

Backstory:

In 2018, Facebook faced backlash for its participation in a data breach, which resulted in over 87 Million users having their data leaked. Mark Zuckerberg was asked to speak at Congress for his company's role in the data breach. Over two days, it was revealed that Cambridge Analytica, a political data-analytics firm had been misusing information it had obtained from Facebook users. Through a quiz app that was available on Facebook, Cambridge Analytica was able to build a psychological profile of a user. Things such as a users' "likes" and their friend group were revealed through the connection of the quiz app to the user's account. Using the information based on the user's psychological profile, Cambridge Analytica was able to use it in their political campaign targeting a certain demographic.

Facebook was ultimately held accountable for its actions and paid a total of \$5 Bn to the FTC (Federal Trade Commission), which is responsible for civil antitrust law. Facebook did not report that the breach occurred immediately and allowed Cambridge Analytica to have continuous access for up to 5 years until it took action.

Arguments against Facebook being liable:

Facebook was not hacked

The data that was breached was because of users who signed up for the app. The users were not hacked for their passwords nor were sensitive pieces of information stolen.

The original reasons for the quiz app were academic. Aleksandr Kogan a Russian psychology professor at the University of Cambridge was the creator of the app and he shared the information in a commercial partnership with Cambridge Analytica.

Facebook did not sell any of its users data

Facebook's business model does not include selling data to any of its users.

They make their money through targeted advertising. This can create a large sum of money for Facebook. In 2019, the company made \$70 Billion from Ad Revenue alone.

However it took a long time for Facebook to terminate their contract with Cambridge Analytica. For over five years, Cambridge Analytica still had access to the users data this only stopped once the media started covering it.