

Hey Smart Scoopers

Hope your week has been wonderful!

This week's Scoop takes you across the world and beyond your screen. We look at a war that has now stretched into its fourth year, peek inside the mysterious algorithms that decide what shows up on your social media feed, celebrate a small Indian film making big history on the global stage, and finish with a puzzle to give your brain a playful workout.

Here are your fresh picks for the week:

Scoop 1: The Ukraine war at four years: The conflict continues(I)

Scoop 2: Why Elon calls X's algorithm "dumb": Who controls your feed?(I)

Scoop 3: Why Elon calls X's algorithm "dumb": Who controls your feed?(II)

Scoop 4: Boong makes history at BAFTAs: From Manipur to world stage

Scoop 5: Puzzle For The Week: Get me four pennies

Dig in and enjoy!

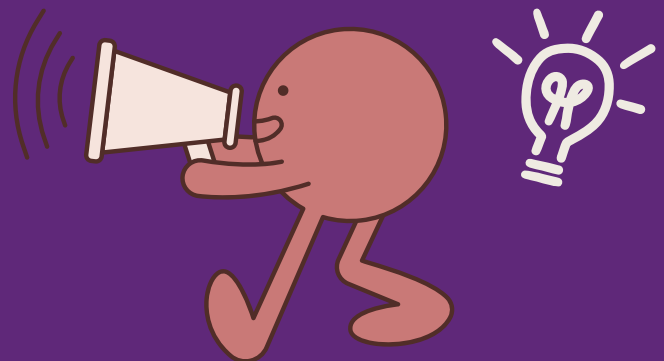
Happy Reading,
The SmartScoop Team

Our mascot, Blurt
will follow us
along the way.

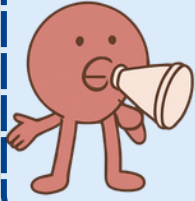
Blurt /blurt/

noun:

A loud, round, super-curious character who just can't keep a fact in.



THE CONFLICT STILL CONTINUES



On February 24, 2022, something shocking happened in Europe. Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, sent his country's army across the border into Ukraine, its neighbour. Putin called it a "special military operation." The rest of the world called it an invasion. Four years later, the war is still going on... A reminder that conflicts don't always end quickly. Millions of lives have been turned upside down in the last four years.

How did it all start?

Russia and Ukraine used to be part of the same country called the Soviet Union until it broke apart in 1991. After that, Ukraine became an independent nation.

But tensions grew over the years. Russia's president believed Ukraine should stay closely connected to Russia, while many Ukrainians wanted stronger ties with Europe. When Ukraine started looking westward, wanting closer ties with Europe and even hoping to join a military alliance called NATO- Putin decided to act!

In 2014, Russia grabbed a part of Ukraine called Crimea. Fighting also broke out in eastern Ukraine. Then, in February 2022, Russia launched a massive, full-scale attack from multiple directions, including a push toward Kyiv, Ukraine's capital. Putin expected it would all be over in a few days. Many people expected Ukraine to fall quickly. But that didn't happen.



Four Years On: Where Does the War Stand?

Against the odds, Ukrainian forces held firm. Over the last four years, the war has shifted from a fast-moving invasion to a "**war of attrition**" - a fancy way of saying both sides are dug into deep trenches, fighting over small pieces of land in the east and south. Despite Russia's enormous size and military power, it has not been able to conquer Ukraine. Four years since the invasion, Russia controls roughly a fifth of Ukraine's territory



The biggest impact of this war is on ordinary people. Wars are not only about maps and armies. They affect real people. Millions of Ukrainians had to leave their homes and move to safer areas or other countries. Families were separated, schools were closed, and many cities suffered heavy damage.



Four years is a long time. For a 13-year-old reading this today, you were only 9 when this war began. Many Ukrainian children your age have never known a time without air-raid sirens. Understanding their story and the world's responsibility to help is where peace must begin.



WHO CONTROLS YOUR FEED?



In January, Elon Musk released the code behind parts of X's recommendation algorithm, allowing the public to see how the platform decides which posts appear in users' feeds. The move is part of an effort to make the social media platform more transparent. Musk said the current system still needs "major improvements" and invited developers to study the code and suggest ways to make it better



Elon Musk  
@elonmusk · Follow

We know the algorithm is dumb and needs massive improvements, but at least you can see us struggle to make it better in real-time and with transparency.

No other social media companies do this.

 Engineering  @XEng

We have open-sourced our new X algorithm, powered by the same transformer architecture as xAI's Grok model.

Check it out here: github.com/xai-org/x-algo...



Have you ever wondered why your social media feed shows you a video of a cat playing piano right after you watched a clip of a skateboard trick? That "**choice**" is made by something called a **recommendation algorithm**.

Recently, Elon Musk, the owner of the social media platform X (which used to be called Twitter), did something very unusual. He released the "source code" for X's recommendation algorithm to the public. Then, in a surprising twist, he called his own system "dumb."

