Exploring Software Engineer Perceptions of Dark Patterns

You are invited to participate in our survey which aims to gather insights into the attitudes, experiences, and perceptions of software engineers regarding the use of dark patterns in user interface design. Dark patterns are user interface designs that manipulate or deceive users into taking actions that may not be in their best interests, such as making unintended purchases or sharing personal information.

Your participation in this survey is valuable and will contribute to a better understanding of how dark patterns are perceived within the software engineering community. By sharing your experiences and opinions, you can help shed light on the prevalence of dark patterns, the challenges faced in identifying and addressing them, and potential strategies for promoting ethical UI design practices.

Duration: The survey will take approximately 12-15 minutes to complete.

Eligibility: Participants must have a background in software engineering and working experiences in industries as a software engineer. You must be 18 years or older to participate.

Participation: Your participation in this survey is voluntary. If any question makes you feel uncomfortable, you can simply stop participating or close the browser window. You may decide not to participate at all, or if you start the study, you may withdraw at any time.

Confidentiality: Your responses will be kept confidential, and the data will be analyzed in aggregate form anonymously.

* Indicates required question

1. Email *

_____

2. Gender *

- [ ] Male
- [ ] Female
- [ ] Non-binary
- [ ] Prefer not to say
- [ ] Other: _____

3. Age *

Mark only one oval.

- ( ) Under 18
- ( ) 18 - 24
- ( ) 25 - 34
- ( ) 35 - 44
- ( ) 45 - 54
- ( ) Over 55

4. Education *

Mark only one oval.

- ( ) High School
- ( ) Some College
- ( ) Bachelor's degree
- ( ) Master's degree
- ( ) Doctoral degree
- ( ) Other: _____

5. Occupation *

_____

6. How many years have you been working as a software engineer? *

   Mark only one oval.

   ( ) No, I have no software engineer industry experience before

   ( ) Less than 1 year

   ( ) 1 - 2 years

   ( ) 3 - 5 years

   ( ) 6 - 10 years

   ( ) Over 10 years

   ( ) Other: _____

7. What is your current level of expertise in software engineering? *

   Mark only one oval.

   ( ) Junior Software Engineer

   ( ) Software Engineer

   ( ) Senior Software Engineer

   ( ) Principal Engineer

   ( ) Staff Engineer

   ( ) Other: _____

8. Which company(s) do you currently work for or have you previously worked for in the past as a software engineer?

   _____

9. Which of the following types of companies have you worked for as a software *
   engineer? (Select all that apply)

   Check all that apply.

   ☐ Technology/Software Company
   ☐ Financial Services
   ☐ Medical/Healthcare
   ☐ Goverment
   ☐ Education
   ☐ Manufacturing/Industrial
   ☐ Non-profit Organization
   ☐ Other: _____

10. How familiar are you with the concept of dark patterns (deceptive patterns) in user *
    interface design?

    Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not	○	○	○	○	○	Very Familiar

11. Have you ever been involved in implementing dark pattern user interface designs *
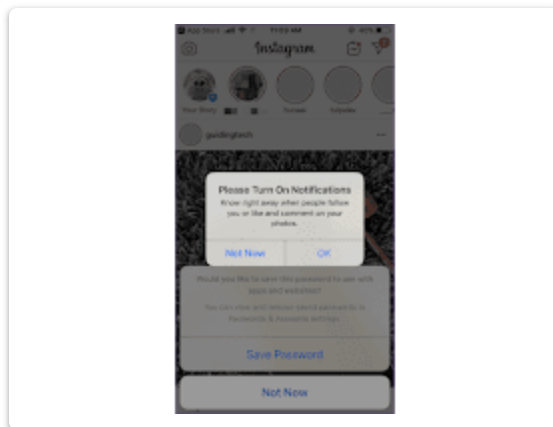   in your work as a software engineer?

    Mark only one oval.

    ○ Yes
    ○ No
    ○ Maybe
    ○ Not applicable/I'm not sure what dark patterns are.
    ○ Other: _____

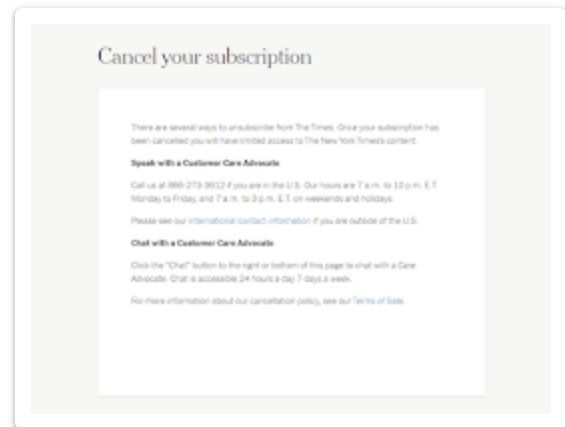12. Which types of dark pattern designs have you implemented in your work as a software engineer? (Select all that apply)
Image sources: Nagging, Obstruction, Sneaking, Interface Interference, Forced Action
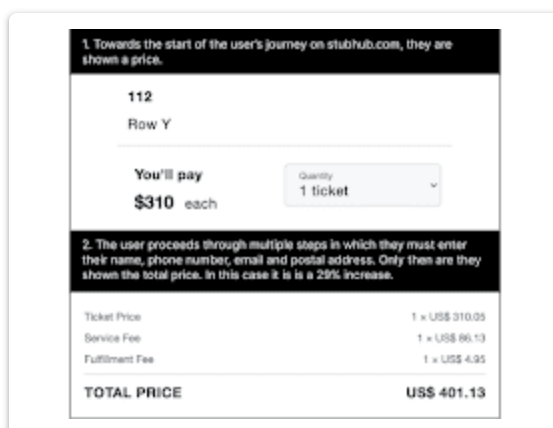
Check all that apply.

