

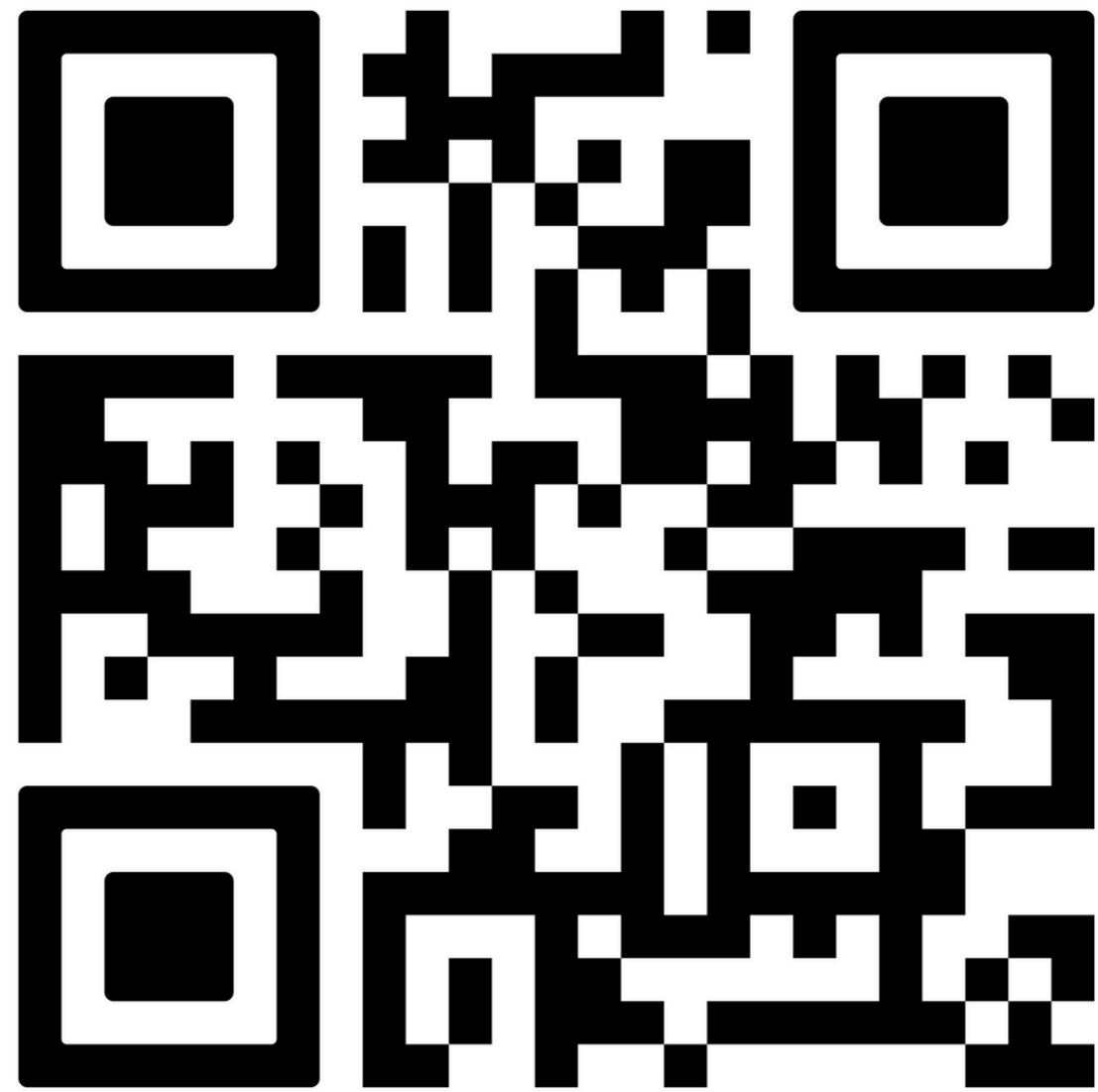
# Bad UX

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 :)



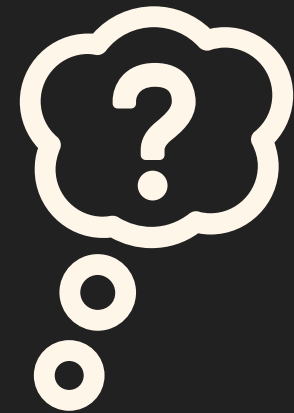
# But First...

What actually makes a design *bad*?