Before we dive in, let's understand few terms:

What is an Algorithm?

Think of an algorithm like a giant digital filter. Every day, millions of posts are uploaded to X. If you saw all of them, your phone would explode with notifications! The algorithm's job is to look at everything and pick the 1,500 posts it thinks you will like the most. It puts these in your "For You" feed.

What Does "Open Source" mean?

Usually, tech companies like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube keep their algorithms a secret. Open sourcing means X put the "recipe" (the recommendation code) on a website called GitHub for anyone in the world to read and suggest improvements. Musk says he did this for transparency. He wants users to see exactly why certain posts show up on their screens!

Why Did Musk Call It "Dumb"?

Because algorithms cannot understand human behaviour completely.

Algorithm studies your actions not your intent: Algorithms studies your actions: what you pause on, what you like, what you reply to, how long you watch a video. For example: If someone shares a post because they are angry about it, the algorithm might think they liked it! This can cause certain posts to spread more than they should. Because of issues like this, the algorithm prioritises content that gets big reactions: things that make you feel strongly (excited, angry, amused) tend to spread more than calm, balanced posts. This isn't unique to X; most social media algorithms work this way.



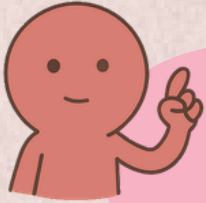
The whole goal? Is to "Keep you scrolling and hooked".

Not to keep you informed :(

WHO CONTROLS YOUR FEED?

Should You Even Care About This?

You might be thinking: I'm 13, I just want to watch funny videos, why does any of this matter?



The algorithm decides what ideas reach you.

If it's designed to show you content that makes you feel angry or anxious (because that keeps you scrolling), then without realising it, you could be spending your time consuming things that affect your mood, your opinions, and how you see the world.

Algorithm also decides whose voice gets amplified and whose gets silenced.

A small creator with great ideas might get buried, while someone posting rage-bait might reach millions. This shapes culture in real ways. An algorithm could be told to promote certain topics or quietly hide others, meaning huge conversations might appear everywhere or almost nowhere in people's feeds. All it takes is a few lines of codes. That's why many experts say algorithms can shape what the world talks about.



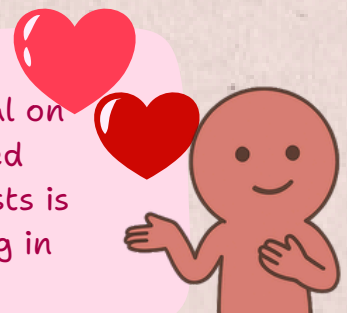
And because most social media companies keep their algorithms completely secret, users usually have no idea why they're seeing what they're seeing. Open-sourcing is at least a step toward letting the public understand the algorithms driving their feed.



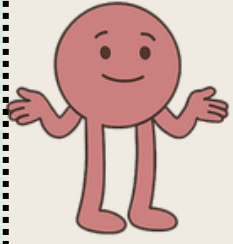
So the bottom line is..

When software is open source, it means the code — the instructions — are freely available for anyone to read, study, and suggest improvements to. The idea is that many eyes make better software. If thousands of developers can see how something works, they're more likely to catch bugs, biases, and problems that a small private team might miss.

Meanwhile, next time you find yourself stuck in a scroll spiral on any social media app, remember: there's a very complicated algorithm working hard to keep you there. Knowing that exists is the first step to deciding whether you want to keep hanging in there.



FROM MANIPUR TO WORLD STAGE



Last month, at the star-studded 79th British Academy Film Awards (BAFTAs*) in London, a small film called Boong from India made history. The film beat global giants like Zootopia 2, Lilo & Stitch, and Arco to win the Best Children's and Family Film award. It was a jaw-dropping moment not just for the filmmakers, but for all of India.

**BAFTA: Think of the BAFTAs as the UK's version of the Oscars. Run by the British Academy of Film and Television Arts, they're one of the most respected film awards in the world. Winning a BAFTA is really a big deal – so when a small film from Manipur walked away with one, people everywhere took notice.*



What's the Film About?

Boong tells the story of a young boy living in Manipur. When his father suddenly stops contacting the family, the boy refuses to believe the worst. So he and his best friend go on a journey to find him and bring him home. The film is about friendship, family, hope, and the way children see the world differently from adults.

Why is it so special?

The movie is in the Manipuri language and was directed by Lakshmi Priya Devi. It was also supported by Indian film producers including Farhan Akhtar. What makes the win special is that the story comes from India's Northeast, a region whose stories are not often seen in international cinema. By winning the BAFTA, Boong helped bring attention to the culture, people, and storytelling traditions of Manipur.

