INFO 350

Week 1b

Info Policy, Law, Ethics...

Policy, Law, Ethics: In the News

Google employees call for removal of rightwing thinktank leader from AI council

Staffers criticized the appointment of Heritage Foundation president Kay Coles James in a letter published on Monday

AI

An external advisory council to help advance the responsible development of AI

Last June we announced Google's AI Principles, an ethical charter to guide the responsible development and use of AI in our research and products. To complement the internal governance structure and processes that help us implement the principles, we've established an Advanced Technology External Advisory Council

Policy, Law, and Ethics in the News
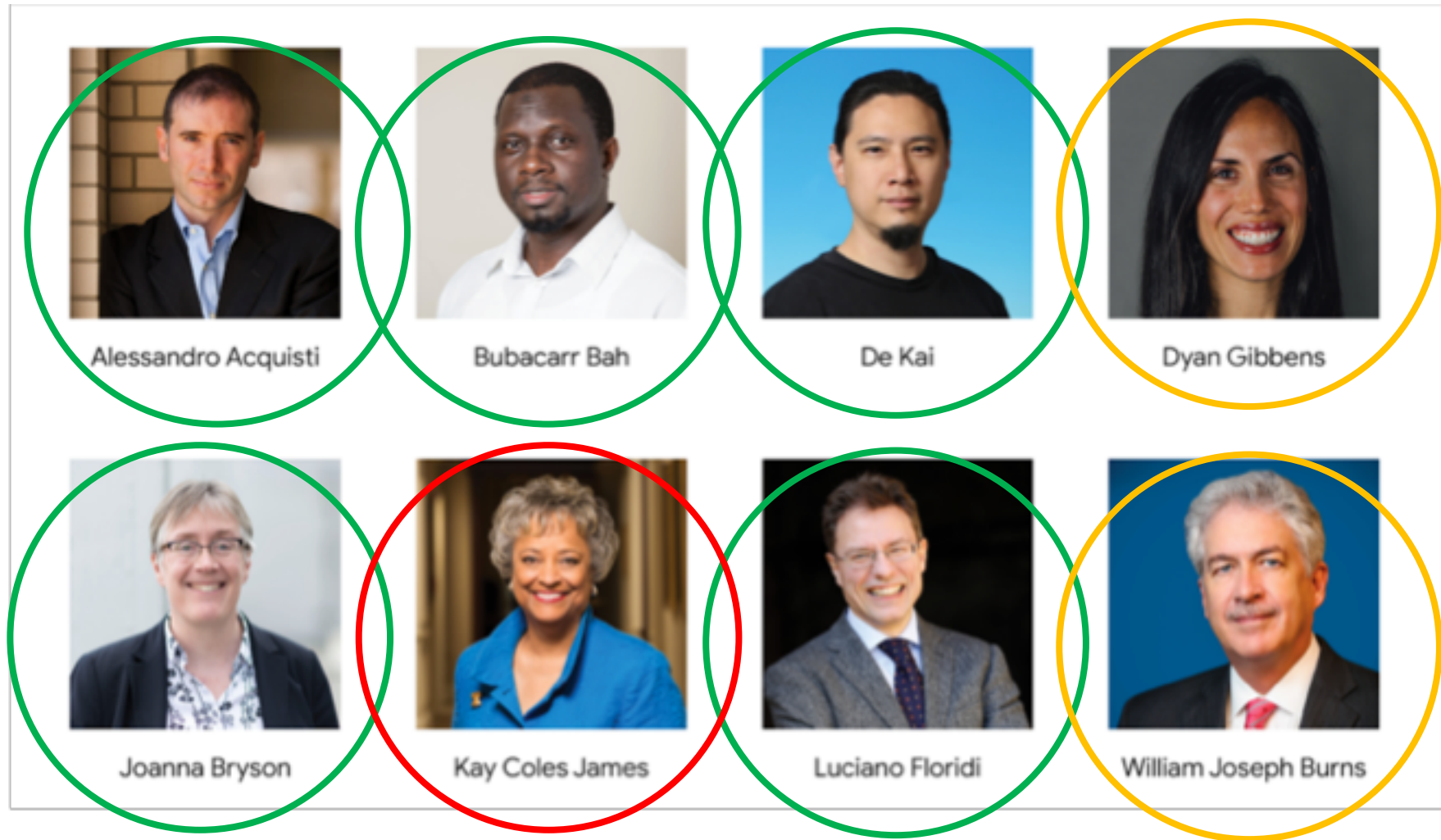
Policy, Law, and Ethics in the News

- Qs
  - Who *should* be chosen for a company ethics panel?
  - Is there anyone who seems like a "no go" for an ethics panel?
  - What value do corporate ethics panels provide to companies
  - What value do corporate ethics panels provide for society (or does it matter)?

