

Key players in the Cambridge Analytica scandal

Aleksandr Kogan, 32

- Cambridge University psychology researcher born in then Soviet Union, accused of lying to Facebook that the data he collected in 2014 was strictly for academic purposes.
- Formed a UK company called Global Science Research, which created the "thisyourdigitalife" app on personality predictions, in exchange for accessing Facebook users' personal data.
- Passed information on millions of Americans to Cambridge Analytica (CA).
- Claimed that Mr Christopher Wylie, who was at CA, assured him everything was in accordance with Facebook policy.
- Tells BBC and CNN he has been made a scapegoat by CA and Facebook, and would be happy to testify about his work.
- Spent some time in Singapore and changed his last name to Spectre together with his wife in 2015.



Alexander Nix, 42

- Suspended as CEO of CA after British broadcaster Channel 4 aired undercover videos on dirty methods used to help clients win elections.
- Worked in the finance sector before joining Strategic Communication Laboratories (SCL) Group, which provides data, analytics and strategies to governments and militaries.
- Began focusing on elections in 2007 and opened offices in Washington and New Delhi, expanding global staff to more than 300.
- First met conservative strategist Steve Bannon in 2013, the year Mr Bannon reportedly helped launch CA with backing from the wealthy Mercer family.
- Gained prominence after US President Donald Trump's election in 2016, and pitched his services to more clients, claiming CA's online campaign played a decisive role in that win.
- CA has denied any wrongdoing, saying Mr Nix's comments "do not represent the values or operations of the firm and his suspension reflects the seriousness with which we view this violation".



Christopher Wylie, 28

- Canadian whizz-kid turned whistle-blower gave The Guardian documents on CA's workings.
- A high-school dropout, he taught himself to code at 19, and went on to study law at the London School of Economics.
- A political connection introduced him to SCL Group in 2013, and he helped set up CA, becoming research director under Mr Bannon, who was CA's vice-president and secretary from June 2014 to August 2016.
- In 2014, he came up with a plan to harvest Facebook profiles of millions of US users and target them with political ads designed to work on their psychological make-up. CA sought help from Dr Kogan.
- Left CA before it joined the Trump campaign.
- "I feel a sense of regret every day when I see where they have helped take our world," he said of CA. "I need to make amends, and that's why I'm coming forward."



Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg, 33

- Has remained silent as the world's largest social media company faces its biggest crisis since its founding in 2004.
- Facebook's reputation has been dented by disclosures of Russian-led efforts to influence the US election - notably by spreading "fake news" and disinformation.
- Dr Kogan told CNN "using users' data for profit is their business model". More than two billion people use Facebook in any given month.
- US and European lawmakers are demanding an explanation of how CA gained access to user data and why Facebook failed to inform users.
- The company maintains it has not acted improperly.



The offices of Cambridge Analytica in London.

HOW THE SAGA UNFOLDED

March 16

- Facebook learnt that The New York Times and The Guardian were preparing bombshell reports on a data leak involving tens of millions of its users.
- In a bid to protect itself, Facebook wrote to the media firms saying the leak did not constitute a "breach", and scooped the reports in a blog post on why it was suspending Cambridge Analytica (CA).

March 17

- The two newspapers reported on how CA played a role in harvesting and misusing private and personal information from more than 50 million Facebook users.
- They quoted whistle-blower Christopher Wylie, who helped set up the firm and worked with academic Aleksandr Kogan to obtain the data, saying the system could profile voters and target them with personalised political ads.

March 18

- US and British lawmakers demanded Facebook explain how it harvested personal information without alerting users. US senators called on Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg to testify before Congress, while attorneys-general in two states launched investigations into how the data was handled. The UK Information Commissioner's Office sought a warrant to search CA's office in London.

March 19

- Britain's Channel 4 News reported, based on undercover footage, that CA secretly stage-managed Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta's campaigns in 2013 and last year.
- The firm denied the report. Facebook's chief of security Alex Stamos announced his role has shifted to focusing on emerging risks and election security after The New York Times reported he was leaving Facebook in the wake of internal clashes over how to deal with Russian actors using the platform to spread false or exaggerated stories to cause division among US voters.

March 20

- BBC reported the head of the European Parliament saying it would investigate to see if the data was misused, and a spokesman for British PM Theresa May said she was "very concerned" about the revelations.
- CA suspended chief executive Alexander Nix shortly before Channel 4 aired a second undercover video showing him claiming the firm played a decisive role in US President Donald Trump's 2016 election win.
- The video also had CA claiming it was engaged in various countries, from Malaysia to Mexico, prompting denials from the Malaysian government which said CA provided services personally to former Barisan Nasional leader turned opposition politician Mukhriz.

March 21

- Fears of increased regulation of social media firms triggered market sell-off of technology stocks like Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat owner Snap.
- Facebook has lost nearly US\$50 billion (\$56 billion) of its stock market value in two days even as a campaign for users to delete the app gains momentum.