

Discussion Guide for The Great Hack

The Great Hack details the story of Cambridge Analytica's efforts to use data acquired from Facebook to impact the 2016 US Presidential Election, Brexit, and several other elections across the globe. Despite substantial efforts by governments, technology companies, and civil society there is substantial concern about more sophisticated versions of these tactics being utilized in upcoming elections, such as the US Presidential election in 2020.

Discussion Questions

1. Can you imagine an algorithm with access to personal data changing your beliefs? Why or why not? What about the beliefs of people you care about?
2. Research has shown that the Big 5 personality traits, the core dataset used by Cambridge Analytica, can be predicted by tracking eye movements¹, and preliminary evidence suggests that they may be predictable with mouse movements². Given that some amount of sensitive personal data will always be available to the online world, how might we protect ourselves and those we care about?
3. What are ways that we might stop the risk of election manipulation while respecting the rights of individuals and organizations such as campaigns to participate in the Democratic process?

1. Hoppe, Sabrina, Tobias Loetscher, Stephanie A. Morey, and Andreas Bulling. "Eye Movements During Everyday Behavior Predict Personality Traits." *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 12 (2018).
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2018.00105>.
2. Khan, Iftikhar Ahmed, Willem-Paul Brinkman, and Robert Hierons. "Towards Estimating Computer Users' Mood from Interaction Behaviour with Keyboard and Mouse." *Frontiers of Computer Science* 7, no. 6 (December 1, 2013): 943–54. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11704-013-2331-z>.

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