Introduction to Moral Reasoning

A Brief Overview of Moral Reasoning

- Morals are a set of firmly held beliefs about the world

- Moral questions are answered using *moral reasoning*

A Brief Overview of Moral Reasoning

- Moral reasons (or judgements) are different than *preferences*
  - Preference Example: Elian prefers that people say "please" and "thank you," but no one is morally required to do these things.
    - Why? Because really nothing of much consequence happens if they do not.

  - Preference: Example: Sam prefers free jazz while Casey thinks it is awful and no one should listen to it.
    - Sam's music preference does not invalidate Casey's and does not really conflict with it.
    - Neither one can legitimately demand that the other give up their preference.

- A sign of a moral question is when a view embraced by one person is unacceptable to another.

- Not a Preference: Sam believes a woman's right to an abortion is her right while Casey thinks abortion should never be allowed.
    - Sam's and Casey's beliefs are in conflict.
    - Each *would* require the other to submit to their beliefs if confronted with this choice.
    - Sam and Casey would struggle to accept, or even *tolerate* the other's view

A Brief Overview of Moral Reasoning

- Moral reasons (or judgements) are different than *preferences*
  - This difference between "conflicting" preferences and conflicting moral judgments points to one way <u>not</u> to answer moral questions:
  - Our personal preferences are important, but we do not answer moral questions by saying what we like or dislike.

  - If moral judgments are not just expressions of personal preference, it follows that moral right and wrong *cannot* be determined by finding out the personal preferences of some particular person or people.

A Brief Overview of Moral Reasoning

- Moral reasons (or judgements) and "what I think"
    - If Liu believes capital punishment is wrong, he does not only *think* it is wrong.
    - A *moral judgement* about capital punishment is that it is wrong at every time and place and for everyone.
    - Moral judgements are intended to bind others.
        - They **obligate** others to something
        - **Ethical questions are about obligations - oughts.**
        - What *ought* you do (or ought not do)?

Why are preference insufficient for moral reasoning?

- Let's look at an example…

22. The lifeboat

'Right,' said Roger, the self-appointed captain of the lifeboat. 'There are twelve of us on this vessel, which is great, because it can hold up to twenty. And we have plenty of rations to last until someone comes to get us, which won't be longer than twenty-four hours. So, I think that means we can safely allow ourselves an extra chocolate biscuit and a shot of rum each. Any objections?'

'Much as I'd doubtless enjoy the extra biscuit,' said Mr Mates, 'shouldn't our main priority right now be to get the boat over there and pick up the poor drowning woman who has been shouting at us for the last half hour?' A few people looked down into the hull of the boat, embarrassed, while others shook their heads in disbelief.

'I thought we had agreed,' said Roger. 'It's not our fault she's drowning, and if we pick her up, we won't be able to enjoy our extra rations. Why should we disrupt our cosy set-up here?' There were grunts of agreement.

'Because we could save her, and if we don't she'll die. Isn't that reason enough?'

'Life's a bitch,' replied Roger. 'If she dies, it's not because we killed her. Anyone for a digestive?'

Spot the Ethical Issues!

In-Class Reflection April 4ᵗʰ

- Is this an appealing vision of the future?
  - If yes, why?
  - If no, why not?
- Are there any ethical issues that come up for you in this vision?
  - (Even if you think this is a positive vision you might still see ethical problems.)

