THE DARK SIDE OF INTERFACE DESIGN

UX Ethics and Dark Patterns

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User Experience (UX) and its Ethics

- UX people like to think of themselves as the human face of computing
- We do things that are *good* for people
- We advocate user-centred design, human-centred design, participatory design
- We try to achieve accessibility, usability, user-friendliness

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Sometimes UX designers succeed

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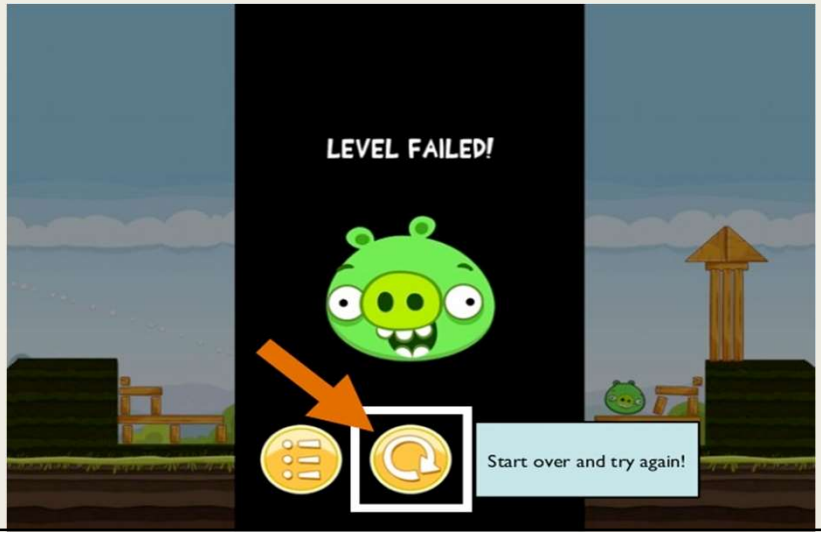
Sometimes UX designers succeed



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Some techniques to narrow the gap

User research

Personas
Scenarios
Essential use cases
User journeys

HCI knowledge

Guidelines
Design patterns

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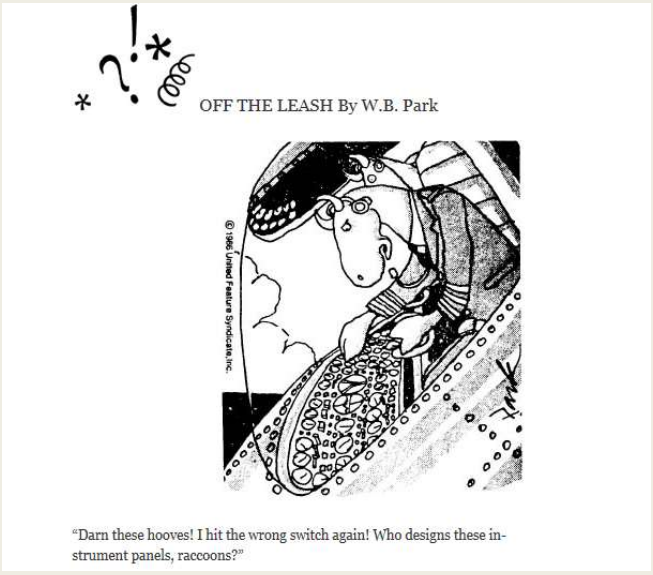
Sometimes UX designers make bad designs



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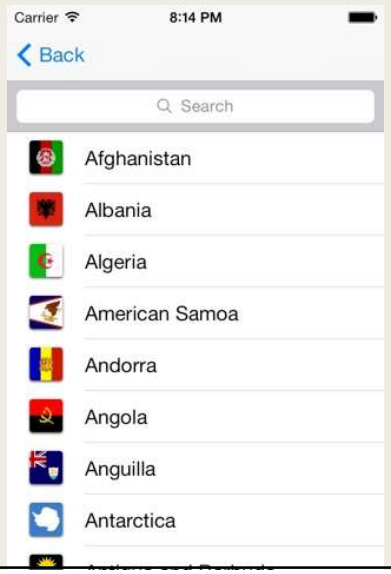
Sometimes UX designers make mistakes



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“Should have used the “Make your country picker context appropriate to user population” pattern”

