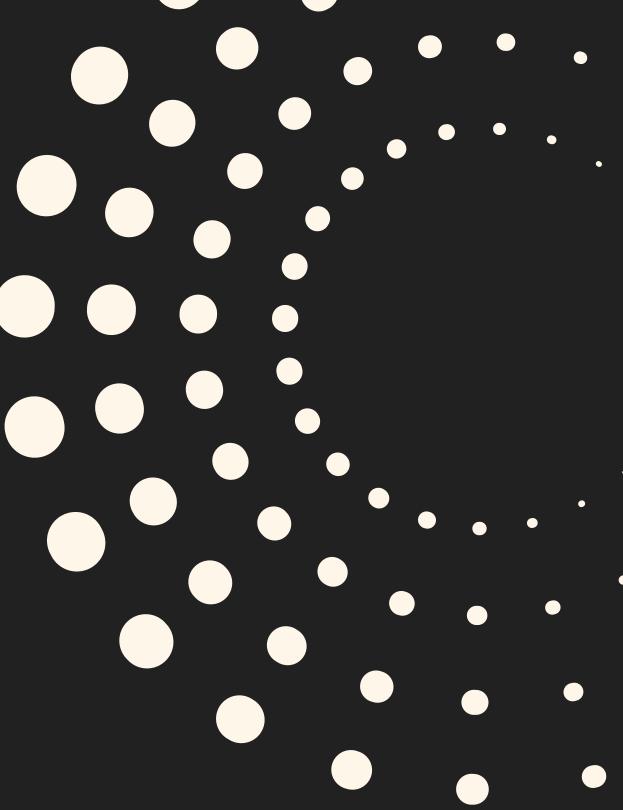


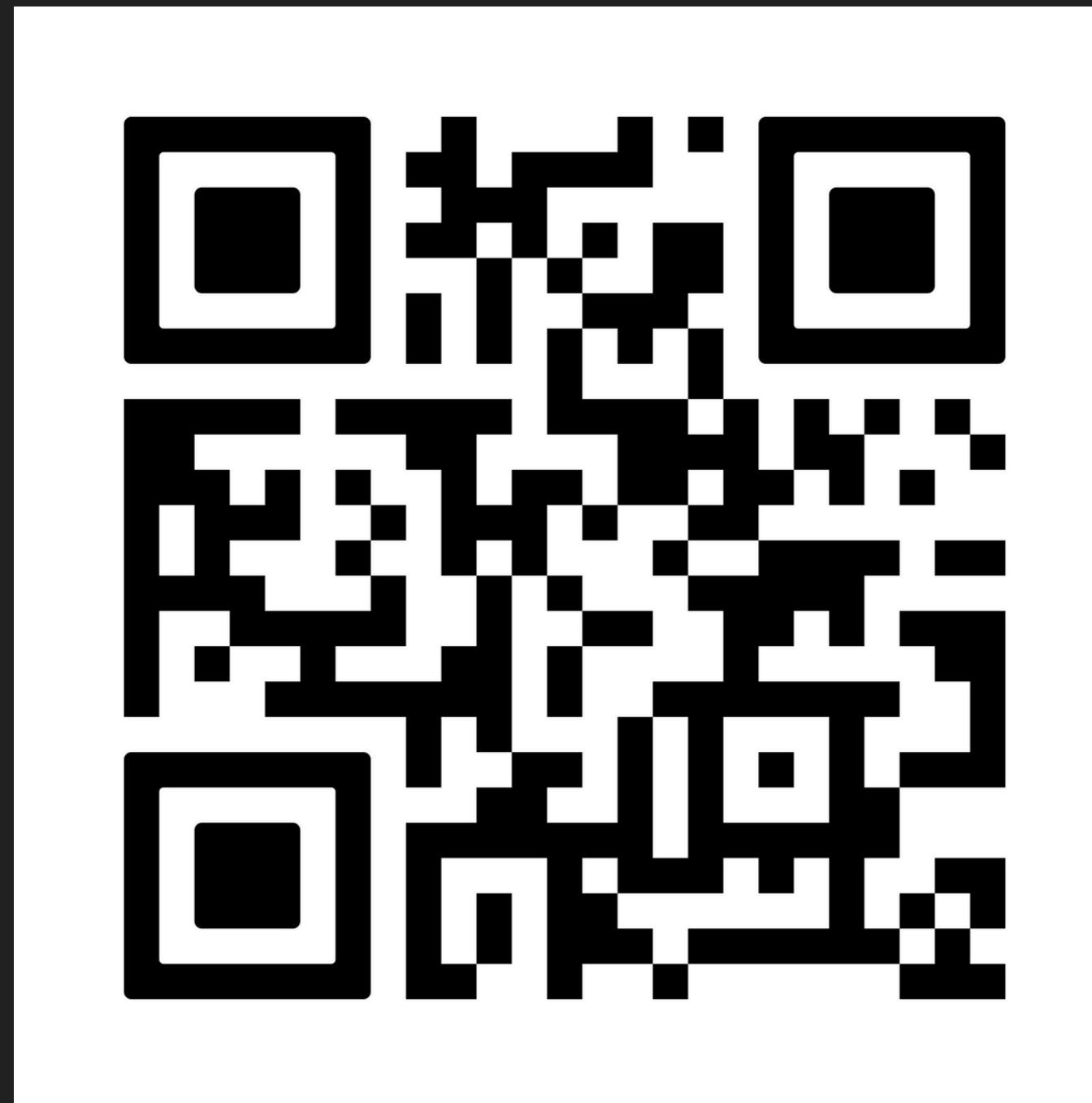
Bad UX

How do you spot it? Why does it happen?