Arguments

The Elements of Arguments

- Why argue?
  - An argument is a means of promoting or defending a position.
    - "to offer a set of reasons or evidence in support of a conclusion." -*Weston*
  - Argument is fundamental to philosophy and plays a role in ethics.
    - We build "chains of reasoning" to prove or make truth claims.
    - Each link of the chain is a *premise* and its destination is a *conclusion*.
    - A conclusion can become a premise to a subsequent chain leading to a larger conclusion, etc.
  - Philosophy is not the only place where we use these methods.
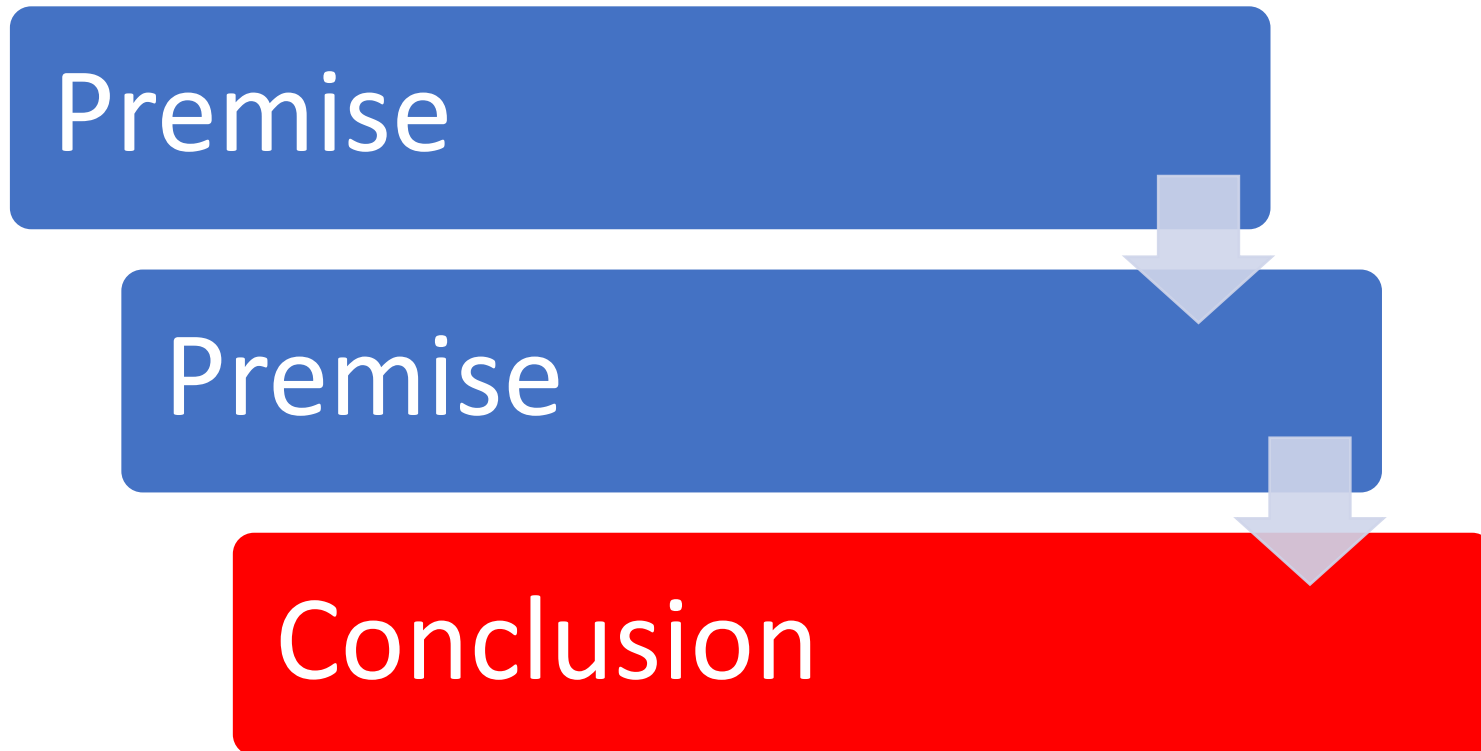
The Elements of Arguments

- Why is this useful *for me?*
  - We have to cooperate and negotiate with others all the time...
    - business, politics, home life, etc.,
  - Joint decisions among cooperators are frequently *contested.*
  - The business cultures at many companies are often *argument cultures.*
    - At Amazon, for example, team members are encouraged to challenge each other; to tear apart each other's ideas and proposals.
    - Selling (a service, a product, an idea) - argumentation is key to building the case for the customer or client.

The Elements of Arguments

- Wherever you work or whatever you do, your success may depend on persuasively advocating for an idea (or opposing one).