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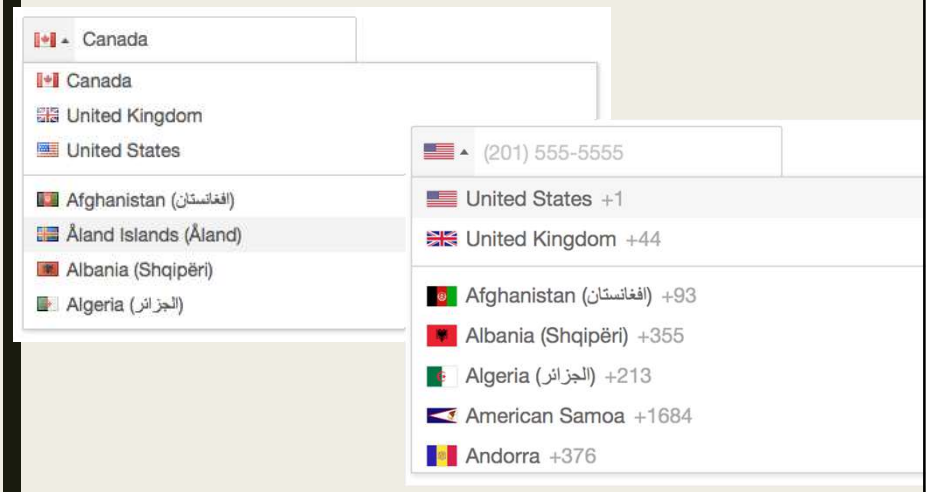
Better…



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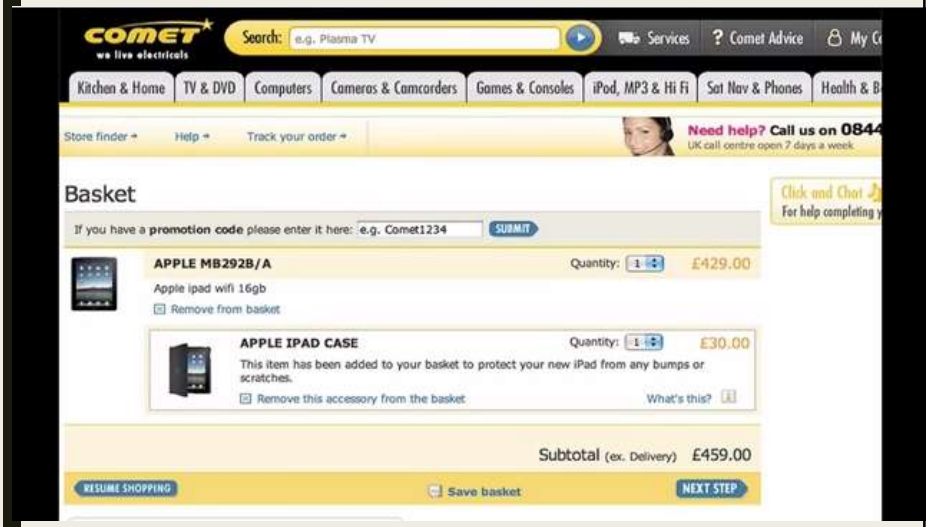
Sometimes UX designers do *really* bad things



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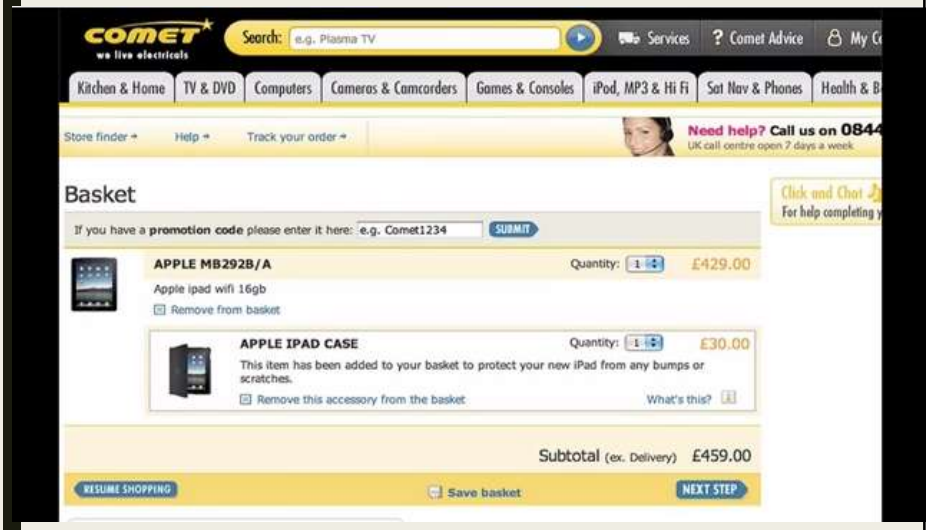
Dark pattern: “sneak into basket”



