

**DIGITAL ISSUES AWARENESS
FOR FRIENDS**

LEYM WORKSHOP SERIES



UNFRIENDLY PERSUASION: DIGITAL DARK PATTERNS AWARENESS

FEBRUARY 11, 2023

Bill Warters, LEYM Digital Communications Facilitator

[HTTPS://LEYM.ORG/PJE-INTEREST-GROUP/](https://leym.org/pje-interest-group/)

Digital Issues Awareness for Friends

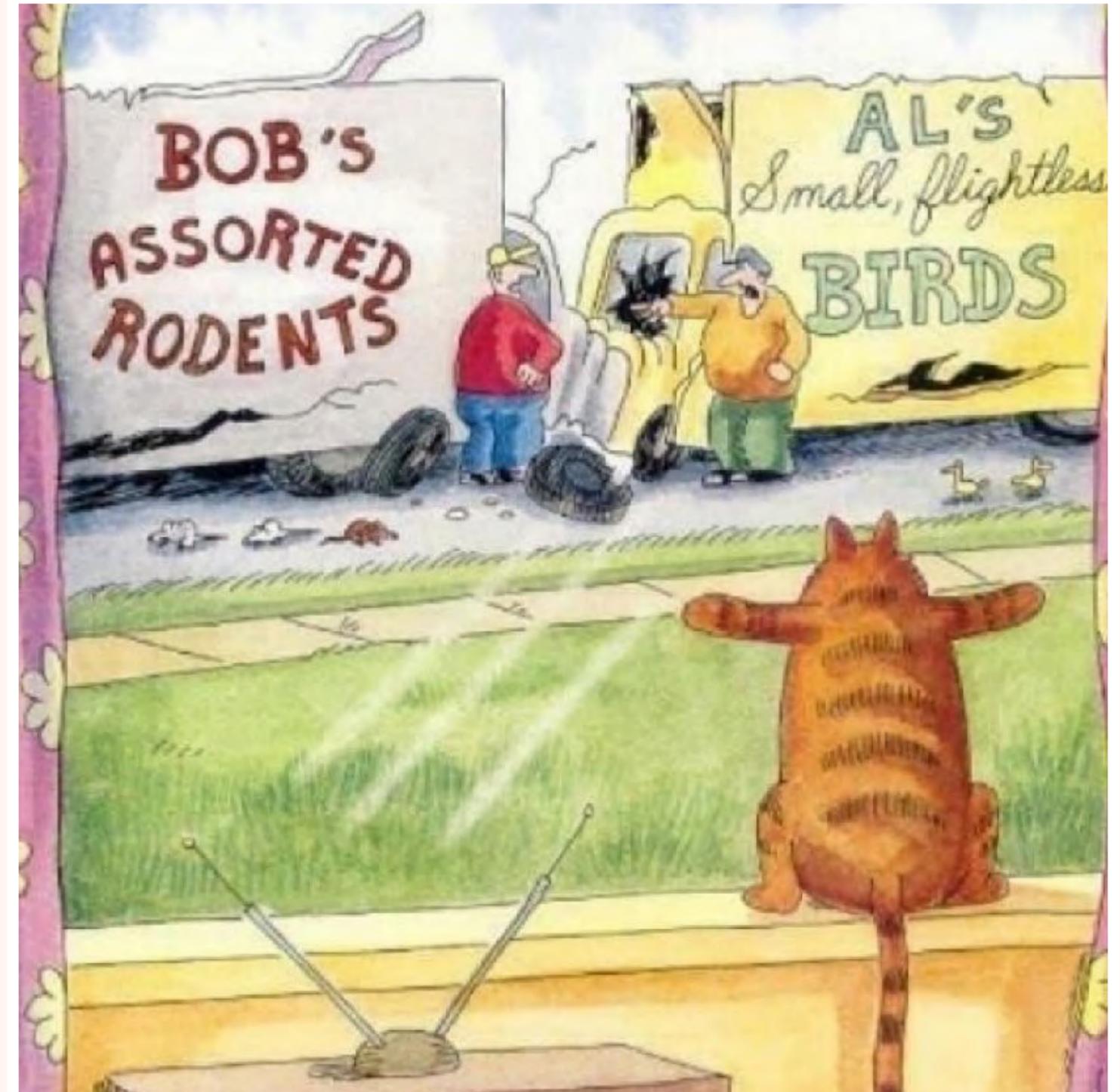
WELCOME!

- **New LEYM Workshop Series**
- **Monthly on Saturday afternoons**
- **Come to one or all of the sessions**
- **Designed to raise awareness among Friends**
- **Sharing of educational materials developed by various digital human rights projects**



CHECK-IN

Please share your **NAME**, your **QUAKER AFFILIATION**, and something you really **ENJOY** **PAYING ATTENTION TO** in your world.



Gary Larson Farside Comic

AGENDA

UNFRIENDLY PERSUASION: DIGITAL DARK PATTERNS AWARENESS

- ✱ **Quakers and Honesty**
- ✱ **Designing for Engagement**
- ✱ **What is Deceptive Design?**
 - ✱ **Types and Examples**
- ✱ **Deceptive Design Quiz (in Breakout Groups)**
- ✱ **What's Being Done to Address Deceptive Design?**
- ✱ **What's a Quaker to Do?**
- ✱ **Key Resources of Interest**



QUAKERS AND HONESTY

REPUTATION FOR HONEST BUSINESS PRACTICES

“For most of human history, you had to haggle over prices before you could buy something. The Quakers were among the first people to commit to fixed prices — and they did it because it was good morals. Turned out, it was also good business.”

Planet Money story

- **Quakers built their businesses by focusing on integrity and good reputations**
- **Quakers are featured in this story: [The Birth and Death of the Price Tag \(NPR Planet Money\)](#)**
- **Today the [Quakers and Business Group](#) continues to promote honest business practices**



Logo for Quakers and Business Group

<https://www.qandb.org/pages/29-our-principles>

DESIGNING FOR ENGAGEMENT

“Design has the potential to evoke emotional reactions in your audience; use this to your advantage. Whether your design’s purpose is to encourage people to buy a product, attend an event, sign up for a newsletter, or browse your website, your audience is more likely to follow through when they connect emotionally with your design.”

<https://www.canva.com/learn/design-for-engagement/>



DESIGN AND CONSENT

got
consent?

“It’s no secret that apps and social media companies are competing for consumers’ attention. The more time spent on an app or platform, the better. And that means a series of design choices have been made, to slowly but surely keep us locked in.

When media studies Professor Shaka McGlotten uses an app like Facebook or Twitter, they **sometimes wonder whether using social media can be considered a consensual interaction at this point.** How much of our social media behavior is ours and how much of it is influenced by the medium itself?”

