

Social Media, U.S. Election Campaigns, and Facebook Data Privacy

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The experience of working with social media in the conditions of conducting election campaigns and public activity of US politicians is analyzed. A new trend in public activity of the first persons of American politics is the democratic effect of proximity to the people on the Internet, realized through an active presence in the blogosphere and social media. Technological features of the Internet presence allow politicians to analyze in real-time the dynamics of the number of supporters and opponents of their programs and to moderate this number in the right direction.

Keywords:

Modern media, Internet, American elections, social media, information policy, media, social networks, PR, election campaigns, blogosphere, public activity.

Since the 1990s, when the rapid spread of Internet technologies began, the number of users of the World Wide Web increased tens and hundreds of times. Modern society exists in a “computer-oriented” space; it needs combinations of text, audio and video content, as well as the ability to share information with each other.

The Internet has become a full-fledged political tool. At the same time, it was used both as an information platform and as a coordinator of mass actions. With the development of telecommunications, society has access to huge volumes of information; it has become possible to express one’s opinion both individually and collectively. Social media has become an integral part of civil society around the world. Social networks become the center of the exchange of opinions and actual or fundamental information. An analysis of open corporate sources suggests that in the past five years, more than half of corporations have increased their spending on social media.

All this leads to changes in the structure of the media. Changing and distribution of the audience by traditional and non-traditional media and the composition of this audience. The proportion of those who receive information only from new media regularly grows. Social networks also influence the political layer of life. There were opportunities for the actions of various actors in the political process and a large-scale coordination of these actions. Recently, political analysts and analysts often talked about the significant impact of the Internet, social networks and their communities, online media and blogs on political processes.

So, in America during the first elections of Barack Obama, volunteers were coordinated through social networks, and thus a large number of young voters were involved. Obama organized the collection of

money for his election campaign via the Internet. The American experience of election campaigns and political processes shows that the Internet allows American democracy to reach out to new people and find new channels of financing. On Tahrir Square, where protest protests took place in Egypt, there was a special place where bloggers sat. In what was happening in Russia on Bolotnaya Square, social networks also played a big role.

Now, there are polar opinions about how the Internet affects politics. There are Internet optimists, such as Weel Ghonim, who was the main blogger in Egypt and organized the most popular page on Facebook to organize protests. In his book "Revolution 2.0," he says that without socialist protest in Egypt would not have existed. The articles of the American Internet theorist Clay Scherki also emphasize the positive role of the Internet and social networks in political life, primarily in coordinating the construction of civil society through social networks.

At the same time, Internet pessimists insist on the negative role of the Internet. One of the most famous among them, the Belarusian dissident Eugene Morozov, who emigrated to the USA on the sad experience of Belarus and Moldova, shows that the Internet itself is a double-edged sword. He refutes the idea that the Internet helps democratization and protest movements, as it is also used by the authoritarian regime to suppress the same protests. Internet pessimists insist that the idea that the Internet is changing politics for the better is an illusion. Cass Sunstein, one of the key employees of Barack Obama's campaign headquarters, argues that the Internet leads to the fact that people scatter on their blogs, and everyone reads on the Web only their own kind, finding themselves in an information cocoon. Moreover, it is impossible to predict whether these people active in the blogosphere are also active in real life or everything will be limited to expressing an opinion online.

But, in our opinion, all these points of view only emphasize the importance of Internet technologies for political processes. We can say that political web activity consists of two areas: websites and social networks. Moreover, if the former has long become an obligatory part of the political protocol, the latter is rapidly being mastered by political actors, and their influence on political activity has not yet been fully explored. In this regard, it is necessary to identify two major directions:

1. Changes in the media sphere under the influence of the blogosphere.
2. Ability of blogs to stimulate active political participation.

We already mentioned that blogging has had a significant impact on modern journalism. Journalists create their own blogs, collecting information and promoting an active civil position in relation to topical issues. But there is also a new generation of "civilian reporters" and active users who, using the capabilities of the mobile phone camera and the Internet to collect information, destroy the existing structure of the media space – the "producer-receiver" of information.

