

End-of-topic Worksheet [50 points]

1. **Briefly summarize one controversy or ethical dilemma related to this topic. [5 points]**

A whistleblower who ended up being a former Cambridge Analytica employee revealed that the organization was harvesting millions of personal data from Facebook profiles. This would later be used as analytical data for the Trump Presidential campaign. The main competing principles related to this are: the principle of honesty since Facebook/Cambridge Analytica deceived people to steal their personal information, and the principle of rights since a person's right to privacy was violated too. This is related to the topic because it involves the whistleblower Christopher Wylie and his freedom of speech.

2. **Clearly, concisely, and charitably summarize one of the leading positions on the controversy you discussed in question 1. [5 points]**

The main leading position is that Christopher Wylie made the correct choice to whistleblowing Cambridge Analytica's actions. It is stated that Cambridge Analytica abused user's privacy and used it to threaten democracy.

3. **State two of the strongest (in your opinion) arguments in favor of the position in question 2. [6 points]**

One of the arguments touted was that Cambridge Analytica illegally took advantage of people's private information without their knowledge, which was later used to target anyone that was easily persuaded with disinformation. Trump's political campaign would send provocative posts to individuals that were also prone to believing conspiracy theories and racist ideologies. This would lead to the manipulation of the presidential elections results.

Another argument is that pushing out targeted ads and posts could lead to people adopting more extremist ideologies. In this case, a lot of the conservative people have started to follow the Qanon cult which its whole purpose is to undermine government institutions.

4. **Clearly, concisely, and charitably summarize the leading position that conflicts with the position in question 2. [5 points]**

A conflicting position is that Cambridge Analytica didn't do anything illegal or wrong by using people's private data for political reasons. It was stated that the reaction to this news was just an overreaction.

5. **State two of the strongest (in your opinion) arguments in favor of the position in question** **4.** **[6 points]**

One of the arguments is that Cambridge Analytica obtained user's information through already well recognized processes and readily available technologies. People were putting their private preferences in a public forum and shouldn't be surprised when it is being utilized by other organizations or advertisers.

The second argument is that most of this controversy is being overblown by news media because it involves a Republican figure, which was Donald Trump. Since there is a Democrat bias involved with news media, social media, etc., there is an agenda to put negative news on the Donald Trump campaign.

6. **Show how each of the arguments you summarized above can be said to align (or not align) with the recommendations made in the IEEE-CS/ACM Software Engineering Code of Ethics** **[10 points]**

Question 3 arguments:

- The first argument is aligned with the Public code of ethics, which states that a software engineer needs to act according to the public interest. In this case, the software engineers at Cambridge Analytica should have taken into consideration that manipulation of the presidential election results wasn't the best for public interest.
- The second argument is more aligned with the "Product", as it focuses on putting out a product with the highest professional standards, which wasn't done in this case since Cambridge Analytica's product instead of just persuading people to support a specific political party, led to people supporting extremist cults like Qanon.

Question 2 arguments:

- The first argument is aligned with "Judgement" as the employees at Cambridge Analytica kept their professional integrity through the usage of legit, legal and readily available technologies to gain information which was already public somewhat.
- The second argument is aligned with "client-employer" code since the employees acted in the best interest of their employer and clients, which were Cambridge Analytica and the Trump campaign. They did their part in making sure that campaign had good data that could be useful for the presidential elections.

(last question on the next page)

7. **Think critically and carefully about the arguments you selected for questions 3 and 5. How do they compare? Are the arguments for one side stronger than the other? On what basis can you compare these arguments? You may use the RESOLVEDD process or the value-sensitive design steps to guide the comparison and clarify the details. If you choose not to use either process, make sure you provide a similar level of detail in your comparison. [13 points]**

RESOLVEDD

1. Cambridge Analytica harvested the private information of millions of users, and this led to it being used for a political campaign which affected the USA presidential elections.
2. Cambridge Analytica's usage of user's data to influence people is leading to the rise of extremist political movements like Qanon, deteriorating democracy. The counter argument is that the information obtained was already readily available and reprimanding the company will affect technological advancements, also it will mean that only political ideologies aligned with Republicanism will be the only ones scrutinized.
3. A solution would be to sue and hand out jail sentences to the key people at Cambridge Analytica. Solution for the counter argument is to allow the company, no matter political affiliation, to keep engaging in their information harvesting operations.
4. If we fine/jail key people at Cambridge Analytica, then future tech companies will not engage in these types of illegal activities anymore. The counter point solution is that not punishing the company will lead companies to self-regulate themselves and not cause too much instability.
5. Less illegal activities will lead to a more stable society where normal political discourse is ensured. Counter point impacts is that companies will develop ways to gather data while preserving important privacy methods.
6. The value uphold is that people's privacy will be respected and, in a way, ensuring that freedom of speech doesn't get manipulated, but it also breaks companies' autonomy with overreach from the government, and CBA indicates less utility. The counterpoint is that the values upheld are respect for the company's autonomy, but it breaks the value of people privacy, and CBA indicates more utility.
7. It will respect people's privacy but lowers companies' autonomy and provides lower utility. The counter position increases companies' autonomy and has higher utility, but it leads to lower respect of people's privacy.
8. The best solution is punishing the companies that engage in illegally obtaining user information and then using it for influencing political situation. This sends out a clear message to companies that they must defense user privacy.

9. Lower a company autonomy doesn't lead to a lot of consequences since it would increase consumer/user protection.

The arguments from questions 3 are stronger because it shows that influencing the political landscape through the use of personal data has dire consequences. These consequences are the rise of extremist organization, and it causes dangers for democracy. The other position isn't very strong because it mainly focuses on defending a company's autonomy and political affiliation, which disregards the actual consequences on society overall.