Aina, M. (2021, July 16). Glued To Your Phone? Here’s How To Rethink Your Relationship With Social Media. *NPR*.
<https://www.npr.org/2021/07/16/1016854764/social-media-balance-relationship-boundaries>

PROMOTING ADDICTIVE BEHAVIOR

- **Ludic Loops** - Psychologist Natasha Dow Schüll spent 13 years studying gamblers and slot machines in Las Vegas and developed a term as a result: **ludic loop, the zone of comfort you enter when engaged in a repetitive activity that gives you occasional rewards.**

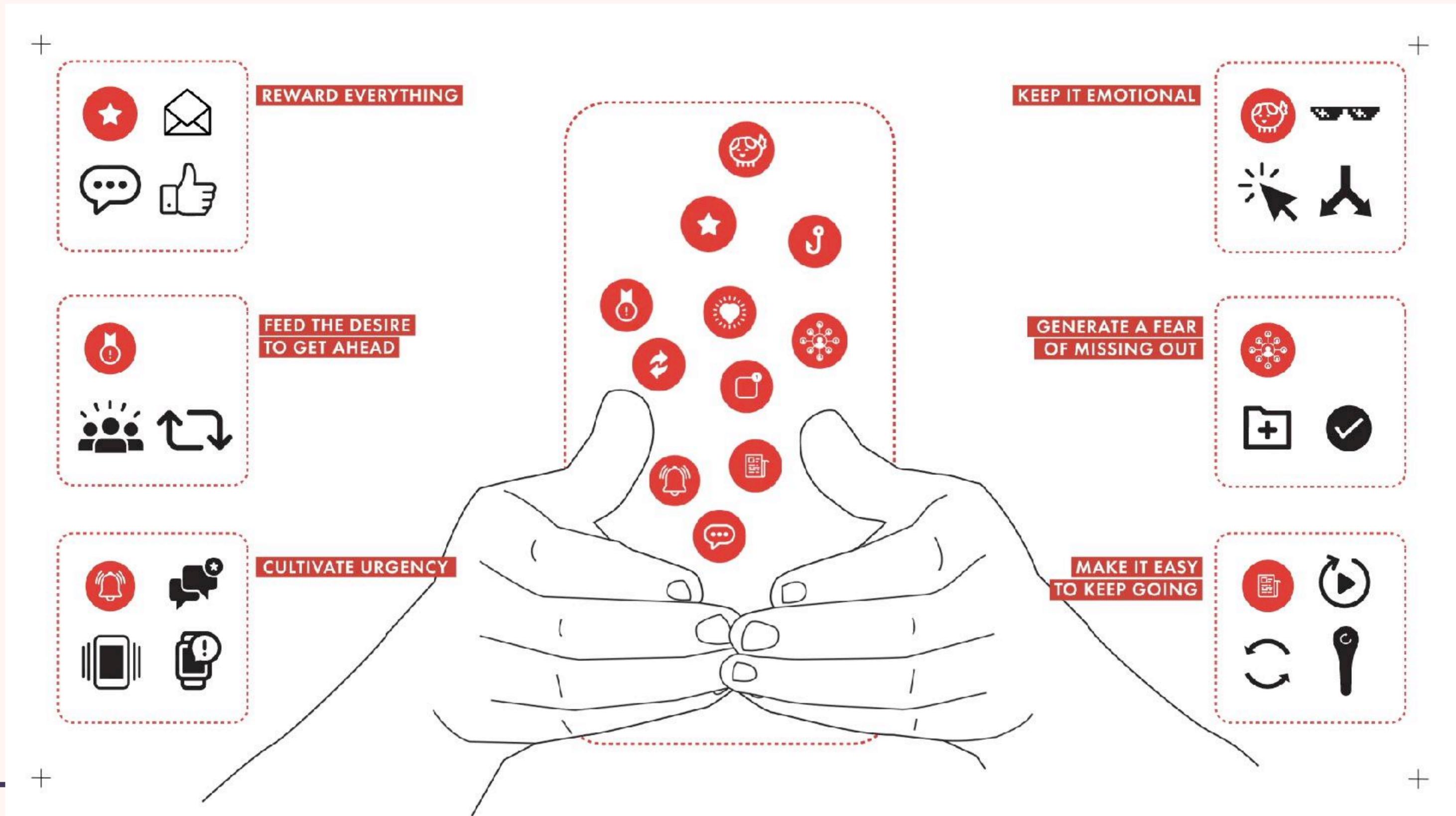


“This intentional design puts you in a calm, inattentive state. The cycle of anticipation and feedback is key to hitting the most important metrics — clicks and time on site. It’s perhaps no wonder many social media platforms and mobile games or apps in general are designed to keep you engaged for as long as possible.”

- **The Hook Model** - Nir Eyal, author of *Hooked: How to Build Habit Forming Products*, identified a basic model for designers: Trigger → Action → Variable Reward → Investment

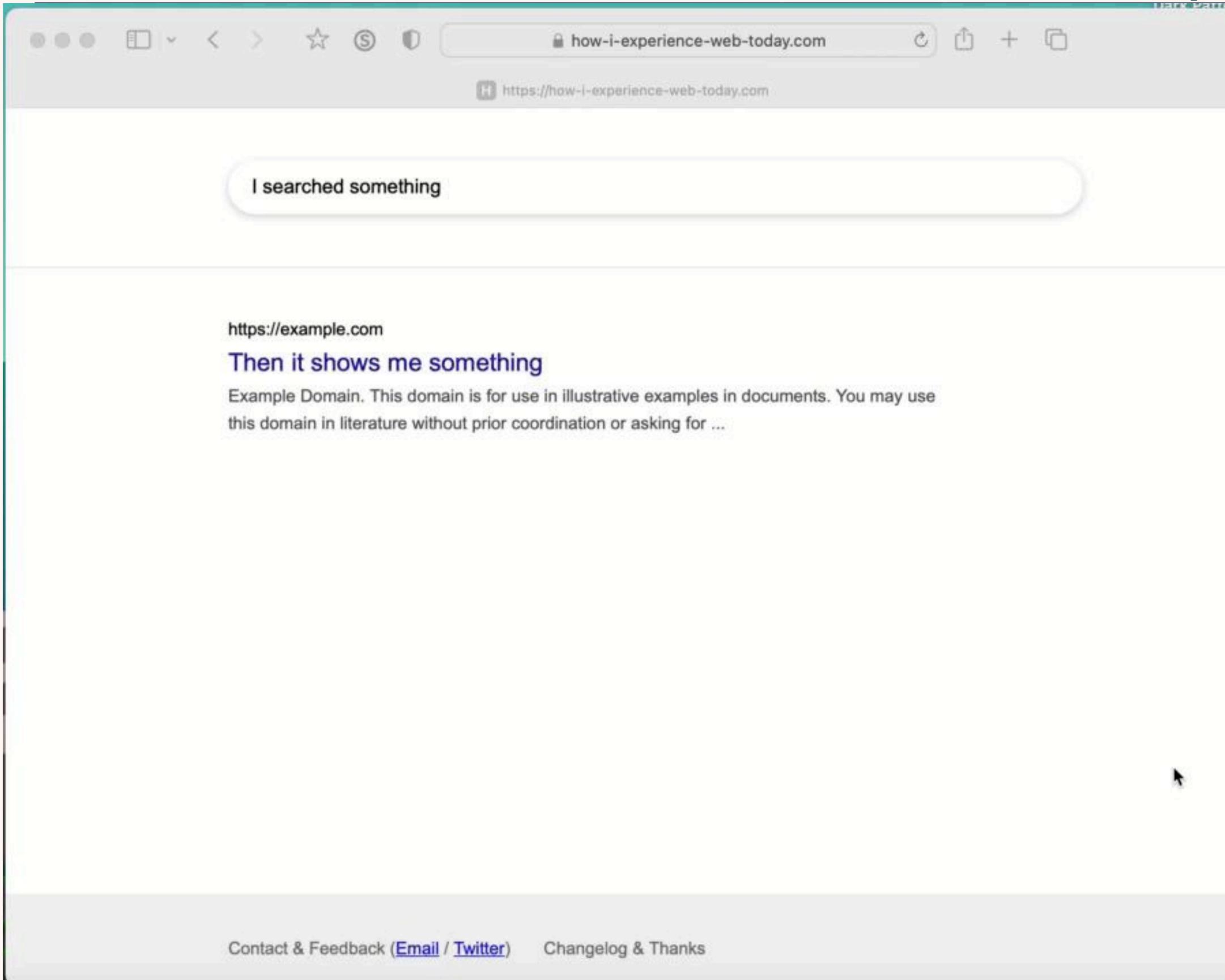


ARE WE HOOKED ON OUR MOBILE DEVICES BY DESIGN?



THE WEB EXPERIENCE TODAY

<https://how-i-experience-web-today.com/>



➤ **Developer Guangyi Li built a demo to attempt to capture the horrors of contemporary browsing**

“Surfing the web isn’t what it used to be. The halcyon era of peaceful browsing on clean sites is now a distant memory. Today’s internet is a digital hellscape of pop-up ads, notification prompts, and paywall blocks.”

