

Dark Patterns

Teacher Notes

Background

Each day millions of people play mobile phone games or use social media, news websites, or messaging services ... but it's easy to forget that these things are created by businesses to make money. These businesses are increasingly trying to earn more money from us through sneaky & underhanded tricks.

For example, the company Rovio made Angry Birds 2 to make money. It earns them over \$200 million per year. As a "freemium" product you get the main app for free, but then pay for optional in-app purchases. Using clever psychology, the game designers manipulate players into making more purchases than intended, or spending longer time playing the game (helping them make additional money from sponsored adverts).

This activity will allow students to become familiar with the tricks this industry uses – known as Dark Patterns – and find out how designers can use these to manipulate you into buying, handing over personal data, or signing up for services that you didn't mean to.

Activity

The different types of Dark Patterns and their definitions are given on the activity sheets, along with some screen captures from games, websites and apps. These have been designed to be used as matching cards so could be cut out before or during the activity.

For each screen capture image, the students need to decide which type of Dark Pattern is shown. These could be used as a discussion point about awareness of online advertising.

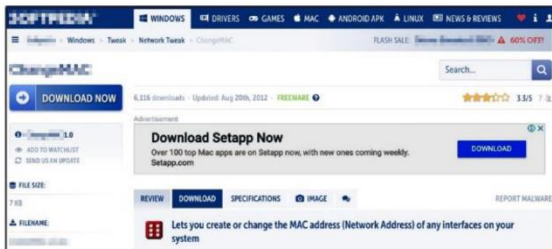
Answers



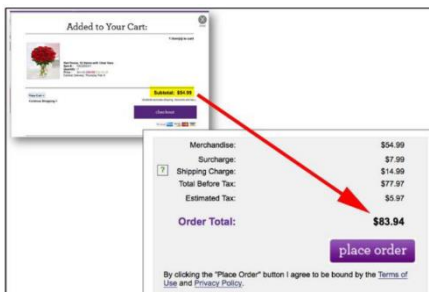
Friend Spam



Confirmshaming



Disguised Ad



Hidden Costs



Artificial Scarcity



Trick Question