- And...it is a key objective of this course that you develop your argumentation skills.
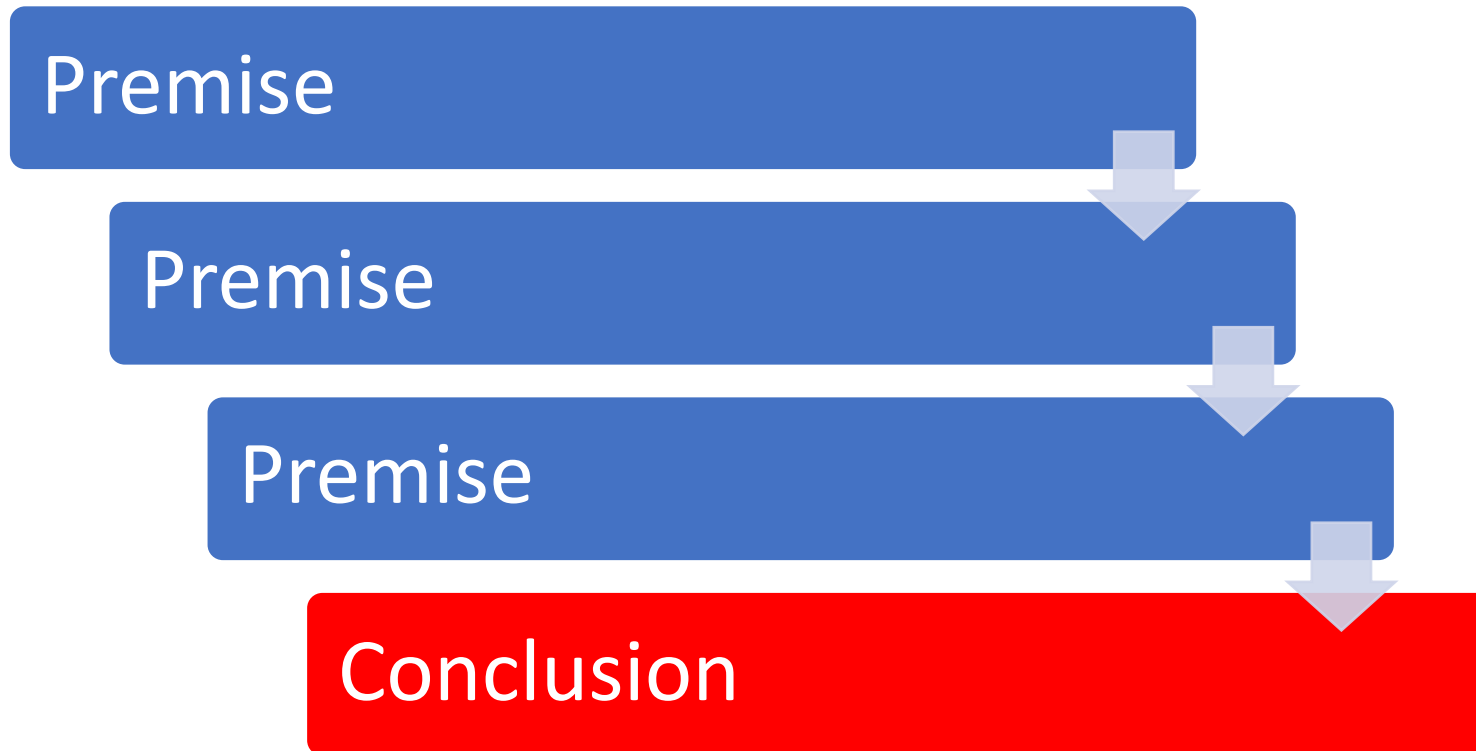
The Elements of Arguments

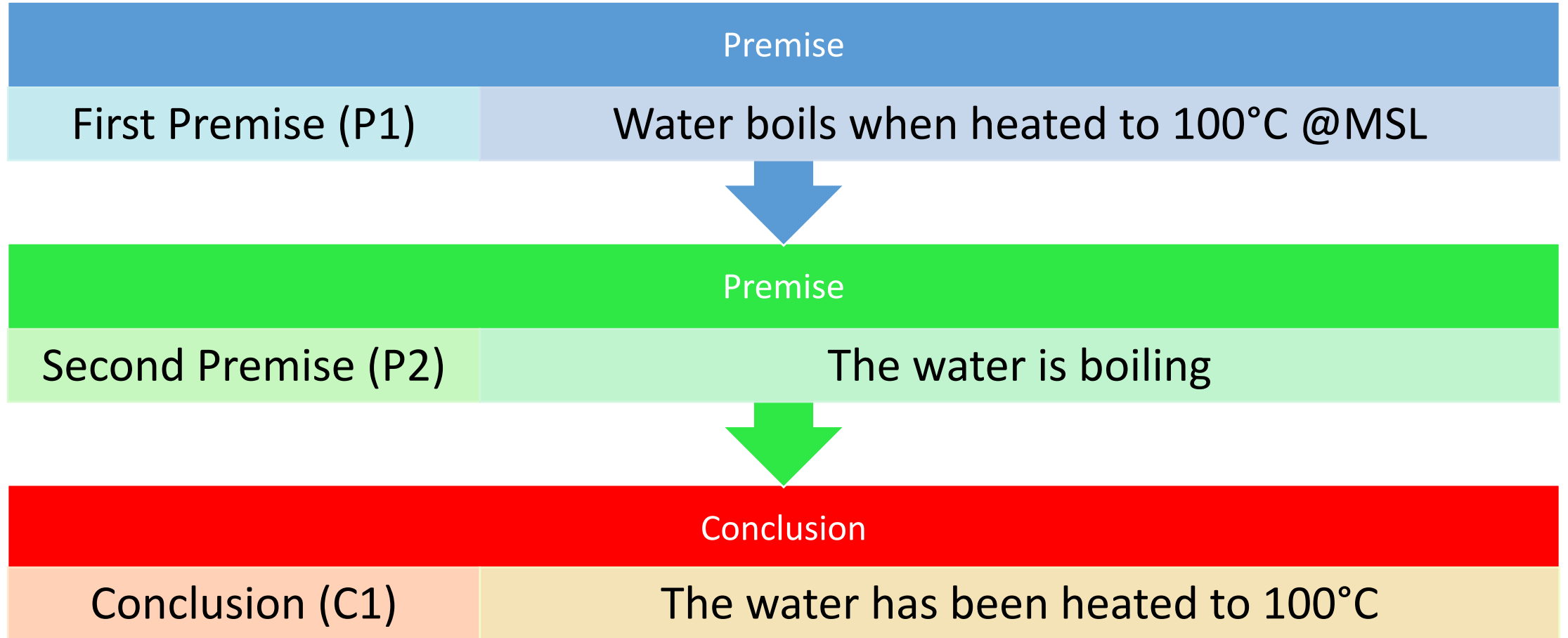Argument construction: one or more premises lead to a conclusion.