WHAT IS DECEPTIVE DESIGN AKA "DARK PATTERNS"?

WHAT ARE SO-CALLED “DARK PATTERNS?”

Understanding Deceptive Design

Dark patterns are design tricks based on human psychology that are used to provoke or manipulate people into signing up for something, buying something, or giving away more personal information than they thought or intended.



How Dark Patterns Trick You Online

dark  patterns

features of interface design
crafted to ***trick users*** into
doing things they might not
want to do, but which benefit
the business in question

<https://youtu.be/kxkrdLI6e6M>

Trick questions

While filling in a form you respond to a question that tricks you into giving an answer you didn't intend. When glanced upon quickly the question appears to ask one thing, but when read carefully it asks another thing entirely.

Sneak into basket

You attempt to purchase something, but somewhere in the purchasing journey the site sneaks an additional item into your basket, often through the use of an opt-out radio button or checkbox on a prior page.

Roach motel

You get into a situation very easily, but then you find it is hard to get out of it (e.g. a premium subscription).

Privacy zuckering

You are tricked into publicly sharing more information about yourself than you really intended to. Named after Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg.

Price comparison prevention

The retailer makes it hard for you to compare the price of an item with another item, so you cannot make an informed decision.

Misdirection

The design purposefully focuses your attention on one thing in order to distract your attention from another.

Hidden costs

You get to the last step of the checkout process, only to discover some unexpected charges have appeared, e.g. delivery charges, tax, etc.

Bait and switch

You set out to do one thing, but a different, undesirable thing happens instead.

Confirmshaming

The act of guilt-tripping the user into opting into something. The option to decline is worded in such a way as to shame the user into compliance.

Disguised ads

Adverts that are disguised as other kinds of content or navigation, in order to get you to click on them.

Forced continuity

When your free trial with a service comes to an end and your credit card silently starts getting charged without any warning. Making it difficult to cancel the membership.

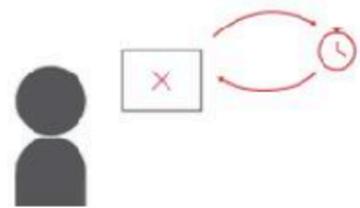
Friend spam

The product asks for your email or social media permissions under the pretense it will be used for a desirable outcome (e.g. finding friends), but then spams all your contacts in a message that claims to be from you.

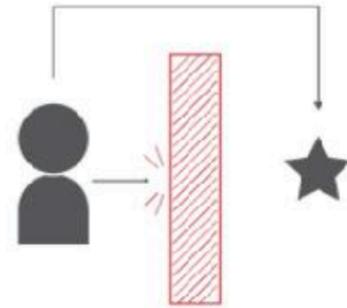
CORE STRATEGIES

<https://darkpatterns.uxp2.com/>

THE FIVE STRATEGIES OF DARK PATTERNS



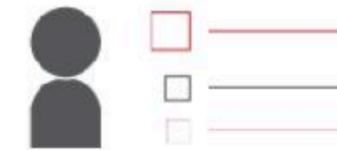
NAGGING



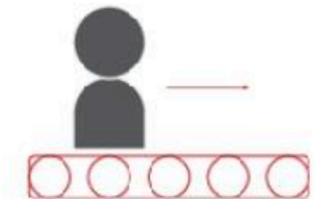
OBSTRUCTION



SNEAKING



**INTERFACE
INTERFERENCE**



FORCED ACTION

A 2021 analysis conducted by three researchers at Princeton University looked into what exactly qualifies deceptive design as “deceptive.” Some of the effects mentioned there rely on mechanisms that “subvert user intent,” “confuse users,” “manipulate users,” and “undermine user autonomy.” This paper also features a lengthy and exhaustive classification of deceptive patterns, such as obfuscation, nagging, and camouflage advertising.

DECEPTIVE DESIGN DIDN'T START WITH THE INTERNET

National Socialist Germany: Anschluss of Austria Ballot

Voting ballot from April 10, 1938. The ballot text reads “Do you agree with the reunification of Austria with the German Reich that was enacted on 13 March 1938, and do you vote for the party of our leader Adolf Hitler?” The large circle is labelled “Yes”, the smaller “No”.

The circle size discrepancy is notable enough as a dark pattern, but also the joining of two very separate questions into one answer is a dark pattern.



RECENT EXAMPLE OF A DISGUISED AD

Please see below for operating system selection links

FFmpeg Library for Audacity 3.2.0 and later for Windows and Mac

INSTALLATION NOTES: Make sure your Audacity version is 3.2 or later. Check the Help menu for information. If you are on Windows, make sure you use the correct installer, for 32bit or 64bit Windows

If you have a special setup, or the .exe does not work for you, it is suggested that you check the [home page](#)

Start Download
Convert thousands of audio files in one go fast. Download with Free.
NCH Software

Download

Deceptive Ad w Download Button

Actual Link I needed

Download for 64-bit Windows: [FFmpeg_5.0.0_for_Audacity_on_Windows_x86](#)
Download for 32-bit Windows: [FFmpeg_5.0.0_for_Audacity_on_Windows_x86.exe](#)
Download for macOS: [FFmpeg_5.0.0_for_Audacity_on_macOS.pkg](#)

FFmpeg Installer for Audacity 3.2 and later

Download for 64-bit Windows: [FFmpeg_5.0.0_for_Audacity_on_Windows_x86](#)

Download for 32-bit Windows: [FFmpeg_5.0.0_for_Audacity_on_Windows_x86.exe](#)

Download for macOS: [FFmpeg_5.0.0_for_Audacity_on_macOS.pkg](#)

- **Seen when attempting to add a necessary software library to an open source audio editing package (Audacity)**
- **Ads embedded in the page are made to look like they offer the actual download link, but they don't**

One Tap Cleaner
Clean Your Android

Phone is slow?

