**Cambridge Analytica**

Cambridge Analytica was a British analytics firm founded in 2013 and dealt with political consulting (Kenzler, 2019). It collected and combined the innovative advertisement technology, predictive data analytics, and behavioral sciences to coax social media users to vote for a particular pre-determined political personality. Moreover, it leveraged on data collected to target specific people with certain political campaigns (Boerboom, 2020).

A social psychologist at the University of Cambridge, Aleksandr Kogan, developed an app called “thisisyourdigitallife” that would collect user data through Facebook once downloaded. The app featured a personality test which Kogan's company, Global Science Research (GSR), partnering with CA, wooed thousands of users into taking the tests by paying them. However, their data were to be collected for academic purposes. The data included the user’s personal information, their activities such as liking a post, and their friend’s information (Rehman, 2019). Third-party developers of applications gathered information of 79 million users on Facebook through 300,000 users (Kozlowska, 2019).

Kogan breached an agreement he made with Facebook by giving this data to Cambridge Analytica. From the data obtained, Cambridge Analytica used it to convey advertisements targeting specific users to influence the 2016 United States election (Deni, 2020). The harvested data was used by Donald Trump’s campaign against Hillary Clinton for the 2016 presidential seat.

Cambridge Analytica analyzed the data and decidedly focused on tens of thousands in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania who were worried or hesitant about Trump's election. With this digital influence, Trump gained 77000 votes from the three states that propelled him to victory.

Facebook's action against this was to change its platform user policy in 2014 to regulate the third-party data apps had access to. Therefore, such apps were inhibited from accessing user friend’s data unless authorized. Upon learning that Kogan had breached its policies, it banned the third-party app and demanded that he and Cambridge Analytica expunge all data gathered improperly. However, in 2018 Facebook learned that they had not complied with this demand and hence banned both of them from using their platform.

**CubeYou**

CubeYou is a data analytics firm in New York that uses artificial intelligence to help marketing agencies, brands, and media companies in making informed decisions (Hern, 2018). It was suspended by Facebook for harvesting information from users similar to Cambridge Analytica.

The firm gathered user information using Facebook quizzes. It used an app called "You Are What You Like" to get information from Facebook users and developed psychrometric profiles (Hern, 2018). CubeYou labeled the quizzes as being used for academic purposes.

The firm, through its website, boasts of having access to personally identifiable information (PII). With panelists exceeding 10 million, it contracts with advertising agencies with a specific target Facebook users for advertisements. The app “You Are What You Like” is designed for entertainment; a user's personality is predicted based on his or her Facebook activities especially likes (Castillo, 2018).

**Ethical, Social, Legal and Professional Implications**

Social issues often refer to the implication or effect of one person's action on another, thus the interaction among people. Ethical considerations are those that reflect a set of moral principles hence leading to the evaluation of behavior being either good or bad. Legal implications are more of the contextualized framework established under enforced legal institutions or authority (Schroeder, Meyer, & Ziewitz, 2009).

Inappropriate use of surveys demonstrates negligence in the practice of data protection policies on companies involved. Accumulation of wealth at the expense of user data boils down to a company’s ineffectiveness at striking a balance between its business model and the services or products it offers. Cambridge Analytica and CubeYou have business models that encourage them to increasingly collect data to facilitate their services to advertisement companies (Zinolabedini & Arora, 2019).

In the aftermath of the Cambridge Analytica scandal, it was evident that users were oblivious of the fact that Facebook had loosened its privacy restrictions. The users had also not

consented to the data harvesting. Aleksandr Kogan's breach of agreement with Facebook on protecting user data showed a lapse in its legal framework (Deni, 2020).

Consequently, Facebook was incapable of protecting its user's data from third-party applications. Its professionalism and ethical standards were tested in its need for transparency with its users. However, the argument is that Facebook’s action in risking user privacy was that their relationship with advertisers enabled users to find products easily (Deni, 2020).

# References

Boerboom, C. (2020). *Cambridge Analytica: The scandal on data privacy.* Rock Island : Augustana Center for the Study of Ethics Essay Contest.

Castillo, M. (2018, April 8). *Facebook suspends another data analytics firm after CNBC discovers it was using tactics like Cambridge Analytica*. Retrieved from CNBC: https://www.cnbc.com/2018/04/08/cubeyou-cambridge-like-app-collected-data-on-millions-from-facebook.html

Deni, L. (2020). *Using care ethics to analyza the Facebook-Cambridge Analytica scandal.* Charlottesville: University of Virginia.

Hern, A. (2018, April 9). *Facebook suspends Cubeyou over harvesting data claims*. Retrieved from The Guardian: https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/apr/09/facebook-suspends-cubeyou-over-harvesting-data-claims

Kenzler, J. (2019). *Cambridge Analytica and the public sphere: An investigation of political manipulation in the digital age.* Tampere: Global and Transnational Sociology.

Kozlowska, I. G. (2019, July 11). *Facebook and data privacy in the age of Cambridge*. Retrieved from University of Washington: https://jsis.washington.edu/news/facebook-data-privacy-age-cambridge-analytica/

Rehman, k. u. (2019). *Facebook-Cambridge Analytica data harvesting: What you need to know.* Srinagar: University of Kashmir.

Schroeder, R., Meyer, E. T., & Ziewitz, M. (2009). *Social, ethical, and legal issues in presence research and applications.* Oxford Internet Institute.

Zinolabedini, D., & Arora, N. (2019). *The ethical implications of the 2018 Facebook-Cambridge Analytica data scandal.*