Club Meeting - 9/8



Please Sign In!



This will be shown again at the end of the meeting too!

While you wait, enjoy this chrome dino :)



But First...

What actually makes a design *bad*?



Two Distinct Flavors

(non-comprehensive)



Misleading

When an experience is designed
without **foresight**



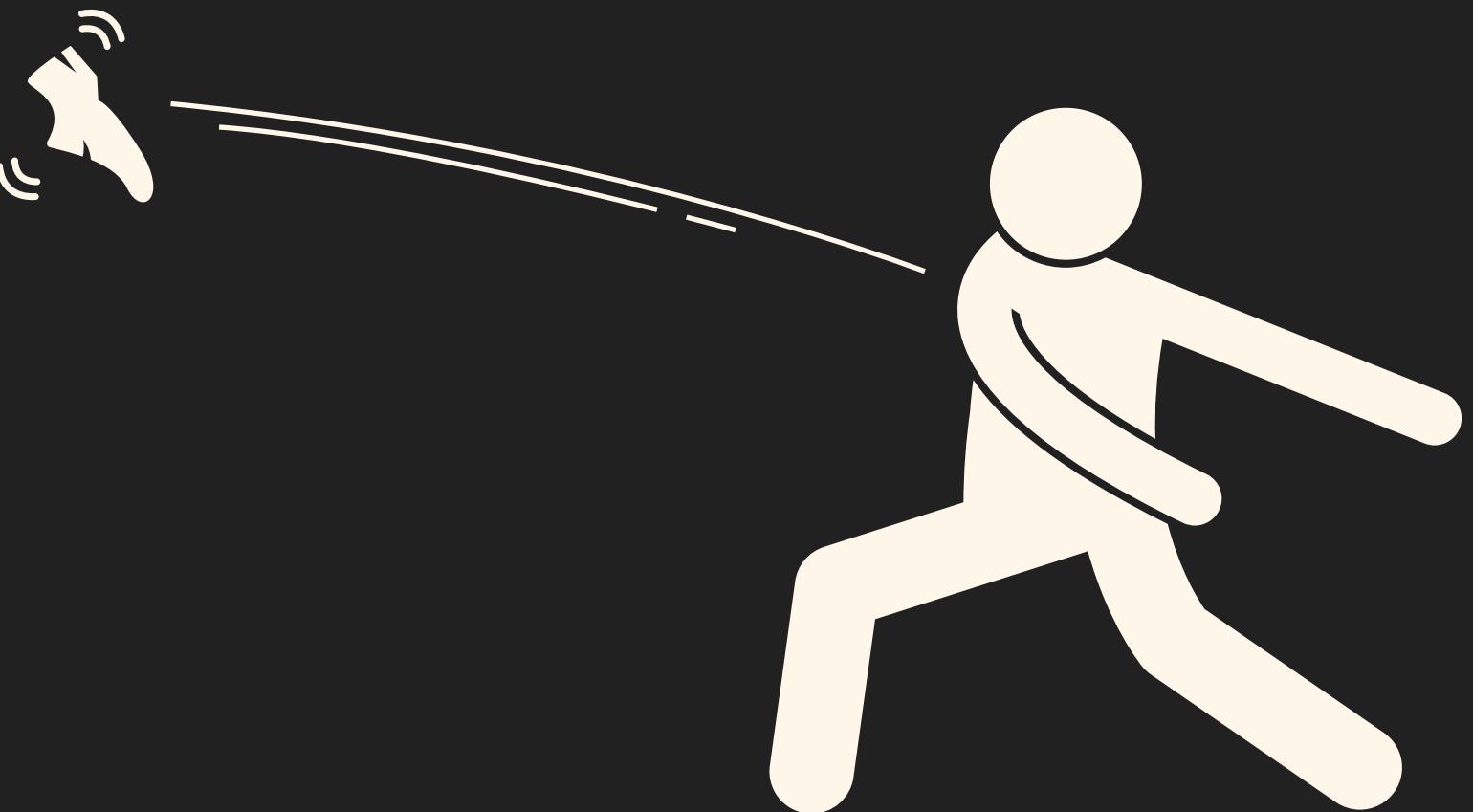
Deceptive

When an experience feels
explicitly **manipulative**

When an interface feels erratic

This is where the **bulk** of poor UX decisions are made.