The political blogosphere is called a source of online activity, as blogs allow online activists to use their opportunities for political action. In this regard, there was a statement that the blogosphere reflects more of the views of society and is an indicator of the democratic nature of the Internet. By

nature, blogs are interactive. Most of them allow visitors to answer comments to the blogger. However, both in blogs and on Twitter, most of the information does not apply to politics. Therefore, the most important functional search element for Twitter was a hashtag,

To organize a discussion around one topic and find relevant information.

Internet participation can include electronic versions of traditional forms of participation, such as electronic referral to government bodies, e-voting, and completely new forms of cybersecurity, such as politically motivated hacking. The Internet increases traditional forms of political participation, facilitating the dissemination of news about events and political events to a broad audience and coordinating political activists.

Within the framework of this article on the material from open sources, we will examine in more detail how successful American politicians work with modern media.

Many experts believe that Barack Obama was the first American president who managed to win elections, including through the strengthening of his presence on social networks. For two presidential terms, he completely changed the world view of how the head of state can work with Internet media, setting new rules of the game, which the politicians of the whole world are trying to follow.

During the presidential campaign of 2008, Obama set the vector of public activity, using Facebook and Twitter intensively. At the same time, his site, www.barackobama.com, was launched, which became a kind of analog of the social network for all supporters of the future leader of the nation. Obama became the first US president to actively appear in evening talk shows, which is in demand among American youth because all these shows have their own channels on YouTube. The important role played by the content: Obama read offensive tweets about himself and the news to the music, replaced the presenter, told how his day went, and did other non-standard things.

The most memorable example of the “new interaction” between the president and the Internet media was the appearance of a clip specially shot by Obama for BuzzFeed, in which he does “things that everyone does but do not talk about it”: looks in the mirror, makes faces, learns to use selfies and so on. The video collected more than 62 million views on Facebook, and the only news with hyphae from it is more than 2 million. Michelle Obama provided him with active media support, also performing and even dancing on a talk show [Bondarenko 2016]. But entertainment content alone was not limited to, the broadcasts traditionally broadcast on television were preliminarily published in blogs with Obama.

To his success in Internet media Obama is indebted to Dan Pfeiffer, who was responsible for the whole complex of his PR communications from the presidential campaign. The main goals, which were in the development of the strategy of the president’s behavior in the Internet media, Pfeiffer said:

1] to work out communication channels which are used by an increasing number of people;

2] to gain the confidence of opinion leaders;

3] to show the true human face of the president and his team [Bondarenko 2016].

These tasks were implemented, among other things, through unexpected viral videos that were created right in the White House.

Of course, Obama used the largest media in the United States to broadcast his messages and the current support of Hillary Clinton. But his strong point is that he took away that part of the audience, which is not interested in reading the big analytical calculations and in-depth interviews.

Even the withdrawal of the 44th US president was illustrated by a funny short film called “The Divine Commander,” which also became popular on social networks.

I must say that such a strategy of increasing popularity is justified. Moreover, it is initially advantageous in modern conditions. Studies by American scientists showed that even those people who do not spend much time on the Internet regularly use the Internet to search for news and information [Baluev, Novosyolov 2012]. New media, defined as social media, are seriously different from online versions of print media by their interactive nature. They are characterized by a two-way communication system, as well as low cost of use compared to traditional media, which remain quite expensive.

The old media depend heavily on the revenues generated from advertising, while new media, in particular Facebook and Twitter, candidates could use almost free of charge. And even with the current monetization of social networks, a large number of free opportunities remain.

During the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign, major-party candidates Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton made extensive use of modern media. The election demonstrated the growing importance of candidates’ social-network accounts. Trump, Clinton, and Democratic primary candidate Bernie Sanders actively shared material on Twitter and Facebook. Clinton also used Instagram, Pinterest, and Snapchat. The follower totals cited in this discussion describe the 2016 campaign period and should not be interpreted as current figures [New Consciousness Control ... 2016].

