SPIEGEL Netzwelt

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Manipulierte Timeline

Facebook kann auf Gefühle seiner Nutzer einwirken

Wissenschaftler machten ein Experiment mit Facebook-Nutzern: Eine Woche lang bekamen 300.000 von ihnen weniger Postings mit emotionalen Inhalten zu sehen als andere. Die Folgen waren deutlich messbar.

Von **Holger Dambeck**
04.06.2014, 07.35 Uhr

RESEARCH ARTICLE | PSYCHOLOGICAL AND COGNITIVE SCIENCES |

Experimental evidence of massive-scale emotional contagion through social networks

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THIS ARTICLE HAS BEEN CORRECTED +

CORRECTION |

Editorial Expression of Concern: Experimental evidence of massivescale emotional contagion through social networks

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PSYCHOLOGICAL AND COGNITIVE SCIENCES PNAS is publishing an Editorial Expression of Concern regarding the following article: "Experimental evidence of massive-scale emotional contagion through social networks," by Adam D. I. Kramer, Jamie E. Guillory, and Jeffrey T. Hancock, which appeared in issue 24, June 17, 2014, of *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* (111:8788–8790; first published June 2, 2014; 10.1073/pnas.1320040111). This paper represents an important and emerging area of social science research that needs to be approached with sensitivity and with vigilance regarding personal privacy issues.

Questions have been raised about the principles of informed consent and opportunity to opt out in connection with the research in this paper. The authors noted in their paper, "[The work] was consistent with Facebook's Data Use Policy, to which all users agree prior to creating an account on Facebook, constituting informed consent for this research." When the authors prepared their paper for publication in PNAS, they stated that: "Because this experiment was conducted by Facebook, Inc. for internal purposes, the Cornell University IRB [Institutional Review Board] determined that the project did not fall under Cornell's Human Research Protection Program." This statement has since been confirmed by Cornell University.

Obtaining informed consent and allowing participants to opt out are best practices in most instances under the US Department of Health and Human Services Policy for the Protection of Human Research Subjects (the "Common Rule"). Adherence to the Common Rule is PNAS policy, but as a private company Facebook was under no obligation to conform to the provisions of the Common Rule when it collected the data used by the authors, and the Common Rule does not preclude their use of the data. Based on the information provided by the authors, PNAS editors deemed it appropriate to publish the paper. It is nevertheless a matter of concern that the collection of the data by Facebook may have involved practices that were not fully consistent with the principles of obtaining informed consent and allowing participants to opt out.