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“Issues discussed in the new Leaks in the Cambridge Analytica Case”

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## **Abstract**

With the inception of Internet Technology in the 19<sup>th</sup> century[8] gave rise new things like data from the technology companies. As the increase in usage of data, it has given rise to a few more challenges in different fields from Entertainment to Politics. This overall intent of this paper is to provide an overview of the discussion discussed in Cambridge Analytica Case and how a company can manipulate user's perspective towards their choice by applying psychology and data. It also demonstrates how data be used against an individual in the field of social media by something called the target audience[19]. The main research idea here is to describe how data effected the future of politics from the United States to European Union by a company.

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# 1 Introduction

When people say Cambridge Analytica, they see towards the social media giant the Facebook because of its scandal outcome in 2015 [1]. With this inception, the outrage came from people across the world with concerns surrounding data and it's privacy. It has become a sensation of the decade and people understood how much it is important for an individual to protect his/her privacy.

There are billions of people who are using the internet every day[14] and they aren't aware how much it is influencing their life from selection of household items to their president. Every individual has the right to choose according to their preference but the technology giants using this power of data and influencing our lives, tastes everything.

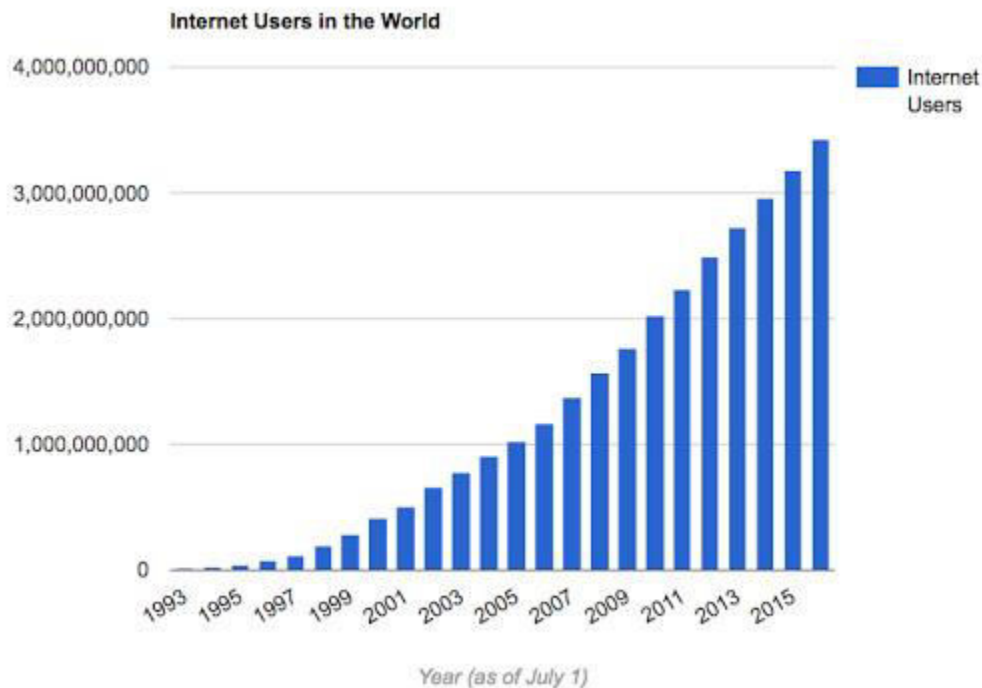


Figure 1 : Number of Internet users in the world[17].

With 3.8[2] billion people using social media, the companies have a huge opportunity to do something good with it, but when it falls into the wrong hands it would create a massive problem like changing the fate of politics and one of those companies which is involved in this scandal is Cambridge Analytica.

It is a data company[3] which focuses on misappropriation of data analysis, data mining, for the electoral process and one of its main technology is Big Data. Big data is one of the hottest technologies which is present right now and involves in various fields and combination of social media with data creates a huge problem in terms of how it is affecting individual for his/her decisions from a psychology perspective.

To understand this whole set of scandal we should focus on social media data influence which is the main thing. We also focus on few concepts like Micro Targeting, Target Sharing and understanding the data-driven elections.

## **2 Foundations and Study Hypotheses**

This section will explain the hypothesis drawn and users perspective towards this case.

### **2.1 Technology Explanation**

The technology behind this data-driven social media is through their likes, shares and comments. Surveys are also considered for the algorithm to use and these come under feature set[4]. These are used against a user and changes his/her ideology. The algorithms in the social media uses Machine Learning(Ex: Recommendation System) to do this.

## **2.2 Technology Impact**

The impact of this technology is used in such a way it can manipulate your thinking in choosing your needs. For example, a user who likes watches gets a recommendation only on watches because when he/she tries to search it the algorithm detects it as a positive sign and when you click something against the post you see, it detects it is a negative sign such that it stores all your information.

## **3 Issues discussed in Cambridge Analytica Case.**

This section discusses the major issues discussed in Cambridge Analytics.

If you look into the statistics of the usage of social media[15], it is increasing day by day and data has come to main concern around it. Irrespective of age people are interested in using social media and addicted to it. This is a major asset for social media companies to use their data.