# Two Distinct Flavors

(non-comprehensive)



## Misleading

When an experience is designed  
without **foresight**



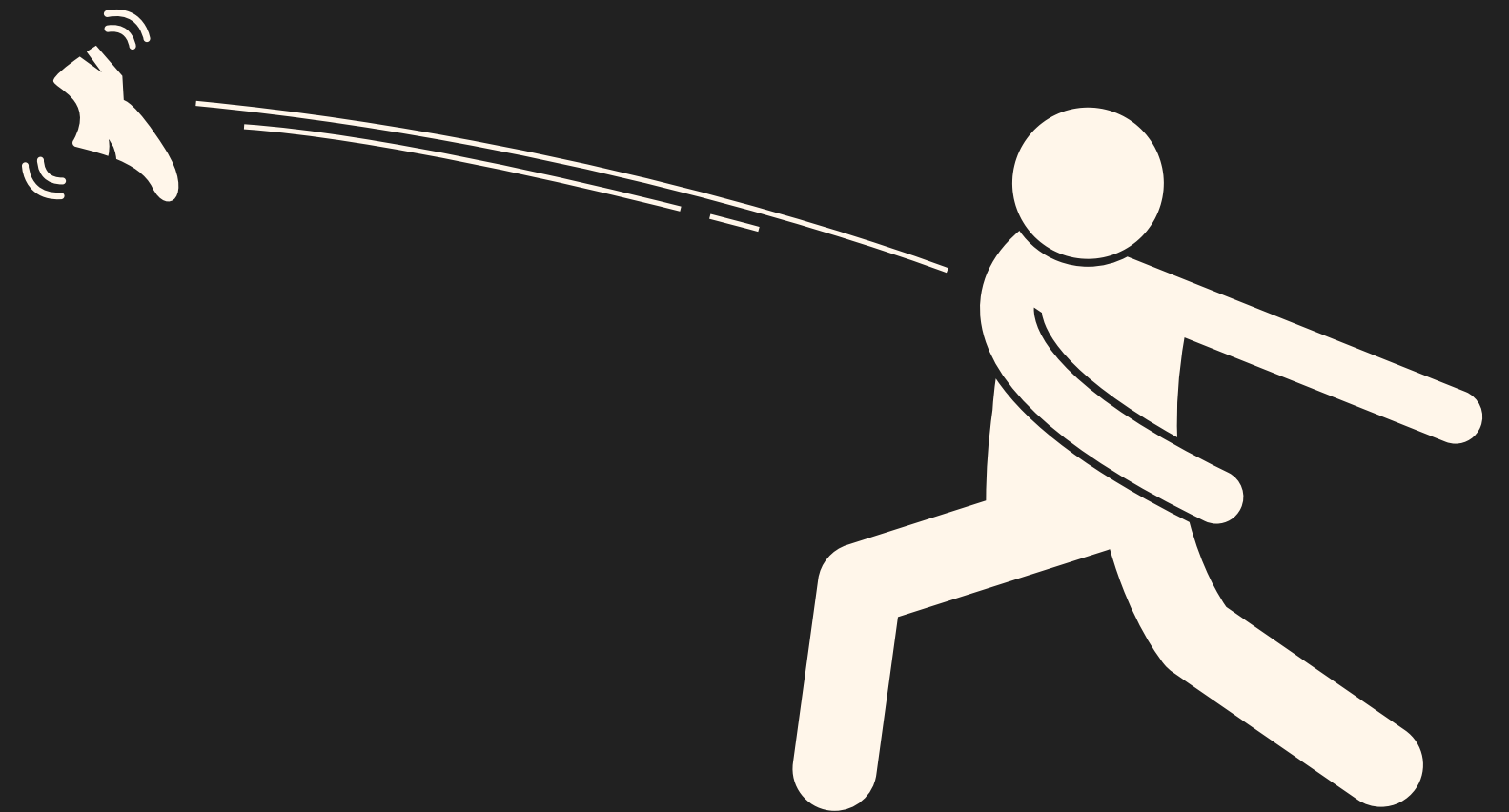
## Deceptive

When an experience feels  
explicitly **manipulative**

# When an interface feels erratic

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

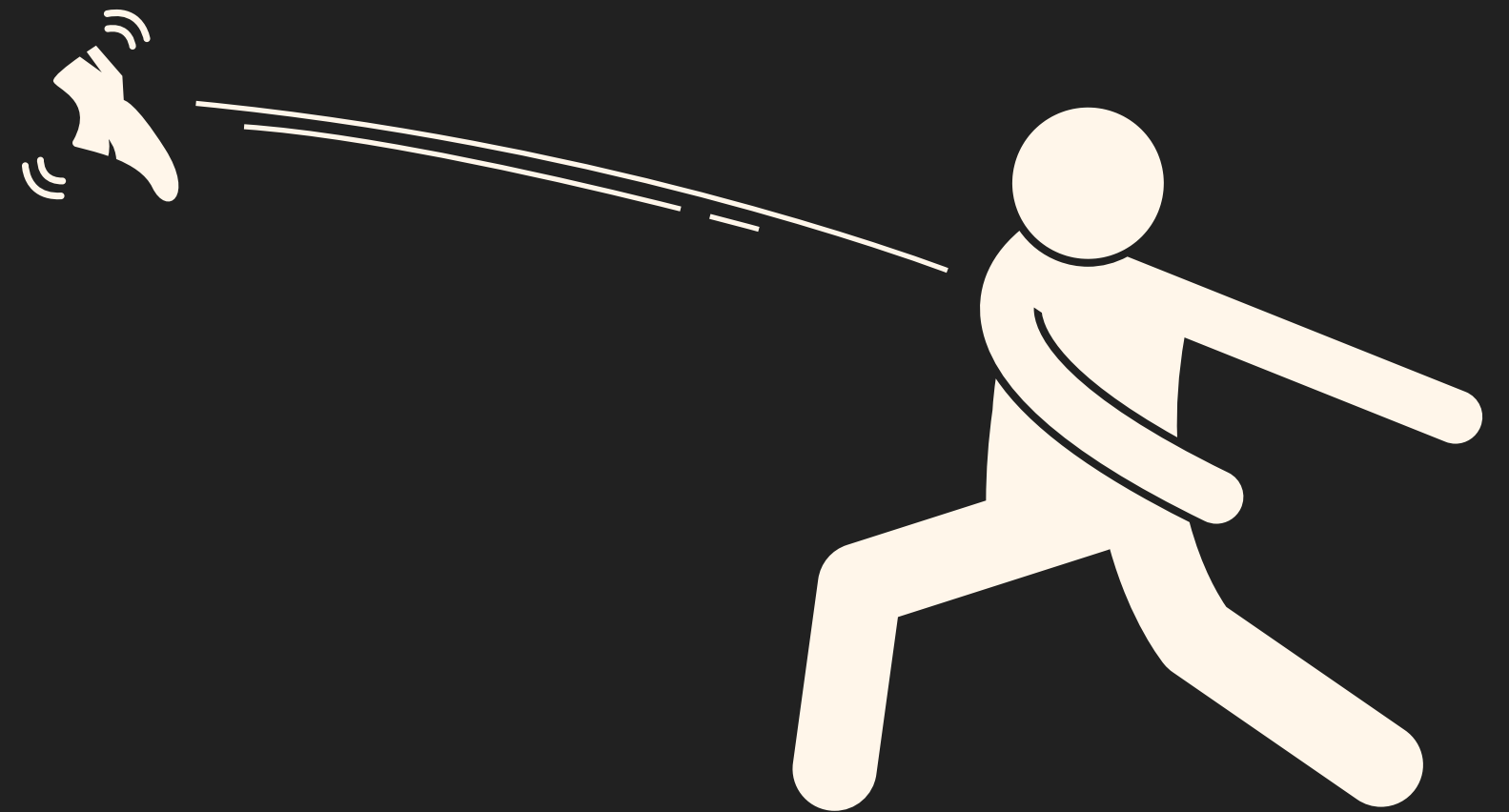
- **Ambiguous Labels:** A “Continue” button that actually cancels the process.
- **Inconsistent Interactions:** Swiping left archives a post on one screen, but deletes in another
- **Unclear Feedback:** Clicking “Submit” on a form that just refreshes the page without any success or error messages



# 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 decieve

- **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 decieve

## A Classic: Trying to cancel a subscription

### Cancel subscription

In canceling your subscription, you'll lose access to several features:

- 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.

[Keep your domain name by downgrading to the Lite plan](#)

Keep my subscription

Continue with cancellation

Notice the green... does it not feel like a "Confirm" option?

