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### Unit 3: Methodology and Research Methods

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## **e-Portfolio Activity: Collaborative Learning Discussion 1: Codes of Ethics and Professional Conduct**

### **Summary Post**

The use case of dark UX patterns (ACM, N.D.) underscores their ethical and legal implications, particularly in connection with the British Computer Society (BCS) Code of Conduct and consumer protection legislation (BCS, 2022). Deceptive interface elements and misleading colour schemes, which are examples of dark patterns, undermine user autonomy and trust, with a disproportionate impact on vulnerable users such as those with visual impairments (Narayanan et al., 2020).

Colleagues' responses emphasised additional considerations, including long-term damage to a company's reputation resulting from the use of deceptive UX strategies (Osman, 2025). Although revenue-driven design choices may produce short-term benefits, they gradually erode consumer trust and challenge UX professionals' ethical obligations to maintain fairness and avoid discrimination (BCS 2022). Lance (2025) also noted the psychological impact of dark patterns, which can cause frustration and diminish well-being, especially among older adults and less technologically adept individuals (Mathur et al., 2019).

In addition to ethical concerns, enforcement remains a significant hurdle despite the existence of legal frameworks such as the UK Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations (CPR, 2025) and the UK Digital Markets, Competition, and

Consumer Bill (UK Parliament, 2023). Businesses often exploit regulatory gaps by implementing subtle design changes that technically adhere to legislation while still manipulating user behaviour (Car & Cassetti, 2025). This situation highlights the pressing need for more rigorous oversight and flexible legal frameworks to curtail deceptive practices effectively.

A proactive stance on ethical UX design necessitates not only adherence to legal standards but also the cultivation of a culture of ethical responsibility within organizations. As Osman (2025) suggests, education and professional development play crucial roles in equipping designers with knowledge to confront unethical practices. By following ethical guidelines and promoting transparent design principles, UX professionals can contribute to creating a more trustworthy digital landscape.

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