

Statement from the University of Cambridge about Dr Aleksandr Kogan

11 April 2018

We would be surprised if Mr Zuckerberg was only now aware of research at the University of Cambridge looking at what an individual's Facebook data says about them. Our researchers have been publishing such research since 2013 (<http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2013/03/06/1218772110>), in major peer-reviewed scientific journals, and these studies have been reported widely in international media. These have included one study in 2015 (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0191886915004973?via%3Dihub>), led by Dr Aleksandr Spectre (Kogan) and co-authored by two Facebook employees.

We wrote to Facebook on 21 March to ask it to provide evidence to support its allegations about Dr Kogan. We have yet to receive a response.

23 March 2018

We are aware of the allegations surrounding Dr Aleksandr Kogan (who also goes by the married name Spectre), a Senior Research Associate at the Department of Psychology, which have been widely reported in the media.

Dr Kogan joined the Department of Psychology as a lecturer in 2012, where he established the Cambridge Prosociality and Well-Being Lab.

In 2014, Dr Kogan established his own commercial enterprise, Global Science Research (GSR). We understand from Dr Kogan that one of his clients was SCL, the parent company of Cambridge Analytica.

It is not uncommon for Cambridge academics to have business interests, but they must satisfy the University that these are held in a personal capacity and that there are no conflicts of interest.

We have previously sought and received assurances from Dr Kogan that no University resources or facilities and none of the data collected for his academic research were used for his work with GSR or the company's subsequent work with any other party.

We understand from Dr Kogan that he originally created a Facebook app for academic research; however, he states that when the app was repurposed for use by GSR, it was rebranded and released with new terms and conditions, and it was made clear that this was commercial, not academic, research.

Facebook has made a series of allegations surrounding Dr Kogan's use of data. The University of Cambridge takes matters of research integrity and data protection extremely seriously. We have to date found no evidence to contradict Dr Kogan's previous assurances; nevertheless, we have written to Facebook to request all relevant evidence in their possession.

In 2015, Dr Kogan applied to the University for ethical approval to use data collected on behalf of GSR for his academic research. His application was reviewed and subsequently rejected. Dr Kogan was in the process of re-applying when Facebook requested deletion of the data; hence the application was withdrawn.

We also understand that Dr Kogan undertook work at St Petersburg University, Russia. Again, researchers are permitted to undertake academic research outside the University of Cambridge provided it does not interfere with the performance of their duties. Dr Kogan correctly sought permission from his Head of Department at the time to work with St Petersburg University; it was understood that this work and any associated grants would be in a private capacity, separate to his work at the University of Cambridge.

We are undertaking a wide ranging review of all the available information around this case. Should anything emerge from this review, or from our request to Facebook, the University will take any action necessary in accordance with our policies and procedures.

Finally, we would like to make it clear that, despite its name, Cambridge Analytica has no connection or association with the University of Cambridge whatsoever.



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