COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSION 1: CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Peer Responses

Murthy Kanuri
Research Methods and Professional Practice
University of Essex

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PEER RESPONSE BY MARIUM RASOOL

I found your analysis of the "Dark UX Patterns" case study both clear and insightful. You did a great job of linking the ethical concerns to specific principles in the ACM and BCS codes. It is worrying how small interface changes for example the color or shape of a button can be intentionally used to steer users toward decisions they might not otherwise make. These tactics are not just questionable design choice but they can also compromise user trust and can cause real financial harm (Mathur et al., 2019).

What stood out to me especially was the pressure Stewart faced from management to prioritize client satisfaction over ethical responsibility. That kind of environment makes it incredibly difficult for professionals to speak up even when they know something feels wrong. I also agree with your comparison of the ACM and BCS frameworks. Both clearly emphasize honesty, fairness, and accountability which get undermined by dark patterns. These deceptive practices do not just risk legal consequences they also damage public confidence in digital services overall (Albesher and Heider, 2023). In a time when users are increasingly aware of manipulative design the existence of transparency and integrity are more important than ever.

Ultimately, this case is a strong reminder that user experience design is not just a technical or aesthetic task it is an ethical one too. Your post brings attention to that responsibility in a really thoughtful way.

References:

- ACM. (2018). Case Study: Dark UX Patterns. Available at: https://www.acm.org/code-of-ethics/case-studies/dark-ux-patterns
- Albesher, A. and Heider, A. (2023). 'An Empirical Analysis of E-Governments' Cookie Interfaces in 50 Countries'. Sustainability, 15(2), p. 1231. https://doi.org/10.3390/su15021231
- BCS. (2015). BCS Code of Conduct. Available at: https://www.bcs.org/membership/become-a-member/bcs-code-of-conduct/
- Mathur, A. et al. (2019). 'Dark Patterns at Scale: Findings from a Crawl of 11K Shopping Websites'. Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction, 3(CSCW), pp. 1–32. https://doi.org/10.1145/3359183
- Quinn, M. J. (2020). Ethics for the Information Age. 8th edn. Boston: Pearson.

PEER RESPONSE BY CRAIG NORRIS

A good read that clearly articulates how the ACM case study Dark UX Patterns violates both several principles of the ACM Code of Ethics as well as the BCS code of conduct. Impact wise, Dark UX patterns can also harm people's mental health. These tricky designs can make users feel stressed, frustrated, or powerless—especially those who are more vulnerable. Zac et al. (2025) found economic and social problems can happen when people can't make informed choices or feel forced to spend extra time and money protecting themselves, which lowers overall well-being.

References:

- Zac, A., Huang, Y., von Moltke, A., Decker, C. and Ezrachi, A., 2025. Dark patterns and consumer vulnerability. Behavioural Public Policy. Cambridge University Press. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1017/bpp.2024.49