☐ Nagging - The user tries to do something, but their efforts are consistently interrupted by other requests to divert their attention to other tasks
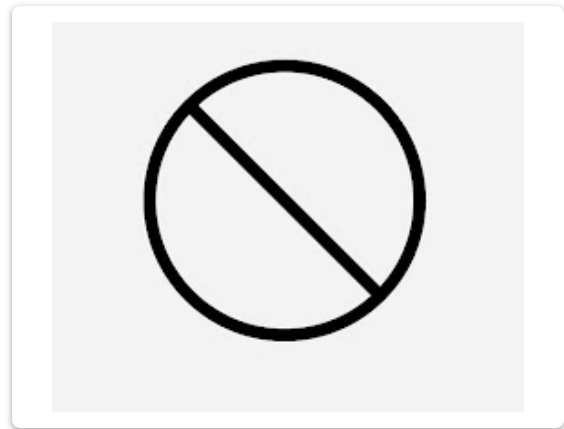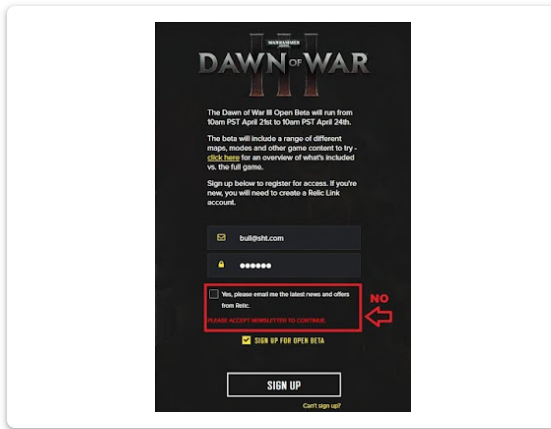

☐ Obstruction - The user encounters obstacles or challenges that impede their ability to successfully accomplish the task or obtain the necessary information

☐ Sneaking - The user is drawn into a transaction on false pretenses because related information is hidden or disguised from them

☐ Interface Interference - The user anticipates a clear and predictable presentation of information on the page, but instead, it is concealed, obscured, or disguised

☐ Forced Action - The user desires to accomplish a certain task, yet they are forced to engage in an undesirable action as a prerequisite

☐ Not applicable/I've never implemented a dark pattern design before

☐ Other: _____

13. Have you ever been pressured or encouraged by stakeholders or management to implement dark patterns in your projects? *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ Maybe

◯ Not Applicable

14. What factors influence your decision **to implement** dark patterns in your projects? *
(Select all that apply)

Check all that apply.

☐ Pressure from stakeholders or management

☐ Meeting business goals or targets

☐ User experience (UX) principles

☐ Company culture

☐ Other: _____

15. What factors influence your decision **not to implement** dark patterns in your projects? (Select all that apply) *

Check all that apply.

- [ ] Pressure from stakeholders or management
- [ ] Meeting business goals or targets
- [ ] Ethical considerations
- [ ] Legal compliance
- [ ] User experience (UX) principles
- [ ] Company culture
- [ ] Other: _____

16. How do you perceive the impact of dark patterns on user trust? *

Mark only one oval.

- ( ) Very negative
- ( ) Negative
- ( ) Neutral
- ( ) Positive
- ( ) Very positive

17. How do you perceive the impact of dark patterns on user satisfaction? *

Mark only one oval.

- ( ) Very negative
- ( ) Negative
- ( ) Neutral
- ( ) Positive
- ( ) Very positive

18. How important do you believe it is to prevent the implementation of dark patterns *
    in software development?

    Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not	⚪	⚪	⚪	⚪	⚪	Extremely important

19. Have you ever raised concerns or objections about the use of dark patterns in *
    your projects?

    Mark only one oval.

    ⚪ Yes, and they were addressed

    ⚪ Yes, but they were ignored

    ⚪ No

    ⚪ Maybe

    ⚪ Not Applicable

20. If yes, please provide further details or examples of the specific dark patterns you
    objected to and the reasons behind your concerns.

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

21. Have you utilized any tools or software to enhance the user interface (UI) design *
of your software applications?

Mark only one oval.

⚪ Yes

⚪ No

⚪ Maybe

22. If yes, please specify the tools or software you have used for UI design
improvement. Have these tools contributed to the implementation of dark patterns
in your code?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

23. Which of the following alternative solutions do you think could be helpful in *
preventing the implementation of dark patterns in software?

Check all that apply.

☐ Strict adherence to ethical guidelines in UI/UX design

☐ Implementation of industry-wide standards or regulations

☐ Providing education and training on the ethical implications of UI design choices

☐ Encouraging a culture of transparency and accountability within development teams

☐ Other: _____

24. In your opinion, what ethical responsibilities do software developers have regarding the use of dark patterns in user interface design?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

25. Do you believe there should be industry regulations or guidelines regarding the use of dark patterns in software development? Why, and why not?

_____

_____

_____

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_____