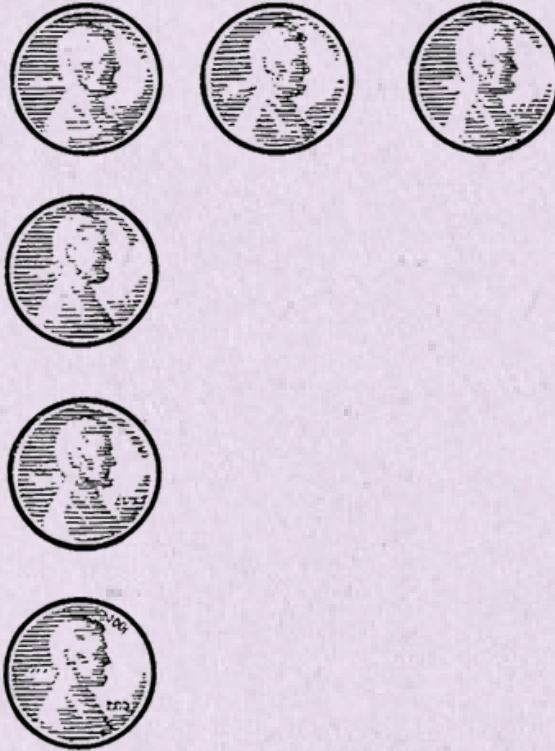
Can You
Watch It?



Yes! After its BAFTA win, Boong is getting a wider re-release in cinemas across India – so if you haven't seen it, now is your chance. Keep an eye out for it at a theatre near you.

GET ME FOUR PENNIES

Can you change the position of one penny only and make two straight rows, each row containing four pennies?

**SOLUTION**

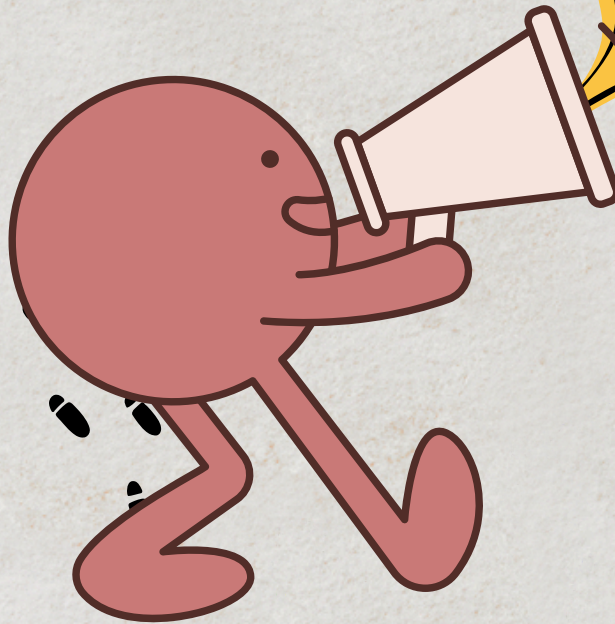
Pick up the bottom-most penny from the vertical row. Place it directly (stack) on top of the corner penny (the one where the vertical and horizontal rows meet).

By stacking them, the corner position now counts as two pennies simultaneously for both rows!

Blurt's

Interesting fact for the week

In about 22 days of scrolling, an average person would scroll a distance equal to the height of Mount Everest (about 8.8 km).



That's it for this week! Until next time, keep your brain gears turning!

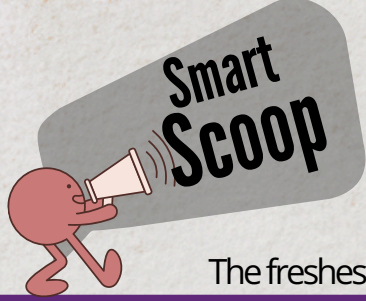


Got some feedback or want to share something with us?

Write to us here:

smartscoopteam@gmail.com

We'd love to hear from you! Mostly Blurt tbh..



The freshest finds for clever minds!!!

SOURCES

[The Hindu](#)
[Economic Times](#)
[The New York Times](#)
[NPR](#)
[The Ken](#)
[The Finshots](#)
[Tech Crunch](#)
[NewsforKids](#)
[Wikipedia](#)
[Wikibio](#)
[Studiobinder](#)

[BBC News](#)
[CNN](#)
[Reuters](#)
[The Guardian](#)
[Bloomberg](#)
[Times of India](#)
[The Wire](#)
[Science News](#)
[National Geographic](#)
[Live Science](#)
[Popular Science](#)

Please write to us for any content modification or removal. We do not intend to violate any copyrights.
All credit goes to the original owner.

Declaration on the Use of AI

All content has been curated, authored, and refined through multiple stages of human writing and review to ensure clarity, accuracy and age-appropriateness. This content is not AI-generated; all pages have been manually edited and finalised by our editorial team. Generative AI was used for editing and creating a few images to improve engagement.