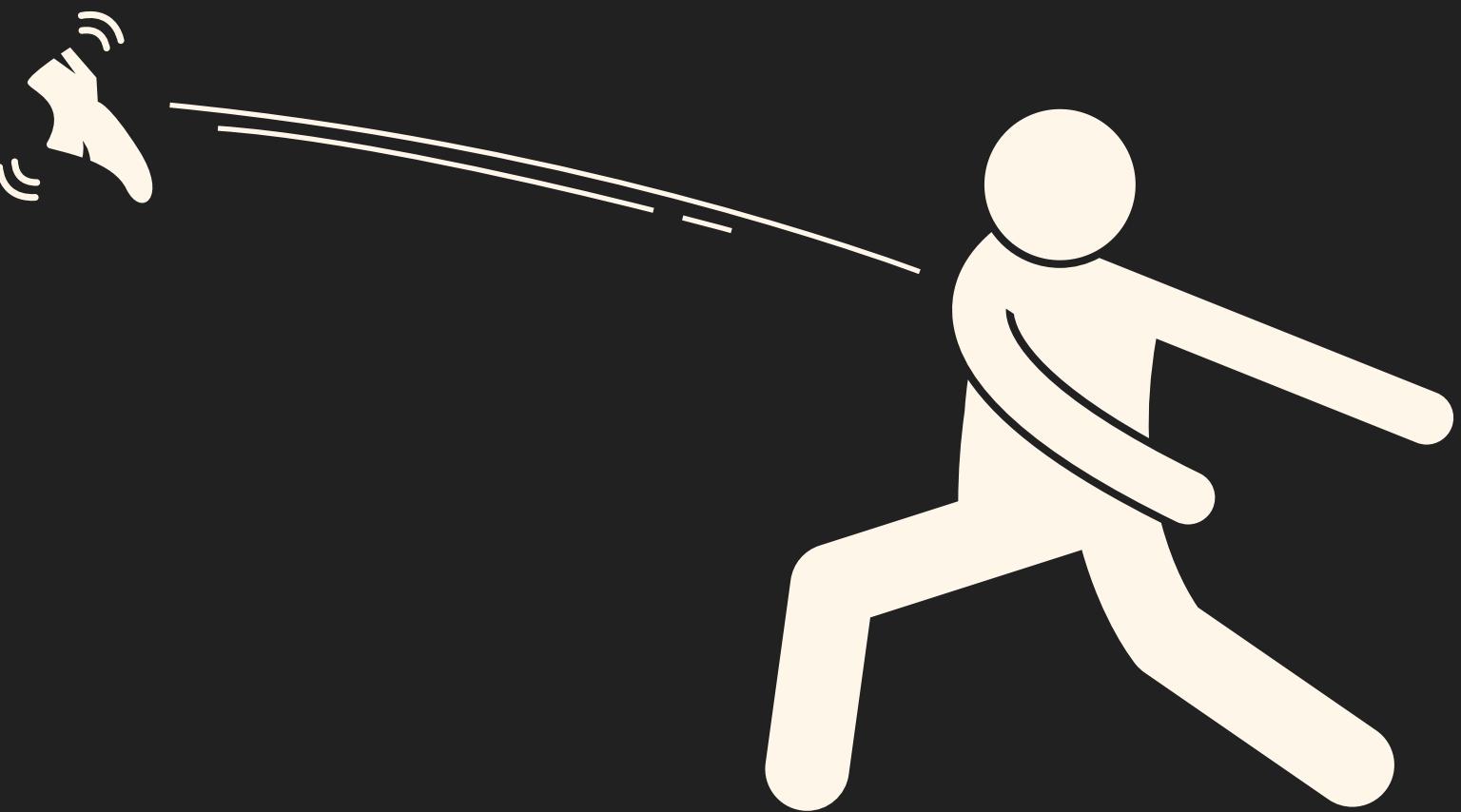
- **Ambiguous Labels:** A “Continue” button that actually cancels the process.
- **Inconsistent Interactions:** Swiping left archives a post on one screen, but deletes in another
- **Unclear Feedback:** Clicking “Submit” on a form that just refreshes the page without any success or error messages



When an interface feels erratic

This is where the **bulk** of poor UX decisions are made.

- **Hidden Functionality:** A swipe-to-delete gesture that works in a list interface, but offers no visual cue it exists.
- **Choice Overload:** A settings page with 20 toggles that doesn't offer an explanation of what they do.
- **Obscure Iconography:** A magnifying glass icon that opens filters instead of search.



When interfaces are built to deceive

- Dark Patterns
 - These are design choices that are *explicitly* crafted to misdirect users
- These are typically defined by...
 - Strange defaults
 - Wacky/disingenuous language
 - Unintuitive cancellation/deactivation processes
 - Excessive pop-ups, notifications and/or requests
- You've definitely seen these before...



When interfaces are built to deceive

A Classic: Trying to cancel a subscription

The screenshot shows a 'Cancel subscription' interface. At the top, a red bar contains the text 'Cancel subscription'. Below it, a message states: 'In canceling your subscription, you'll lose access to several features:' followed by a bulleted list:

- Your custom domain name **thetestshop.de** will expire.
- The associated email address **info@thetestshop.de** will expire.
- Your website will lose visibility in **search engine results**.
- **Ads** will be displayed on your website again.

