers"*  
(Questionnaire Feedback).



*"I didn't really know much about algorithms at all to begin with, so I found it interesting knowing how they can like give you specific information based on your digital footprint."*  
(Quote from a Participant)

Most (95.8%) felt they learnt at least something about how the internet affects their lives.



**Wave 1: Fourteen Youth Juries that took place in February 2017 and March 2017**

**Wave 2: Thirteen Youth Juries that took place November 2017-April 2018**

## FINDINGS - What did we learn from you?

### In short .... lots and lots!

A summary of the main things that we learnt are below:

#### Using the Internet

Results from the surveys told us that you used the internet frequently, with most (80.4%) using search engines like Google or Bing several times a day. In some Youth Juries, we asked you to tell us what you used the internet for (e.g. social media, shopping). We mapped this out onto big paper, and invited you to stick down the apps that you used to carry out this activity (e.g. using Netflix to watch films).



This shows the activity

#### Sharing your Information

The UnBias team learned what you knew about companies using information they collect about you when online. Some **were aware** that companies often share and sell data to other companies. Many **were not aware** that this happens - some of you were very surprised to learn that this happens.



**YES**

Many **were okay to share** information that you considered less personal to you with companies - for example your shoe size, whether or not you had a piercing, what music you listen to or where you last went on holiday.



**NO**

Many **did not feel happy to share** information that you felt should be kept private with a company - for example your home address, phone number, where you attend school and information related to your health. The majority were not happy with companies knowing their location.

Some of you felt that the type of information that is collected about you by companies online was **creepy and weird**.

## Benefits and Concerns about Algorithms

Many of you told us that there were lots of things that you liked as well as things that you disliked about the way that algorithms work.

The table below shows some of your responses:

| Benefits of Algorithms   | Concerns about Algorithms  |
|--|--|
| Helping you to see things <b>that you like</b> or opinions <b>that you agree with</b> on the internet. | <b>Errors</b> - algorithms make mistakes and sometimes show you things that you do not wish to see.  |
| <b>Convenient</b> - helping you to find these things more easily.                                      | Sometimes the algorithm may <b>ONLY</b> show you things that you agree with, which may <b>stop</b> you from seeing <b>other points of view</b> (this is called a Filter Bubble). |
| They <b>personalise your searches</b> to what the algorithm has learnt about you.                      | Concerns about the <b>motives and power</b> held by those who programme the algorithm.   |
| Providing opportunities to <b>learn new things</b> .   | Some <b>did not want</b> the information to be <b>filtered by an algorithm</b> , and would prefer to decide for themselves what they see online.                                 |
| <b>Entertaining you!</b> The algorithm is able to show things to you that you might find entertaining. | Some reported feeling <b>annoyed</b> by the algorithm repeatedly showing the same advertisements to them.  |

## Your Actions when Online



### Spotting Fake News

Many expressed concerns about the spread of so called 'fake news'. Here are some of the things that you did to help you to spot it:

- Check where the information had come from (the source).
- Look at other websites to see if the same information is shown elsewhere.
- Use your own judgements (some called this *common sense*) to make a decision.

### Staying Safe Online

Many were concerned about their personal safety when online. Here are some of the steps that you took to protect your information when online:

- Putting your social media on 'private' or 'ghost' mode.
- Being especially careful about putting your location online.
- Avoiding social media that does not allow a private mode.

### Tackling the power of the Algorithm

Concerns about the power and influence that an algorithm may have were expressed during the Youth Juries. Some took the following steps to try to resist this:

- Installing ad blockers.
- Using other browsers or switching between them.
- Ignoring and scrolling past advertisements that pop up.

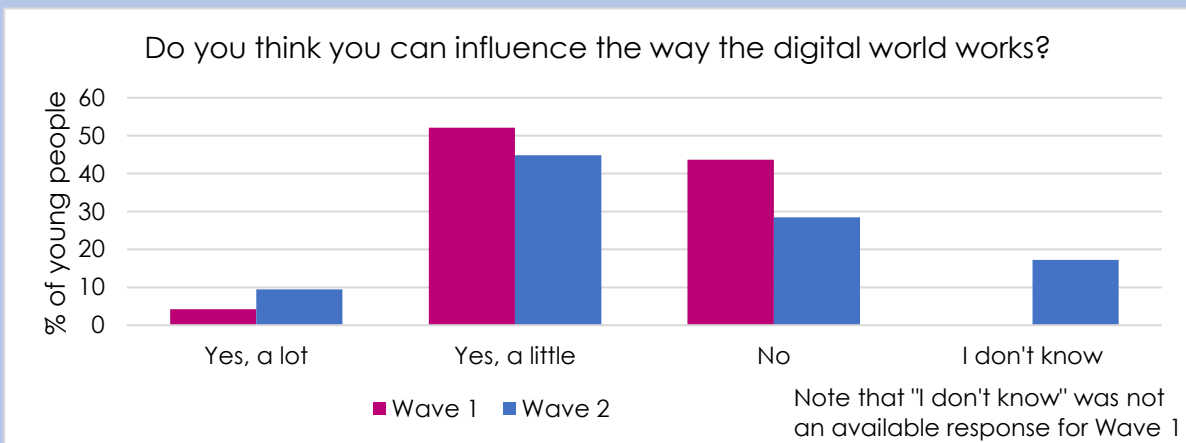


## Feeling Powerless

Aside from the steps that you took above, many told us that they felt powerless to influence some of the ways that the internet operates, with many experiencing:

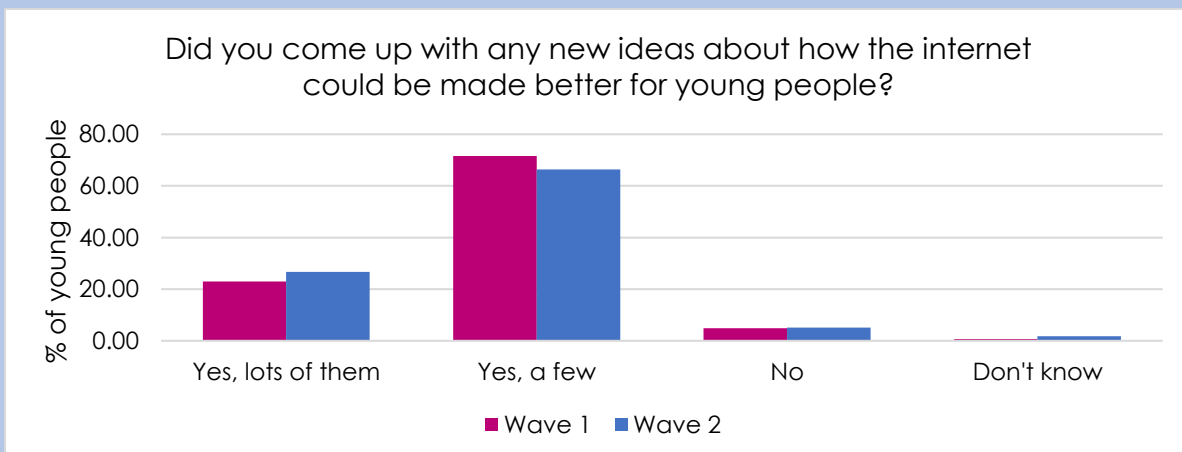
- Confusing and lengthy Terms and Conditions.
- Not being able to use websites and apps without agreeing to the Terms and Conditions.
- The sharing and selling of personal information to third parties.
- Not being able to fully delete information that you put online.

**The results from the questionnaire revealed that you were largely mixed about how much you could influence the way that the digital world works:**



## Your Ideas!

We asked what you would like to happen to help to fix some of the concerns that you had. Most (93.8%) came up with some ideas about how the internet could be made better for young people.



## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Terms and Conditions

Many told us that you would like **simpler** and **clearer Terms and Conditions**. Your suggestions included making them **shorter** in length, **not using difficult words**, providing **a short summary of key details** at the top of the page and using **videos** to communicate the keys details, to name a few.

*“Make it more accessible to average people. So everyone can understand.”*

### More Control

You told us that you would like **more control** over the algorithm - you would like to be able to **turn them on and off**, as well as to **personalise the algorithm** so that they work according to your own preferences.

*“I think to a great extent I agree that we need more control, so actually we can control how the algorithm works like disable those filter options...”*

### Regulation

Many would like to see **more regulation** of advertisements, of algorithms, and of fake news, although some of you saw some difficulties with this too.

*“Ad monitors on social media and websites should be more monitored and be more strict on ads.” (Written recommendation)*

*“I don't think it could be properly done because some people might think something is ethical but other people might think it's unethical. So in that way there'll be no results left.”*

### Education and Awareness Raising

Many would also like to see **education and awareness raising**, particularly in **schools**, about algorithms, how they work and their effects on the user.

*“Yeah, maybe incorporate that into PSHE lessons or just IT lessons because we have education about lots of other things and this is probably just as important as half of those things.”*

# Algorithm Transparency

We asked those that took part in the Youth Juries how algorithms could be made more transparent to users. You gave feedback below:

## Releasing a code:

The majority did not feel that this would be helpful...

“[...] realistically 95% of people aren't going to even know what it means.”

### Some recognised the problems with this too:

“I just think it could go wrong because if someone's really good at hacking they might be able to get the code.”

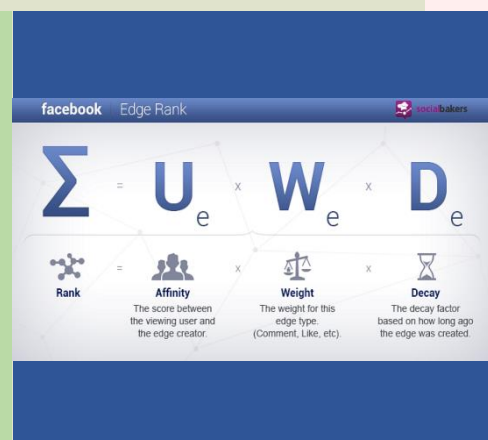


## Facebook's Newsfeed Algorithm:

This received mixed feedback.