Premise

Premise

Conclusion

The Elements of Arguments

Adding premises provides additional evidence…

Premise

Premise

Premise

Conclusion

The Elements of Arguments

- Two main types of arguments:
  - **Deductive Arguments** are arguments that make *truth* claims. If the argument is good, then its conclusion is a statement of fact.
  - **Non-deductive Arguments** are arguments that *suggest* the truth based on a preponderance of evidence – meanwhile admitting the possibility that the conclusion is not the truth (or the entire truth).
  - Examples of non-deductive arguments
    - **Inductive arguments**
    - **Hypothesis testing**
    - **Inference to best explanation**

The Elements of Arguments

Premise	
First Premise (P1)	Water boils when heated to 100°C @MSL

Premise	
Second Premise (P2)	The water is boiling

| Conclusion	
Conclusion (C1)	The water has been heated to 100°C

The Elements of Arguments
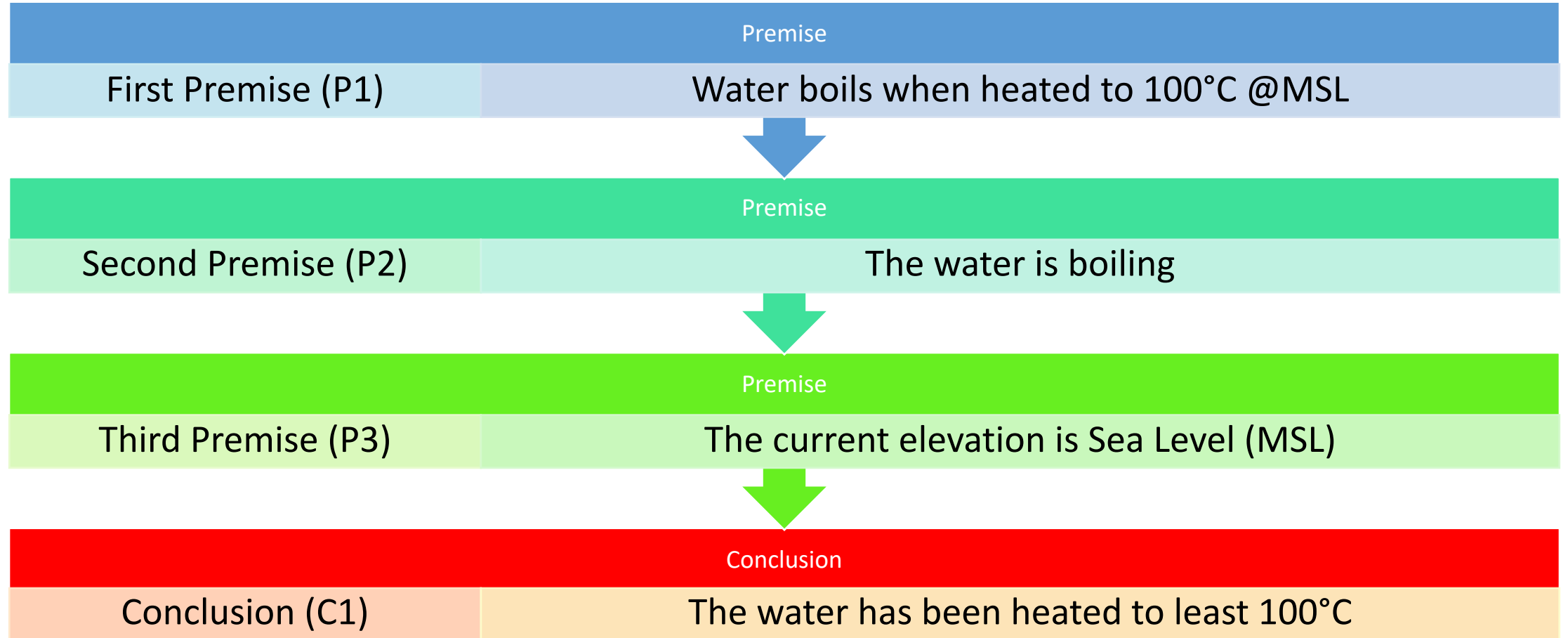
Uber & the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- Uber has been sued for failing to provide services that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- Prior court decisions have held that <u>transportation companies</u> are required to comply with the ADA.

