Dark patterns, an increasingly popular ecommerce marketing technique, seek to encourage users to make a particular purchasing decision. They are also the subject of increasing regulatory scrutiny, including the FTC’s ABC Mouse enforcement action.

The agency has now announced an April 29, 2021 virtual workshop, “Bringing Dark Patterns to Light: An FTC Workshop.” The workshop is intended to explore the ways that some ecommerce websites and apps employ user interfaces that could have an impact on consumer choice. Researchers, legal experts, consumer advocates, and industry professionals will discuss what dark patterns are and the impact they have on customer experience. Among the subjects the event will consider are:

- how dark patterns differ from analogous sales tactics used by brick-and-mortar stores;
- how they affect consumer behavior, including potential harms;
- whether some groups of consumers are unfairly targeted or could be especially vulnerable;
- applicable laws, rules, and norms; and
- whether additional rules, standards, or enforcement efforts are needed to protect consumers.

Check out the event page for the webcast from a link that will go live before the event convenes.

**Take away:** Dark Patterns, or social nudges, are increasingly the subject of regulatory and consumer protection scrutiny. This workshop should provide insight on how the FTC considers certain techniques to influence consumer actions in the ecommerce environment.

**Tags:** dark patterns, FTC