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...**

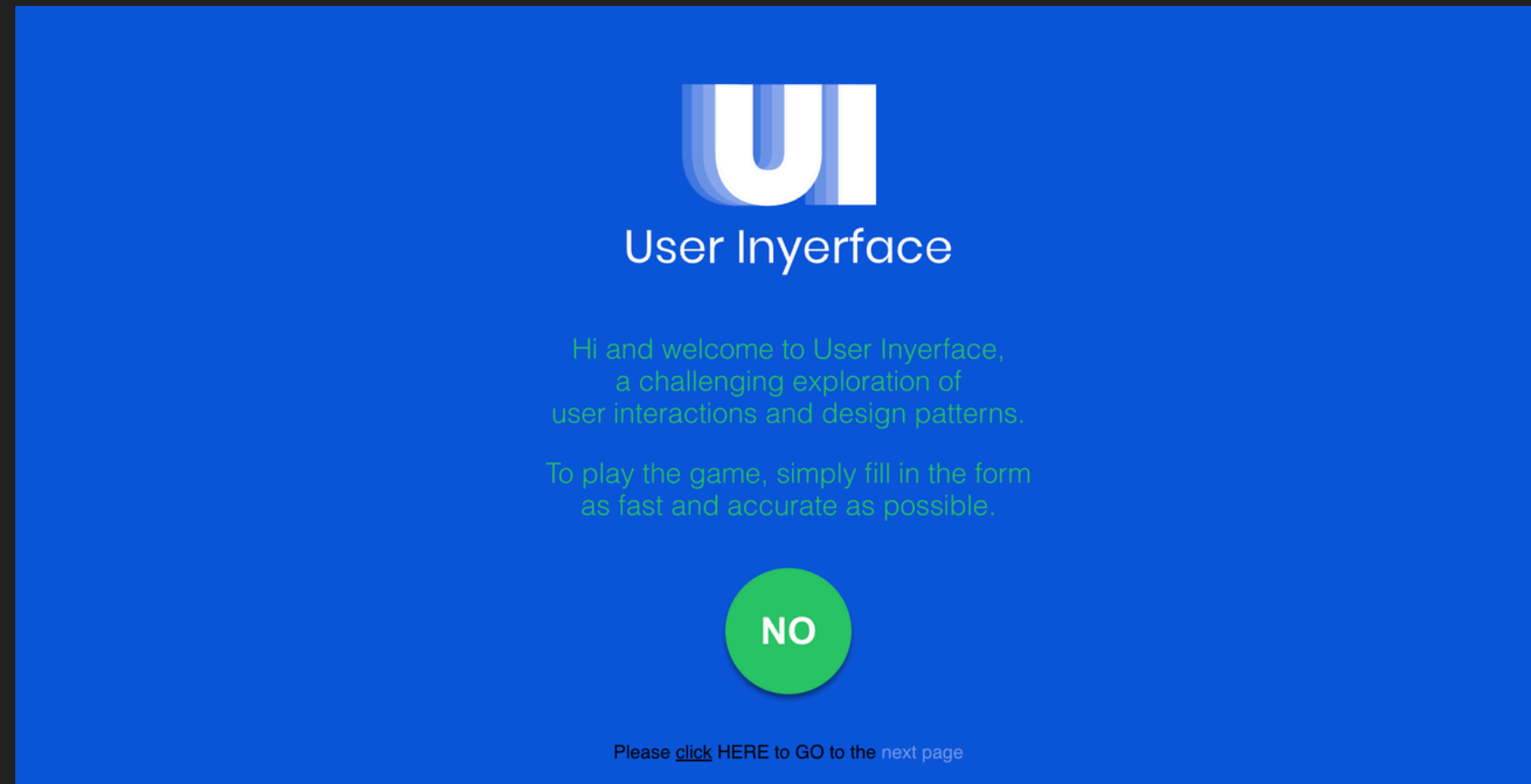
- Legacy Systems

- 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**.



<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 Inyerface**

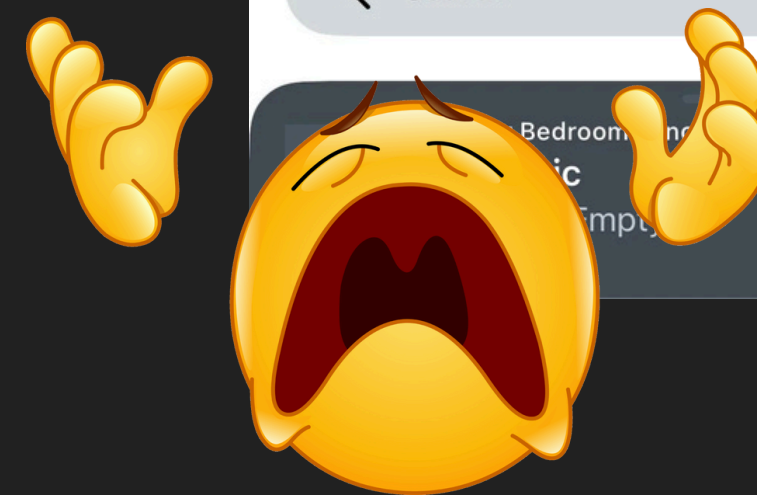
