



## DARK PATTERN: SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

**NEWS:** Dark patterns pose a growing concern in India's digital landscape

### WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

**Definition:** Deceptive design practices in websites/apps to manipulate users into unintended actions.

### Common Examples:

- Creating false urgency.
- Hiding subscription cancellation options.
- Using misleading language.

### Concerns:

- **Consumer Manipulation:** Exploits psychological biases to trick users into unwanted actions.
- **Undermines Trust:** Erodes user trust in digital platforms.
- **Legal Risks:** In India, falls under 'unfair trade practices' as per the **Consumer Protection Act, 2019**.

**DARK PATTERNS**  
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UX Knowledge Base Sketch #29

DARK PATTERNS ARE **TRICKS** THAT MAKE THE USERS DO THINGS THEY DID NOT MEANTO. FINE LINE BETWEEN INFLUENCING USERS' BEHAVIOR AND TRICKING THEM!

DARK PATTERNS CAN WORK IF SOMEONE IS LOOKING FOR SHORT-TERM RESULTS. ONLY INITIAL SUCCESS, NOT SUSTAINABLE.

USING DARK PATTERNS HAS A NEGATIVE IMPACT IN THE LONG-TERM. USERS WILL SWITCH TO MORE ETHICAL PRODUCTS / SERVICES.

vs.

THE MOST COMMON TYPES

- FORCED CONTINUITY**: FREE TRIAL → CHANGES TO A PAYING SCHEME WITHOUT WARNING
- ROACH MOTEL**: THE START IS EASY (SIGN UP/SUBSCRIPTION); QUITTING IS HARD
- GROWTH HACKING THROUGH SPAMMING**: YOU BECOME THE SPAMMER WITHOUT KNOWING IT
- DELIBERATE MISDIRECTION**: FOCUSING THE USERS' ATTENTION ON THE MORE EXPENSIVE OPTION, HIDING THE CHEAPER WAY
- OBSCURED PRICING**: MAKING IT HARD TO COMPARE THE PRICES
- SNEAK INTO BASKET**: A RANDOM ADDITIONAL ITEM APPEARS IN YOUR BASKET (WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT)
- BAIT & SWITCH**: USE A CONVENTION, PATTERN IN A WAY TO MAKE THE USER FALSELY ASSUME SOMETHING
- DISGUISED ADS**: AN AD LOOKING LIKE ANOTHER TYPE OF CONTENT / NAVIGATION
- ROADBLOCK**: A POP-UP INTERRUPTS YOUR INTENDED ACTION
- HIDDEN COSTS**: AT THE CHECKOUT, A NEW, UNEXPECTED COST APPEARS
- PRIVACY ZUCKERING**: SHARING MORE PRIVATE INFO THAN YOU WANT
- MISINFORMATION**: E.G. CONFUSING COLOR, CONTRAST LANGUAGE
- TRICK QUESTIONS**: CHECK BOX TREACHERY



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- **Impact on Businesses:** Leads to reputational damage, legal fines, and weakened market position.

## Way Forward:

- **Ethical Design:** Promote transparency and user-friendly interfaces.
- **Educate Designers:** Incorporate ethics into design training.
- **Strengthen Regulations:** Enforce stricter guidelines with mandatory disclosures and penalties.
- **Empower Consumers:** Use tech solutions to detect dark patterns and promote consumer education.
- **International Collaboration:** Learn from global laws like the EU's Digital Services Act and GDPR.

Source: [https://epaper.thehindu.com/ccidist-ws/th/th\\_international/issues/99141/OPS/GFTD9QPAS.1+G1QDAKCT5.1.html](https://epaper.thehindu.com/ccidist-ws/th/th_international/issues/99141/OPS/GFTD9QPAS.1+G1QDAKCT5.1.html)

