

Ethical Impacts of Data Mining for Political Purposes

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I. INTRODUCTION

Cambridge Analytica was a political consulting firm that was hired by various political campaigns, including the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign of Donald Trump, to collect and analyze data on voters. The company used data from Facebook without the consent of the users, which violated Facebook's terms of service and breached users' privacy. Cambridge Analytica collected data on millions of Facebook users, including their likes, interests, and friend networks, to create detailed profiles of individuals and to target them with political advertisements.

II. ETHICAL CONCERNS

This scandal brought to light the ethical concern of data privacy and the responsibility of tech companies to protect the personal information of their users. It not only raised questions about the ethics of using personal data for political purposes and the potential for manipulation of elections through the use of targeted advertising but also raised the issue of foreign governments potentially manipulating elections through similar means [1].

III. HOW IS THIS RELATED TO COMPUTING?

Data engineers use computing and related technologies to efficiently store, process, and analyze large datasets, enabling them to extract valuable information from raw data such as insights and patterns that can be used to inform business decisions and improve overall performance. Facebook harvested the data with help from Aleksandr Kogan who designed a quiz to gather user data on both the person taking the quiz and the data of their friends [2] to be used by these data engineers.

IV. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS AND STEPS TAKEN

Facebook has since restricted the amount of data that developers are allowed to scrape using this method [2]. To effectively address the impact of data mining on personal information, it is crucial to take additional measures such as educating the public on data privacy regulations and consumer rights, being vigilant about sharing personal information online, and advocating for increased transparency from companies regarding their data mining policies.

REFERENCES

- [1] N. Confessore, "Cambridge analytica and facebook: The scandal and the fallout so far," *The New York Times*, 2018.
- [2] Z. Kleinman, "Cambridge analytica: The story so far," *BBC News*, 2018.