Below the list is a link: [Keep your domain name by downgrading to the Lite plan](#). At the bottom, there are two buttons: a green 'Keep my subscription' button and a red 'Continue with cancellation' button.

Two callout bubbles provide additional context:

- A white callout bubble points to the green 'Keep my subscription' button with the text: 'Notice the green... does it not feel like a "Confirm" option?'.
- An orange callout bubble points to the red 'Continue with cancellation' button with the text: 'Yet, the **actual** confirm option is low-contrast and styled in red, making it look to be the wrong choice.'

Other things to look out for...

UX issues don't always neatly fit into these two categories.

Here are some others to look out for:

- **Feature Creep**

- When an application is trying to do *too much* at once.
- Could be accidental (designer got carried away)
- Or, it could be intentional (pushing users to engage with the app)

- **Ambiguous Errors**

- “Something went wrong!”
- Did the developer forget their documentation, or are they trying to hide the *true* reason the app failed?



Often, it's a perfect storm

- **Time Crunch**
 - Teams rush to ship features, leaving little room for thoughtful design or usability testing
 - Quick fixes replace long-term solutions
- **Limited Resources**
 - UX research, testing, and iteration may be skipped **altogether**
 - Developers may use pre-built icons and buttons to speed up their workflow, trading nuance for quick dev times



Often, it's a perfect storm

- **Stakeholders**

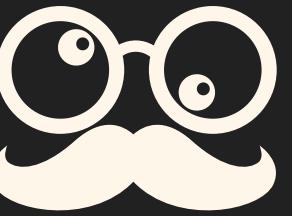
- ... I know. Gotta mention it.
- Decisions can often be driven by capital, rather than user needs
- Opens the door to **Dark Patterns...**

- **Legacy Systems**

- Outdated tech limits what developers can feasibly do with their platform
- **Ex:** App was built on a desktop-first platform, expects users to be able to hover over icons, mobile users cannot



With a side of silliness



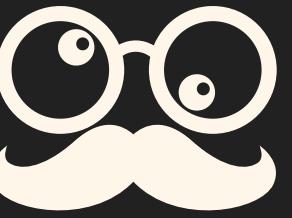
This site **rocks**.



The screenshot shows a blue-themed website for "User Inyerface". At the top center is the logo "UI" in a stylized, layered font, followed by the word "User Inyerface" in a smaller, sans-serif font. Below the logo is a green circular button with the word "NO" in white. To the left of the button, there is text: "Hi and welcome to User Inyerface, a challenging exploration of user interactions and design patterns." To the right of the button, there is more text: "To play the game, simply fill in the form as fast and accurate as possible." At the bottom of the page, a small note says "Please [click HERE](#) to GO to the next page".

<https://userinyerface.com/>

With a side of silliness



Another great one...

* The Password Game

Please choose a password

<https://neal.fun/password-game/>

With a side of silliness

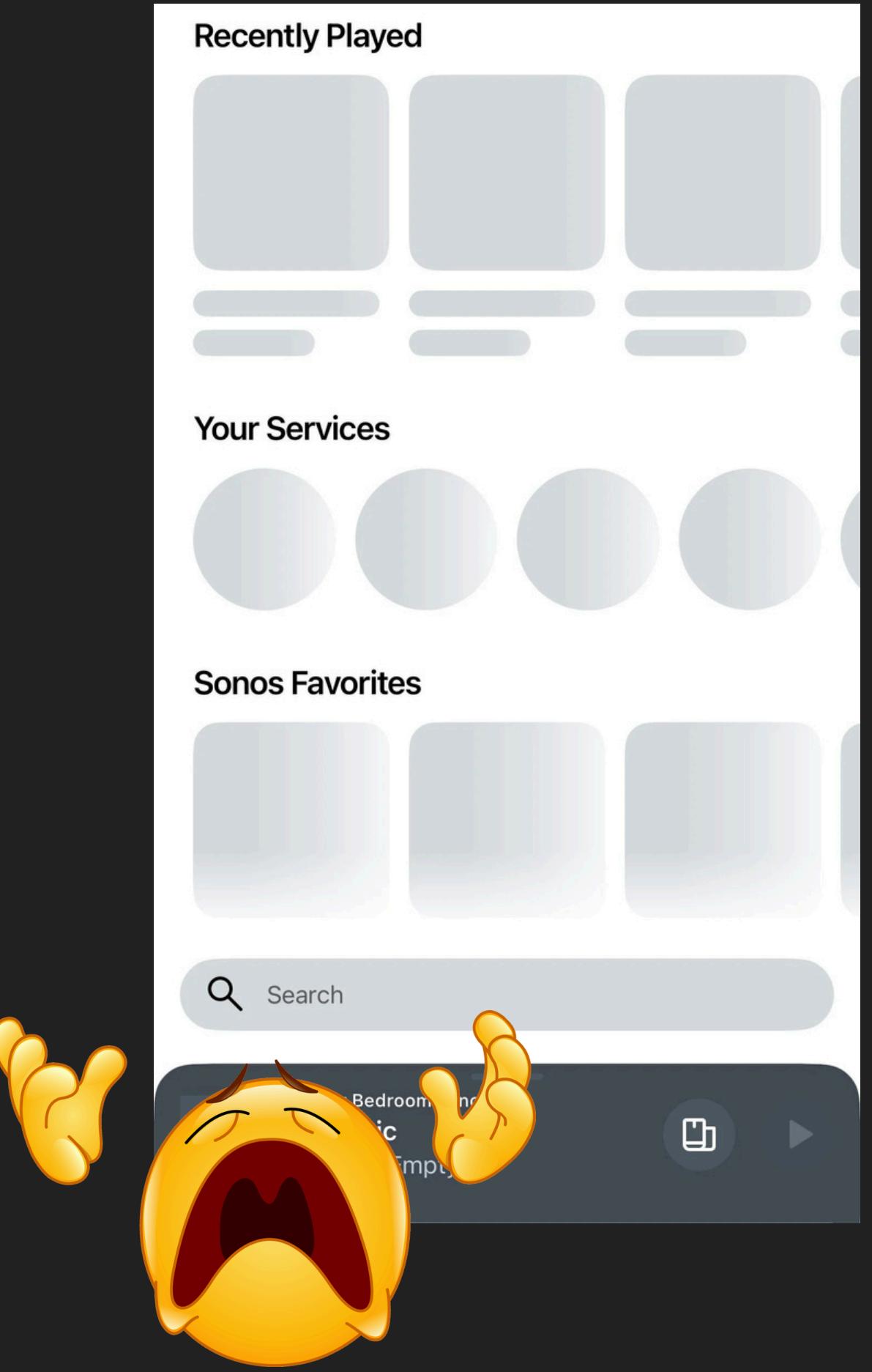
Are these examples kind of dumb? Well yes, obviously.

