

Deceptive Pattern Outcomes

A deceptive pattern is a deliberate antipattern designed to confuse or deceive a user. There is a difference between poor design and unintentional blockers for users.

A deceptive pattern is where there is a deliberate attempt to aim or force a user down a particular path or to trap attention in a way that redirects or focuses on a goal, that the user either doesn't want or need, or may be harmful to them.

Introduction

Outcome

Deceptive patterns that harm users.

Platform

All platforms

Technology

Mobile, Web

Input Aspects For Testing

DOM tree, CSS styling, Accessibility tree.

Summary

Applying user experience to web components to minimize harmful effects to users.

How It Solves User Needs

Makes Web pages more accessible and usable, less harmful to people with disabilities and neurodivergent users, and creates friendlier and safer user experiences for everyone.

When To Use

Any time a Web page or component is being built.

Background

W3C Resources

WCAG
WAI-ARIA
Section 508
EN 301 548
User Surveys

Non-W3C Resources

TBD

Accessibility Support

TBD

Assumptions

- We need to discuss the severity of each of these anti-patterns.

Examples

Barriers

[Annoying / Unwanted (Unexpected)]

- Firing an error before completion of an input in a field.
- Autoplay
- Client-side validation that is taking a long time to perform a task.
- Elements that load late, shift the screen and cause users to click or tap the wrong element because something moved into that space.
- Deceptive/lengthy unsubscribe or cancel account patterns
- Pop-ups that make it difficult to close (small close button, tiny text to close underneath the big button to sign up for stuff, etc)
- Double cookie banners, like on [BBC.com](https://www.bbc.com). Where you can click one away, but the other is still there and has no easy option to get rid of it.
- Requiring unnecessary interactions.

[Not using affordances]

- Anything that activates on hover.
- Disabled buttons/controls or controls that appear disabled but are not.

[Vestibular]

- Animation (Any content that moves by default, animations, and banners).
- Not obeying motion preferences set by the user.

[Not activated / Not controlled by user]

- Forms that refresh without submission.
- Surprise login/registration when you click a link.
- Entry on a form with moving focus automatically for each form field.
- Surprise login/registration at the end of a multi-step form to see results.
- Pop-ups that show up after scrolling through the page.

[Indicators]

- Anything that doesn't manage focus well.
- Modals with multiple screens that don't move focus to the next screen.
- Hiding close buttons on modals.
- Close buttons which are obscured by size or colour choice ***TBD**
- Changing button meaning in multi-page/multi-modal forms. ***TBD**

[Unwanted content / advertising / without user knowledge]

- Paywalls
- Clicking a button and triggering a modal or prompt, alerting you that what you are trying to access is a paid feature.
- Disguised ads
- Sneak items into a basket
- Hidden costs
- GDPR where in order to opt-out of targeted ads they force you to scroll through an almost endless list of advertising platforms and select each one. ***TBD**
- Confirmation shaming (unsubscribing patterns that shame users) ***TBD**

[Wording]

- GDPR messages (and their deceptive wording especially around 'legitimate interest')
- Trick questions ***TBD**

[Consistency (affordances)]

- Menu items in navigation that open on hover and others that open on click.

[Adjustability / flow blockers]

- In multi-step form page, failure to provide links to navigate back/forward to review/edit data.
- Infinite scrolling.
- Autofill is disabled
- Copy & paste is disabled
- Credit card numbers remembered in the browser do not input correctly when auto-filled.
- Mobile apps that do not allow access to browse, use content, or access functionality without enabling location.
- Resetting a form field after an incorrect character is typed into the field (e.g.: banking app & password). ***TBD**
- Cookie consent pop-ups where the consent is a button and the “save my choices” is a link in the text next to it. ***TBD**

[(Time) Pressure]

- Timers that indicate time remaining for a sale or countdown until something can be bought.

[Invasive]

- Nag to turn location on - when location is not enabled.
- Web pages that are invasive and ask for features to be enabled.
- Persistent unwanted notifications.
- Web pages that ask for geolocation information from users.

- Privacy sharing (tricked into sharing more info about yourself publicly than you intended) ***TBD**
- Forced continuity ***TBD**
- Sites that give discount code popups that come up before you even get to look at the site/product but require your immediate signup to gain the discount. ***TBD**

[TO BE CATEGORIZED @@]

- Price comparison prevention - needs info
- Misdirection that moves focus - needs info
- Bait and switch - needs info
- Subscription-based services which make you log in via a web browser to make billing changes or cancel when all or the vast majority of user interaction is through the mobile app. - needs info
- Toggle switches that are labeled vaguely, with unclear language * **General A11y issue**
- **Removal of text selection - NEW**
- **Volume on video playing after video has been exited. - NEW**
- **Opting out of emails, newsletters, confirmation shaming, subscribe shaming. - NEW**
- **QR codes leading to inaccessible PDFs - NEW**
- **Racist, ableist, *-phobic content(wording) in components/features/etc. - NEW**
- **Error messages in form where the user has a hyphenated name or special character in their name - NEW**
- **Words that are muted on Twitter but are seen when people who are followed retweet the “muted” word. - NEW**
- **People that are not followed by one person but are seen by the person when others follow or like a tweet from the unfollowed account. - NEW**

[EXAMPLE SITES]

<https://www.deceptive.design/>

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

Inapplicable

N/A

Define User Need

All users with a variety of different needs.

Essential

1. Use without harm or risk (to self or others within a physical, mental, or cognitive environment).

Sensory

Vision & Visual

1. Does not affect visually.
2. Does not affect color perception.
3. Does not affect depth perception.
4. Does not trigger photosensitivity.

Hearing & Auditory

1. Does not affect hearing.
2. Does not affect auditory processing.

Sensory Intersections

1. Does not affect vestibular issues.

Physical

Mobility

1. Does not affect mobility or limited mobility
2. Does not affect limited reach or range.

Motor

1. Does not affect or trigger motor skill issues.
2. Does not affect physical tracking

Physical & Sensory Intersections

1. Does not affect kinesthetic perception.
2. Does not affect sensory processing.
3. Does not affect input or interaction modality, speed, and/or frequency.

Speech

1. Does not affect speech or vocalization.

Cognitive

Attention

1. Does not affect direct attention.
2. Does not affect limited attention.
3. Does not affect the ability to focus.
4. Does not affect the ability to shift attention.
5. Users are not distracted.
6. Users are not purposely misled.
7. Users are not purposely stressed.
8. Users are not purposely shocked.

Language & Communication

1. Does not affect the ability to read.
2. Does not affect the ability to write.
3. Does not affect the ability to comprehend language.
4. Does not affect understanding of
 - a. Writings
 - b. Words
 - c. Symbols
 - d. Dialect

Learning

1. Does not affect learning concepts.
2. Does not affect compositional/thinking skills.
3. Does not affect coordinational skills (motoric skills, visual-spatial organizational memory, and social).

Memory

1. Does not affect short-term memory.
2. Does not affect long-term memory.
3. Does not affect limited sensory memory
 - a. Visual
 - b. Visuospatial

c. Auditory

Executive

1. Does not affect limited planning, organizing, sequencing, and execution ability.
2. Does not affect emotional control or self-monitoring.
3. Does not affect judgment.

Mental Health

1. Does not trigger debilitating fear or anxiety.
2. Does not trigger anger or emotional despondency.
3. Does not trigger depression or despair.
4. Users are not purposely stressed or shocked.

Cognitive & Sensory Intersections

1. Does not affect visual memory.

Independence

Independence

1. Does not affect independence (user does not need help)
2. Use without invasion of privacy.