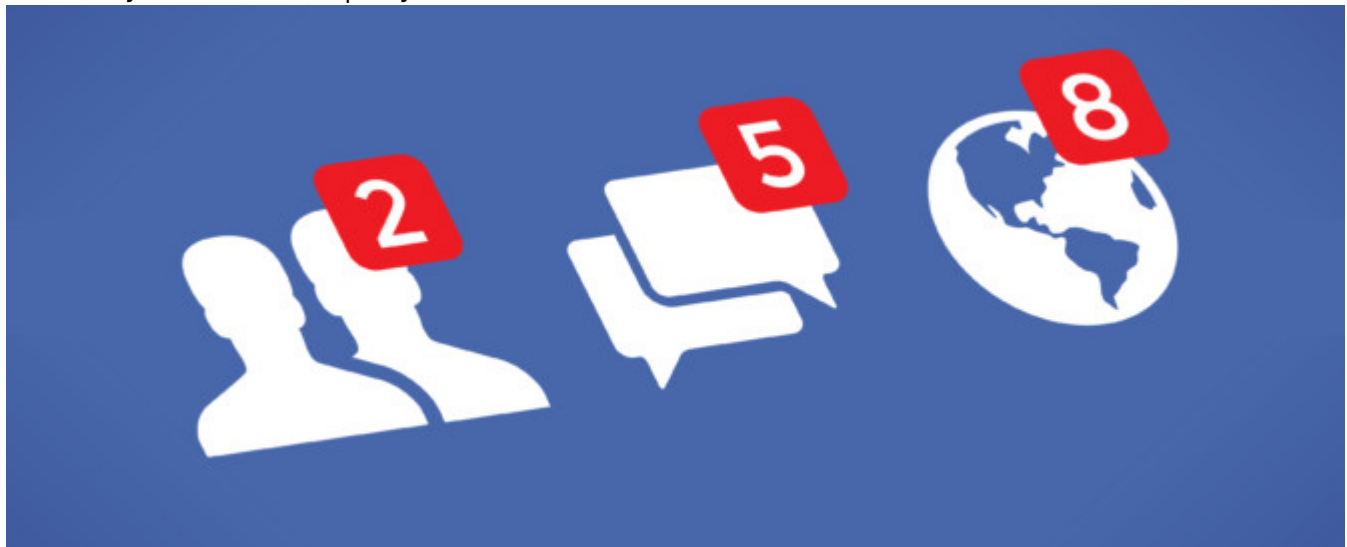


WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA SCANDAL

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written by Lucinda Botes | May 23, 2018



The Cambridge Analytica scandal has recently become a buzzword that everyone seems to be talking about but what exactly is it about? Most people understand that it has something to do with the leaking of Facebook users' data but who stole the data, how and why?

Who is Cambridge Analytica?

They are a multinational political consulting firm based in the UK specializing in advising politicians on political campaign strategies. Cambridge Analytica also collects and connects data to consult and communicate for political candidates. They do this by tracking information through data mining and analytics.

What did Cambridge Analytica do?

They created quizzes on Facebook which they used to mine data from over 50 million Facebook users. The information probably included people's names, locations, genders and things users have "liked" on Facebook. They then used this information to create political advertisements that targeted people's mental vulnerabilities based on the data they collected.

It is believed that they used the data to influence millions of Americans in an attempt to influence their votes leading up to the 2016 USA Presidential Election. The majority of these ads were positive towards Donald Trump or were very negative towards Hillary Clinton. The majority of these ads also contained false information.

What was Facebook's role?

Facebook breached users' trust by allowing apps to mine data on their platform and then allowed the same company who mined the data to target users with politically triggered advertisements.

Why is this important?

This is an example of a sophisticated modern-day propaganda machine. The whole series of events

brings to light how companies can use our data against us, to influence our decisions and in turn influence society significantly. Secondly it highlights that the information we share online means and says a lot more about us than we want to admit. It certainly also confirms how vulnerable we are in social media spaces. The ultimate question though, is whether this is enough to make you delete your Facebook account?