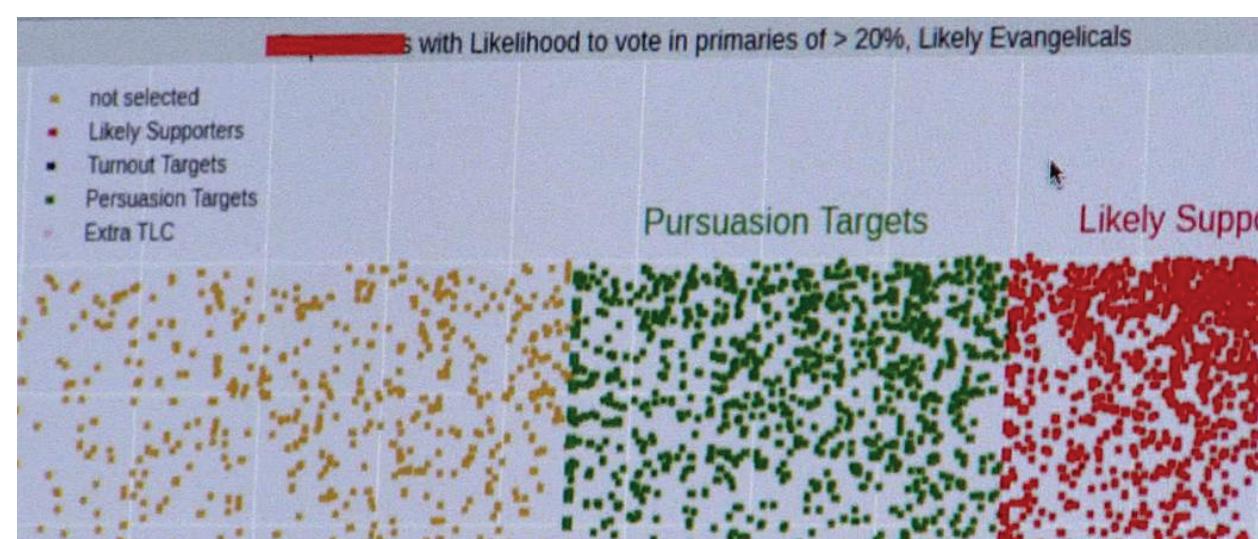


Life Before Memothy

Devices and Practices That Influenced the Program

Cambridge Analytica

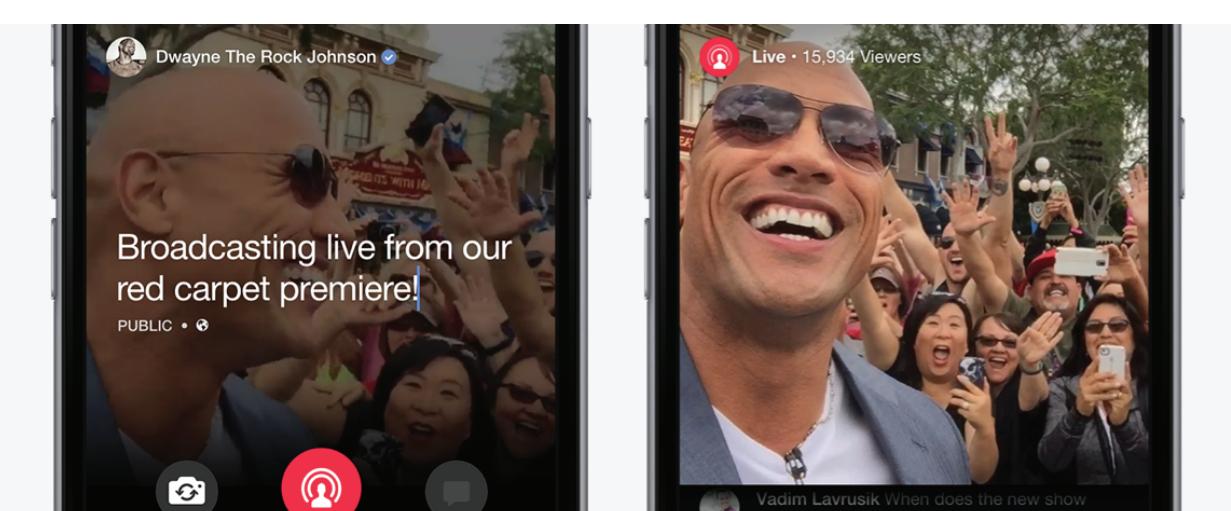
This big data analytics company was influential in Donald Trump's 2016 election campaign and the United Kingdom's Brexit. Using one's smartphone like a constant psychological questionnaire, they were able to fairly accurately predict a person's personality based on their Facebook likes.



