

TRUMP'S CAMPAIGN DIDN'T USE CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA'S PSYCHOGRAPHICS; DID HIS SUPERPAC?

In the wake of news that the head of Cambridge Analytica, Alexander Nix, offered to help Julian Assange with the stolen Hillary emails, Wired has a good story on what Trump's campaign did with CA. In general, it says that the campaign did not rely on CA's data, nor did it use CA's famed psychographics based in part of Facebook data.

Cambridge worked both for the Trump campaign and a Trump-aligned Super PAC. In June 2016, Cambridge sent three staffers, led by chief product officer Matt Oczkowski, to the campaign's San Antonio office. Oczkowski's team eventually grew to 13 people, working under Trump digital director Brad Parscale and alongside his staff and outside consultants. According to Parscale, the Cambridge staff provided useful analysis of data about the American electorate. They did not, however, provide the raw data—things like demographic information, contact information, and data about how voters feel about different issues—on which that analysis was done.

That may sound like a small distinction, but it's a crucial one. Ever since it burst onto the scene of American politics in 2015, Cambridge has trumpeted its massive data trove, boasting 5,000 data points on every American. Cambridge claims to have built extensive personality profiles on every American, which it uses for so-called

“psychographic targeting,” based on people’s personality types. It is feared by some, including Hillary Clinton, for conducting a kind of psychological warfare against the American people and dismissed by others as snake oil. Both Parscale and Oczkowski have said repeatedly that the Trump campaign did not use psychographic targeting.

In fact, however, the story suggests Trump’s campaign *did* use CA data for a month, in July, because the RNC wasn’t yet sharing its data with Trump.

The Cambridge staff helped the campaign identify which voters in the RNC’s data file were most likely to be persuadable, meaning they were undecided but looked likely to swing toward Trump. They also created lists of voters who were most likely to become donors. In August 2016, a Trump aide told me Cambridge was critical to helping the campaign raise \$80 million in the prior month, after a primary race that had been largely self-funded by Trump. This was the only period during which Oczkowski’s staff relied on Cambridge’s data, because the RNC was just beginning to share its data with the Trump team.

According to the WSJ, July is when Nix reached out to Assange.

But there’s another implicit revelation in the story: in explaining why he didn’t know about Nix’s outreach to Assange, CA chief product officer Matt Oczkowski, who led CA’s efforts with the campaign, said that they were walled off from CA because of rules prohibiting cooperation between campaigns and SuperPACs.

“I had absolutely no understanding any of this was going on, and I was surprised as everybody else when I saw

the story” about Nix’s approach to
Assange, Oczkowski says. During the
campaign, he says his team was walled
off from the rest of Cambridge, because
the company was also working with a
Trump Super PAC.

Which of course suggests that CA was embedded
even more with the SuperPAC.

And that, in turn, raises a slew of other
questions. For example, did people who left the
Trump campaign – most notably Roger Stone – have
any ties with the SuperPAC? After all, Stone had
a role in efforts to find Hillary’s emails and
surely a bunch of other rat-fuckery (because
that’s what rat-fuckers do). So did the wing
that was openly asking Russians for help also
have closer ties to the more sordid aspects of
what CA does?