

## CHI '26 WORKSHOP

# Bridge Over Troubled Water: Aligning Commercial Incentives with Ethical Design Practice to Combat Deceptive Patterns

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## Preface

Deceptive, manipulative, and coercive design practices—collectively known as dark patterns or deceptive patterns—remain deeply embedded in our digital experiences, steering user choices against people’s best interests and undermining their agency and autonomy. Whether through consent banners that encourage the sharing of personal data, obstructions when customising privacy settings, or friction introduced during account creation and deletion, the design of digital systems frequently works against the very users it claims to serve. The resulting lack of transparency erodes trust and breeds frustration as user expectations break down—a situation in which, over the long term, neither users nor service providers genuinely benefit.

Over the past decade, human-computer interaction (HCI) scholars have conducted pioneering research on the types, definitions, and harms of these practices, and this body of work has increasingly supported new legislation and regulatory sanctions against companies that deploy deceptive patterns. Yet in an era of growth-hacking and revenue maximisation, often pursued at the expense of users, much remains to be done. While regulation continues to mature, multiple studies show that services relying on deceptive patterns face negative consequences of their own—rising user frustration, decreased satisfaction, and diminished brand trust. We believe it is time to move beyond a purely adversarial framing and to work more closely with industry professionals, aligning commercial incentives with users’ needs and core human-centred values.

This workshop brought together researchers, legal scholars, and practitioners through transdisciplinary activities designed to build bridges across these communities. Rather than treating users and services as opposing parties, we sought to identify the underlying tensions between user expectations and commercial incentives, and to develop ethical and responsible design alternatives that reflect both. Our key objectives were as follows:

- 1. Identifying gaps and alignment between user expectations and commercial incentives:** Building on existing knowledge to outline implications for design that address both users’ and service providers’ needs, and to surface where their interests genuinely diverge and where they can be reconciled.
- 2. Assessing contemporary design practices:** Critically evaluating which practices consistently lead to harmful interactions, which are context-dependent, and which are generally unproblematic—moving towards a more nuanced, evidence-based characterisation of deceptive design.
- 3. Rerouting user journeys to enable informed decision-making:** Developing responsible and fair design alternatives that support informed choice while remaining viable for service providers, explored through collaborative, hands-on co-design exercises.

Each submission to the workshop was anonymously peer-reviewed by workshop organizers through a structured, blind review process, respecting potential conflicts between authors and reviewers. We accepted 14 position papers spanning a broad array of topics directly linked to the three objectives above, ranging from transparency labels and fair patterns to deceptive design in quick commerce, digital finance, immersive environments, and generative AI. Authors were also given the option of submitting brief statements of interest, lowering the entry barrier for early career researchers and attendees from adjacent fields.

The accepted position papers, listed below, are published in this volume of the CEUR Workshop Proceedings as archival materials of the workshop.

## Accepted Workshop Papers

*Design Transparency Labels: Fostering User Trust and Well-Being Through Design Transparency* — Riccardo Graziosi, Luca Passarella

*Towards a Framework for Levels of Anthropomorphic Deception in Robots and AI* — Franziska Babel, Shane Saunderson, Shalaleh Rismani

*Attention is All They Want, Time is All You Have: Aligning Time Use with Values to Counteract Dark Patterns* — Michael Hoefler, Aidan Deloia, Curtis Leaver

*The Architecture of Distrust: A Heuristic Evaluation of Deceptive Patterns in Brazilian Pharmaceutical Marketplaces* — Rafael D. M. Poiate

*Dark Patterns in Indian Quick Commerce Apps: A Student Perspective* — Tanish Taneja, Arihant Tripathy, Nimmi Rangaswamy

*Examining the Relationship Between User Agency and Dark Patterns* — Aidan Dayvyd

*Deception by Design: A Temporal Dark Patterns Audit of McDonald's Self-Ordering Kiosk Flow* — Aditya Kumar Purohit, Yuwei Liu, Manon Berney, Hendrik Heuer, Adrian Holzer

*Deceptive Patterns in Immersive Environments: How XR Can Expand Markets But Expose Sensitive Information* — G. Nikki Alabanza, Salem Alabanza, Brendan David-John

*Vibe-Coding or Vibe-Shifting? The Risk of Amplifying Dark Patterns in Generative UI Design* — Hsien-Ying Lin

*Generative Artificial Intelligence & Conversational Agents – Part of the Problem or of the Solution of HCI Dark Patterns* — Christian Zinke-Wehlmann

*Neutralising Deceptive Patterns: Mapping Data Protection Authorities' Roles in the Emerging Multi-Authority Landscape* — Marta Beltrán

*Defining Relationship-Based Deceptive Patterns* — Alexis Hiniker, Daisy Chen, Marx Wang, Marie Bragg, Katie Davis, Jenny Radesky

*Dark Patterns in Digital Finance: How Design Harms and Confuses Consumers in Digital Finance Products* — Caroline Sindere, Sophie Elizabeth Klitgaard

*User Interfaces for Transparency: Could the Digital Product Passport Be a Case of a Fair Pattern?* — Jonas Frich

This half-day CHI '26 workshop took place as part of the ACM (Association for Computing Machinery) Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, held in Barcelona, Spain. The programme was structured around two 90-minute sessions: the first dedicated to foundations and perspectives, with lightning introductions and position paper presentations identifying gaps between user expectations and commercial incentives; and the second dedicated to collaborative design, with transdisciplinary group work and co-design exercises aimed at rerouting user journeys and developing responsible design alternatives. We were joined by participants spanning career stages, world regions, and disciplinary backgrounds, including HCI researchers, industry practitioners, and legal and policy experts.

We look forward to discovering how this workshop has helped to align ethical design principles with commercial practice, and to sparking the next phase of research, regulation, and responsible design on deceptive patterns.

Yours sincerely,  
The organizing committee