

DARK PATTERNS IN MOBILE APPS: ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS AND DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR TRANSPARENT USER EXPERIENCES

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ABSTRACT

Dark patterns in mobile apps refer to design techniques that manipulate users into making decisions they might not have intended, often in favor of the app's business interests. These deceptive practices include tactics such as hidden fees, forced subscriptions, and tricky opt-out mechanisms. While these strategies may generate short-term gains for app developers, they raise significant ethical concerns regarding user autonomy, consent, and trust. As mobile apps become increasingly integrated into daily life, the ethical implications of dark patterns cannot be overlooked. They undermine the integrity of the user experience, exploit user behavior, and can result in long-term damage to brand reputation.

This paper explores the concept of dark patterns in mobile applications, identifying common types and their impact on users. It highlights the ethical challenges these patterns pose to both developers and users, emphasizing the importance of fostering transparent and honest design practices. Furthermore, the paper proposes design guidelines aimed at creating ethical and user-centered mobile app experiences. These guidelines focus on enhancing transparency, ensuring informed consent, and prioritizing user well-being. By adopting these practices, app developers can not only protect their users from manipulative design but also build trust, improve user satisfaction, and encourage long-term engagement. The paper concludes by advocating for industry-wide awareness and the development of regulatory frameworks to mitigate the prevalence of dark patterns and ensure a fairer digital ecosystem for all.

KEYWORDS: *Dark Patterns, Mobile Apps, Ethical Implications, User Experience, Design Guidelines, Transparency, Informed Consent, Manipulative Design, User Autonomy, App Development, User Well-Being, Digital Ethics, User Trust, Regulatory Frameworks.*

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