

## **Assignment 04**

**1. Read the document: FB\_Secret\_Mood\_Manipulation.pdf which is posted on the Canvas site.**

**Write a 200-word summary of the events outlined in the article.**

The article FB\_Secret\_Mood\_Manipulation talks about Facebook mood experiment happened in 2012 and raises the question to readers that was it ethical or not. This experiment was conducted for one week in January 2012, in which Facebook's News Feeds was manipulated for nearly 700,000 users. Some people were shown the positive and happy posts whereas some were shown sadder and negative News Feeds and the results of the study showed that more negative News Feeds led to more negative status messages, as more positive News Feeds led to positive statuses and when the feeds got less emotional, people stopped writing too many posts or words on Facebook. Moreover, Grohol said that the study was not well designed because they used the tools without understanding the tools' limitations. In addition to that, whether an institutional review board (IRB) had approved this experiment or not and whether Facebook told the users about alteration of their News Feeds for purpose of research are still questionable. Furthermore, this is not only the experiment when Facebook tweaked News Feeds of users because Facebook uses an algorithm to determine what to display and what to hide. Conclusively, Facebook apparently tweaks people's News Feeds all time which has major impact on people's emotional state.

**2. Write a 300-word essay on ethics in online social networks. Do you think the Facebook mood experiment was ethical? Are any types of experiments or studies that are done without the subjects' knowledge or consent ethical? What types of studies or experiments might you find reasonable or useful, if any? This happened in 2012; do you think it could happen again today? Why or why not? You may also include your insights into the GDPR issue, if you wish.**

Ethics is the concept of what is good, bad, right and wrong. In social media, the right ethic equals the right perspective and the right thinking on how to leverage social media appropriately and how to engage people in the right manner. I don't think that the Facebook mood experiment was ethical though it was legal because it was conducted without the subjects' knowledge or consent ethical. Moreover, whether an institutional review board (IRB) approved this experiment or not and whether they put too much faith in the tools they're using without considering its significant limitations are still questionable.

Similarly, OkCupid, a dating website, ran two experiments, which much like Facebook's Newsfeed algorithm. In the first experiment, OkCupid took pairs of bad matches (actual 30% match) and told them they were exceptionally good for each other (displaying a 90% match). Unsurprisingly, the data-crossed lovers were more likely to email each other when OkCupid told them they were compatible. This kind of experiments must not be conducted by any social media though they perform them for research or improve their websites because it involves people's emotions and to play with someone's emotions is not ethical or right at all.

Furthermore, I do think that any study or experiment, we can call it legal as well as ethical if it is conducted with their user's knowledge or consent ethical. As illustration, Facebook announced a new app called Study that will let the company collect data on how people use their smartphones in exchange for money. Although Facebook will use this application in order to improve its own products, it is lawful and ethical because it totally depends on individual choice, whether to participate in this study or not.

Lastly, I do believe that this type of experiment can be conducted in the future because we can see data is very critical everywhere and companies can earn a lot profit by taking decision depending upon results of data analysis. In order to stop other companies to do such kind of research or experiment, government should enforce certain firm laws.

**3. Read the document: [Logging\\_in\\_with\\_FB.pdf](#) that outlines possible risks associated with logging in to other sites with your Facebook login credentials. It is a tempting convenience, but it is worth the risk? Write a 200-word paper outlining the key issues in the article. Also, include your opinion regarding the advisability of this practice.**

Nowadays, many companies are giving public access to their APIs that will allow developers to develop applications easily and effectively. Facebook has provided universal login API, which allows users to login with Facebook in other applications without registering themselves. Although it provides comfort to users and developers, it has its own adverse effects.

First of all, whenever we install any application and we find that it allows us to Login with Facebook, we usually opt for it as it seems very convenient. With that, we also compromise our privacy because it carries our profile information to other apps and websites. And according to research from Princeton University, we should not trust to lesser popular websites because they may carry security risks. In addition to that, the Princeton researchers identified seven different scripts from different companies that are capable of pulling information from Facebook's login API. Even though none of the companies agreed on the fact that they use people's personal data by saying that they just use the scripts to provide their service, we can't ignore the risk associated with it.

Personally, I do prefer Login With Facebook or Login With Google for popular and trustworthy applications though sometimes because of my laziness, I opted for it for some unknown applications. But, after reading this article, I will be very cautious about choosing Login With Facebook option as we don't know what is happening with our personal profile's data and how they will use that data in the future. Furthermore, many times, while logging in, we allow to use our personal data by clicking on allow or accept because we are in rush to use the application.

Conclusively, we all need to be very careful before choosing any particular option. We need to read all instructions carefully and then decide on what to click and what to allow as our privacy is interlinked with most of available options.