But, they're also *very illuminating!*

- **User Interface**
 - **Visual overload:** too many colors, flashing elements, and tiny click targets
 - **Misleading navigation:** buttons that do the opposite of what you expect.
 - If you've ever used a recipe website before, the number of popups feels eerily similar...
- **Password Game**
 - **Conflicting guidance:** your password might meet one requirement but fail another... it's infuriating!
 - **Non-intuitive feedback:** the game's hints aren't always clear or actionable.
 - You get stuck in an endless game of whack-a-mole. Fix one issue, another pops up in its place :)

Examples, please!

- Sonos
 - This one is a *doozie*
 - In 2022, Sonos began a full rewrite of their codebase, which originated in the early 2000s
 - The project took around 2 years, finally getting earmarked for release in Spring 2024.
- The Problem?
 - This redesign needed wayyy more time. It was BAD
 - **Missing features:** Playlist editing, sleep timers
 - **Technical issues:** Volume adjustment delays, speaker groups disconnecting
 - Tech debt is real!



Examples, please!

- **Bank of America**
 - Another example of a **legacy system** getting in the way of visual *consistency*
 - Not so much an issue with Bank of America itself, but moreso banking infrastructure as a whole
- The Problem?
 - Banking systems **need** to be secure
 - This makes the underlying architecture complex, and difficult to build on
 - This makes the user-facing experience suffer, as it takes *years* to iterate upon these systems without issuing breaking changes

Drop shadows here, but not there... why??

The screenshot shows a web-based banking interface for Bill Pay. At the top, there's a search bar with placeholder text "Can't find what you're looking for? Go to your account details, or visit [Wires](#) to view more activity." Below this is a section titled "Scheduled" with a note: "There's nothing showing in scheduled right now." The main area is titled "History Last 3 months" and contains four entries, each with a small Bank of America logo icon:

