

The Great Hack worksheet **B1**

The Great Hack documentary uncovers the different sides of the Cambridge Analytica/Facebook data scandal. Award-winning filmmakers Karim Amer and Jehane Noujaim discuss their motivation to make a film about the origin of the information we consume daily and access to the personal data we share on the Internet and social media.



Photos and interview: Netflix

Professor David Carroll teaches social-media design at Parsons School in New York. He decided to attack Cambridge Analytica in British courts, asking to see the data they held on him.

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Brittany Kaiser was the Cambridge Analytica's business development director. She has taken on the role of whistleblower, giving detailed information to the courts, British Parliament and US Congress committees on Cambridge Analytica's practices.



Carole Cadwalladr is a British investigative journalist who broke the stories that Cambridge Analytica may have used data obtained from Facebook to try to manipulate voters in 2016 in the Presidential elections in the U.S.A. and Brexit referendum in the U.K.

Q&A WITH KARIM AMER AND JEHANE NOUJAIM

1 **What inspired you to make *The Great Hack*?**

For us a hack is about finding a vulnerability in the system and exploiting it. We realized that the true hack of today's world was the hack of the mind. All the tiny manipulations that can happen through a screen and begin to warp where we go, what we do, and who we are.

5 This film is ultimately about whether we have free will. It's about democracy and it's about complicity.

In the larger story of privacy rights and the monetizing of data, you chose to focus on Cambridge Analytica. What made you decide to focus there?

10 Cambridge Analytica stood out to us from the beginning as the perfect microcosm of the opportunities and obstacles facing the data industry today. They operated in a gray area — a blind spot — and we wanted to figure out what that was.

One of the issues you bring out in the film is how poor the laws are in the United States when it comes to protecting an individual's right to data privacy.

15 These data rights we're talking about are not necessarily intuitive when it comes to reinventing communications and messaging through the Internet, because initially it's all about getting ahead. This film is really focused on helping people understand the terms and conditions they sign, and we hope that it will promote change for the better.

Jehane, your previous film *The Square* illustrated how Facebook could drive political and social change, in that case the Arab Spring. What are your feelings about Facebook now?

20 I've thought about this a lot in making this film. There are so many positive applications of technology that can bring people together around the world. Obviously, my view of Facebook has changed since *The Square*. I think it's a perfect example of how incredible innovations can also become weapons.

What do you think the implications of that are for democracy and civil society?

25 The implications really come down to the individual. As long as one person is compromised in this, I think we are all compromised in some way. The idea that a few select people can be successfully targeted without their consent to act in a way that serves the agenda of any corporation or ideology has huge consequences for our society and our relationships.

What are your hopes for the film once it's released?

30 With the Netflix release we have the opportunity to share this story and this message with people in a large number of countries and languages. It is our hope that *The Great Hack* can help inform, ignite conversation between people on all sides of the political spectrum, and ultimately help build more transparent systems.



a. Read the introduction and **find out** what type of film *The Great Hack* is. What do you know about the Facebook/Analytica scandal?

b. Read the first question and **explain** what the word 'hack' means according to the filmmakers. How is the film linked to the idea of democracy?

c. Focus on questions 2. and 3. and **find out** what role the filmmakers want their film to play concerning the negative impact of the Internet in our lives.

d. Read the two following questions and **explain** how Jehane Noujaim's opinion about the Internet has evolved. To what extent do you agree with these views?

e. Read the last question and **explain** how the documentary can contribute to making things evolve. Can you think of another impact it could have on the viewers?