In the last six months, the media tried to explain what exactly the phenomenon of Donald Trump, calling many different aspects. Undoubtedly, one of them is Trump’s personal attraction and charisma. In the United States, one of the main indicators is business success. Trump in his youth, began with very modest positions and quickly moved. His shocking nature, the ability to present himself and the great experience of participating in various competitions play into his hands. There is an opinion that America is so keen on show business that the best showman enjoys success. And then, of course, all the cards in the hands of Donald Trump. His reality show “Candidate” collected 5-7 million spectators a week. Its Twitter is read by over 8 million subscribers.

One gets the impression that Trump has no internal discipline, no brakes, and he says what comes to

his mind. Sometimes, he looks sincere, and sometimes overly shocking, but clearly, he adapts well to the changes and is interesting as a media person.

Trump immediately realized that the posts quickly lost relevance, so he reacted to events in real time. Every day, he publishes ten least 10 records, and sometimes it comes to 50-60. In addition, Twitter allows Trump to insult political opponents with impunity, while Facebook actively opposes the trolling coming from such a famous person.

It is worth noting that the current trend of close interconnection of technologies and media is growing every year, significantly changing the behavior and habits of the audience. Spoiled with gaming technology, the audience perceives news as a game. In a situation where the user has a choice: to read the report, to see a new series of "Games of Thrones," or to play, – the news also has to become a little "Game of Thrones" or a video game. And talented showmen, such as Trump, feel in this game as fish in the water.

The focus of the media environment is also changing. The lines between politicians, journalists, bloggers and activists continue to blur. Significance is measured by the number of subscribers. Such qualities as "editorial flair" and "sense of the audience" cease to matter, because now there are specific large data about each person who came to the site. The methods of analyzing these data and the algorithms based on them are substantially improved. And this is the main explanation why successful American politicians turn to social media and try to be closer to the people. Social networks allow you to count your supporters and opponents on their heads, giving you the opportunity to stay with them in direct interaction, tracking their response to events in real time.

However, speaking about the quality of interaction with the audience through social media, it is worth paying attention to such important political process possibilities of social networks, such as information control. So, in the spring of 2016, Facebook's social network was accused of political censorship. The reason was an article in which former Facebook employees claim that a selection of news for users,

the staff of the company is engaged, and they purposely put the materials of the liberal media into the top, ignoring the articles of conservative media. In the company itself, the accusations of censorship were rejected. And in March, Facebook updated its rules, explaining that you can not publish on social networks.

The changes touched on various topics, such as hate speech, intimidation, materials that are hard to perceive, the publication of images of the naked body, as well as issues of confidentiality, security, and intellectual property. In particular, real threats or organization of acts of violence in real life were banned, and support of terrorist organizations was not allowed. The Facebook administration also removes various insults of people based on race or ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or illness.

At first glance, this looks quite realistic. Although social networking platforms are new, they are used

by political competitors in the same way as billboards and TV commercials. The process remains competitive. The leader is the one who will unite more supporters and buy a larger advertising package.

At the same time, numerous studies have shown the existing opportunities for technology abuse on Facebook. Published in 2012 in Nature article by the American professor of political science, Robert Bond and other researchers describes an experiment in which, on the day of the 2010 election, Facebook sent a reminder “come and vote” to 60 million users. This led to the plots of about 340,000 people who would otherwise not go to the polls. Professor of International Law at Harvard University Jonathan Zit-Train published an article in 2014, pointing out that, given the huge amount of collected information about users, Facebook can easily send such messages only to those people who support one particular party or candidate. And because these advertisements are ephemeral, just like search output, manipulating the elections will not leave any paper footprint [New control of consciousness. 2016].

Now, there are no laws prohibiting Facebook from selectively sending ads to specific users. Facebook earns money from targeted advertising. It is impossible to know whether the social network is manipulating at the moment, but it is obvious that it would be foolish and, perhaps, even wrong for Facebook not to do this. Some candidates are more profitable for the company than others, and Facebook’s management is obligated to shareholders to promote their interests.

