General Instructions

1. For each page, synthesize the reading and research by writing in complete sentences in essay format.
   a. Use the green instructions in the notes below each page to focus your research and writing.
   b. Write about each question, prompt, or process provided in those notes.
   c. Write a full page of text with lots of detail (about 270 words).
      i. Don’t generalize so much that your writing is devoid of detail.
      ii. Don’t repeat yourself.
   d. Cite each source by adding a hyperlink in the Title of the Article or law.
   e. Do not change the template:
      i. Text must be 14 point Lato left-justified type.
      ii. Refrain from adding extra margins or double spacing.
      iii. Do not bullet the paragraphs. Write in essay format only.
   f. Add additional pages if you need more room.

2. Add all sources to the Bibliography page.
   a. Include author, year, title, publisher, and URL.
   b. Number or bullet them using the list button.

When in doubt, write to the instructor for clarification using the Canvas Inbox.
Historical Timeline

2010
Global Science Research develops “thisisyourdigitallife”. “thisisyourdigitallife” asks users to take a psychological test. The app harvests the personal data of the test taker’s Facebook profile along the Facebook profile data of their Facebook friends (Meredith 2018).

2013
Cambridge Analytica, the company in possession of the physiological data gathered from “thisisyourdigitallife”, helps Ted Cruz and Donald Trump in their campaign. The help involved launching Facebook advertisement campaigns using the acquired psychological data (Meredith 2018).

2015/2016
Mark Zuckerberg, owner and founder of Facebook, confesses that Facebook failed to protect user data and that they are trying to figure out how the data breach happened. Zuckerberg later apologizes for the data breach and says that Facebook will make sure it never happens again (Meredith 2018).

March 17, 2018
Christopher Wylie blows the whistle on Cambridge Analytica, revealing that Cambridge Analytica bought the data gathered from “thisisyourdigitallife” and has been using it to profile people in an attempt to assist presidential campaigns. It was confirmed that at least 87 million Facebook profiles were harvested for data (Meredith 2018).

March 21-25, 2018
Open Graph is launched by Facebook. Open Graph allows third parties to ask the permission of Facebook users to use their personal data and the personal data of their Facebook friends. The personal data is all the information attached to their Facebook profile, including private messages (Meredith 2018).
The Cambridge Analytica and Facebook scandal began in 2010 when Facebook began to allow third parties to request Facebook profile data from Facebook users. Allowing this is not necessarily a problem because Facebook users were agreeing to letting their data be used. The problem was that one particular third party app, “thisisyourdigitallife”, was also acquiring personal data from all of the Facebook friends of the people agreeing to having their personal data looked at. A Vox article by Alvin Chang titled “The Facebook and Cambridge Analytica scandal, explained with a simple diagram” says that “thisisyourdigitallife” “exposed a loophole in Facebook API that allowed it to collect data from the Facebook friends of the quiz takers as well”. To express how big of a deal this loophole was, only 270,000 people agreed to have their data used by “thisisyourdigitallife”, but around 87 million Facebook users’ data was harvested from “thisisyourdigitallife”.

The second issue is that Cambridge Analytica illegally bought and sold the data. The data was originally used for “research”, but soon was being passed around illegally.

The third, and perhaps biggest problem with the scandal, is how Facebook values its users’ data. It is not known whether or not Facebook knew about the data breach before it went public, but people from within Facebook have reported the difficulties that the Facebook security team face when trying to protect Facebook users. They reportedly are “fighting an uphill battle against the people whose job is to make money for the company” (Chang 2018). This leads to the argument that Facebook is more concerned about money than privacy, and hints that the company could have prevented much of what happened in the scandal.
According to a Fortune article titled “Facebook Cambridge Analytica Scandal: 10 Questions Answered”, and a CNBC article “Facebook-Cambridge Analytica: A timeline of the data hijacking scandal”, the major players in the scandal were Aleksandr Kogan, Cambridge Analytica, Christopher Wylie, Facebook, and various Republican party campaigns. The first major player to affect the scandal is Facebook. Facebook in 2007 began allowing third parties to develop apps within the Facebook space, and then in 2010 Facebook began allowing third parties to request Facebook profile information. Kogan, the second major player, was able to use the two previous Facebook policies to gather Facebook user data. Kogan was a researcher who worked for Cambridge Analytica to gather the profile data of over 80 million Facebook users, data which was later used by Cambridge Analytica. Cambridge Analytica itself was a political consulting firm that used the Facebook data to assist various Republican campaigns, namely the Donald Trump and Ted Cruz campaigns. The Trump and Cruz campaigns allegedly used the data provided by Cambridge Analytica to fuel Facebook advertisement campaigns. It was Christopher Wylie, a researcher at Cambridge Analytica, who blew the whistle on how the data was being used.