 One Tap Cleaner & Booster



Move slider
to increase phone's speed

INSTALL NOW

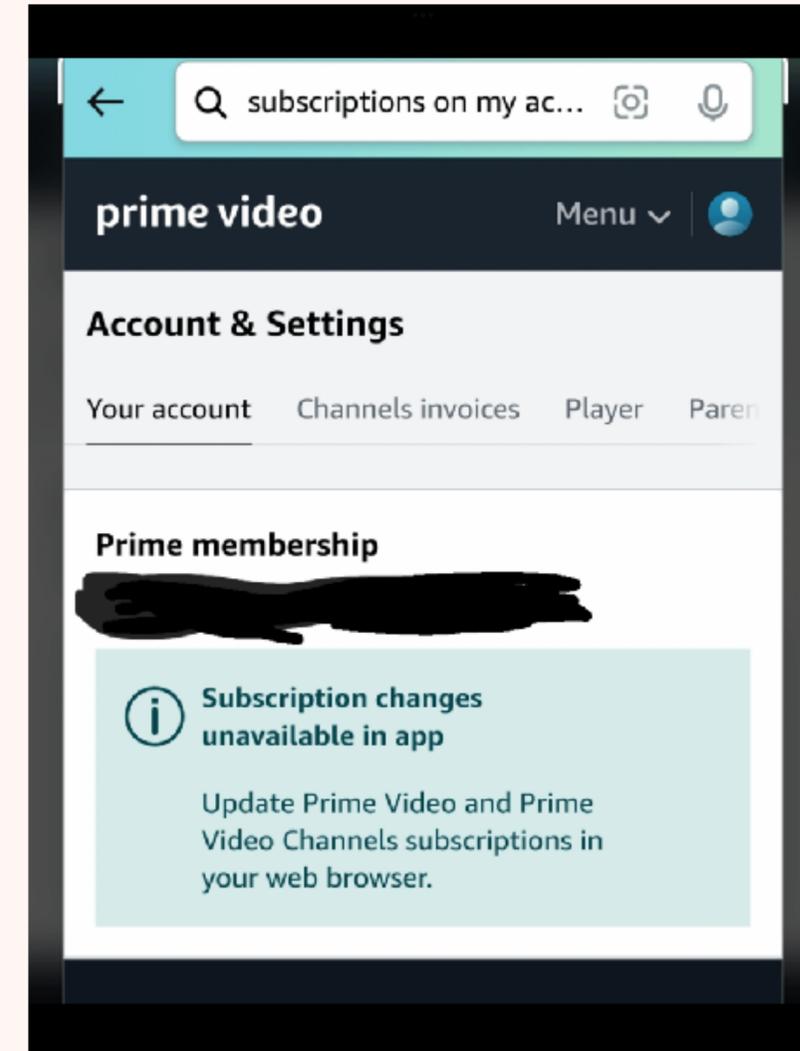
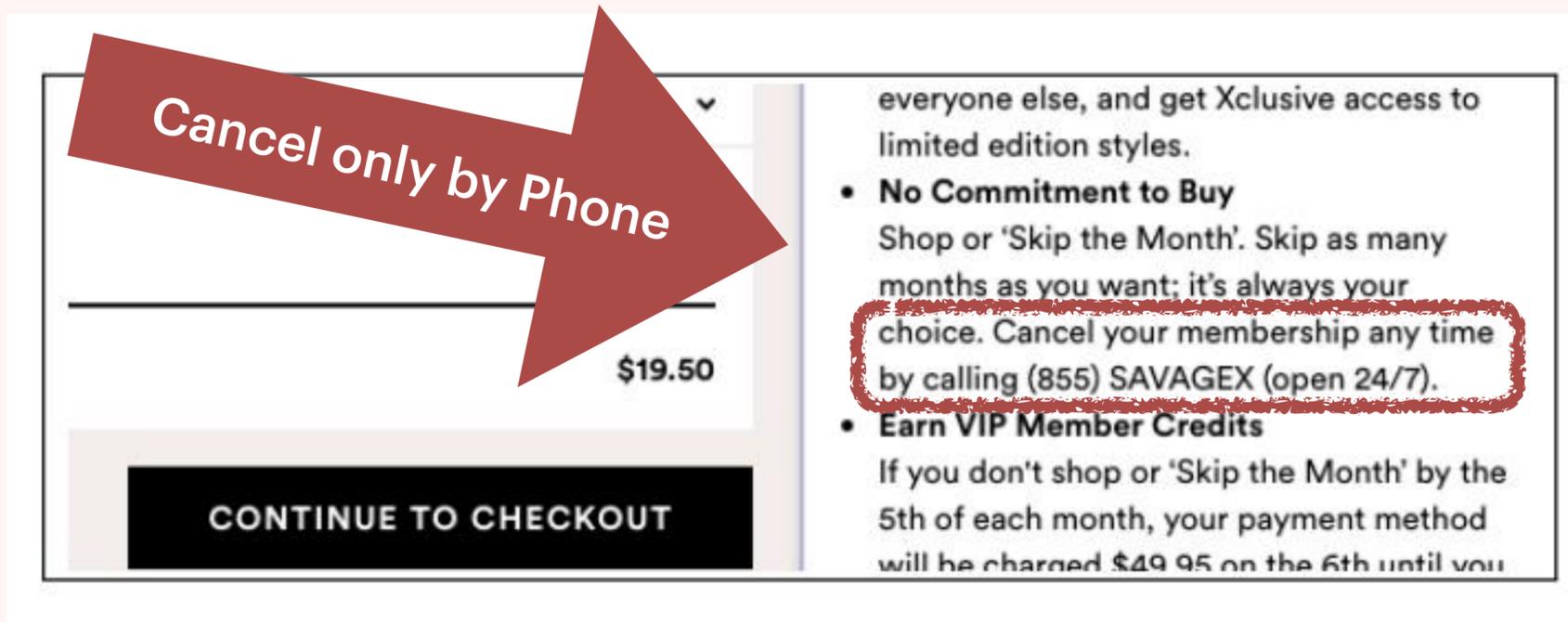
Ad

ANOTHER DISGUISED AD

- **This ad pops up on your phone, inviting you to adjust the speed and performance of your device.**
- **If you touch the slider, it takes you to an app you didn't want, and tries to get you to install it.**

HARD TO CANCEL EXAMPLES

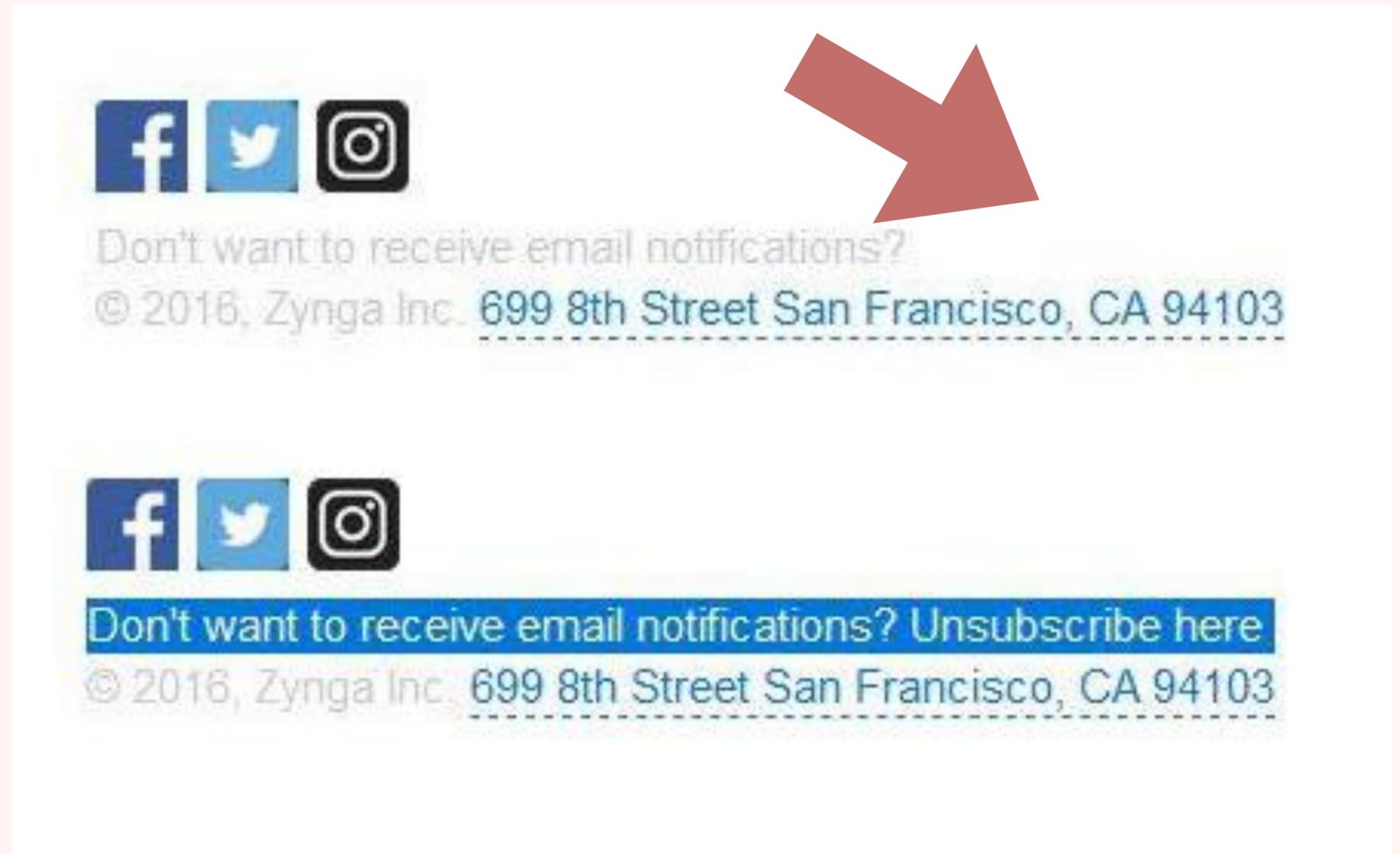
➤ **Clothing Retailer Savage X Fenty makes it possible to sign up for membership online, but if you want to cancel your subscription, you have to call customer service**



➤ **Prime Video app won't let you unsubscribe in the app. You have to go online to a different location to start the process.**

WHERE IS THE UNSUBSCRIBE LINK?