Another experiment, Facebook, which was written in 2014 in the PNAS, has raised objections around the world. According to the article, during the week 689, 000 users of the social network received either disproportionate.

There are many positive news, either in excess of negative news or a balanced news line. The members of the first group then used a few more positive expressions in communication, while the members of the other group – used a few more negative ones. This showed that companies – owners of social media can intentionally and massively manage the “emotional states” of people. This thought troubled many. Claims were caused by the fact that such a large-scale experiment on emotions was conducted without the explicit consent of the participants [New control of consciousness ... 2016].

Of course, Facebook has a lot of data about consumers, but they do not go in comparison with Google’s database, which collects information about people in 24/7 mode, using 60 different platforms for observation. Among them – are the search engine itself, Google Wallet, Google Maps, Google Adwords, Google Analytics, Chrome, Google Docs, Android, YouTube and many others. Gmail users mostly do not pay attention to the fact that Google stores and analyzes every email, even unsent drafts, as well as incoming messages that come from both Gmail users and other services. These high-tech features give Internet companies opportunities for unobtrusive but effective control and manipulation by their users.

To understand the possibilities of the new consciousness control, we will consider in more detail the

main Google search engine. Her search is so good and popular that the company name is now widely used as a verb in different world languages. “Googling” means finding the information you need in the Google search engine. Google provides the right information almost instantly and almost always in the first place in the “search results”.

This ordered list is so good that in half the cases, it is enough to open the first two of its items. By 10 items posted on the first page of results, more than 90 percent of clicks go. Very few people open other pages of the issue, in spite of the fact that often these pages are thousands – which means that you can find useful information in them. Google decides which of the billions of web pages it will include in our search results and how to rank them. How this decision is made is a mystery. According to the privacy policy of Google, with which everyone who uses the company’s product agrees, it can transfer the collected information to anyone, including government authorities. (Federal Trade Commission, 2019)

Undoubtedly, if Google decided to intervene in the elections, for this, it would have great opportunities, writes R. Epstein, the leading scientific psychologist of the American Institute of Behavioral Research and Technology. The company could first use its vast database of personal information to identify hesitant voters. Behind-

so that she could modify search transmissions day after day only for these people by selecting a specific candidate. The main advantage of this approach is that it is very difficult to identify the manipulation of Google [New control of consciousness. 2016].

Due to the fact that Google is the best search engine, and scanning the rapidly growing Internet becomes prohibitively expensive, more and more search engines take information from the leader and do not generate it on their own.

Watching the presidential elections in the US, researchers are paying attention to the obvious signs that Google supports Hill-Clary. In April 2015, Clinton hired former employees of Google. According to researchers, this resource can bring Clinton from 2.6 to 10.4 million votes on election day, despite the fact that no one will know about it and there will not be a single paper footprint. Wavering voters have always been the key to winning elections, and there has never been such a powerful, effective and inexpensive way to attract them, as now Google has.

Summarizing the foregoing, we note that under the current conditions of the changed influence of social media, their role in the political process grows every year. The existing polar points of view about the importance of the Internet for politics do not abolish the main thing – a significant degree of this influence.

Social media provides an opportunity for development as a democracy, as a platform for broadcasting, exchanging views and comments, and control, allowing you to manipulate through existing technologies.

In October, the media reported that the Presidential Administration plans to launch 100 Telegram channels in the regions to form an agenda before the presidential elections. Later, presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that the Kremlin actively monitors the Telegram channels and digests on them are regularly placed on the table by Putin. This fact shows how much importance is given to social media in political processes and in election campaigns in particular. The use of this tool has already become mandatory for candidates at elections of any level. (Information Commissioner's Office, 2018)

Internet and social media technologies began to be used in elections in 1996 in the USA when the first presidential candidate's election site appeared. In the 2000s, digital technologies allowed the introduction of fundraising, and the mobilization of the electorate began via the Internet. In the late 2000s, social networks began to take the first place in order to promote candidates, in the beginning of 2010 mobile technologies and Big Data began to appear. Since the middle of 2010, mobile messengers are beginning to develop as a pre-election tool.

