Dark Pattern Cheat Sheet

Looking to be more ethical? Want to design interfaces that don't manipulate users? This guide will help you identify Dark Patterns and the categories they fall into.

How to use this Template

1. Take the situation or interface in question, match it with the Dark Pattern strategies, and assess if any of them apply.

2. If any are met, review the Dark Pattern Types for that strategy, then identify which type best matches the situation or interface.

3. Once identified, label the interface with the corresponding Dark Pattern.

Obstruction
Does the platform make the task more complex than it needs to be?

1. **Comparison Prevention** – Does the platform make it difficult for the user to compare the prices of products by presenting them in a complex manner?

2. **Obstruction** – Are there any barriers or hurdles that make it difficult for a user to complete a task or access information?

3. **Hard to Cancel** – Is it very easy to subscribe to something but very difficult to unsubscribe?

Forced Action
Does the platform fool/mislead the user into taking an additional action before completing the action they intended to?

4. **Forced action** – Is the user forced to do something undesirable in return for completing the action they want to?

5. **Nagging** – Is the user repeatedly interrupted by requests to do something while they are trying to do something else?

Interface Interference
Does the interface promote certain actions over other actions through visual or language manipulation?

6. **Preselection** – Is the user presented with a default option already selected influencing their decision-making?

7. **Trick Wording** – Is confusing or misleading language used to mislead the user into taking an action?

8. **Visual Interference** – Is information presented to the user in a confusing manner to mislead them?

Sneaking
Is important information hidden or disguised from the user?

9. **Disguised Ad** – Is the advertisement clearly visible as an advertisement or is it hidden as a part of the interface?

10. **Hidden Cost** – Is the user attracted to buying an item through the advertisement of low prices but when they go to buy the product unexpected charges and fees are added?

11. **Hidden Subscription** – Is the user unknowingly enrolled in a recurring subscription or a payment plan without their explicit consent?

12. **Sneaking** – Is the user fooled into making a transaction because important or relevant information is hidden from them or presented in a delayed fashion?

Social Engineering
Does it take advantage of the user's individual biases or beliefs to influence them into performing certain actions?

13. **Confirmshaming** – Does the platform emotionally manipulate the user into doing something they normally would not do?

14. **Fake Scarcity** – Does the platform give a fake indication of limited supply of a product to pressure the user?

15. **Fake Social Proof** – Does the platform use fake information to attract the user or mislead the user into believing something?

16. **Fake Urgency** – Is the user pressured into completing an action because of a fake time limitation?