

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

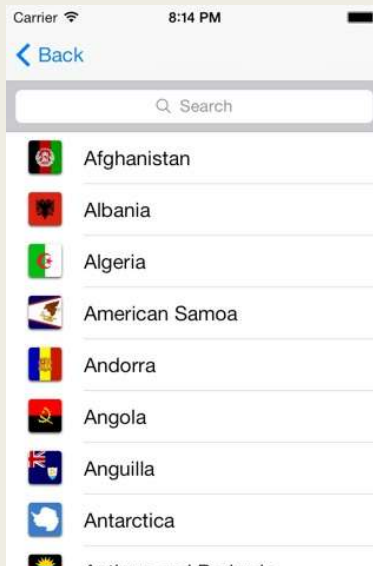
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Sometimes UX designers make bad designs



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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...

A screenshot of a web form showing a country selection dropdown menu. The menu is open, displaying a list of countries and their international dialing codes. The countries listed are: Canada, United Kingdom, United States, Afghanistan (افغانستان), Åland Islands (Åland), Albania (Shqipëri), and Algeria (الجزائر). The United States is selected, and its dialing code +1 is shown. The phone number (201) 555-5555 is entered in the adjacent field.

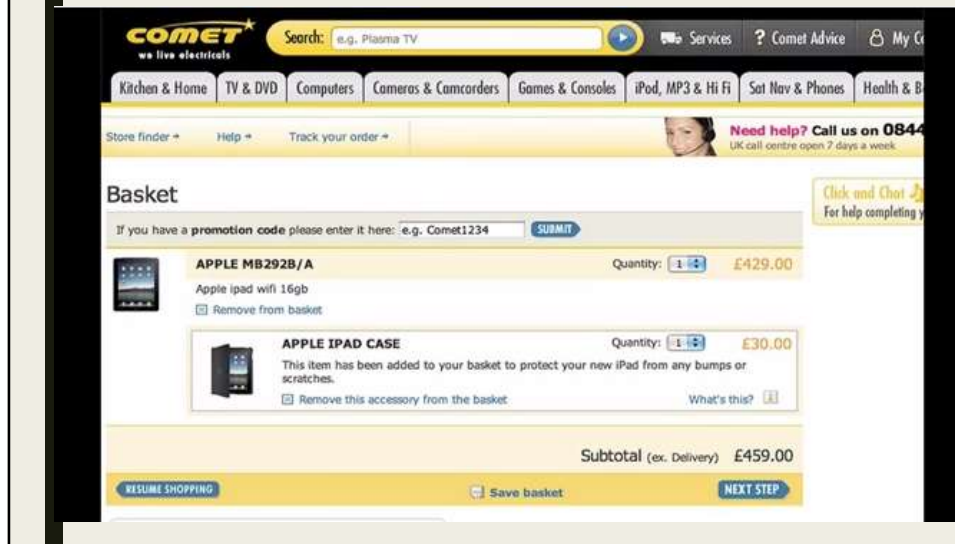
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Sometimes UX designers do *really* bad things

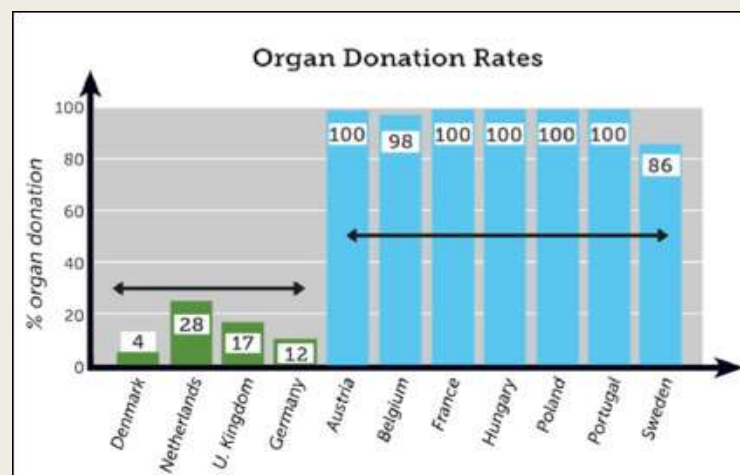
A screenshot of the Comet website's checkout page. The page shows a basket with two items: an Apple iPad (MB292B/A) and an Apple iPad Case. The iPad is priced at £429.00 and the case at £30.00. The subtotal (ex. Delivery) is £459.00. The page includes a search bar, navigation links, and a 'Need help? Call us on 0844' banner. The basket items are listed with their quantities and prices, and there are links to 'Remove from basket' and 'What's this?' for each item.