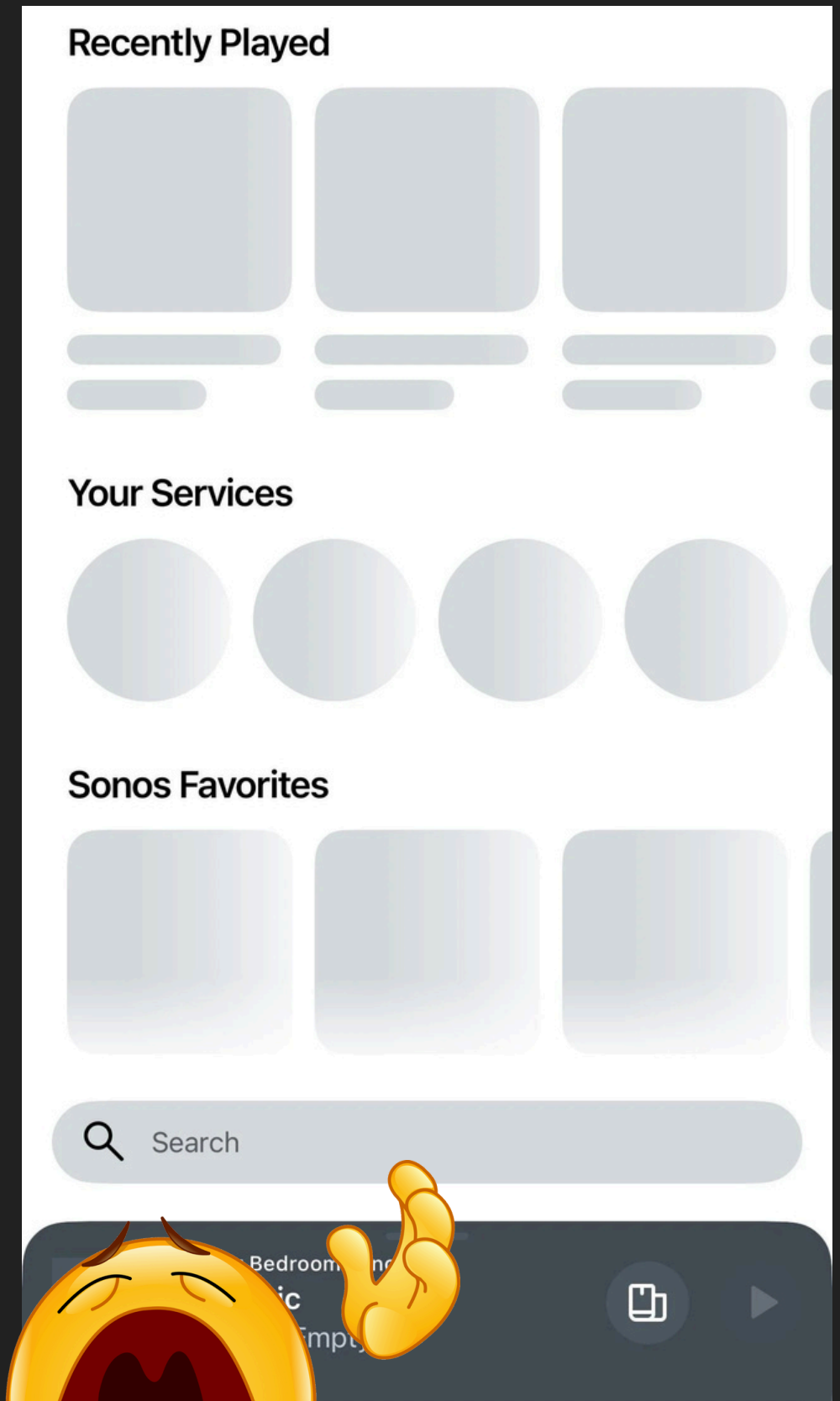
- **Visual overload:** too many colors, flashing elements, and tiny click targets
- **Misleading navigation:** buttons that do the opposite of what you expect.
- If you've ever used a recipe website before, the number of popups feels eerily similar...