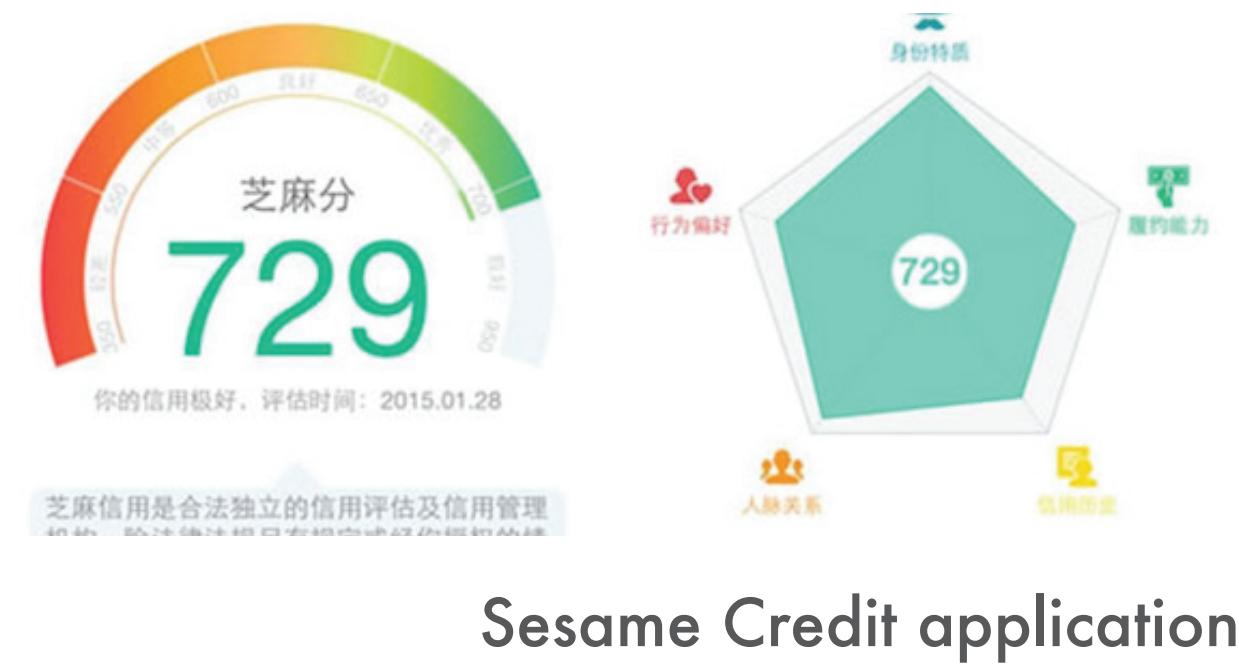
Cambridge Analytica visualization predicting primary outcome

Facebook Live

Beginning in January 2016, any Facebook user could self-broadcast their experiences to the public or their online community. Friends could react to moments as they were shared and the broadcaster was able to see how many people were watching at a time. This tool was used to broadcast political events and actions that were not broadcast by the mainstream media.