- **Gaming company Zynga really doesn't want you to unsubscribe**
- **The "Unsubscribe here" link is hidden as white text on a white background.**



TRICKY CHECKBOXES

The Trick
Questions dark
pattern on Virgin
Active. Opting out
of marketing and
promotions
requires unticking
the first checkbox
and leaving the
second checkbox
ticked.

How we contact you

By providing your details you agree that we can contact you (including by electronic means such as email, SMS and MMS) about promotions, special offers and discounts from Virgin Active. If you would prefer not to hear about these please untick this box.



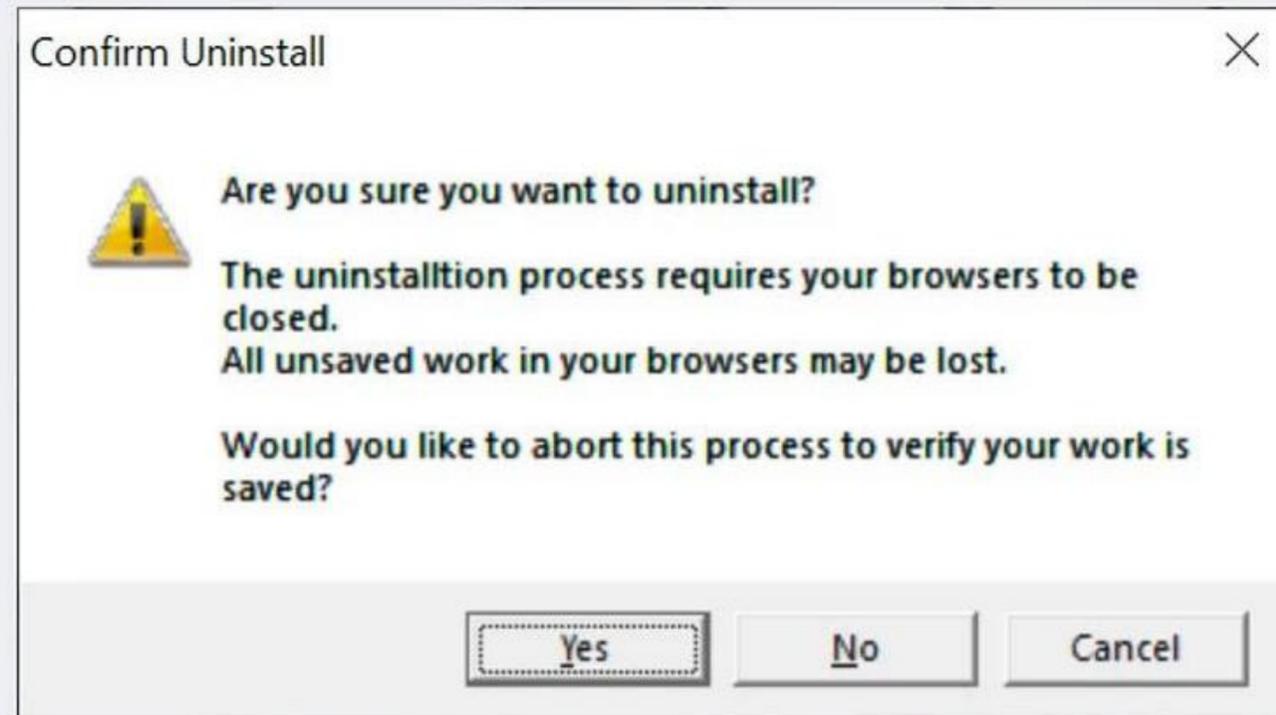
We would also like to share your information with other Virgin companies and other carefully selected organisations so that they may contact you from time to time (including by electronic means such as email, SMS and MMS) about promotions, special offers and discounts we think may be of interest to you. Please untick this box if you would like to hear about these.



TRICKY CHECKBOXES

LOADED QUESTION

**Two Questions,
One Answer.
Choose wisely.**



The Trick Questions dark pattern as part of the process of uninstalling an unwanted plugin. What is the right answer here? What does YES mean?

SNEAK INTO BASKET

TODAY'S SALE! - VALID ONLINE ONLY - *Up To 45% Off + Free Local Delivery

① [Delivery Info](#) — ② [Billing Info](#) — ③ [Review & Place Order](#)

Need assistance? We are here to help! Call us any time at 877-638-3303

[Log in](#) to apply your points or discounts and earn even more points towards future purchases

SHOPPING CART

Item	Qty	Price	Subtotal
 Dreaming of Tuscany Selected: "As Shown" 2nd choice: similar as possible, same look and feel	1	\$52.99	\$52.99
 Greeting Card Service Selected: "STANDARD"	1	\$3.99	\$3.99

Sneak into Basket on avasflowers.net. Despite requesting no greeting cards, one worth \$3.99 is included.

In stock: [Ships today if ordered by 2pm EST!](#)

QTY: **ADD TO MY CART**

 LIFETIME Quality Assurance Warranty  90 Day Return Policy  110% Low Price Guarantee