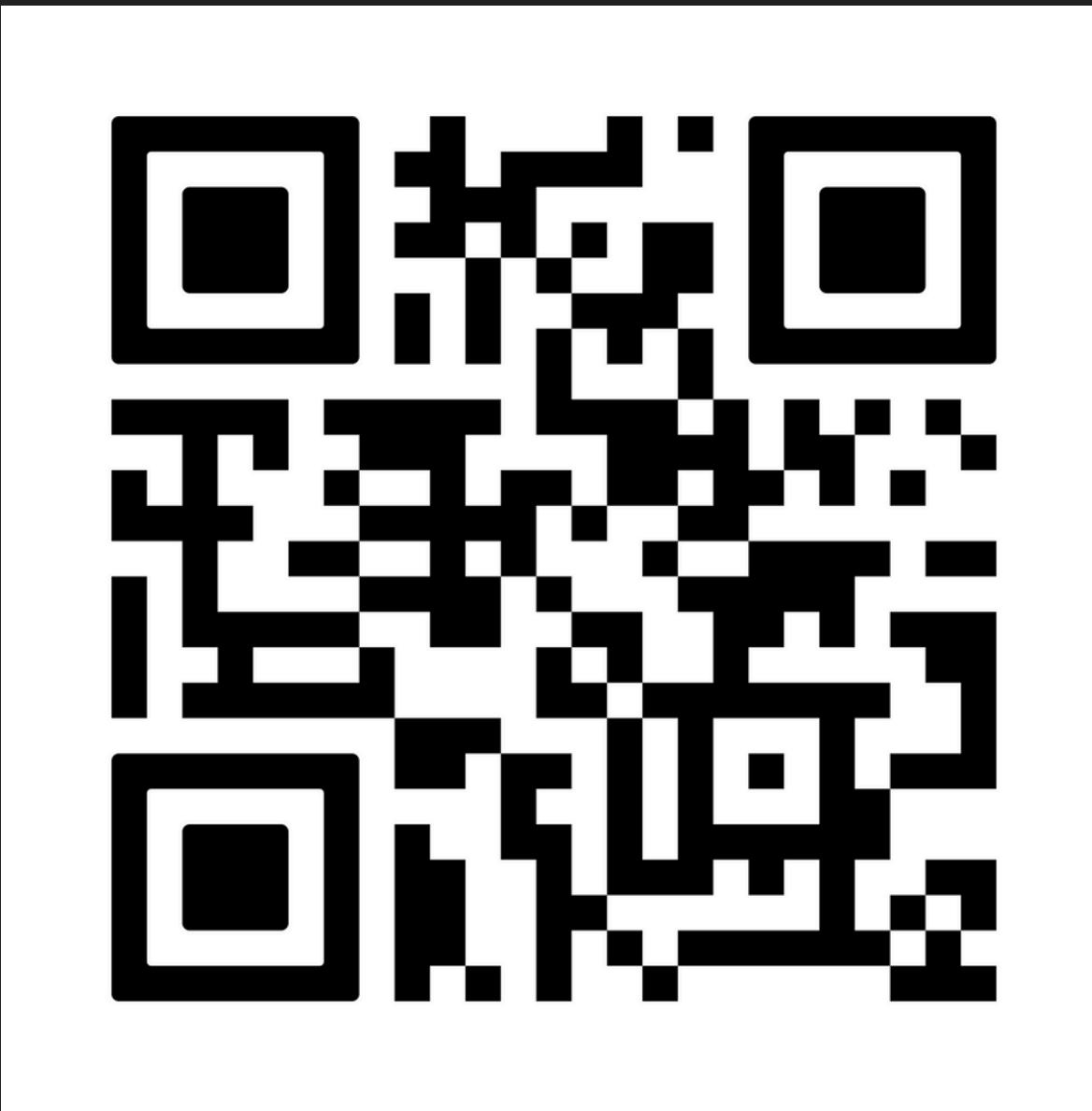
- Customized Cash I
- Customized Cash I
- Bank of America C Bill Pay payment
- Customized Cash I

To the right of these entries is a "Thank you! for using Bill Pay" message with a thumbs-up icon. On the far right, there are download and sort buttons. On the left side of the main content area, there are collapsed sections for "eBills and Reminders" (which says "You have no upcoming reminders or eBills due.") and "Payments" (with tabs for "Scheduled" and "Recent"). The "Scheduled" tab under Payments has the sub-instruction "Scheduled payments are listed here." At the bottom right, there's a "Quick Help" section with links to various questions like "Have a Bill Pay Question?", "What is an eBill?", etc., and a "Log Out" button at the very bottom right.



Now, it's your turn!

Time to play **UX detective**.

