

ABSTRACT

Perfectly arranged shopping window decoration, sleek product packaging, perfected sales talks - companies tend to invest into flawless worlds of consumption to attract costumers and raise revenues.

Yet with the beginning of the new century, physical worlds of consumption start to transform into the digital realm and as a consequence the direct contact between costumers and corporations shrinks in importance. User interfaces become the new touch point to interact with cooperations to buy new products and services.

Real time feedback loops, one-click shopping experiences and personalized product proposals expand the shopping experience for the digital consumer whilst unknowingly becoming the subject of profiling, quantification and manipulation.

The enhancing feelings of comfort and speed conceal the downside of platform capitalism in which the user interface becomes a tool for corporate manipulation to get digital consumers to pay with their most precious capital: freedom of autonomous choice and privacy.

This diploma work investigates into the strategies and consequences of manipulative user experience and user interface design - also known as dark patterns in HCI. Interviews with politicians, specialized consumer councils, NGOs, UX designer, cybersecurity experts and policy consultants build the foundation to set dark patterns in relation to legislative processes, consumer protection, economic megatrends and the role of design in it. Thereby the experiment to survey a complex, interdisciplinary field of problems in which the digital consumer is at a central role of the research and design process begins to emerge.

Which strategies could be developed to blow the whistle on deceptive design? Which creative methods could be used for this?

The reserach and interviews with experts discuss potential solutions that build the starting point for the artistic realision of the diploma project.