

After reading about the Cambridge Analytica scandal, I'm honestly surprised by how simple it was to use surveys to collect personal data. It is quite worrying that people's trust and willingness to participate was taken advantage of, probably without them fully understanding or agreeing to how their information would be used (Confessore, 2018).

This is not just about privacy; it brings up serious ethical issues around free choice and informed decision-making. Legally, it makes you wonder about data protection laws and whether platforms like Facebook are being held responsible enough. In society, it damages public trust and can allow manipulation. Professionally, it completely fails to stick to principles of honesty, openness, and working for the greater good. Another example is Aleksandr Kogan's app that gathered data on up to 87 million Facebook users for Cambridge Analytica (Cadwalladr & Graham-Harrison, 2018). The blowback is huge: elections interference via targeted political ads.

As people studying research, we have a duty to use tools like surveys carefully and with integrity. Strong ethical standards, strict rules around informed consent, and always striving to do good have to be the foundation of all our work when involving people and data. Only then can we hope to use the power of research to benefit society in a responsible way.

References

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- Confessore, N. (2018). Cambridge Analytica and Facebook: The Scandal and the Fallout So Far. *The New York Times*. [online] 4 Apr. Available from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/04/us/politics/cambridge-analytica-scandal-fallout.html> [Accessed 02 June 2024]