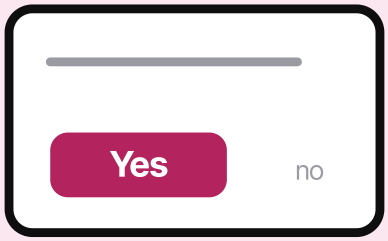
Concept

# Deceptive patterns (dark patterns)

Interface designs that lead people to do something they didn't want to, like buying, subscribing or giving up data, by exploiting how we decide.




In Spanish
*Patrones engañosos*

Origin
Brignull (2010; book in 2023)

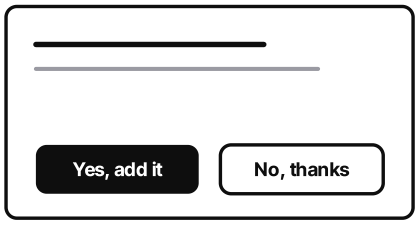
## What problem it addresses

Explains why some interfaces get us to accept things we would turn down if we took our time.

## An example

Two ways of offering a paid service at the end of a form.

### Neutral option




Accepting and declining are presented just as clearly and take the same effort. **11% accept.**

### With deceptive patterns




Declining takes more steps and the wording pressures you to accept. **Up to 42% accept.**

The same offer and the same kind of people: only the design of the decision changed.

## Why it happens

1 

**They exploit mental shortcuts** such as haste, inertia or social pressure.

2 


**They hide or make costlier** the option that best serves the person.

3 

**They work,** which is why they have spread so widely.

## Applications in design

### Use it like this

Make accepting and declining take the same effort and read just as clearly.

### Avoid

Hiding cancellation, preselecting extras or using guilt-tripping wording.

### Don't fall for it

Review your purchase and cancellation flows with someone outside the team: these patterns become normal without anyone noticing.

**11% → 42%**

### What the research says

In an experiment with almost 2,000 people, acceptance of a paid service rose from 11% without manipulation to 26% with mild patterns and to 42% with aggressive patterns (Luguri and Strahilevitz, 2021).

●●● **Solid evidence.** It's not just one experiment: a crawl of some 11,000 online stores found 1,818 instances of 15 different types (Mathur et al., 2019).

## Connections

Used in

- Value sensitive design
- EAST framework
- Privacy by design

Related to

- Bandwagon effect
- Zeigarnik effect
- Framing effect
- Privacy nutrition label
- Lie factor
- Gamification
- Hook model
- Nudge and choice architecture
- Octalysis
- Default effect
- Principles of influence
- Status quo bias

# Authors and works

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2010 | **Harry Brignull** | Coined the term dark patterns and began cataloging them; in 2023 he collected them in the book Deceptive Patterns. |
| 2019 | **Arunesh Mathur et al.** | Measured how common they are across some 11,000 online stores. |
| 2021 | **Jamie Luguri and Lior Strahilevitz** | Measured how much they change people's decisions. |
| 2022 | **US Federal Trade Commission** | Its report "Bringing Dark Patterns to Light" grouped them into four types: those that create false beliefs, those that hide important information, those that lead to unauthorized charges and those that subvert privacy choices. |
| 2022 | **European Union, Digital Services Act** | Its Article 25 bans online platforms from designing or organizing their interfaces to deceive or manipulate people, or to impair their ability to make free and informed decisions. It has applied since 17 February 2024. |

## Sources

### Original sources


- Brignull, H. (2023). Deceptive patterns: Exposing the tricks tech companies use to control you. Testimonium. View source (https://deceptive.design/book)
- Mathur, A., Acar, G., Friedman, M. J., Lucherini, E., Mayer, J., Chetty, M., & Narayanan, A. (2019). Dark patterns at scale: Findings from a crawl of 11K shopping websites. Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction, 3(CSCW). View source (https://doi.org/10.1145/3359183)
- Luguri, J., & Strahilevitz, L. J. (2021). Shining a light on dark patterns. Journal of Legal Analysis, 13(1), 43–109. View source (https://doi.org/10.1093/jla/laaa006)
- Federal Trade Commission (2022). Bringing dark patterns to light. FTC Staff Report, September 14, 2022.
- Reglamento (UE) 2022/2065 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de October 19, 2022, relativo a un mercado único de servicios digitales y por el que se modifica la Directiva 2000/31/CE (Reglamento de Servicios Digitales). Diario Oficial de la Unión Europea, L 277, October 27, 2022. View source (https://www.boe.es/doue/2022/277/L00001-00102.pdf)


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