Advertising

The most indicative are the election campaigns of Barack Obama and Donald Trump. In 2008, Obama's headquarters began using mobile technologies in conjunction with social networks. According to research, at that time, 88% of users of social networks with the right to vote had mobile phones. At McCain's headquarters, work on Facebook and YouTube began with a lag of 7 months, working with Twitter – with a lag of 1 year and 4 months. A number of technologies, including mobile ones, were not used at all.

The pre-election site of Obama has since 2007 allowed the registration of a personal cabinet, subscribing to thematic mailings, track the calendar of campaign events, while the content of the site has changed depending on the geolocation of the user. In addition, through the private office, it was possible to make contributions, sign up for volunteers, and mark the events of interest. Also, on the site, there were links to all accounts on social networks.

Within the framework of the 2008 election campaign, Obama's main strategy on the Internet was the presence on the maximum possible number of sites, including industry and niche sites: for example, LinkedIn and Reddit. Within the framework of this strategy, segmentation of the electorate was carried out, and various platforms were used to work with them. So, on Facebook, in addition to the main page of Obama, there were pages "Veterans for Obama", "Latin Americans for Obama", "Students for Obama" and others like that.

The novelty of the 2008 campaign was also the development of the Obama Mobile mobile application by Barack Obama's headquarters, which allowed volunteers to make calls on their contact database and mark the result of this interaction, see the call statistics for the campaign as a whole, track the calendar of events, contact the nearest headquarters, see reports on all past events.

Especially in this campaign, it is possible to note the unique technology of SMS dispatches, in which the volunteer was sent a proposal to call a number from the active base and agitate a person to vote for Obama: only numbers that people left in person were used.

In 2012, the use of social media significantly expanded; there are accounts of Obama on Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, and MySpace. Through mobile applications, feedback forms and social networks, interaction with voters and their mobilization were carried out. By quantitative indicators of work with social media, Obama has significantly bypassed the candidate from the Republican Party, Mitt Romney.

Indicators of work with social media in the presidential elections in 2012 in the US

Obama Romney

- Facebook 30.7 million friends 8.8 million friends
- Twitter has 21 million followers and 1.3 million followers
- Youtube 237,000 subscribers 23,000 subscribers
- Instagram has 1.4 million subscribers and 42,000 subscribers

In the presidential election in the US in 2016, the situation repeated, but the advantage this time was on the side of Republican candidate Donald Trump. The involvement of users of social networks was very high, and Trump's campaign won not only in quantitative terms but also in qualitative ones. For example, the page of Trump on Facebook had more subscribers compared to the pages of Hillary Clinton, but it also led to a number of likes, comments and reposts.

- It should be noted that in the statistics of 20 posts about Trump on Facebook, only one was positive.
- Has had and has a viral effect on the personality of the current US president.
- Links to Donald Trump's accounts: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram.

In Russia, the political year in 2017 is marked by an increase in the role of instant messengers, in particular, the political Telegram channels that have proliferated as mushrooms have become a phenomenon, through which anonymous or not very anonymous "insides" spread with varying degrees of probability. At the same time, political scientists highly appreciate Telegram as a means of influencing the political situation and political class due to the fact that the information that is broadcast there is not available on official channels.

At the same time, the political Telegram community is a rather narrow stratum of elite officials, journalists, PR people and ordinary people who are seriously interested in politics. That is, a message launched by Telegram does not reach the main part of the electorate and does not directly affect it. Despite this, the government is actively working with messengers and Telegram in particular, actively heating interest in it with regular news about its possible ban.

The Facebook Scandal But Sorted

It's been fermenting in me since two weeks ago the scandal around Facebook, Cambridge Analytica and the misuse of 50 million datasets got rolling. Because a significant part of the coverage on the subject is wrong – and I think you have to sort a little bit there. (Federal Trade Commission, 2019)

So far, the story often goes like this: “Facebook had one of the biggest data leaks in the history of the social network. The company Cambridge Analytica was able to tap 50 million records that influenced the election in the US in favor of Donald Trump. In response to the data leak, companies such as Tesla and SpaceX have deleted their appearances on Facebook. The social network itself is responding to the massive pressure and wants to give its users better and easier control over their data over the coming months.”