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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.

Contractual conditions

- ☐ Tick this box to confirm that you have read and accepted, in accordance with letter F of the [privacy policy](#), to receive emails with our best deals.
- ☐ Check this box to confirm you have read, understood and accepted [the terms and conditions and the Privacy Policy](#).

Total cost of the flight


92.83 €


CONFIRM


Price includes agency fees equal to 10.00 € per person, per route.


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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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Review and Continue

Review your selections

Flight: 1 Round-Trip Ticket [Change Flight](#)

Sun, Aug 1, 2010 New York La Guardia Airport (LGA) to Minneapolis International Airport (MSP)
 Depart: 06:00am
 Arrive: 10:14am
 US Airways
 Flight 3315 operated by US AIRWAYS EXPRESS-REPUBLIC AIRLINES (on Embraer EMB-175 Jet)
[Adult fare rules](#)

1 Stop in Philadelphia International Airport (PHL). No plane change
 Total Travel Time: 5 hrs 14 mins

Sat, Aug 7, 2010 Minneapolis International Airport (MSP) to New York La Guardia Airport (LGA)
 Depart: 05:40am
 Arrive: 05:50am
 Midwest Airlines
 Flight 1620 (on Embraer E70 JET)
[Adult fare rules](#)

1 Stop - change planes in Milwaukee, WI (MKE)
 Connection Time: 45 mins
 Depart: 07:35am
 Arrive: 10:50am
 Midwest Airlines
 Flight 1980 (on Embraer EMB E90 Jet)
[Adult fare rules](#)