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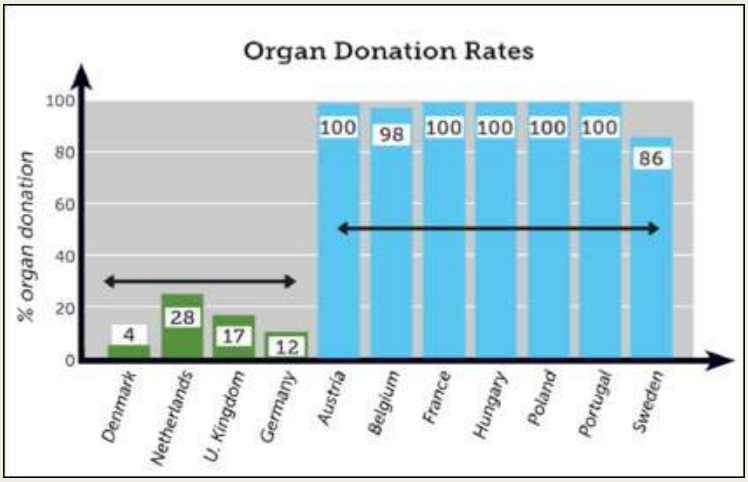

The power of the opt-out…!!!

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"**A Dark Pattern** is a user interface that has been carefully crafted to trick users into doing things, such as buying insurance with their purchase or signing up for recurring bills.

Dark Patterns… are not mistakes, they are carefully crafted with a solid understanding of human psychology, and *they do not* have the user's interests in mind.

We as designers, founders, UX & UI professionals and creators need to take *a stance against Dark Patterns*."

Harry Brignull - http://darkpatterns.org/

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Bravofly.com's Trick Question

Posted by Harry, April 4, 2015. Filed under Trick Questions.

Bravofly.com really, really wants to send you promotional emails. During the checkout process, in a box labelled 'Contractual conditions', are two checkboxes. Most users, skimming the label of the first box, will read "Tick this box … read and accepted …" and will tick the box. A closer reading reveals that you're actually signing up to receive promotional email.

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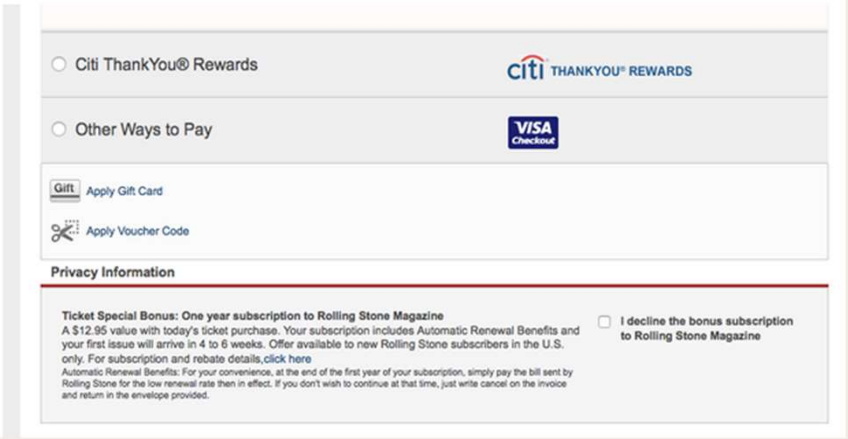
During checkout at livenation.com, there's an un-ticked checkbox that must be ticked to decline a paid subscription to Rolling Stone. Worse yet, this box is in the "Privacy Information" section. If you miss this checkbox and want to cancel the subscription, you have to do so by mail.