First, it was not a data leak.

Five years ago, the Russian-American neuroscientist Aleksandr Kogan came up with an idea for Facebook: he wanted to collect data on users for scientific purposes using an app within Facebook. He then invented a psycho-test called “thisisyourdigitallife”.

Around 270,000 people used this psychoassay, and – for that! – knowingly agreed to read out data such as the place of residence and the likes on Facebook. The confirmation window for it you know for sure. It also appears if you play Candy Crush or want to sign in to other online services like Spotify or Tinder with your Facebook login.

Anyone who submits his data to an app within Facebook will knowingly provide it. So, this is not a data leak.

The problem was that the app “thisisyourdigitallife” could not only the data of its approximately 270,000 users but also those of their friends. This meant that it was no longer 270,000 records but 50 million.

This could happen, first of all, because Facebook gave its app developers this opportunity in principle at that time. Secondly, the 49.7 million people whose records are also affected had not fought through the social network attitudes. Had they done so, they would have hidden in the menus the possibility of prohibiting the transfer of data to apps of their friends.

The feature that apps were allowed to suck the data of friends, Facebook turned off the juice in the spring of 2015, even after it had long caused serious concerns with privacy advocates. Until then, however, many apps are likely to have subtracted the data. So I would not rule out that there are more of this kind waiting next to the Cambridge Analytica case, if not so big and so political.

In summary, It was not a data leak but a “feature” of Facebook. The problem is, first of all, the users,

who are too lazy to go over their attitudes and second, Facebook, who left this door open for data sharing for years.

Second, Facebook does not sell user data.

Aleksandr Kogan sold the 50 million records to Cambridge Analytica – breaking his contract with Facebook. App developers like him were allowed to collect all this data, but only for use in connection with their apps. Selling the data to third parties has always been prohibited. If Facebook at this point therefore “as a victim”, as I’ve read it more often, that’s true.

However, over the years, Facebook has apparently failed to rigorously control its developers – and has handled the Cambridge Analytica case quite formally. Facebook knows that Kogan has sold data to the company since 2015 and has only been assured by both of them in writing that this data has been deleted – which did not happen. Here, a harder gait would have been appropriate; former Facebook employee Sandy Pakrilas sums up the problem in the Guardian:

Asked what kind of control Facebook had over the data given to outside developers, he replied: “Zero. Absolutely none. Once the data leaves Facebook servers, there is no control, and there’s no insight into what’s going on. ”

However, Facebook has not sold data. I keep hearing this accusation: “Facebook sells our data. After all, that’s their business model. “I’ve been talking foolishly over the past few years on this point: it’s not Facebook’s business model to sell our data. On the contrary, it would be detrimental to the business model.

Facebook earns \$ 40 billion a year in personalized advertising. For example, advertisers can place an ad on Facebook for Norah Jones fans who are between 30 and 40 years old, male and living in Dormagen. I get to see this ad then – but advertisers do not realize that it’s me who can see them. If the data were once sold and circulated, they would not be so valuable anymore. So Facebook sits on its data treasure.

In summary, Facebook does not sell user data, only access to the respective users. The data transfer to app developers was and is, therefore, a potential threat to their own business model.

Third, there is no evidence that Cambridge Analytica has really influenced elections.

It all sounds too perfect: the evil data collector Facebook, whose data lands at an ominous company that promises to influence elections. The scientist Aleksandr Kogan is said to have received money from St. Petersburg for his research. The company Cambridge Analytica should have connections to the Russian oil company Lukoil. And then we all wish to get a simple explanation for such things as

Trump and Brexit.

What we are experiencing right now is the reissue of a discussion at the end of 2016. Cambridge Analytica was already in the headlines after The Magazine published the article “I just showed that the bomb exists.” “The psychologist Michal Kosinski has developed a method to analyze people on the basis of their behavior on Facebook meticulously,” it said. Kosinski helped Donald Trump win with his wondrous Big Data methods.