Total Travel Time: 4 hrs 10 mins

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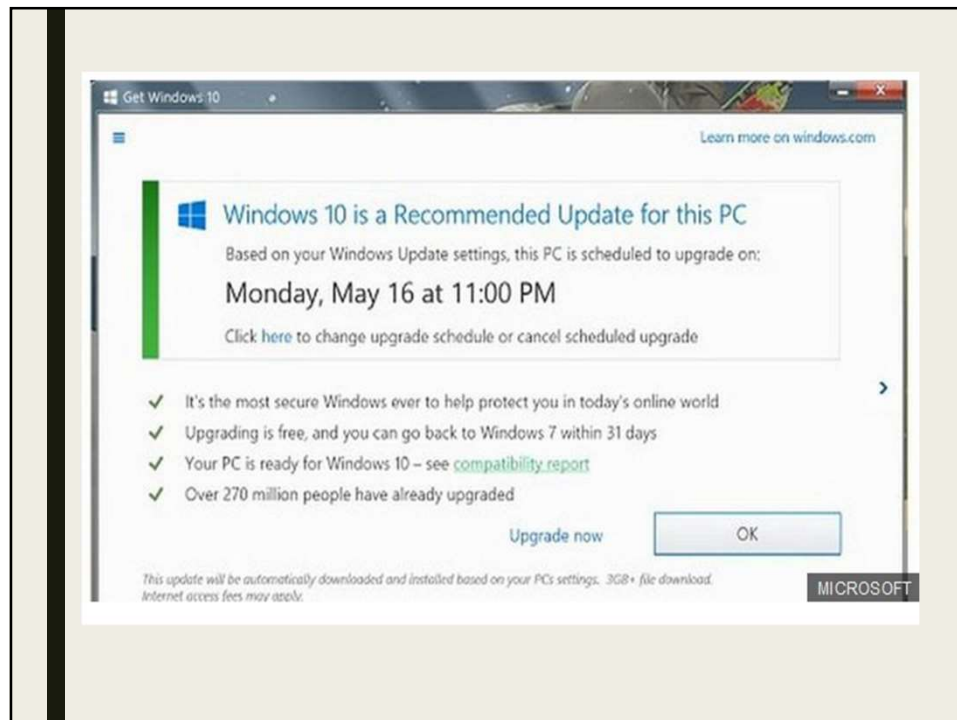
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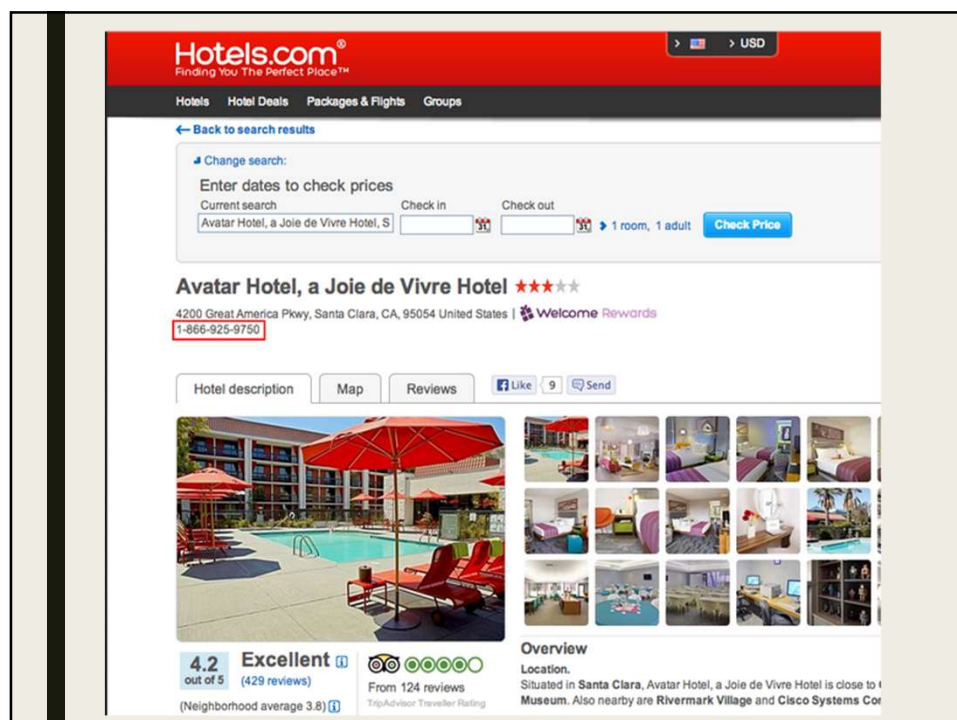
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Passenger(s)

All passenger names must match those in the passport/accepted travel document
Duplicate names must not be entered for passengers

Passenger 1

Title: Ms First name: Hazel Last name: Bolton

Insurance - country of residence

Medical Expenses (excess of £250) Personal (excess of £250) Cancellation (excess of £250) Ticket Return (in case of Ryanair flight)

United Kingdom Ireland Germany Spain France Italy Sweden Austria Belgium Czech Republic Denmark Finland Hungary Latvia Lithuania Malta

Don't Insure Me

select your country of residence

If you wish to purchase travel insurance, please select "Don't insure me" in the drop-down box. Ryanair recommends that all passengers obtain travel insurance

FLIGHT BOOKING

Passenger(s)

Manchester T3 → Dublin T1
Saturday, 02 May 2015
17:45 - 18:50

1 Adult, 25.99 GBP

Dublin T1 → Manchester T3
Tuesday, 05 May 2015
06:20 - 07:25

1 Adult, 9.99 GBP

Fees 0.72 GBP

Credit Card Fee: 0.72 GBP

Discount Pay by debit card: 35.98 GBP

Pay by credit card / PayPal: 36.70 GBP

TOTAL 36.70 GBP

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Making things REALLY difficult...

G2A Shield

Settings > Account > G2A Shield

Why do you want to resign from G2A Shield?

☐ I don't need G2A Shield

☐ I don't know how to use G2A Shield

☐ I don't want to pay 1 EUR for G2A Shield

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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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