- **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!

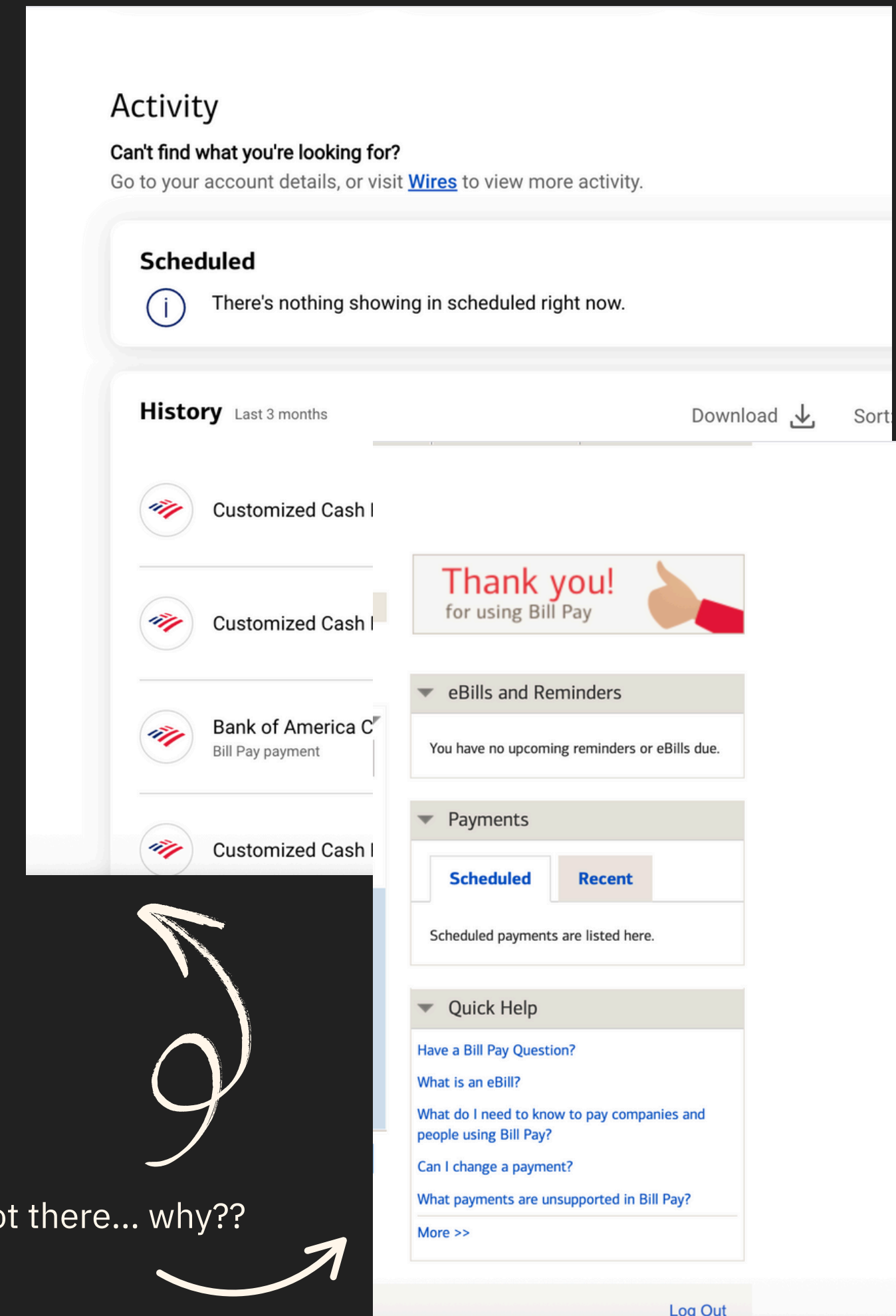




# Examples, please!

- 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??

