Filip Tomin – **tominfil** – L1BA3008

**Topic:** Scenario #1 – Facebook Psychology Experiment

**Thesis:** Psychological experiments require the subject to give consent and be unaware of the data the experimenters are trying to collect. Facebook did what was required to ensure a successful experiment, to provide explicit notification would jeopardize the validity of the experiment.

**Claim 1:** Subjects are required to give consent. Facebook users do so upon clicking “sign up”, as consent is discussed within Facebook’s terms which every user acknowledges they agree with by clicking “sign up”.

* This is explicitly stated on the Facebook sign up page: “By clicking Sign Up, you agree to our Terms and that you have read our data policy[.]”

**Claim 2:** A psychological experiment requires natural human reaction, if the user was aware they were being tested on for a certain thing, they may try to skew the results.

* For example, if given a questionnaire which was designed to test morality, someone who knew the purpose of the questionnaire would try to answer in such a way to give them the best outcome, rather than answering in a way that best reflected their personality.

**Claim 3:** Notifying the user would cause loss of data from users neglecting to participate or incorrect data from users trying to skew results.

* While a loss of data is not as bad if kept to a minimum, incorrect data in this sort of experiment could lead to questionable results. If Facebook found that their users appeared to be happier even when shown negative images, it would seem as if users were becoming morally evil.
* This is evident in other experiments such as the Milgram experiment on obedience, where subjects were convinced that they were dealing extremely painful shocks to another researcher, though they really were not doing anything.

**Resources:**

1. [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) [Referenced for claim 1, when mentioning the sign up page.]
2. [www.simplypsychology.org/milgram.html](http://www.simplypsychology.org/milgram.html) [Referenced for claim 3, an example of an experiment where the subject was unaware of what was truly going on, and it was necessary to the success of the experiment.]