Unit 5- Case Study: Inappropriate use of surveys

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Introduction on Surveys

With the wide dissemination of interconnected services and online media, more or less, each user of the internet has encountered at least once a harmless survey as a mobile phone can be equivalent to a traditional questionnaire. Nevertheless, there are some considerations on how these innocuous surveys should be conducted, and the participants must provide informed consent, meaning they are aware of the survey's purpose, how their data will be used, and their right to withdraw without liabilities (Bryman, 2016). Below is the Cambridge Analytica scandal and how it violated ethical survey practices and other instances.

Cambridge Analytica Case

In 2018, Cambridge Analytica manipulated and used unethically and for monetary gain and political purposes the results of 87 million Facebook users in and out of the United States of America (Confessore, 2018). This was achieved with the employment of a third party, an employee of the Palantir company who harvested the psychological profiles of millions of Facebook Users (Confessore, 2018). The selection of Palantir technologies was a deliberate decision. After conducting research, it becomes apparent that a data mining company backed by the CIA has been operating covertly to collect data through unethical means. This company's clients include governments and organisations such as the CIA, the FBI, the NSA,

the CDC, the Marine Corps, the Air Force, Special Operations Command, West Point and the IRS (Pewretti, 2017).

Example similar to CA scandal

DeepMind's Access to UK Health Data 2016. Google's acquisition of DeepMind signed a contract with the Royal Free NHS Foundation Trust in 2015, granting them access to the health data of 1.6 million patients. New Scientist revealed the full agreement in April 2016. DeepMind's deal was to develop Streams, an app for tracking kidney disease patients and notifying clinicians of any decline in their condition. DeepMind's access to sensitive health information, such as HIV status and drug overdose details, caused controversy after being revealed by New Scientist (Kharpal, 2017).

Impact

A) Ethical Impact

Violation of Patient's privacy and consent. The issue of DeepMind's access to healthcare data without patients' explicit consent presents ethical concerns regarding privacy rights and autonomy, which could compromise the principle of respect for persons. Maintaining patient confidentiality is paramount in healthcare. Sharing patients' health information without consent would violate their trust and undermine the doctor-patient relationship (Beauchamp & Childress, 2001).

B) Social Impact

Damage of Public Trust in Technology and Healthcare.

The event may have diminished trust in tech companies' use of personal data with healthcare providers, affecting participation in digital healthcare initiatives. Tech companies are responsible for safeguarding personal information by using clear and transparent data practices (O'neill, 2002).

C) Legal Impact

This case occurred before the GDPR's enforcement mandates strict data processing and consent requirements. Nonetheless, the personal data protection laws at the time required fair and lawful data processing. There are questions about whether this incident met those standards (Kuner et al., 2021).

D) Professional Impact

Tech and healthcare professionals must adhere to ethical standards, especially in data handling and patient privacy, as highlighted by this case. Collaboration between healthcare providers and tech professionals is essential for ethical technological advancements (Borry et al., 2005).

Epilogue

DeepMind's UK health data case emphasises the paramount intersection of tech, healthcare, and ethics. It underscores the need for strong frameworks for consent,

privacy, and data use, balanced against potential benefits. The incident serves as a lesson for both industries, emphasising the significance of ethical, legal, and professional factors in managing sensitive data.

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