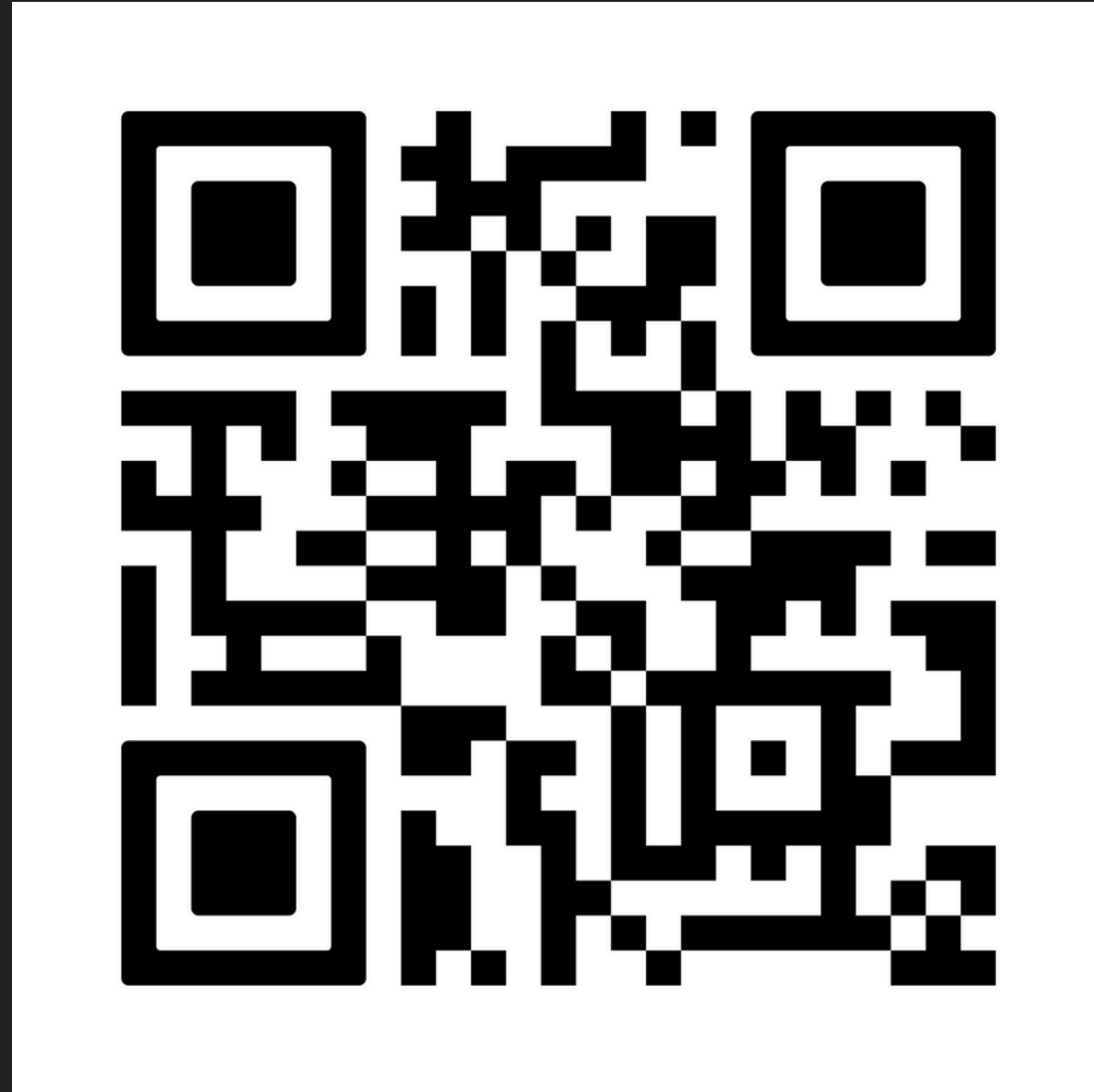






# Now, it's your turn!

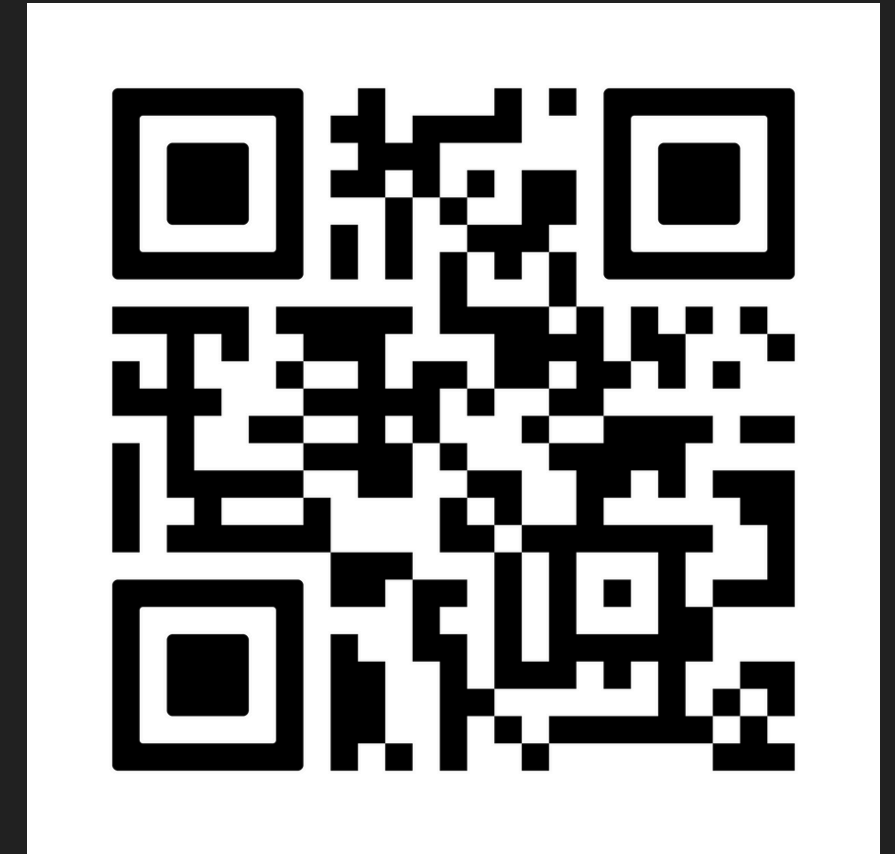
Time to play **UX detective**.



[Lingscars.com](https://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!

