

Surveys are often used as a way of gathering information in order to gain insight into a particular population or phenomenon. However, this type of research can also be used inappropriately, as in the case of Cambridge Analytica. This company was able to access personal data from millions of Facebook users by using seemingly innocuous surveys. This data was then used to influence the outcome of the Brexit referendum and the 2016 US Presidential Election. This type of data harvesting is considered a breach of privacy, as it allows companies to access personal information without the user's consent.

Similarly, the online quiz-maker 'OkCupid' was found to be collecting personal data from users, such as their age, location, and sexual orientation, and sharing it with outside companies (Dovey, 2018). This type of data collection is a violation of user privacy, as it allows companies to target users with tailored ads and other messages. Furthermore, this type of data collection has been linked to the spread of misinformation, as it allows companies to target users with messages that appeal to their individual biases and interests.

The inappropriate use of surveys has numerous ethical, social, legal, and professional implications. Ethically, it is wrong to access and manipulate personal data without the user's consent. Socially, it can be seen as an invasion of privacy, as well as a form of manipulation that can lead to the spread of misinformation. Legally, it is a violation of data protection laws in many countries, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the European Union. Professionally, it is considered a breach of trust and has the potential to damage the reputation of companies and organizations.

In conclusion, the inappropriate use of surveys can have significant ethical, social, legal, and professional implications. This includes the risk of data breaches and the spread of misinformation. Companies and organizations must ensure that their data collection and sharing practices are in compliance with applicable regulations and ethical standards.

References:

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