

Reflective Activity 2

Case Study: Inappropriate Use of Surveys

Cambridge Analytical and Facebook Scandal

The firm collected data from millions of Facebook users through a third-party application. The application was not a simple quiz that users provided access to their Facebook profiles as they had assumed. However, it was a psychological questionnaire that did not only collect data from the participants but also harvest the information from their Facebook friends without their consent. The data was used to create voters' profiles (Confessore, 2018).

How had it happened?

The users took surveys that collected personal information and the app accessed the user's data and their friends. Thereafter the data was analysed by Cambridge Analytical to create psychological profiles and target individuals with specific political content (Confessore, 2018).

Why was it used?

Cambridge Analytica was used the data to build voters profiles (Confessore, 2018).

Example of inappropriate use of Surveys

Another example of inappropriate use of surveys was used in 2012 by the retail store, Target. It was revealed that the company had created a model that identifies pregnant customers based on their purchase patterns. The purpose of this was to send targeted advertisements to pregnant customers. This however raised privacy concerns when a teenager's father challenged the store manager after receiving a mail related to pregnancy for his daughter. The model had accurately predicted her pregnancy before her father was aware (Hill, 2012).

A potential impact is privacy invasion. This could potentially lead to unintended privacy breaches by predicting sensitive information that customers do not want to reveal about their personal lives.

References

Confessore, N., 2018. Cambridge Analytica and Facebook: The Scandal and the Fallout So Far. *The New York Times*.

Hill, K., 2012. *How Target Figured Out A Teen Girl Was Pregnant Before Her Father Did*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kashmirhill/2012/02/16/how-target-figured-out-a-teen-girl-was-pregnant-before-her-father-did/?sh=e4a080566686>

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