



Funny, When Obama Harvested Facebook Data On Millions Of Users To Win In 2012, Everyone Cheered



Privacy: Facebook faces what some are calling an "existential crisis" over revelations that its user data fell into the hands of the Trump campaign. Whether or not the attacks on the social media giant are justified, the fact is that the Obama campaign used **Facebook (FB)** data in the same way in 2012. But the reaction from the pundits and press back then was, shall we say, somewhat different.

According to various news accounts, a professor at Cambridge University built a Facebook app around 2014 that involved a personality quiz. About 270,000 users of the app agreed to share some of their Facebook information, as well as data from people on their friends list. As a result, tens of millions ended up part of this data-mining operation.

Consulting firm Cambridge Analytica, which paid for the research, later worked with the Trump campaign to help them target advertising campaigns on Facebook, using the data they'd gathered on users.

But while the Trump campaign used Cambridge Analytica during the primaries, it didn't use the information during the general election campaign, relying instead on voter data provided by the Republican National Committee, according to CBS News. It reports that "the Trump campaign had tested the RNC data, and it proved to be vastly more accurate than Cambridge Analytica's."

Since this involves the Trump campaign, the news accounts have been suffused with dark conspiratorial tones. The Times article talks about how Trump consultants "exploited" Facebook data, and quotes a source calling it a "scam." It has been widely described as a massive data breach.

But Facebook had been **promoting itself** to political parties looking for a new way to reach voters.

Nor was this the first time Facebook users had their data unwittingly shared with a political campaign.