There are many scandals, issues happened in the history [18]concerned around privacy. Even though many government regulations came into existence [18]after these scandals around data privacy they are still many concerns.

Not only privacy, but even cybercrime has also increased by 72%[18] concerning around the data and some of the cases that happened because of the data breach are:

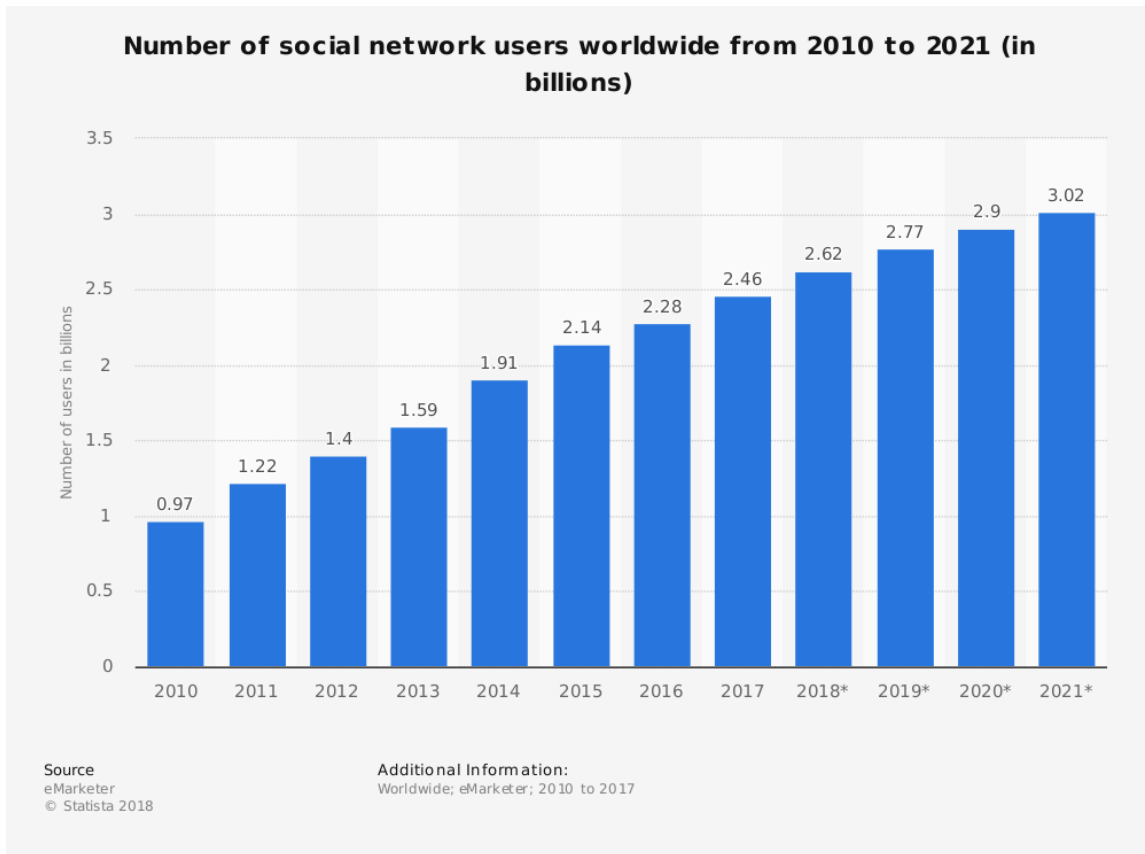


Figure 2: Number of social media users worldwide in billions from 2010 to 2021 [15].

The first issue is US Presidential Elections which was happened in 2016 [6]. The reason it came into the first place as a discussion it not only changed the perspective towards the data but also the future of politics in the most developed country US.

Another important thing is, as the more young people use social media, it has a bad impact on them. For example if you see the image below about the age of people who use social media the teen has more effect on it.