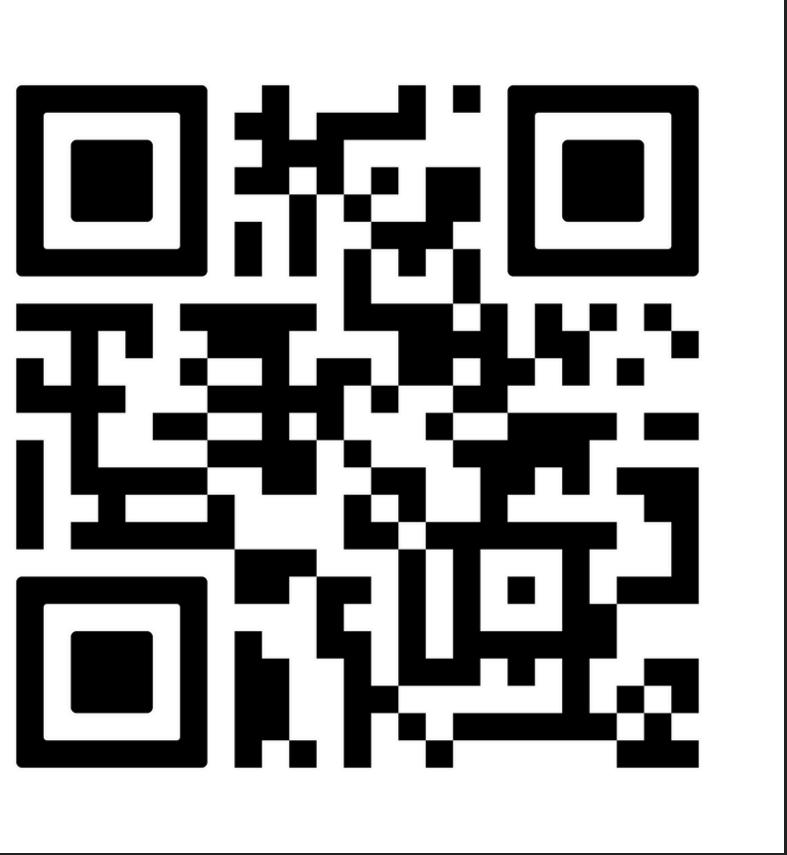


Lingscars.com

UX Detective



- Visit the site. Explore like an **investigator**!
- **Your task?** Find at least **2–3** examples of questionable design choices
 - Ask yourself: *How might this confuse or mislead a user?*
- Quick reminder of what we covered:
 - **Deceptive:** Patterns that trick the user into doing something they didn't intend
 - Dark patterns (e.g., sneaky pre-checked boxes, disguised ads)
 - Ambiguous labels that steer users wrong
 - **Misleading:** Breaks flow or makes interaction harder than it should be
 - Inconsistent interactions (different behavior in similar spots)
 - Obscure icons, ambiguous errors
 - **Contextual:** The “why” behind bad UX
 - What looks rushed?
 - Are there
 - Legacy systems that can’t adapt
 - Stakeholder opinions or resource/time crunches driving poor choices
- You have **10** minutes. We'll reconvene after!

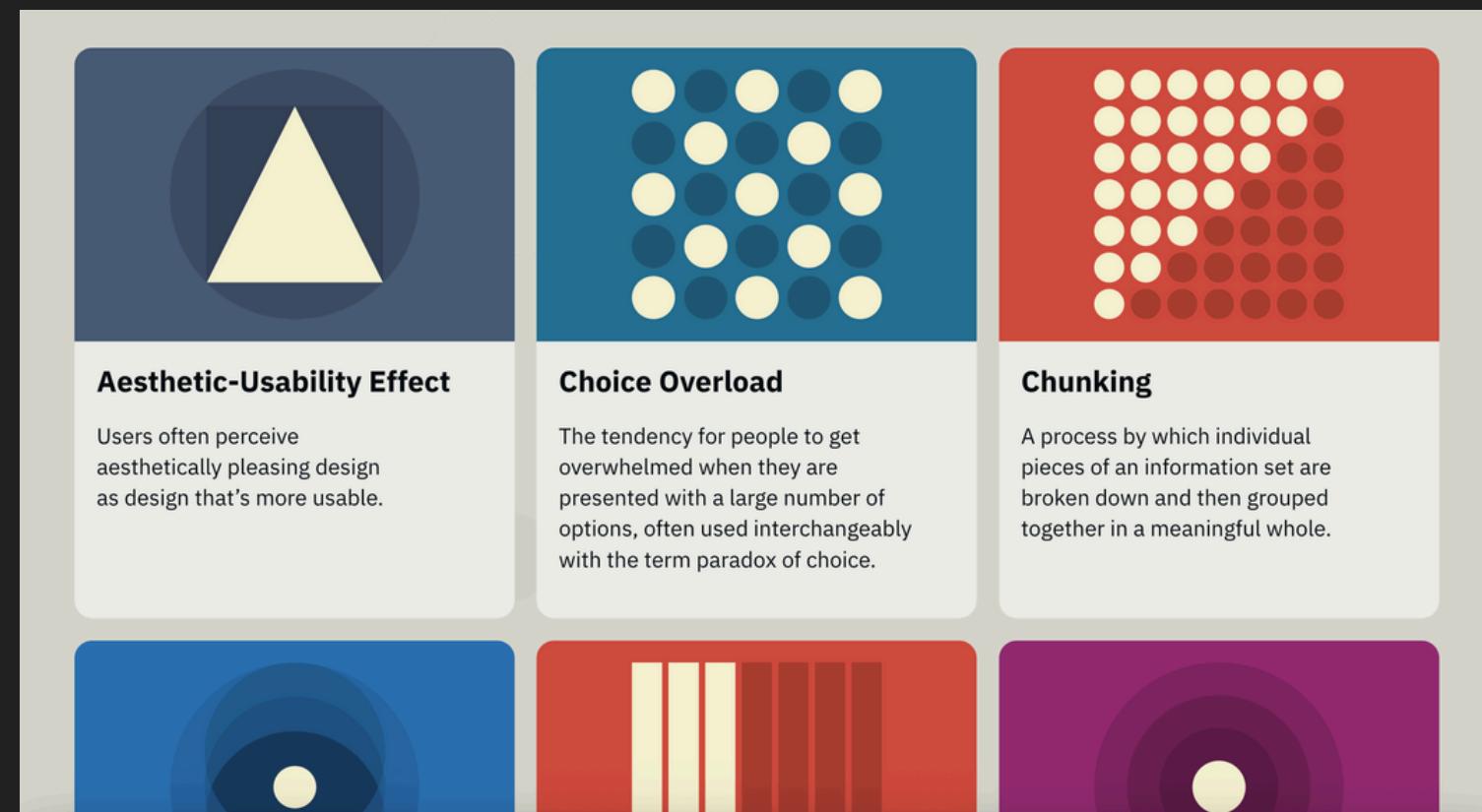


In case you lost it:
<https://lingscars.com>



Quick Shoutout

I've found this page *super* helpful in nailing down UX fundamentals as of late. Check it out if you're interested!