- Therefore Uber must comply.

The Elements of Arguments

Premise	
First Premise (P1)	Transportations companies are required to comply with the ADA

Premise	
Second Premise (P2)	Uber is a transportation company

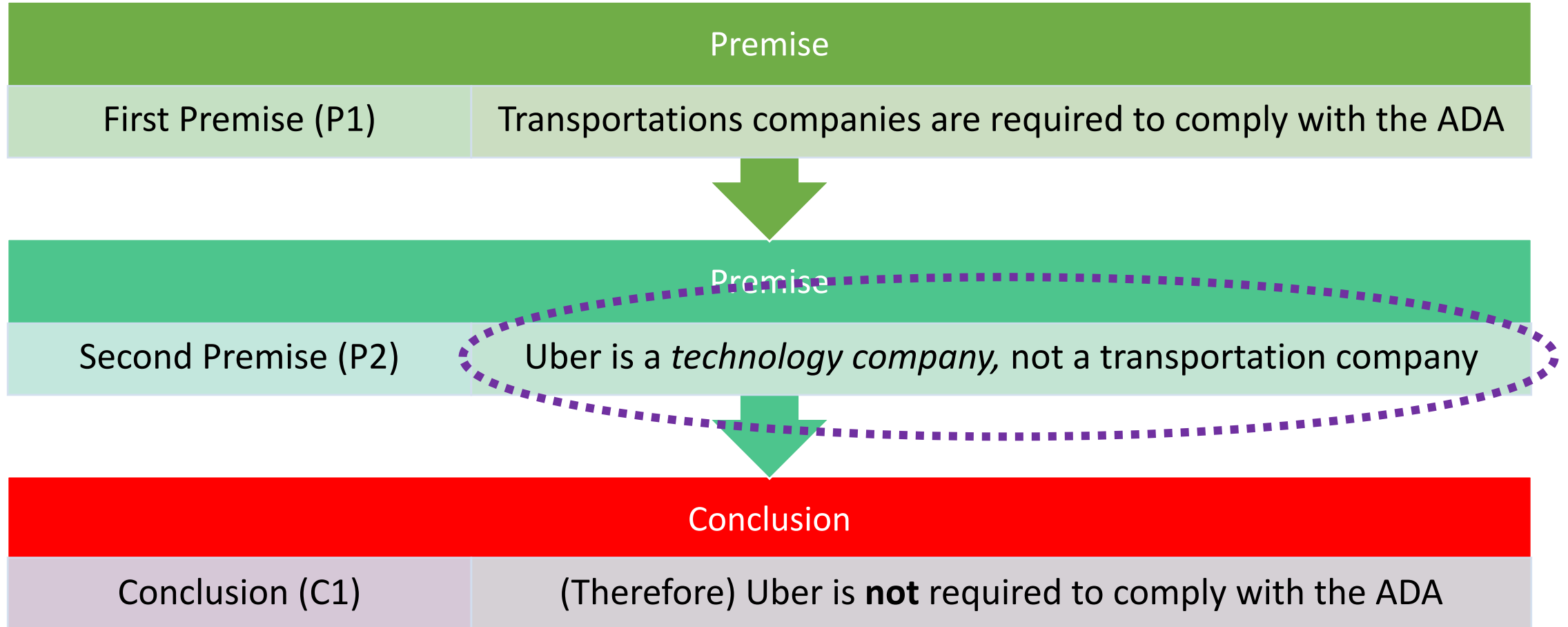| Conclusion	
Conclusion (C1)	Uber is required to comply with the ADA
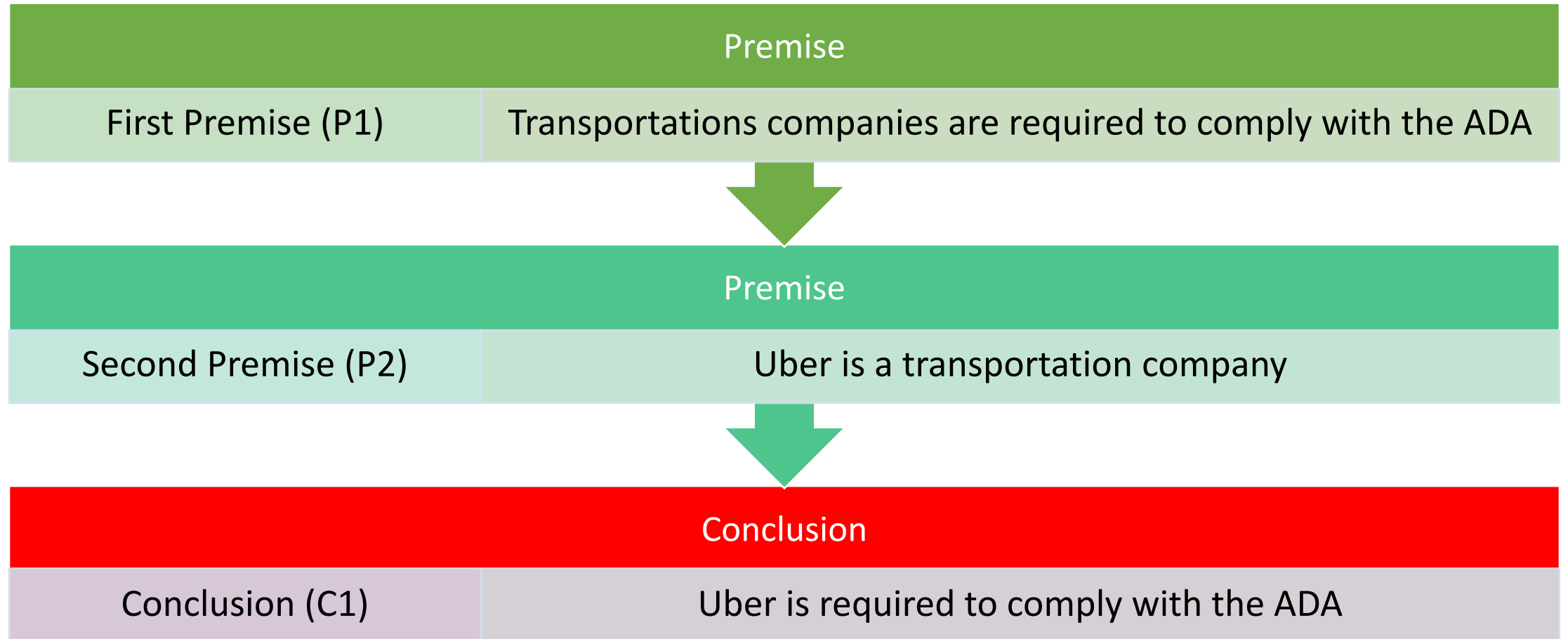
The Elements of Arguments