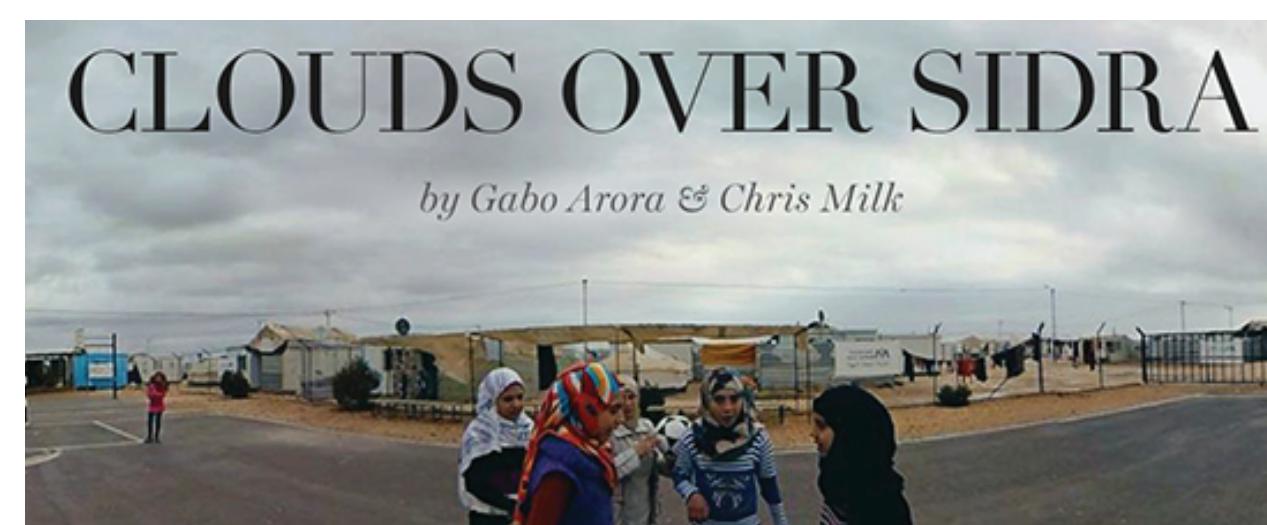
Facebook Live advertisement



Sesame Credit application

Scoring Trustworthiness

China had hoped to create a score to measure citizens' trustworthiness by 2020. The program failed due to disapproving public opinion. This plan was similar to the Communist Party's 2010 pilot of a program in which citizens lost points for running a red light, driving drunk, or paying a bribe.



poster for a VR film created for the UN

VR Empathy

As virtual reality (VR) grew in accessibility and popularity from 2010 to 2020, it was largely touted as an "empathy machine", allowing users to experience another person's life. Journalists at the forefront of this movement captured 360 degree stories from places like Syrian refugee camps, giving viewers back at home a taste of these other lives.

Body Cameras

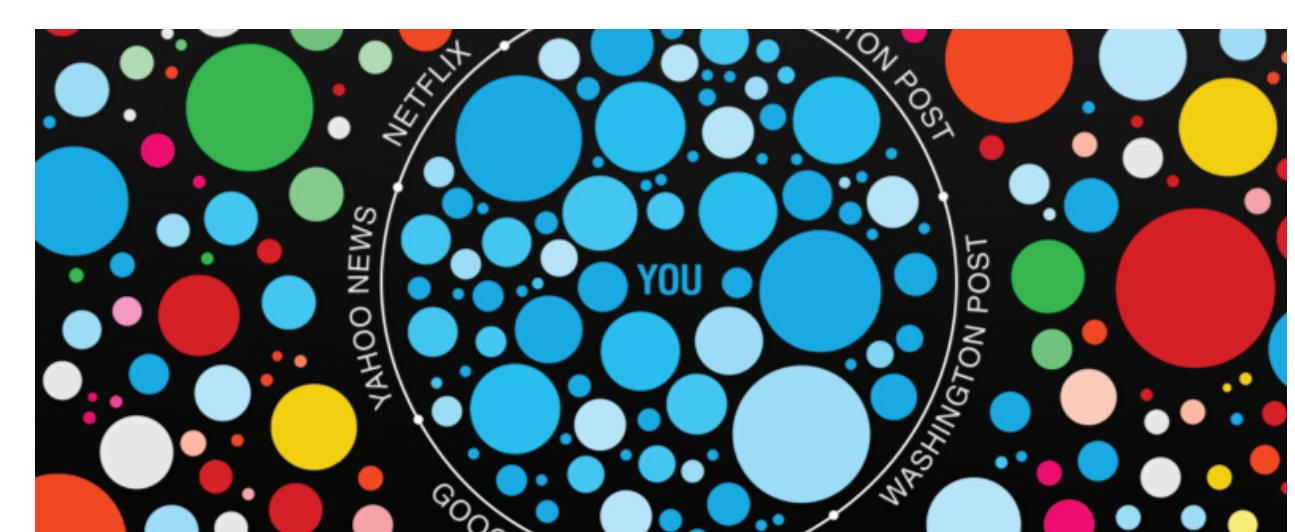
To prevent abuse of power many police forces adopted body cameras to be worn by their officers. Axon, a safety tech company released body cam models with livestreaming capabilities and cloud storage. They also speculated that the whole public would wear body cameras to record their daily lives and interactions.



police officer wearing body cam

Filter Bubble

This term became common as people spent more and more of their time on social media. Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter were the main sources for news content at this time. Their algorithms populated their users' news feeds with content that was similar to the content already there. Over time, people became stuck in these "echo chambers" of homogenous views.



depiction of the filter bubble by Eli Pariser

Analysis

After studying the above signals, the path to the Memothy program becomes clearer. The presence of filter bubbles and the need for VR empathy point to why the program came to exist. Technologies like body cameras and Facebook Live point to the technical development of the input components in the Memothy Necklace. The use of virtual reality to build empathy points to the Memothy Goggles. China's trustworthiness scores and the use of data to profile society by Cambridge Analytica influenced the government's central control of the program and the tax credit and food stamp incentives.