

# Many are investigating whether secretive firm Palantir and Obama DNC heads had 'improper' access to user data



- Facebook CTO Mike Schroepfer faced a grilling from U.K. lawmakers in the wake of the Cambridge Analytica data scandal.
- The data of 87 million Facebook users was harvested and sent to Cambridge Analytica.
- Palantir confirmed earlier this year that one of its staff had links to Cambridge Analytica.

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 [Mark Zuckerberg testifies before the House Energy and Commerce Committee in the Rayburn House Office Building on Capitol Hill April 11, 2018.](#)

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[Facebook](#) is looking into whether secretive firm Palantir had improper access to user data, following the Cambridge Analytica scandal, a top executive said Thursday.

Mike Schroepfer, chief technology officer at the social network, appeared in front of U.K. lawmakers to answer questions about the company's role in the fiasco that saw 87 million Facebook profiles harvested for data before being sent over to British political consultancy Cambridge Analytica.

He was asked whether concerns have been raised about "improper access" by Palantir to Facebook user data. The CTO confirmed that they had.

"I think we are looking at lots of different things now. Many people have raised that concern. ... It's something else we are looking into," Schroepfer said.

He was then asked by Damian Collins, chairman of the U.K. parliament's Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, whether Palantir was part of its "review work."

"Correct," Schroepfer answered.

Palantir has [previously done work](#) for the U.S. National Security Agency and is backed by the [CIA's not-for-profit](#)

venture capital firm. It is known for being highly secretive and using data to power much of its work.

The company, which was co-founded by billionaire [Peter Thiel](#) and is run by CEO Alex Karp, was dragged into the Facebook data scandal in March. Neither has been accused of wrongdoing.

Christopher Wylie, the whistleblower who provided information to the explosive reports in The New York Times and The Guardian newspapers in March, recently claimed that Palantir [worked with Cambridge Analytica](#).

Wylie claimed that Cambridge Analytica CEO Alexander Nix was introduced to Palantir by Sophie Schmidt, the daughter of former Google CEO [Eric Schmidt](#).

Wylie, [a former employee of Cambridge Analytica](#), said Nix had "several meetings" with Palantir.

"Senior Palantir employees" then worked on the Facebook profile data that was acquired by Cambridge Analytica, Wylie claimed.

"That was not an official contract between Palantir and Cambridge Analytica, but there were Palantir staff that would come into the office and work on that data," Wylie told lawmakers. He added that Palantir staff "helped build the models we were working on."

At the time, Palantir said it had never had a relationship with Cambridge Analytica. But the next day, the firm released another statement saying that it had found evidence of an employee with links to Cambridge Analytica.

"We learned today that an employee, in 2013-2014, engaged in an entirely personal capacity with people associated with Cambridge Analytica. We are looking into this and will take the appropriate action."

The allegations against Cambridge Analytica have heightened concerns over whether the data of Facebook users was then used to try and influence the outcome of the 2016 U.S. presidential election and the Brexit vote.

Palantir did not immediately reply to CNBC's request for comment.



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