

Facebook's Settlement in Cambridge Analytica Lawsuit

What is the issue?

Facebook has agreed to settle a lawsuit seeking damages for allowing Cambridge Analytica access to the private data of tens of millions of users.

What is the Cambridge Analytica lawsuit?

- It is primarily about the Facebook's role in the 2016 U.S. election.
- A probe revealed that a London-based data analytics firm, Cambridge Analytica, misused data from as many as 50 million Facebook users.
- The firm collected the personal data of many users without their consent to build psychographic profiles of voters.
- The potential voters' personality traits, ideology, and beliefs were then built.
- Former U.S. President Donald Trump's campaign is said to have used the services of Cambridge Analytica to influence voters by micro-targeting them.
- It was also accused by a whistleblower of pursuing voter suppression tactics targeting Black voters.



What is the role of Facebook in the scandal?

- **Role in Cambridge Analytica Scandal**
 - Allowing unauthorised access to its users' data
 - Slow response to data breach and in informing the user community
 - Refuting the claims of Cambridge Analytica that they deleted the collected data after realising that it went against Facebook's terms
- **Other cases-** U.S. residents who used Facebook after 2015 alleged that the company tracked their location via their IP address despite them disabling the location service option.
- In 2019, Facebook paid a record 5 billion dollar to settle Federal Trade Commission (FTC) charges for deceiving users about their ability to control the privacy of their personal info.

What is the response of Facebook?

- It apologised for the breach of trust and admitted that the company didn't do enough to deal with it.
- Since the Cambridge Analytica scandal broke, Facebook has
 - Removed data access from thousands of apps suspected of abusing
 - Restricted the amount of information available to developers

- Made it easier for users to calibrate restrictions on personal data sharing
- In 2019, Facebook agreed to pay a fine imposed by the U.K. for breaches of data protection law related to the Cambridge Analytica scandal.

References

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