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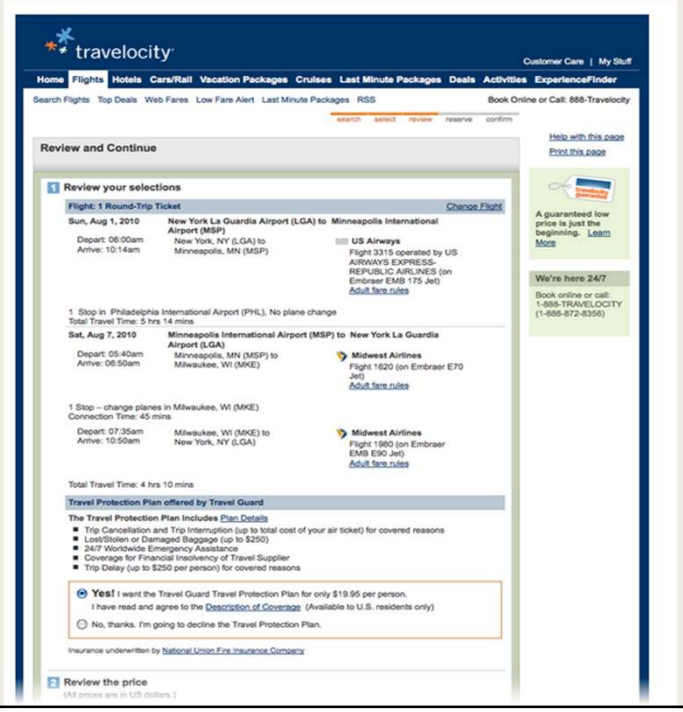

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Hotel description
Map
Reviews
Like 9 Send
4.2
out of 5
Excellent
(429 reviews)
From 124 reviews
(Neighborhood average 3.8)
Overview
Location.
Situated in Santa Clara, Avatar Hotel, a Joie de Vivre Hotel is close to
Museum. Also nearby are Rivermark Village and Cisco Systems Cor

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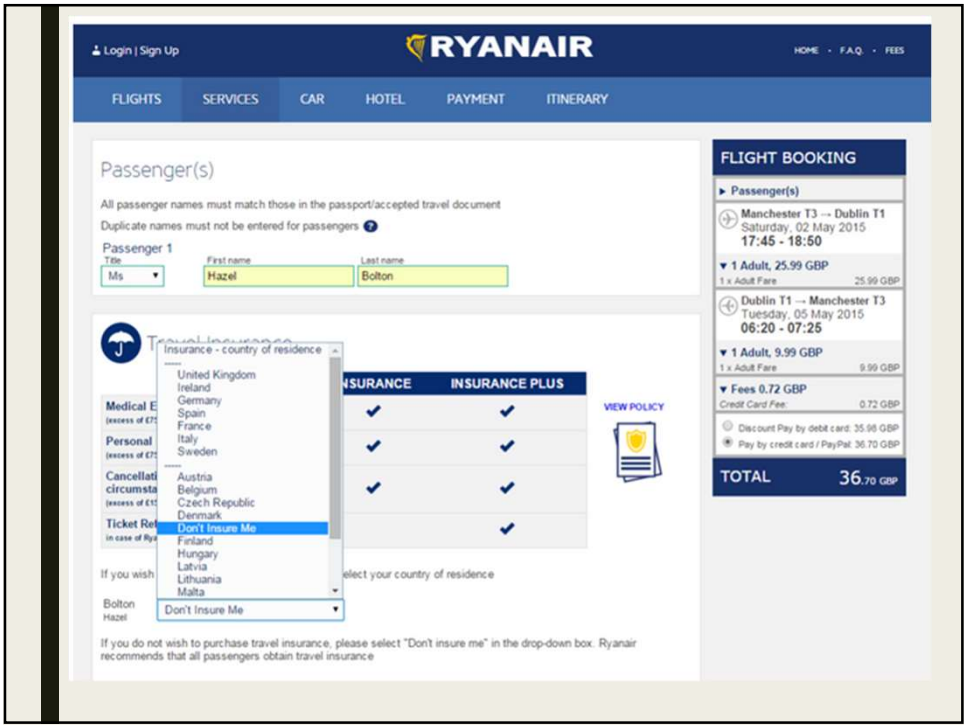

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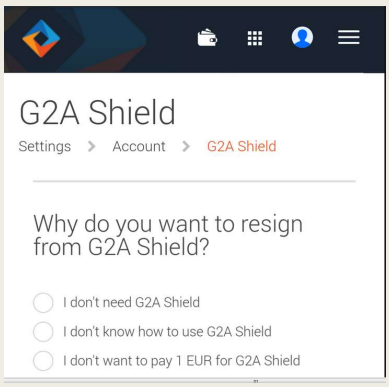
Making things REALLY difficult…



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So – don’t be evil?

If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?

—Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*

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Possible approaches

- *UX designers' code of ethics?*
- *Support from the British Computing Society?*
- *"Naming and shaming" companies who use the patterns?*
- *Publicising the patterns?*

Dark Patterns:
https://darkpatterns.org/

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