Behind it, I had already made a few question marks in WDR Digitalistan 2016. The Cambridge Analytica article cited evidence from only two people, namely inventors and sellers of Big Data methods. The article mistook correlation and causality – a popular mistake. And the article concealed that Ted Cruz had dropped in the Cambridge Analytica Republican primaries in the middle of his campaign – apparently because he was not satisfied with the results. The authors of the article had to row back in the Swiss Tages-Anzeiger:

“We should have questioned our research results more. Then, the necessary relativizations would remain in the text – such as the Cambridge Analytica abdominal landings and their controversial role in the Brexit and Cruz campaigns. ”

To this day, there are doubts that Cambridge Analytica has been able to influence elections and popular referendums, even after the Guardian’s coverage kicked off the Facebook data scandal. Jürgen Hermes works in the spectrum of science, as the company promises a lot but always remains very vague when it comes to how these promises are supposedly implemented. Proof of this remains Cambridge Analytica to this day guilty. Instead, the British channel Channel 4 shows that the company relies on methods other than just data analysis:

How reliable are the claims of a company that uses such methods? His manager responded to the question of whether it could get compromising details about the political opponent, answering that one could “send girls to the candidate’s house,” and Ukrainians were “very nice, I think that works very well”? Who offers to give money to a candidate for his election campaign, to offer him a piece of land in return – and record it on video?

All this does not mean that we should not worry about targeting and manipulation. With all the data, especially Facebook, we have to remain vigilant – even after the psychological experiments that Facebook itself has conducted with users. We should also keep a close eye on Cambridge Analytica. But the story of this company also means that it brings conspicuously many clues for an air number.

In summary, Political targeting should work – but maybe sooner, if you have the possibilities, which only Facebook has. When it comes to Cambridge Analytica, there are still too many questions left.

Fourth, Tesla and SpaceX probably have not deleted their Facebook pages

That also fits in perfectly with the story: the bad Facebook, on the one hand – appalled companies and users on the other side. Highlight: WhatsApp co-founder Brian Acton called on Twitter to turn his back on Facebook – and Tesla and SpaceX boss Elon Musk stepped on it.

After that it was almost everywhere, the Facebook pages were “deleted”. You can not just delete Facebook pages. You can also disable it. Hardly any report went into the possibility that you can probably put the pages back online anytime. They each had around 2.6 million fans; It would be madness to take the opportunity to reach it via Facebook. So my suspicion: a public relations stunt.

Especially with Elon Musk you would have to know better. Or, as Vox puts it: “The guy who founded a company called ‘Boring Company’ and used it to sell 20,000 flame throwers. Who called a company ‘Thud’ and does not tell anyone what it is for. The Tesla donated a bioweapon defense button. With Musk, it’s often hard to tell if it’s really about technical innovation, glaring trolls or a mix of both. ”

In summary, Everyone wants to hear that the big uprising against Facebook is now beginning – Elon Musk is taking advantage of the hour. Possibly, the Facebook pages of Tesla and SpaceX but not deleted, but only temporarily disabled.

Fifth, Facebook did not respond “quickly.”

On Wednesday, Facebook announced that the privacy tools will be redesigned. On the smartphone, the settings were soon “not distributed to almost 20 different subpages, but in one place accessible.” Outdated settings options are being revised. Among other things, it should help users to understand which information can be shared with apps and which can not.

Left Old, Right New: The Privacy Tools For Facebook

It was said in the coverage this week that often, with this change, Facebook reacted to the data scandal. That’s wrong. Facebook itself states in its announcement that it has been working on a large number of these updates for quite some time – and indeed, it announced the new privacy tools in January. Anyone who is familiar with the subject knows that it is not possible to revise central functions such as privacy tools in just one and a half weeks. For development of this kind, entire development teams usually take several months.