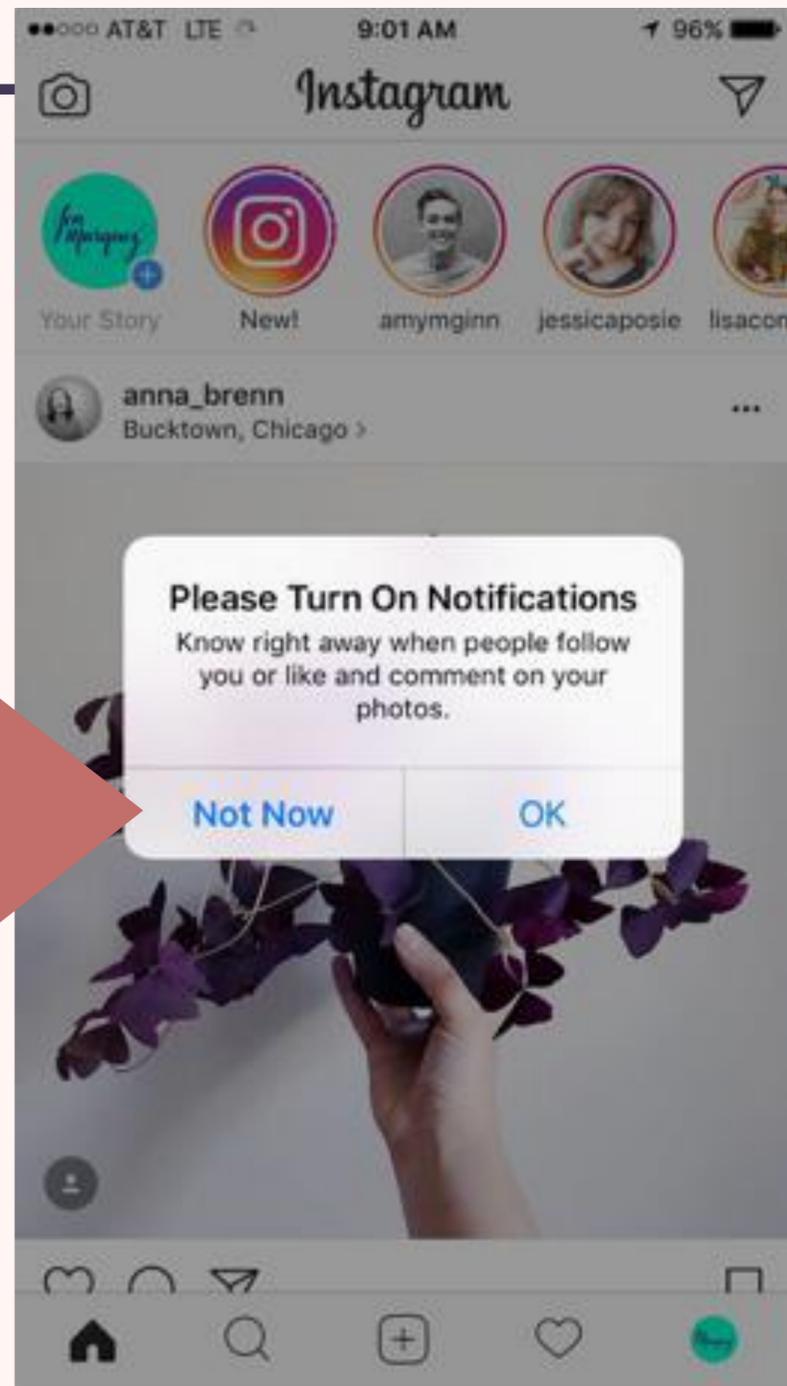
Send me purchase updates on Messenger

Send to  Messenger

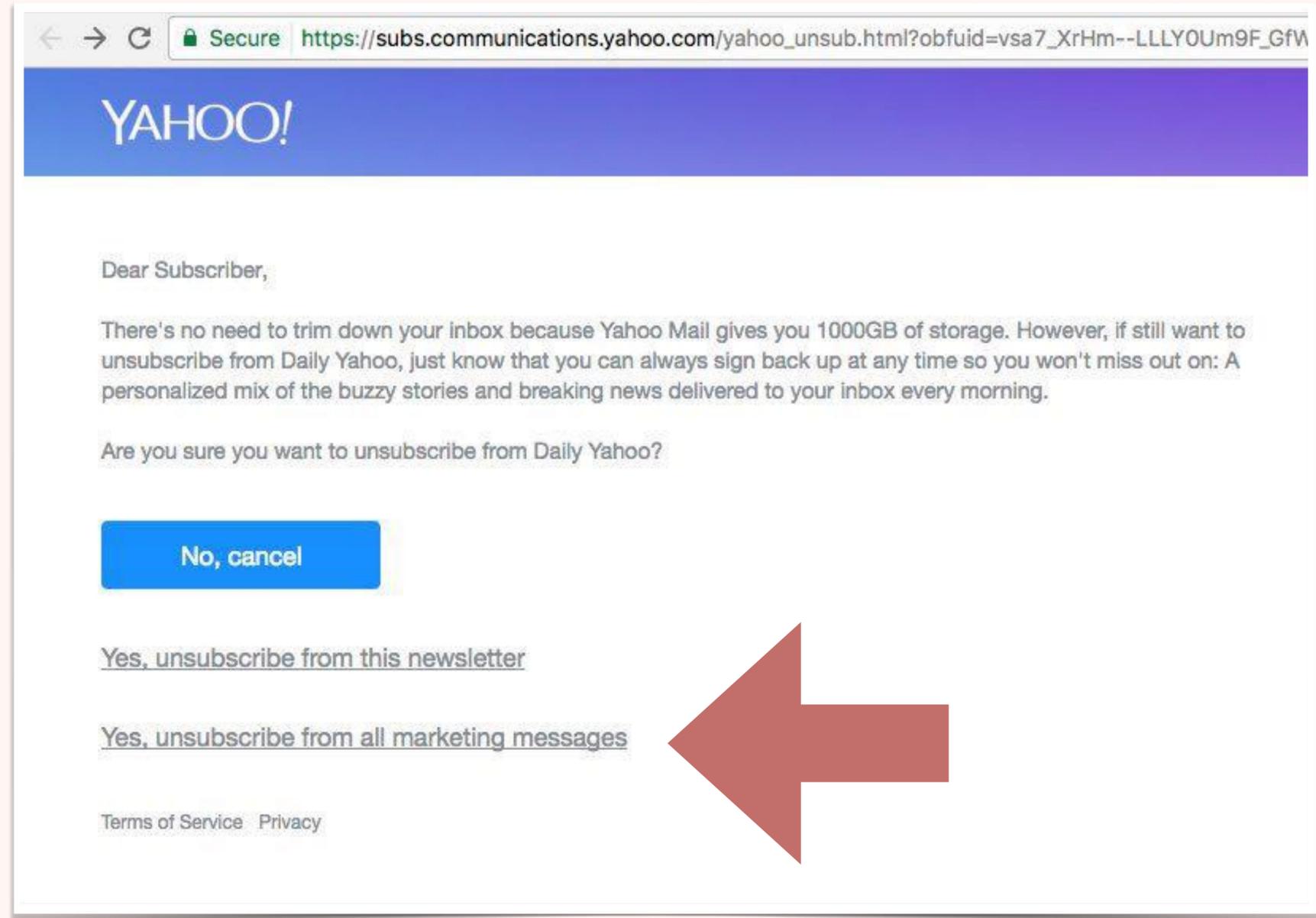
 **LG V40 ThinQ - Full Edge Tempered Glass Screen Protector, Black**
~~\$19.99~~ **\$4.99**
 Add to my cart

Sneak into Basket on cellularoutfitter.com. The pre-checked box means the screen protector worth \$4.99 ends up in cart.

SO HARD TO SAY NO



Nagging: The Instagram user is pressured to turn on notifications, and there is only the option for “not now” and “ok”. If the user does not want to turn on notifications, there is not option for that, and the app will continue to bother them about it.

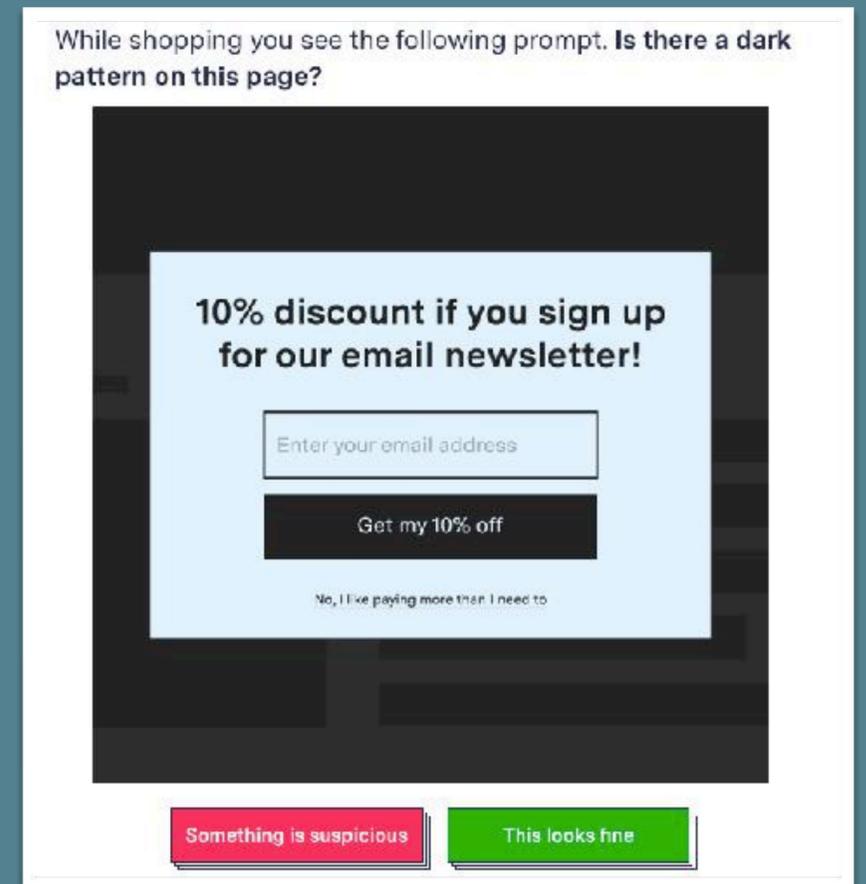


Yahoo uses confusing options when trying to unsubscribe from their newsletter. The design encourages users to click “no, cancel” because they want to cancel their subscription, but to actually cancel, the user must select one of the small, light grey text options below the big blue button.

