

Stewart's team made simple web page design changes, leading to a significant increase in customer profits. Despite complaints from users with visual impairments, the combination of red and green in the text was confusing. The rectangular buttons were replaced with arrows, allowing users to cancel and return to previous pages, move to more expensive categories, and add protection without customer confirmation. These changes were made to improve user experience and customer satisfaction (ACM Ethics, N.D.).

Dark patterns are deemed immoral because their major goal is to influence users' behavior for the benefit of the customer without completely revealing or obtaining users' actual authorization (Parrilli & Hernández-Ramrez, 2020). Dark patterns are situations in which designers and software developers use their understanding of human behavior to build misleading functionality (McLean, 2020).

Many principals have been violated, according to BCS, such as discrimination based on disability through manipulation of colors that confuse products, and non-compliance for the principles of professionalism in designing deceptive things which harm users by implementing services they do not want and without their prior consent (BCS, 2022). Majola (2023) supports this by stated that the replacement of rectangular buttons with arrows, where the left arrow cancels and the right arrow moves the user to a more expensive category without prior confirmation and the use of color contrast that discriminates against people with visual impairments, further exemplifies the misleading nature of dark patterns.

Saxton (2023) highlighted a study by Chetty et al. (2020) about the dark design patterns in e-commerce website, which mentioned the development of "three decades-long trends" in marketing, including deceit and manipulation in retail, consumer nudging, and growth hacking as the source of dark design patterns in e-commerce websites. And ended with a question about which of these patterns are evident in the Stewart case?.

McLean (2020) defines dark patterns as circumstances in which designers and software engineers use their knowledge of human behavior to create deceptive features. Which is applicable in Stewart case where manipulating with webpage design by replacing buttons' shapes and its places furthermore mixing colors to make it confusing for people with visual impairments. However, psychological pricing and falsely advertising a store closure in e-commerce case is not considered as deceptive and harmful to users because they want it with their prior confirmation and are aware of the consequences.

References

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