“I get what that means, you can kind of figure out.”

“Yeah, not with all of the algebra and stuff, because that's just doesn't make any sense to us.”



## Alternative Suggestion:

Some suggested other ways to help to make the algorithm transparent, for example:

“[...] you should give it different formats to do it. So you could have a video, you could have bullet points,...whichever suits a person you should have more way of doing it.”

## OUTCOMES- WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The team submitted evidence to a **Parliamentary Inquiry** on the **'Impact of social media and screen-use on young people's health'** in 2018.

The document is here, if you'd like to take a look:  
<http://bit.ly/UnBiasEvidence>.

We wrote an academic paper called **'Work-in-Progress: UnBias Youth Juries'** which was presented at the **Social Media and Society** conference in Copenhagen in July 2018.



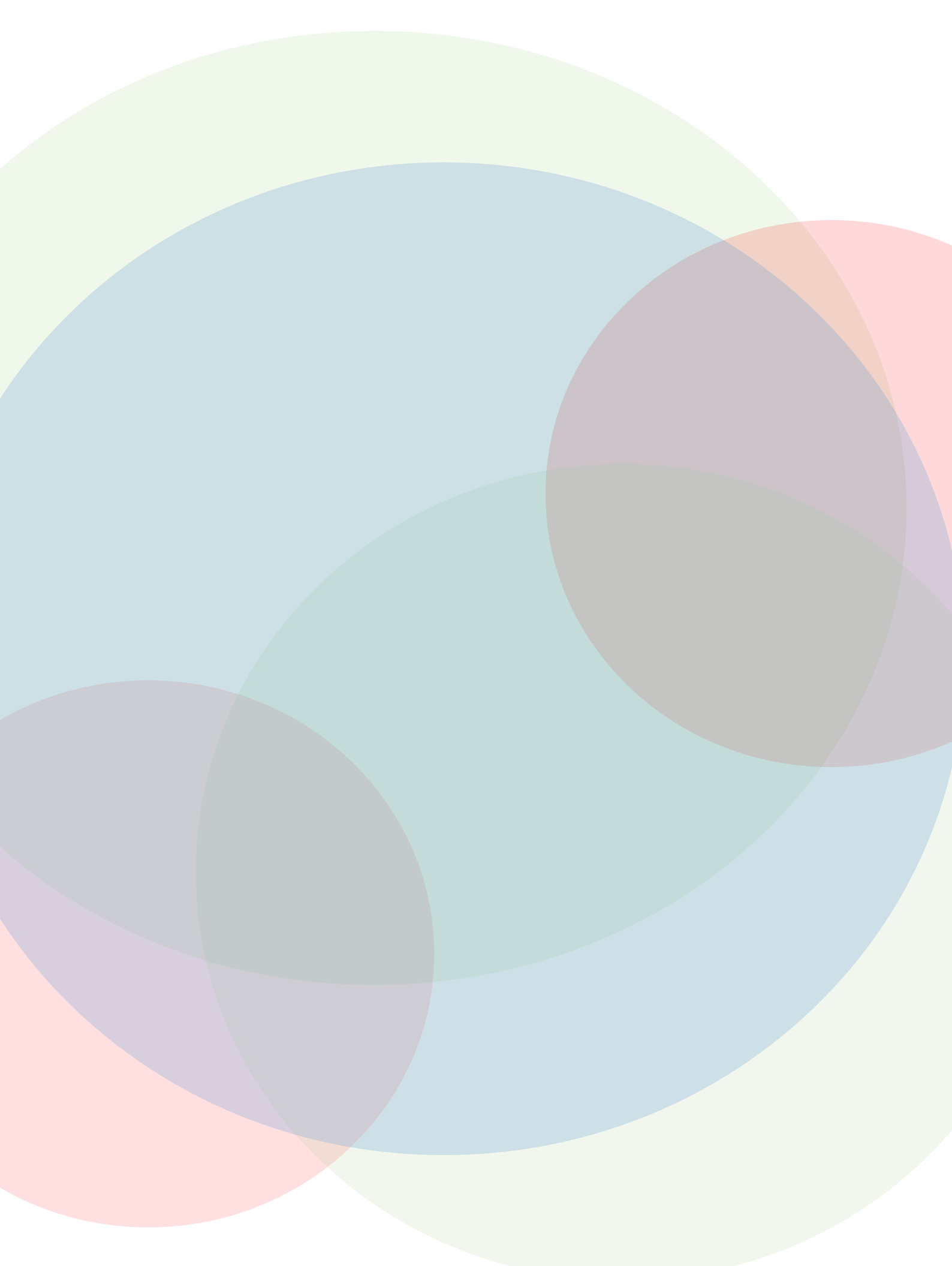
**Presenting your responses!**

We wrote another academic paper called **"...they don't really listen to people"**. **Young people's concerns and recommendation for improving online experiences'**. This will be presented at a conference called **Ethicomp** in Poland in September 2018.

More reports and articles to follow!  
Please keep checking back at the UnBias website for updates on all of our activities!

Website here:

<https://unbias.wp.horizon.ac.uk/>.





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