

## Reflective activity 2

The Cambridge analytica scandal was one of the incidents that shook the worlds faith in technology companies. Follow up surveys on the impact revealed (SlickText, 2019):

- Around 74% of respondents were concerned as to how their information was used
- 94% were unlikely to do business with a company whose practices are questionable
- 80% reported that the methods of obtaining data were inappropriate
- 77% reported that targeted advertisements made them uncomfortable
- Half reported that they had unsubscribed due to privacy concerns.

The term surveillance capitalism has been coined, with Facebook and Google the instigators (Amnesty International, 2019).

Apart from these known culprits, others have jumped on the bandwagon in order to turn a profit. Dictator governments, such as China have been accused of the same practices, with the rationale of state security being used(Stanger, 2022).

Apple is another such company who has been grouped together with Facebook and Google. Although not reported by Apple, significant revenue has been linked to data gained from Facebook and Google.

Credit card companies such as Visa and Mastercard, and by extension banks, have also profited immensely from this practice. Users spending habits are closely monitored in order to develop targeted solutions to increase revenue (Company, 2020).

My opinion of this is to adopt decentralised systems who do not rely on advertising for revenue. Decentralized systems inherently protect users data and would effectively reduce these practices.

Amnesty International. (2019). *'The Great Hack': Cambridge Analytica is just the tip of the iceberg.* [online] Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/07/the-great-hack-facebook-cambridge-analytica/> [Accessed 29 May 2022].

Company, F. (2020). *Credit card companies are tracking shoppers like never before: Inside the next phase of surveillance capitalism.* [online] Fast Company. Available at: <https://www.fastcompany.com/90490923/credit-card-companies-are-tracking-shoppers-like-never-before-inside-the-next-phase-of-surveillance-capitalism> [Accessed 29 May 2022].

SlickText. (2019). *One Year After Cambridge Analytica, Survey Reveals Strong Consumer Privacy Fears Remain | SlickText.* [online] Available at:

<https://www.slicktext.com/blog/2019/02/survey-consumer-privacy-fears-after-cambridge-analytica/> [Accessed 29 May 2022].

Stanger, A. (2022) 'The Real Cost of Surveillance Capitalism: Digital Humanism in the United States and Europe', in Werthner, H. et al. (eds) *Perspectives on Digital Humanism*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, pp. 33–40. doi: 10.1007/978-3-030-86144-5\_5.