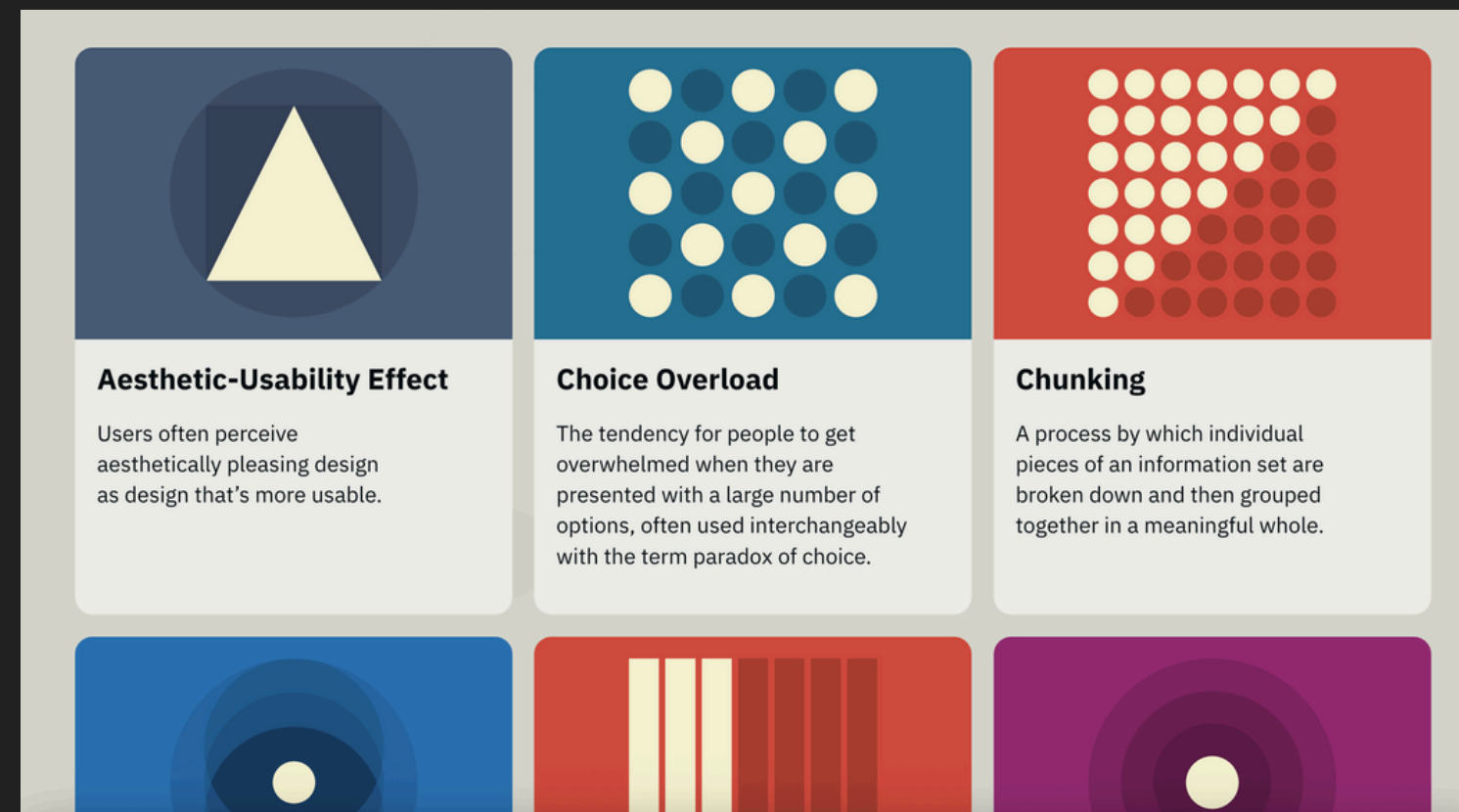


In case you lost it:  
<https://lingcars.com>



# 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://lawsofux.com>

# Ways to Contact Us!



**@uxdpitt**



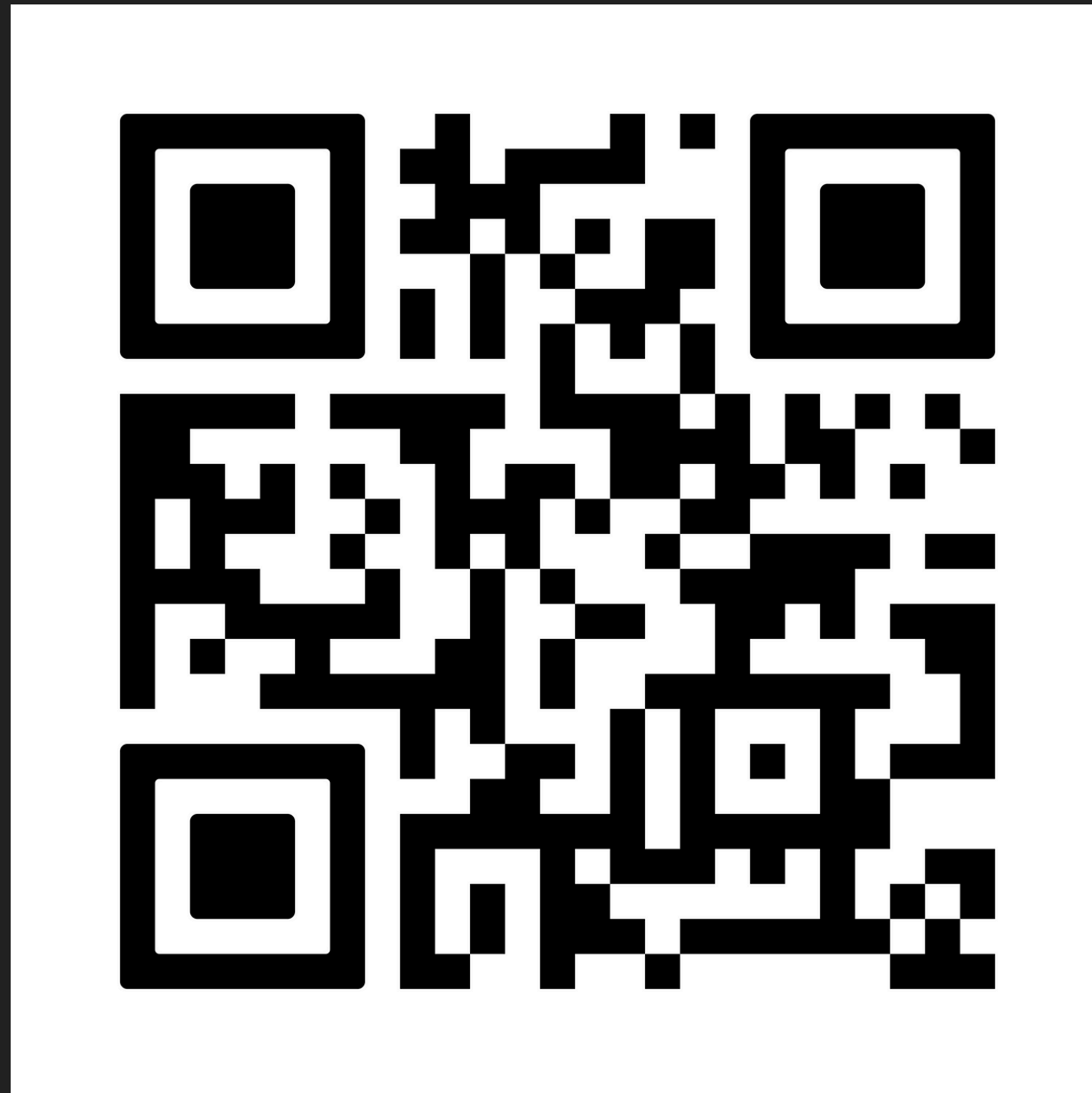
**UXD Discord Server**



**lbs57@pitt.edu**

# Thank you for coming!

Sign In Form



Discord Server

