The Cambridge Analytica scandal in 2018 involved the unauthorized collection and exploitation of personal data from millions of Facebook users. The data was obtained through seemingly innocuous surveys and quizzes on Facebook, which were used to gather information about users' personalities, preferences, and behaviors (Confessore, 2018). However, the true purpose behind these surveys was to harvest vast amounts of user data for political targeting and manipulation.

This incident highlights the ethical, social, legal, and professional implications of inappropriate survey use:

1. **Ethical Considerations**: The unauthorized collection and exploitation of personal data raises serious ethical concerns regarding privacy, consent, and trust. Users were unaware that their data would be used for political purposes, violating their right to informed consent and autonomy over their personal information.
2. **Social Impact**: The misuse of survey data for political targeting can have significant social consequences, including the manipulation of public opinion, the spread of misinformation, and the erosion of democratic processes. By targeting individuals based on their psychological profiles, campaigns can tailor messages to exploit vulnerabilities and influence behavior, potentially undermining the integrity of elections and democratic decision-making.
3. **Legal Implications**: The Cambridge Analytica scandal prompted investigations by regulatory authorities in both the United Kingdom and the United States, leading to legal action against Facebook for its role in the data breach. The incident also spurred legislative efforts to strengthen data protection laws and enhance regulatory oversight of tech companies' data practices, such as the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the European Union (Confessore, 2018).
4. **Professional Standards**: The misuse of survey data by Cambridge Analytica violated professional standards of integrity, transparency, and ethical conduct. It underscored the importance of ethical guidelines and codes of conduct for professionals working in data analytics, market research, and digital marketing, emphasizing the need for responsible data stewardship and respect for user privacy rights.

Further examples of inappropriate survey use include:

**Google and Screen wise Meter Scandal:**

In 2019, it was revealed that Google was running a program called "Screenwise Meter," which paid users, including teenagers, to install a VPN app on their devices. This app allowed Google to monitor and collect detailed data on the users' internet and app usage. The program was framed as part of market research efforts, but it failed to provide transparent information about the full extent of data collection and its usage. The involvement of minors in the program, without clearly obtaining informed consent, raised significant ethical and privacy concerns, leading to widespread criticism and eventual shutdown of the program on iOS devices after intervention by Apple (Annie, 2019).

References:

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