Of course, Facebook should be happy to see people using the revised privacy tools to respond to the data scandal. The timing is good. Just as Facebook has often chosen him well, Facebook has to listen

to criticism. Facebook admits that everything is too complicated. Facebook is building. That was already in 2010. That's how it is today. To the outside, it sounds good when being rebuilt. Internally, however, it can also confuse users when things are constantly changing – who wants to roam through new menus with regularity?

And then there is the announcement from Facebook, that it will now be easier to download your own data – “after all, it is your data,” writes Facebook. I had to laugh. This function will make it possible to download a copy of your own data in a format with which you should be able to upload it to other online platforms again. That sounds like a great, open, accommodating step from Facebook. However, the corporation conceals that this function is, in fact, a statutory requirement – if the new General Data Protection Regulation in the EU applies from the end of May.

Summary: What is being done in response to the data scandal is not a response to the data scandal. The new privacy tools have probably been in the planning for a long time. The possibility to download your own data is a legal requirement. So there has to be more, if Facebook really has an interest in winning back the trust of many users. A lot more.

How much is journalists' fear of Facebook flowing into their coverage of Facebook?

Ann-Kathrin Büüscher tweeted a few days ago very aptly: “The Cambridge Analytica story is made to confirm the prejudices of all those who have always found Facebook somehow stupid. This can be observed in the reporting excellent. ”

Facebook is one of the players on the net, which has been posing enormous challenges for our profession for years – partly because Facebook is increasingly in control of what content is delivered to our audience via the newsfeed and which is not. Therefore, there was recently heated discussion about the announcement of Facebook to show more content from family and friends in the newsfeed – and less of pages.

This is a bit of personal empiricism, but In my mind, the biggest gaps in my breathing are the people who have long been annoyed with Facebook – and suddenly saw the reason why it was best to quickly delete their own performances and do it Cuddling up again on your own website and waiting for users to come by. The first changes in the algorithm that may have been in use since autumn 2017 have been lost. Even Facebook does not know what the changes will look like in the end, all the more.

How much does the fear of Facebook play a role in reporting on Facebook to a number of journalists? In the meantime, I ask myself this question in many reports that I see, hear or read – and from which the corresponding framing just blurts out.

Differentiate, differentiate, differentiate!

It is so important that we discuss all these things. But it is just as important that we discuss the right points. That we attack Facebook in the right place and stay with the facts. Because the list of errors

on Facebook is huge:

For years, Facebook has ignored the concerns of privacy advocates and allowed applications to access the data of friends of their users. The fact that this gate was open for so long, Facebook did not consider it necessary to control app developers sharply, and in retrospect, satisfied with written confirmations that sold data was supposedly deleted, was grossly negligent.

Facebook still does not provide enough transparency. To me, many warnings are too small, and the language in my translation from English is often too schwurbelig. But you have to take advantage of Facebook, where the hint to check the settings has been displayed for quite some time again at the top of the newsfeed. The fact is also that many users are too lazy to take care of it.

So far, Facebook has no serious interest in informing its users consistently and honestly. It would be very easy to send an e-mail to the affected 50 million people so that there is finally a sense of security, whether you yourself were affected or not. Full-page ads in daily newspapers with embarrassing translation mistakes are not enough, in my opinion. And it would also be fair not to give the impression that you are reacting to criticism, even though you are reintroducing functions that were planned anyway.

Facebook still has a communication problem. Public reactions come too late, statements to the press are too rare, and contact persons for simple users are completely missing. A company of this size and with so much money in the backpack could act quite differently.

Facebook does not recognize its responsibility. The strategy of doing it first and everywhere and only then to see what happens is outdated; It would make sense to think about the effects of individual measures and functions in the future. It would also be responsible to make the profiles of new users as safe and private as possible by default – and to leave it up to the people themselves whether they want more publicity.

I still think that you have to regulate Facebook. In my opinion, it is no longer a “normal company”, but has in recent years become an elementary component of our communication and information society – with more than 30 million users in Germany. At the same time, the company is moving too slowly, and the dangers that social networks bring to our democracy, among other things, have recently become clear.

But for the debate, it is important that we stick to the facts and not fall into legend and populism – because that’s not how we get against this highly complex issue.

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