The Aachen Lab Demo

Dark Patterns
Countermeasures Against Malicious Designs

To Do & Notice

Select one (or none) of our three visual countermeasures against dark patterns. Then use our website prototypes to simulate buying a smartphone or some concert tickets. Watch how each countermeasure handles page elements that try to manipulate you.

What's Going On?

Our three countermeasures each try to reduce the manipulative effect of dark patterns differently. The first tries to alert you that a dark pattern is present, the second silently removes the manipulation, and the third lets you toggle between the removed and original version of the page.

So What?

Dark patterns are interface design strategies that try to nudge you towards decisions that go against your best interests. Researchers can already detect some dark patterns automatically. But what should happen then? We designed visual countermeasures that could run on your own device, and applied them to multiple common dark patterns including *Visual Interference*, *Confirmshaming*, and *Low Stock Messages*.

Countermeasures

Highlight with Explanation: Draws a box around a dark pattern and provides an explanation.

Hiding: Tries to remove the dark pattern quietly.

Switch: Lets you toggle between *Hiding without Marking* and the original version.

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