Dark patterns are hidden mechanisms and elements in games, social media platforms, or websites. They encourage users to do things that they may not want to do. This includes making purchases, disclosing personal data, or investing a lot of time in them. These mechanisms can also be classified as addictive elements.

Why is dealing with dark patterns so important?

Whether you're an adult, a child, or a teenager: It's important to know about dark patterns and other dangers posed by digital media. When you become aware of them (i.e. in games) you can learn to counteract them and begin to use digital media in a healthy and self-determined way.

Because media literacy and mindfulness also mean more fun!

Sources:

- **jugendschutz.net:** www.jugendschutz.net/fileadmin/daten/publikationen praxisinfos_reports/report_dark_patterns.pdf
- **Spieleratgeber-NRW:** www.spieleratgeber-nrw.de/ratgeber/risiken/dark-patterns
- **Dark Pattern Games:** www.darkpattern.games
- **Datenschutz.org:** www.datenschutz.org/dark-patterns
- **Bayerische Landeszentrale für neue Medien:** www.blm.de/files/pdf2/blm-schriftenreihe_110.pdf
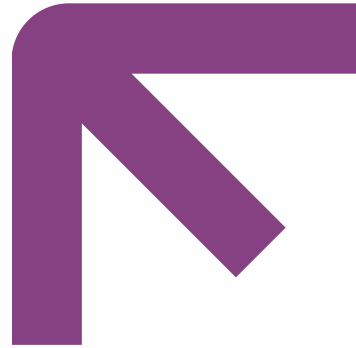
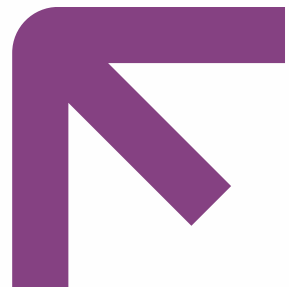**Strong together with GAMESHIFT NRW for responsible media use by young people**

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**WHAT IS IT ABOUT DARK PATTERNS?**

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MONEY PATTERNS

- You pay to bridge wait time
- You pay for advantages or profit in the game
- Resources are apparently made scarce so that you have to buy new ones
- You pay for treasure chests that often contain consolation prizes only
- Expensive products are presented to you as special offers that you must not miss out on
- You don't know how much the in-game currency is worth in real money

PSYCHOLOGICAL PATTERNS

- You keep playing so that your purchases are really worthwhile
- You keep playing because you don't want to lose any badges
- You keep playing because the next reward could be just around the corner
- You keep playing to complete a collection
- You keep playing because of the cool sounds or appealing graphics
- You keep getting notifications until you finally agree to the request
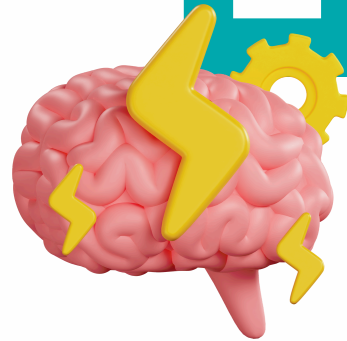
DARK PATTERNS
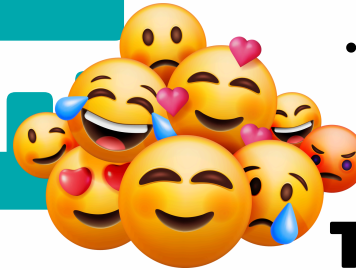
SOCIAL PATTERNS

- You have to make others play to receive rewards
- You receive gifts from others, so you have to give something in return
- You try to be better than others by winning competitions
- You compare yourself to others through leaderboards
- You miss out on something if you don't play or check your social media profiles
- You constantly receive new profile suggestions

TIME PATTERNS

- You receive rewards if you play every day
- You have to watch advertisements to continue playing
- You cannot pause, or you will lose
- You have to wait until your power is replenished
- You need a lot of time for small achievements
- There is no end to the game or social media platform

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