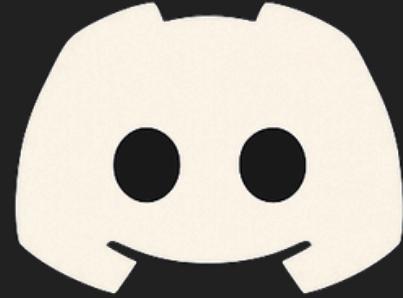


<https://lawsوفux.com>

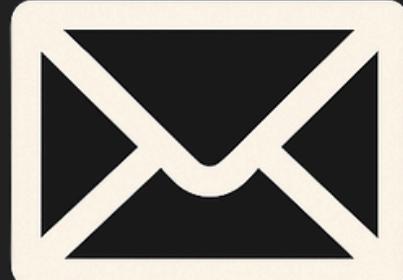
Ways to Contact Us!



@uxdpitt



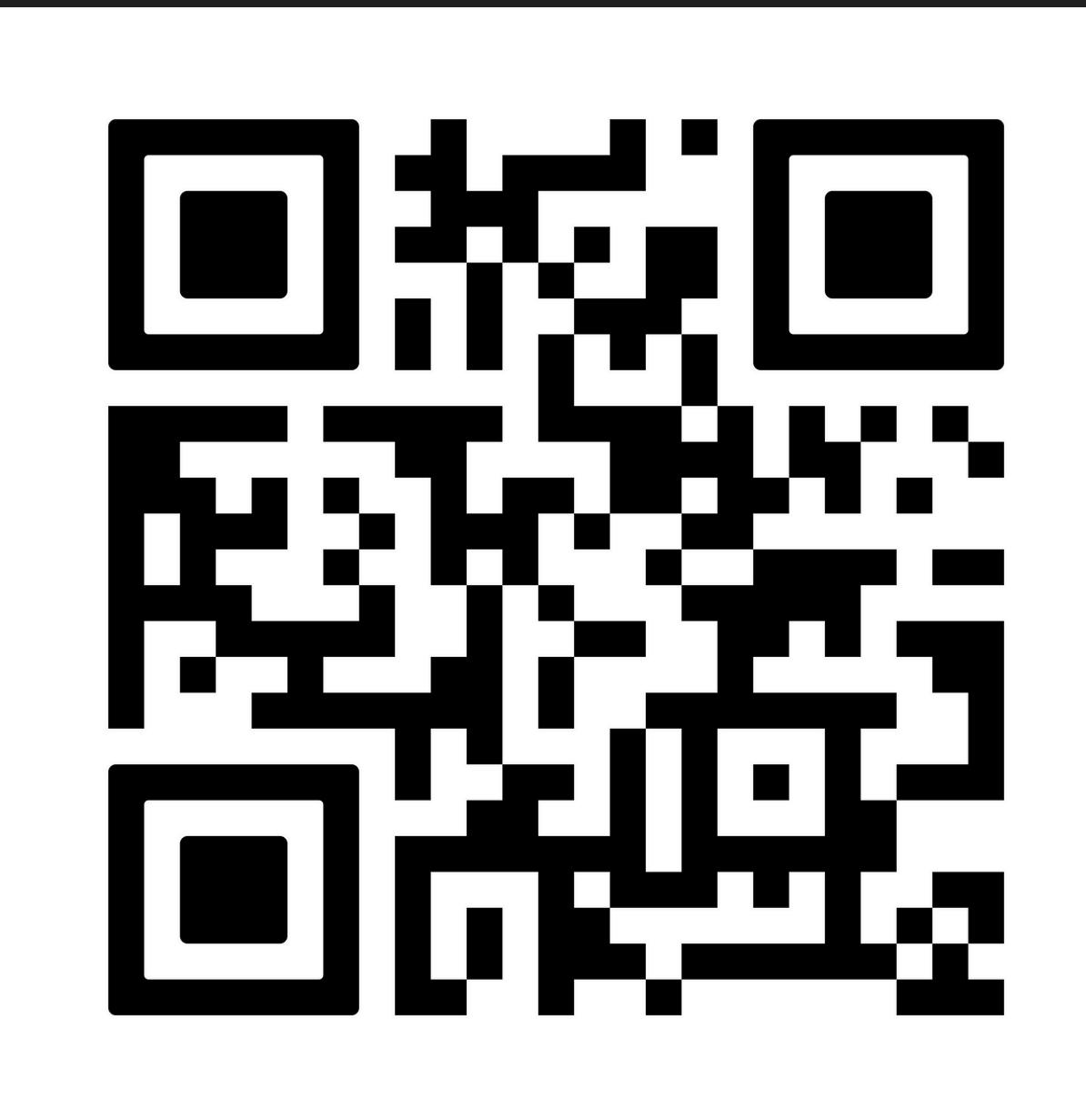
UXD Discord Server



lbs57@pitt.edu

Thank you for coming!

Sign In Form



Discord Server

