

Abstract

This bachelor's thesis describes the history of videogame evolution, which culminates in mobile videogames. This thesis focuses on commonly employed monetization practices in such games. The context of their conception is necessary to allow the reader to truly understand why and how these practices came to be. This bachelor's thesis also focuses on dark patterns and manipulative game design that is often incorporated into these games as a way of enforcing their monetization. Some of these practices are widely known, such as lootboxes. Many other mechanics that are also questionable in regards to their ethics are relatively unknown. This thesis aims to inform the reader about some of the more obscure practices. The presence of such malicious design will be investigated in a series of case studies, which will also shed light onto the fact, that some of these practices might seem innocent to the uninformed. A survey has been conducted to determine to what degree the public is informed about what a dark pattern is, and whether they came into contact with such mechanics. The survey also examines whether the public would be inclined to accept laws, that would protect minors and adults alike against manipulative techniques and dark patterns.

In the summary a suggestion was proposed, aimed towards those game marketers and developers, who employ such tactics. As it seems that the eventual inception of „gamer“ protection laws is inevitable, as the biggest mobile game market in China has already subjected to many measures in order to protect their citizens. A report of the European Parliament suggests that similar legislation might be on the way.