



BEING-WISE  
CA22104

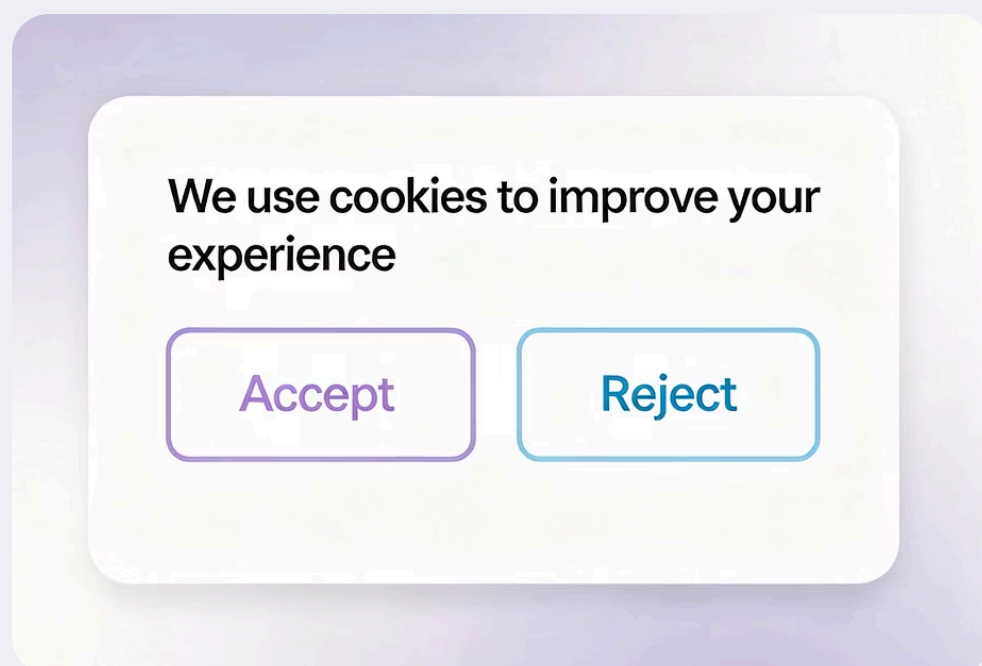
COST ACTION CA22104  
Behavioral Next Generation in Wireless  
Networks for Cyber Security  
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# Did you really choose that?



Or **was the design  
choosing *for* you?**

BEING-WISER AWARENESS SERIES

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

# By the end of this, you'll see digital interfaces differently

01

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## **Recognize dark patterns**

Spot manipulation hiding in plain sight

02

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## **Understand the strategy**

See how design shapes your decisions

03

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## **Reclaim your choices**

Slow down, question, and decide freely



# You've seen this before

## Cookie banners

One bright button. One buried link.

## Countdown timers

"Offer expires in 4:59..."

## Guilt messages

"No thanks, I hate saving money."

These aren't accidents. They're patterns.

# So what *are* dark patterns?

Interface designs that steer you toward decisions that benefit the platform, not you.

## → **Pressure**

Urgency cues and fear of missing out

## → **Confusion**

Unclear options, misleading labels

## → **Friction**

The "wrong" choice is made exhausting

## → **Default traps**

Pre-checked boxes, auto-renewals

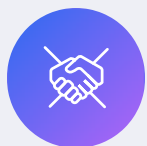
# This isn't just bad UX

**Dark patterns are a cybersecurity and privacy issue.** They shape what data you share, what you consent to, and whether your choices are truly yours.



## Privacy

More data shared than intended



## Consent

Agreement without real understanding



## Trust

Interfaces that look helpful but aren't



## We value your privacy

We value your privacy and want to make sure we are transparent about how we use your data. We have updated our privacy policy to reflect these changes. You can find the full details in our privacy policy.

Accept

Reject

## We use cookies

We use cookies to enhance your browsing experience. You can manage your cookie preferences at any time. For more information, please visit our privacy policy.

Accept

Reject

# Fair design vs. manipulative design

The same choice. Two very different presentations.

### ✓ Fair Design

Both options are equal in size, color, and placement. You choose freely.

### ⚠ Dark Pattern

"Accept All" is large, bright, and front-and-center.  
"Manage settings" is grey, tiny, and buried.



More options

**Accept all cookies**

Customize

#### MINI SCENARIO

## Is this a real choice?

"**Accept all cookies**" bold, colorful, full-width button.

"**Reject**" small grey text, two extra screens away.

If one path takes one click and the other takes eight, is that a **balanced choice**?

- ❏ The answer is no. Unequal friction is a design decision — and it's deliberate.

# Your dark pattern checklist

## **Is one option visually dominant?**

Bright color, larger size, prime position = nudge

## **Is the safer path harder to find?**

More clicks, greyed out, or hidden in settings

## **Are you being rushed?**

Timers and urgency language create panic, not clarity

## **Do you feel guilty for saying no?**

That guilt is engineered. It's not yours.

## **Would equal options change your choice?**

If yes — that's a dark pattern.





# If the safe option is harder to choose, something is wrong.

## **Not all clicks are free**

When design pressures, confuses, or guilts you; that's not neutral.

## **Slow down.**

Question the interface. Your choices are yours.



**What's the most manipulative interface you've seen recently?**

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