- But wait a minute…
- Uber claims it is *not* a transportation company and therefore is not subject to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Elements of Arguments

Premise	
First Premise (P1)	Transportations companies are required to comply with the ADA

Premise	
Second Premise (P2)	Uber is a *technology company,* not a transportation company

Conclusion	
Conclusion (C1)	(Therefore) Uber is **not** required to comply with the ADA

The Elements of Arguments

- A ***valid*** **deductive argument** is one in which *if the premises are true, then the conclusion must be true.*

- **Valid**:
  - P1: Transportation companies are required to comply with the ADA.
  - P2: Uber is not a transportation company.
  - C1: Therefore Uber is not required to comply with the ADA

- **Not valid:**
  - P1: Transportation companies are required to comply with the ADA
  - P2: Uber's estimated worth might be as high as $120 billion dollars
  - C1: Therefore Uber is not required to comply with the ADA

The Elements of Arguments

- A *sound* **deductive argument** is a valid argument in which the premises **are** true.

- **Sound and valid:**
  - It is illegal to discriminate in housing decisions based on race or gender
  - Facebook's advertising portal made it possible for advertisers to target housing ads based on race
  - Facebook made it possible for advertisers to break the law (HUD is suing them over this)

The Elements of Arguments

- **Unsound, but valid:**
  - Companies that employ people in the Seattle city limits must comply with the Seattle Minimum Wage Act
  - In-N-Out Burger employs people in Seattle (false claim!)
  - Therefore In-N-Out Burger must comply with the Seattle Minimum Wage Act

- This argument is <u>not sound</u> because one of its premises is false, but if the premises were true, then the conclusion would *have to be* true.
- This is a valid argument, but it is not sound.

