

The Reality Game: A propaganda expert on 2016's lessons for the 2020 campaign | Slate

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In April 2016, on the occasion of the New York state mixed presidential primary, I found myself in the basement of an electronics store in Chelsea, doing research on how both Republicans and Democrats were leveraging digital media tools in their drive for the nomination. I'd gone there to attend a Meetup event called "Data Driven Marketing: Lessons Learned From 2016 Elections." The company hosting the gathering billed itself as Ted Cruz's digital marketing team. It was called [Cambridge Analytica](#).

There weren't more than a dozen people in attendance.

Representatives of Cambridge Analytica told the room that they had individual data sets on 230 million people in the United States. With a combination of consumer and lifestyle data, they said, they had created individual profiles "from scratch" and could use this information to persuade "key audience members to measurably change their behavior." Demographic politics, they claimed, were dead. Big data combined with psychological manipulation was the path forward. That night in the basement in 2016, I was flabbergasted by their sheer gall and hubris in publicly discussing their technophilic goal of manipulating public opinion on a grand scale.

[...]

Source: [The Reality Game: A propaganda expert on 2016's lessons for the 2020 campaign.](#)