

# COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSION 1: CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Summary Post

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## SUMMARY POST

My initial post was on the ACM case study “Dark UX Patterns,” which describes the career of Stewart, a UX designer who is pushed into implementing dishonest design by guiding users to intentionally click on more expensive options. I argued that these actions contravene central ethical principles of the ACM and BCS—honesty, fairness, harm avoidance and professional integrity (ACM, 2018; BCS, 2018). I also discussed the legal impacts under consumer protection laws and the effects on society of diminished user confidence.

Marium Rasool reinforced my analysis by stressing the subtle yet impactful nature of dark UX and how management pressure can suppress ethical objections. I was supported in my response by Marium who also mentioned the crucial role of user trust, integrity, in UX design and agreed with me that design has an ethical weight that we need to take responsibility for (and honesty needs to take a few spotlights as well).

Craig Norris contributed a valuable mental health perspective in this vein, referring to Zac et al. (2025) to argue that dark patterns may lead to stress and psychological harm, especially for those who are most vulnerable. I found Craig’s broader notion of harm useful and concur that this makes the case for morally informed design standards of user wellness (Zac et al., 2025).

In my comment to Dinh Khoi Dang about the malware ethics case, I contrasted it with the Dark UX case because they are literally the perfect contrast how, both, are risks but that at a different level of the organization, they are both ethically relevant risks. I pushed for clear paths of ethical escalation within companies. I contended that ethical resignation (as recommended by the BCS) may, at times, be the only thing that remains of responsible action when ethical transgressions remain unattended (BCS, 2018).

I also responded to Marium Rasool, who examined a case of gender discrimination and workplace misconduct. I appreciated the post’s focus on how unethical behaviour, such as deleting female contributors’ names, reflects deeper issues in corporate culture. Drawing on Margolis and Fisher (2002) and Stahl (2007), I emphasised the importance of ethical leadership and structural protections, including effective whistleblowing systems. As in the Dark UX case, management inaction exacerbated harm, illustrating how ethics must be embedded in practice and leadership.

### References

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- Stahl, B.C. (2007) 'Ethics, Morality and Critique: An Essay on Enid Mumford's Socio-Technical Approach', Journal of the Association for Information Systems, 8(9), pp. 479–490.
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