Inductive Arguments

- Another form of argument is an ***inductive* argument.**
  - Inductive arguments are non-deductive arguments that *infer* a claim rather than seek to prove it as true.
  - Claims are supported by <u>evidence</u> without assuming that the conclusion is *certain*.
    - Three days ago, a crow landed on my railing at exactly 7am.
    - Two days ago, a crow landed on my railing at exactly 7am.
    - Yesterday, a crow landed on my railing at exactly 7am.
    - Therefore: tomorrow a crow will land on my railing at exactly 7am.

Inductive Arguments

- In the 2016 elections, foreign governments used social media to inflame debates on divisive issues.

- African American voters were specifically targeted with messaging designed to discredit Hillary Clinton based on both real and fake information about her.

- Voter turnout by African Americans was lower than anticipated in the 2016 election.

- *This suggests* that social media posts suppressed the African American vote in 2016.

Inductive Arguments

- Inductive arguments are constructed like deductive arguments, but *validity* cannot be asserted.

- Even if all the premises are true, the conclusion may not be true.
  - Premises are offer *evidence* or *authority* about something in the world.
  - Premises lead us to *suggest* that something is true.

- Instead of validity or soundness, inductive arguments are evaluated for their *strength.*
  - A strong argument seems very likely to be true based on the premises.
  - X event occurred in the past when Y happened, therefore Z is probably true.

Inductive Arguments

- P1 When the drinking age is lowered, traffic fatalities go up.

- P2 When the drinking age is raised, traffic fatalities go down.

- P3 The number of lives saved by raising the drinking age fully justifies the loss of liberty imposed on young people.

- C Therefore, the minimum drinking age should be raised.

Inductive *Logic*

- Machine Learning algorithms are induction engines
  - ML systems look for patterns in data and then *infer* something about the target – a preference, an undisclosed condition, a future action, etc.
  - We cannot be sure that an ML assertion is true, but it may be the best explanation for a particular phenomenon.
  - Good ML algorithms produce *strong* inferences from which decision makers can make confident decisions.

Inductive *Logic*

- Target Store case:
  - If customer is female and of child-bearing age +
  - If customer buys unscented lotions and/or soaps +
  - If customer buys supplements, including calcium, magnesium, and zinc.
  - Customer is (most likely) pregnant

  - http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/19/magazine/shopping-habits.html

Technology

Facebook allegedly offered advertisers special access to users' data and activities, according to documents released by British lawmakers

Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg listens to opening statements during a Senate committee hearing on April 10. (Michael Robinson Chavez/The Washington Post)

By **Elizabeth Dwoskin**, **Craig Timberg** and **Tony Romm**

Most Read Business

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3 Decline in fixed mortgage rates continues unabated through the holidays

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5 NFL playoff games could go dark on Verizon and Spectrum thanks to disputes with big

Facebook Violated FTC Consent Order. (Again.)

The New York Times [reported](#) that Facebook gave big tech companies access to personal data in violation of the terms of service and public statements. The companies include Amazon, Sony, Microsoft, Yahoo, Spotify, and Netflix, as well as two companies considered security threats to the U.S.: Chinese smartphone manufacturer Huawei and Russian search engine Yandex.

Facebook even allowed these companies to read users' private messages and access friend lists. According to the Times, Facebook "permitted Amazon to obtain users' names and contact information through their friends, and it let Yahoo view streams of friends' posts as recently as this summer, despite public statements that it had stopped that type of sharing years earlier."

Individual Work

Conclusion 1: What Facebook did was wrong

Conclusion 2: What Facebook did was okay/acceptable

- On Canvas:
  - Construct a *deductive* argument (premises necessarily lead to a conclusion)

  - Construct an *inductive* argument (premises suggest a conclusion)

The Elements of Arguments

- First, a conclusion:
  - P1: Facebook's terms of service restricts partner access to user data, such as to app developers, especially sensitive data like personal messages.
  - P2: FB execs have publicly claimed that FB does not give access to user data without the user's consent.
  - P3: [Internal emails reveal](#) that, without user consent, Facebook gave access to over 100 "whitelisted" apps owned by high value clients including Amazon, Airbnb, Sony, Tinder, Netflix, Huawei, Yandex, and others.
  - C: Facebook lied to the public and violated FTC consent degrees regarding the sharing of user data with others without consent.