

Cambridge Analytica dismantled for good? Nope: It just changed its name to Emerdata

Shock shutdown – THE TRUTH

By [Shaun Nichols in San Francisco](#) 118  [Reg comments](#) [SHARE](#) ▼

 Illustration of someone taking off a mask

The company formerly known as Cambridge Analytica shocked the media today when it announced an immediate shutdown and liquidation of its business.

That "shutdown," however, may be short-lived as official documents indicate those behind the [controversial analytics company](#) will be launching as a new firm with a less-toxic brand.

The surprise announcement came on Wednesday evening, when the UK-based Cambridge Anal., and its parent organization SCL Elections, stated it would [enter insolvency proceedings](#) and disband immediately.

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The announcement came after Cambridge Anal. found itself at the center of a political firestorm when a former staffer **blew the whistle** on a data-harvesting campaign that had covertly collected the personal information on **more than 87 million** Facebook users.

These records were used to target particular voters with ads and social media posts in hope of influencing their decisions at the ballot box. Whether or not these persuasion tactics actually worked is up for debate, but an attempt was at least made with info **sneakily swiped** from people's profiles via a quiz app. The biz denies any wrongdoing.

"Over the past several months, Cambridge Analytica has been the subject of numerous unfounded accusations and, despite the company's efforts to correct the record, has been vilified for activities that are not only legal, but also widely accepted as a standard component of online advertising in both the political and commercial arenas," the biz said in its blame-shifting sign-off.

"Despite Cambridge Analytica's unwavering confidence that its employees have acted ethically and lawfully, which view is now fully

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supported by [Queen's Counsel Julian] Malins' [report](#), the siege of media coverage has driven away virtually all of the Company's customers and suppliers."

The organization said it will honor all employee severance, notice, and redundancy obligations as the lights go out. It added:

The company is immediately ceasing all operations and the boards have applied to appoint insolvency practitioners Crowe Clark Whitehill LLP to act as the independent administrator for Cambridge Analytica.

Additionally, parallel bankruptcy proceedings will soon be commenced on behalf of Cambridge Analytica LLC and certain of the company's US affiliates in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York.

Though Cambridge Analytica said it is pulling the plug in the US and UK, there is already some indication that the outfit – which has a non-trivial organizational structure – is more or less just going to rebrand under a different banner.

The UK's official registrar of businesses and organizations, Companies House, [lists an active company](#) called Emerdata Limited, headquartered at the same offices as SCL Elections and run by much of the same management and investors as Cambridge

Analytica. It even describes itself as a "data processing, hosting and related activities" organization.

For instance, Dr Alexander Taylor was appointed a director of Emerdata on March 28. That's Cambridge Analytica's acting CEO and data wizard Dr Alexander Taylor. Julian Wheatland is an Emerdata director who is also a director within the SCL network of organizations.

Jennifer and Rebekah Mercer are directors of Emerdata, and are the daughters of ultra-wealthy businessman Robert Mercer who created and bankrolled Cambridge Analytica. Billionaire Bob has given tens of millions of dollars to rightwing political efforts. Jennifer and Rebekah also had a hand in Cambridge Anal.

Emerdata was founded in mid-2017, but has been rather active since Cambridge Analytica hit the headlines earlier this year, including official filings as recent as yesterday.

So, it seems the shutdown may be less a business catastrophe than a marketing exercise. ®