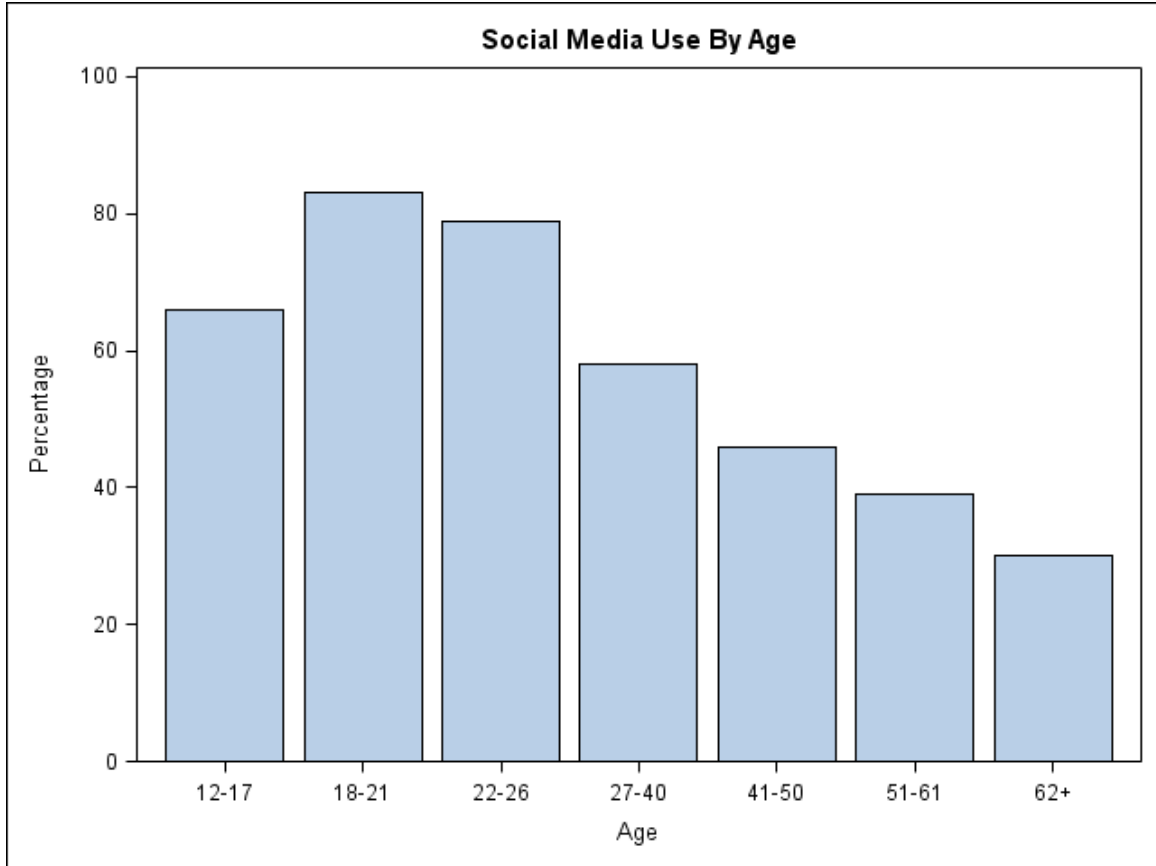


Figure 3: Social media usage by age [16]

The issues came out to the public and understood by people when its CEO, Alexander Nix discussed in a conference in [5]. In 2016 US elections, parties organized a campaign which mainly focused on data on how data is used against their voters based on not only surveys but also psychology.

Apart from targeting, psychology has a huge impact, for example, skin colour, origin, religion are also considered. According to this paper[9] a company called Strategic Communications Laboratories, the parent company of Cambridge Analytica working with Global Science Research which designed Facebook database also took the responsibility of Amazon Mechanical Turk[10] for home workers who does survey job for a 1-2\$ and



they were asked to connect their Facebook accounts which gave this company whole access to operate. From one connection in one Facebook account, it reaches to many of his/her friends and mutual friends and personal information is extracted from these accounts to target against them.

The scandal has become worse when a tv channel named 'Channel 4' broadcasted the phone call of Chief executive of Cambridge Analytics, Alexander Nix[9]. It not only operates in the US alone but also various countries like Africa, Mexico and Malaysia. They are also part of Brexit, and also the situation in Russia and Ukraine

Because of this scandal, Facebook lost nearly 35 billion dollars[11] and the founder of Facebook Mark Zuckerberg apologized publicly on April 2018, Facebook accepted to new regulations and announced new rules which are related to the protection of personal data.

## **4 How to protect your data**

Following this it proved that it is essential to protect our data from third party applications. Even though companies publicly say they are concerned about users data, users are fishy about it because of the scandals so there are few steps as a user to protect the data.

Firstly, It is important from the users perspective by not posting personal information such as name, date-of-birth, and it is also important to not upload personal pictures like drinking and family pictures.

Secondly, there are few things like Behavioral advertising and third-party applications [7] which target audience based on their choices. For example, a user who likes watches can see the advertisement related to watches because that user is targeted by those companies. To avoid this we have certain ad blockers that are merely useful. Moreover, government officials can get valuable information from social networks[7]. To protect from these we should use different credentials for different third party applications we use and never go through these third-party applications to login. This is one of the best solutions.

## **5 Discussion**

This section describes the results of the scandal and things happened before, after and during the scandal.

Before the scandal, it is quite evident that people are so crazy to use social media hugely but once it is burst people understood how it is important to protect their data and started doing essential things like not using third party applications and personalizing information in settings[12].

During the scandal people started panicking and couldn't resist themselves that how come a social media company can target themselves using their data. Lots of backlash in twitter for example #deletefacebook moment[20] was trending in twitter against to this social media. Still after a while people again started using their accounts normally.

## **6 Conclusion**

In this paper we mainly discussed about the issues discussed in Cambridge Analytica and main concerns surrounding it for example US elections and also how an individual can protect his/her data.

This scandal has proved that data can be used against to his/her intentions and change their attitude.

As the technology is increasing it has also proved that no matter what individuals will try to use these social media giants again and are not concerned about the risks they are facing. For example a user using a social media for 6 years, it would be very hard for his/her to delete it all of a sudden. So unintentionally users are so addicted to it and mostly the teen.

So in conclusion, It is important that government should step in and take measures by not going this data into the wrong hands.

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