Facebook holds power over its users, because Facebook holds all of its users data and is responsible for protecting it. Once Kogan and Cambridge Analytica got a hold of a large amount of Facebook profile data, they held power over Facebook. Facebook most likely knew what Cambridge Analytica was doing with the data, but letting the public know about it would be a disaster for Facebook, so they had to let Cambridge Analytica do whatever they wanted with the data.
Major Players

Wylie held power over Cambridge Analytica, having knowing how the data was being used and how it was acquired. The Republican parties held power over Facebook users because they were able to create specialized Facebook ads with the data that Cambridge Analytica was providing them.
Countries Affected

An article by ABC News titled “Facebook says up to 87m people affected in Cambridge Analytica data-mining scandal” shows a graph of which countries the Facebook and Cambridge Analytica scandal affected most. At the top of the list is the United States, with an estimated 70 million accounts mined and shared. Business Insider wrote an article titled “Here's a state-by-state breakdown of Facebook users impacted by the Cambridge Analytica scandal” that does an analysis on the states that had the most and least amount of mined and shared Facebook accounts. An interesting thing to note is that nine of the top ten most affected states, in terms of percentage of the state population affected, were Republican voting states. The top ten least affected states were Democratic voting states. This could be due to how the Facebook data was used to assist Republican campaigns.

Indonesia had an estimated 1.1 million Facebook profiles mined for information. According to an article written by Wesley Rahn, titled “Cambridge Analytica causing trouble for Facebook in Southeast Asia”, the minister of Communication and Information Technology in Indonesia is threatening to block Facebook in Indonesia if it is found out that the profile data harvested from Indonesian Facebook profiles was illegally shared.

Politico article “2.7M Europeans affected by Facebook, Cambridge Analytica scandal”, written by Laurens Cerelus and Mark Scott, shows how the different European countries were affected by the scandal. At the top of the list is the United Kingdom, with over 1 million people affected. The second most affected European country was Germany, with about 300,000 people affected.

A little over 300,000 Australians had their Facebook profile data illegally shared (ABC News 2018). It is clear that the US was most heavily impacted by the scandal, but it still needs to be noted that this was a worldwide event.
Consequences

The scandal has produced financial, public reputation, and data protection policy consequences. To start with the financial consequences, Facebook stock shares dropped 24 percent as a result of the scandal, 24 percent being about 134 billion dollars. However, according to a CBS News article written by Anthony Mirhaydari titled "Facebook stock recovers all $134B lost after Cambridge Analytica data scandal" reports that Facebook has recovered all of it's losses. Furthermore, Facebook’s’ stock prices are likely to not drop anytime soon, in fact they are most likely to go up due to Facebook releasing several new products soon, including a dating app, an add free subscription, and smart speakers (Mirhaydari 2018). Alex Hern and David Pegg wrote an article titled "Facebook fined for data breaches in Cambridge Analytica scandal" that says Facebook is going to fined the maximum fine possible by the European General Data Protection, which is 500,000 euros.

After the Facebook data scandal went public, people worldwide were furious. According to Louai Nasser’s article "How Much Will Cambridge Analytica Data Scandal Impact Facebook Usage?", people were threatening to delete Facebook and quit using it. However, despite all the threats, not many people actually quit using Facebook. Nasser says “old habits die hard” as part of why people remain using Facebook. Another reason why people are not deleting Facebook is because it is many people’s only way to communicate over long distances.

Advertisers will continue to use Facebook as an advertising platform because of the amount of traffic Facebook gets. The European General Data Protection has set tighter regulations on data protection, but this doesn’t get rid of the fact that Facebook is still a huge advertisement platform and many companies and applications rely on it for revenue and advertising.
The Guardian interviews former Cambridge Analytica employee Christopher Wylie, who “blew the whistle” on how Cambridge Analytica acquired and used the Facebook profile data of millions of people. He explains how Cambridge Analytica was “built on Facebook profiles”, using the data to build custom advertisements in order to change the way people think about specific ideas and concepts.

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Using Utilitarianism, as it is portrayed in CrashCourse’s video “Utilitarianism: Crash Course Philosophy #36”, Aleksandr Kogan was being unethical and his actions were not morally justified. Utilitarianism can be defined as “performing actions that produce the most good to the most people”. Kogan first made an application that requests the Facebook data of the people who use the application. He stated this data would be used for research purposes. This action is morally justified by Utilitarianism, as the data is used solely for research, no harm is brought to the users of the application, and the research is presumably used for good causes. However, Kogan illegally shared the data, and suddenly people other than himself were in possession of the Facebook data of 87 million people worldwide. Utilitarianism does not say breaking the law is unethical, but any action must produce the most good to the most amount of people. Harm did not come to all those 87 million people, but many people and companies were hurt. As a result of gathering the Facebook data and sharing it, Cambridge Analytica shut down, Facebook stocks dropped 24 percent, Facebook and the Trump administration took a big hit to their respective public reputation, people had their data shared with companies that can and did abuse it, and possibly more unknown entities were affected. Kogan’s actions produced good to only a few people, namely himself, and they harmed many others. This goes directly against the philosophy of utilitarianism, and therefore his actions were unethical.

2. Cerulus, Laurens, and Mark Scott. “2.7M Europeans Affected by Facebook, Cambridge Analytica Scandal.” *POLITICO*, 6 Apr. 2018, 


   www.theguardian.com, 