BREAKOUT GROUPS

Let's Try the Dark Patterns Identification Quiz developed by the Markup

<https://bit.ly/darkpatternsquiz>



POLITICAL PERSUASION AND PERSONAL DATA

- **The Tactical Tech team has been doing a deep dive into how companies seek to influence elections using marketing and persuasion techniques**
- **You can view results of their research related to **Data and Politics** [here](https://ourdataourselves.tacticaltech.org/projects/data-and-politics/)**

<https://ourdataourselves.tacticaltech.org/projects/data-and-politics/>



“All the data-driven methods presented in this guide would not exist without the commercial digital marketing and advertising industry. From analysing behavioural data to A/B testing and from geotargeting to psychometric profiling, political parties are using the same techniques to sell political candidates to voters that companies use to sell shoes to consumers. The question is, is that appropriate? And what impact does it have not only on individual voters, who may or may not be persuaded, but on the political environment as a whole?”

POLITICAL EMAILS

SIX PRIMARY SNEAKY TACTICS

- **A group of researchers at Princeton University's Center for Information Technology Policy (CITP) collected 435,000 political emails.** See electionemails2020.org for data
- **It found that the majority of emails used "dark patterns" to manipulate voters and trick donors**
- **Approximately 70 per cent of the Trump campaign emails and about 40 per cent of the Biden campaign emails contained at least one of six tactics.**

- Using sensationalist or clickbait subject lines to encourage the recipient to open the email
- Using forward referencing or information-withholding terms designed to trigger curiosity
- Creating a false sense of urgency to create a "fear of loss" response
- Obscuring the name of the sender to encourage the reader to open the email
- Using false threads, a trick which makes the email look like it's part of an ongoing conversation
- Inserting bogus Re: and Fwd: markers to make it seem like the email was a reply or forwarded.

DECEPTIVE EMAIL TACTICS EXAMPLES

"From" field has been changed from the actual sender. Many email clients will only display the beginning of a long name before being cut off

Deadline to make this email seem urgent and extremely pressing

From: ⚠ Midnight Deadline (via JaimeHarrison.com)
Subject: re: *Lindsey Graham*

"re:" placed to make to this email look like a reply, when it is not

With less than two hours until our deadline tonight, we're SO close to our **2,500 donation** goal to DEFEAT Lindsey Graham!!

All we need is 549 more donations before MIDNIGHT.

This number continuously ticks downwards from 549 at random increments once the email is opened

479 DONATIONS TO GO

Chip in \$10 immediately →

If we hit this crucial fundraising target, it'll be a huge boost for Jaime before our public deadline and a **MASSIVE blow** to Lindsey Graham.

OFFICIAL
2019 DONOR STATUS
Our Email
NO DONATIONS (PLEASE CHIP IN!)

It's not too late to make your first donation to DEFEAT Lindsey Graham.
Please give whatever you can by MIDNIGHT tonight →

Chip in \$10 immediately →
Chip in \$25 immediately →
Chip in \$50 immediately →
Chip in \$100 immediately →

"From" field changed to make it appear as if you have responded to this email before, and it is part of an ongoing thread

Subject phrasing intended to make it appear as if reader's money is being held up

From: finance, me (2)
Subject: Status *pending*

Friend,

Our campaign is facing its biggest deadline yet in less than 48 hours and we need your help.

Before this quarter is over, and fundraising results are made public, we still need 467 supporters to chip in \$5 or more. Can you help?

CHIP IN →

Right now, our campaign is a 100% digital and your online support allows us to continue building the momentum to help Martha win.

The Left will be scouring our reports for any sign of weakness, and this is our chance to demonstrate the strength of our campaign.

So please, if you're able to lend your support chip in \$5 or more before Tuesday.

Sincerely,
Team McSally

CHIP IN →

01 Jul 2020

Trump Victory 2020
Sarah's name is MISSING
Sarah, Did we get this right?

30 Jun 2020

DonaldJTrump.com

PATRIOT ALERT

CONTRIBUTE \$20 = \$120
CONTRIBUTE \$15 = \$90
CONTRIBUTE \$10 = \$60
CONTRIBUTE \$5 = \$30
CONTRIBUTE ANY AMOUNT

23 Jun 2020

Donald J. Trump

BARACK OBAMA

"You don't have to do this for you"

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-22/donald-trumps-campaign-email-blitz/12781782>

<https://electionemails2020.org/>

TRUMP CAMPAIGN MONEY GRAB

The [National Republican Congressional Committee](#) is using threatening language to push Republicans into making repeat monthly donations.

The NRCC, which raises money for House Republicans, warns donors against unchecking this prechecked box:

We need to know we haven't lost you to the Radical Left. If you **UNCHECK** this box, we will have to tell Trump you're a **DEFECTOR & sided with the Dems. CHECK** this box and we can win back the House and get Trump to run in 2024.

Make this a monthly recurring donation

Prechecked boxes makes it a monthly donation

A Weekly Donation!

This is the **FINAL** month until Election Day and we need **EVERY** Patriot stepping up if we're going to **WIN FOUR MORE YEARS** for President Trump. He's revitalizing our economy, restoring **LAW & ORDER**, and returning us to American Greatness, but he's not done yet. This is your chance - stand with President Trump & **MAXIMIZE** your impact **NOW!**
Make this a weekly recurring donation until 11/3

President Trump: October 9th marks 25 days out from Election Day and we need your support. American Patriots like **YOU** inspired me to keep fighting this past week, and I'm not done yet. I'm asking you to join **Operation MAGA** and help me secure **VICTORY** in November. **Join the movement NOW**
Donate an additional \$100 automatically on 10/09

The Trump campaign deployed deceptive tactics in March 2020, quietly updating its online donation portal with a pre-checked option box signing supporters up for recurring donations rather than one-time payments. Later in June, another pre-checked option box appeared asking for more money in celebration of Trump's birthday. Among those deceived was a 63-year-old cancer patient who was tricked into paying over \$3,000 after initially meaning to donate just \$500.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/03/us/politics/trump-donations.html>

WHAT'S BEING DONE TO ADDRESS DECEPTIVE DESIGN?



[https://businessvolunteersmd.org/
techies-for-good/](https://businessvolunteersmd.org/techies-for-good/)

LEGISLATION AND LITIGATION

- **In 2015, LinkedIn settled a lawsuit for \$13 million over dark patterns in which it collected new users' email contacts through deceptive design.**
- **US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) hosted 2021 Workshop "Bringing Dark Patterns to Light" to educate developers**
- **The US FTC is investigating potential deceptive design patterns on Amazon Prime after pressure from advocacy group Public Citizen**
- **European Consumer Organization is litigating against Google for incorporating deceptive design during Google Account signup**
- **U.S. Sens. Mark R. Warner (D-VA) and Deb Fischer (R-NE) may reintroduce their Deceptive Experiences To Online Users Reduction (DETOUR) Act from 2019, bipartisan legislation to prohibit large online platforms from using deceptive user interfaces, known as "dark patterns" to trick consumers into handing over their personal data. It may be integrated into other legislative efforts.**

The European Parliament recently adopted the following text in article 23a.1 of the Digital Services Act:

Providers of online platforms shall not design, organise or operate their online interfaces in a way that deceives, manipulates or otherwise materially distorts or impairs the ability of recipients of their service to make free and informed decisions.

