

PRIVATE DATA ARE HIGHLY PRECIOUS FOR TOURISM INDUSTRY



Modern tourism industry promotion is based to a great part on analyzing available data about potential travelers and customers. The private data stored by Facebook naturally are quite attractive to many companies.

Cambridge Analytics was presented at ITB as an intelligence service provider for tourism industry, having prominent clients already, like a first-class airline and several high-end hotel chains. Their data manager, Alexander Tayler, explained that the old advertising methods were dying, replaced now by the creation of customer profiles, which allows the product to be divided into segments based on the travelers' preferences.

The director of the company is Alexander Nix, the man that negotiated with the people in charge of Donald Trump's campaign to encourage and manipulate the votes towards the republican candidate.

The private data of about 50 million people came from Facebook, the website where the information was obtained.

Tayler does not talk about his clients, but he admits that his company does not have its own data. "We do not own any of the data we use to work with. We are a consultant firm. We work with data from multiple sources." He shares no opinion whatsoever about the data coming from the Facebook users' posts on the social network, but he does refer to the use of data from sources like Axioma or Experion (two companies that specialize in obtaining data on the customers' identities).

Tayler says that the secret of his work, aimed at the world of tourism industry, is that they group customers into different categories according to what they are like. Once those groups are known, the advertising is personalized, directed to that specific audience and attending to their interests.

Tayler insists that his company goes further than the others. "We started with a customer study program and combining data that the customers respond to and what we obtain from other sources (customer data, other publicly available or commercially available data) and with that we use information from those groups. What the public needs and wants, what types of messages they will respond to, in order to create a communication campaign."

On May 25, a new directive that will protect customer data (known as the GDPR) comes into force in Europe. Tayler does not show any concern about the restrictions introduced by EU. "What is really necessary in tourism industry such is that those businesses that have private data that offer a cross-

over perspective, such as websites that compare prices or where reservations are made, share which clicks lead to purchases”.

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