See more on regulation efforts here:
<https://iapp.org/news/a/ongoing-dark-pattern-regulation/>

NAMING AND SHAMING

<https://www.deceptive.design/hall-of-shame/all>

➤ Collections of bad design have been created to try and put pressure on companies to stop the practice

<https://darkpatterns.uxp2.com/patterns/>

The dark side of UX Design

DARK PATTERNS TIP LINE

- **Consumer Reports Digital Lab and a group of researchers started the Dark Patterns Tip Line**
- **Now hosted by the Digital Civil Society Lab at Stanford**
- **See story about Learnings from the Project here: <https://ritaallen.org/stories/key-learnings-from-the-dark-patterns-tip-line/>**

DARK PATTERNS **TIP LINE**

HARMS

SIGHTINGS

ABOUT

REPORT

DARK PATTERNS TIP LINE

Every day, we're exploited for profit through **dark patterns**: design tactics used in websites and apps to persuade you into doing things you probably would not do otherwise.

We need to take a stand against dark patterns—and you can help by reporting a dark pattern today. It will help us fight back against companies using manipulative dark patterns to take our private information, money, and time. You deserve respect, online and off.

REPORT A PATTERN

CHECKOUT

Subtotal	\$22.10
Delivery fee	\$1.49
Tax and fees	\$6.01
Driver tip	\$5.92
Total	\$35.52

Service fee

This 15% fee helps us cover operating costs

<https://darkpatternstipline.org/>

COMPLAIN TO YOUR STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL

<https://www.consumerresources.org/file-a-complaint/>



CONSUMER PROTECTION

A national hub of consumer protection information and resources for consumers from your state or territory attorney general



NATIONAL ATTORNEYS GENERAL
TRAINING & RESEARCH INSTITUTE
THE TRAINING & RESEARCH ARM OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ATTORNEYS GENERAL

Please click on the map below to find resources from your state or territory attorney general.



PROJECTS TO PROMOTE AND INCENTIVIZE HUMANE TECHNOLOGY

- **Much has been written about the sometimes unintended negative impacts of the way social media and apps have been designed. These include loneliness, teen depression, internet “addiction”, growing social polarization, etc.**
- **A growing movement is focusing on building more “Humane Technology”**
- **The Center for Humane Technology is a key example**
- **They are offering a free online course for “professionals shaping tomorrow’s technology” entitled Foundations of Humane Technology. View it at <https://www.humanetech.com/course>**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r2RkIhU7-gs>

More than 13,000 people have participated in course so far

COUNCIL ON TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL COHESION



Social cohesion is the glue that holds society together – particularly in the face of toxic polarization



This project is focused on preventing polarization, not deceptive design, but it is an example of work with developers to improve the web experience.

A screenshot of the website's main page. At the top left is the logo (a colorful starburst) and the text "Council on Technology and Social Cohesion". At the top right is a hamburger menu icon. The main content area has a light pink background and contains three rows of text, each with an icon to its left. The first row has a gear icon and the text: "We need technology that builds trust and civic health rather than outrage and division". The second row has a hands-holding icon and the text: "We need people who understand how to build bridges in divided communities to be better equipped to use technology". The third row has a puzzle pieces icon and the text: "We bring practitioners who heal division together with people who design technology".

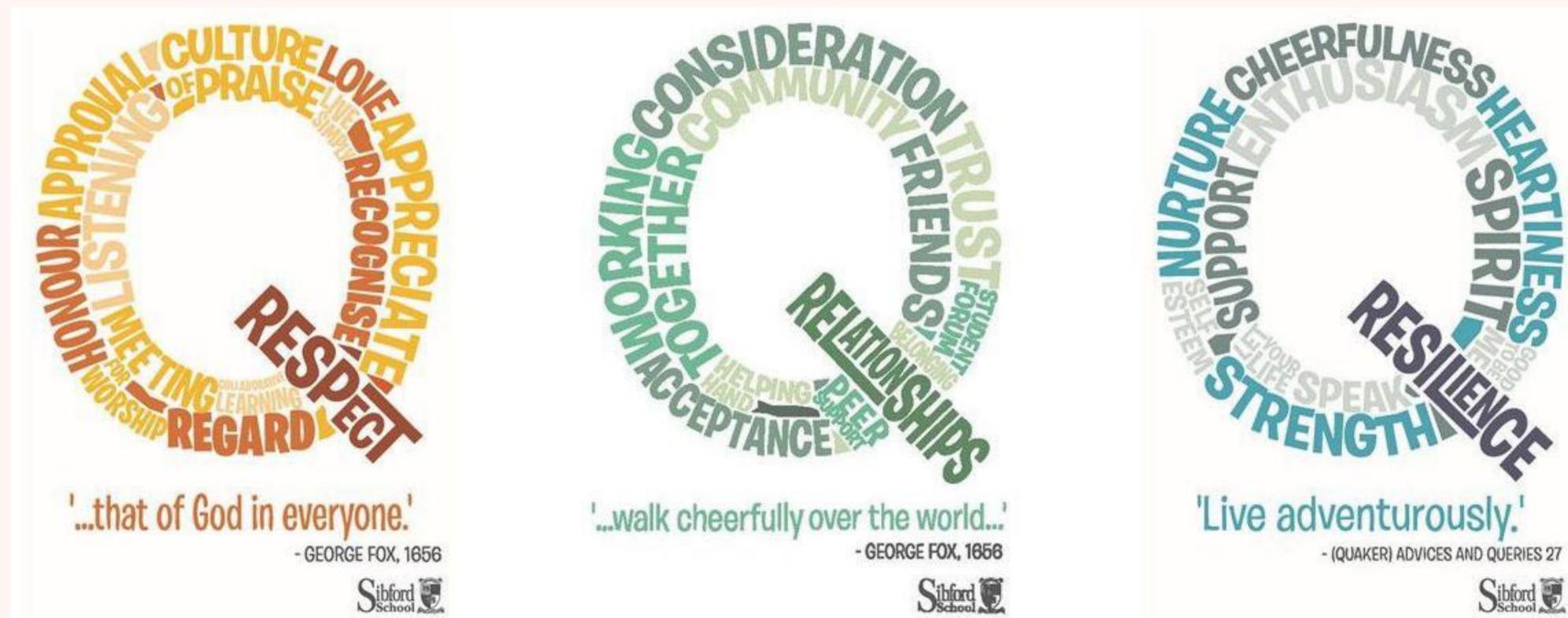
<https://techandsocialcohesion.org/>

WHAT'S A QUAKER TO DO?



WHAT KIND OF A QUERY MIGHT WE OFFER FRIENDS FOR CONSIDERATION?

- **Advices and Queries are a common tool used by Friends groups to raise awareness of issues.**
- **What might a Query on Deceptive Design and the Dangers of Technological Addiction sound like?**



RESOURCES OF INTEREST



- **Deceptive Design Website by Harry Brignull**
 - **The Dark Side of UX Design website with examples**
 - **Data Detox Project module (The Internet Made Me Do It)**
 - **Dark Patterns Tip Line**
 - **Dark Patterns Experience Games (Dundee Design Festival - desktop only, not for mobile devices)**
 - **The Markup Quiz on Dark Patterns**
 - **Personal Data: Political Persuasion (A deep dive by Tactical Tech Team)**
 - **Princeton Corpus of Political Emails**
 - **Video on Quakers and the Origin of the Price Tag (NPR Planet Money)**
 - **Humane Tech: Tips on How to Take Control Over Your Social Media Experience**
 - **Persuasive Technology: How Does Technology Use Design to Influence My Behavior (Youth Toolkit resource from Humane Tech)**
-



THANK YOU

Bill Warters
leymworker@gmail.com

Slides will be posted to LEYM Interest Group page:
<https://leym.org/pje-interest-group/>