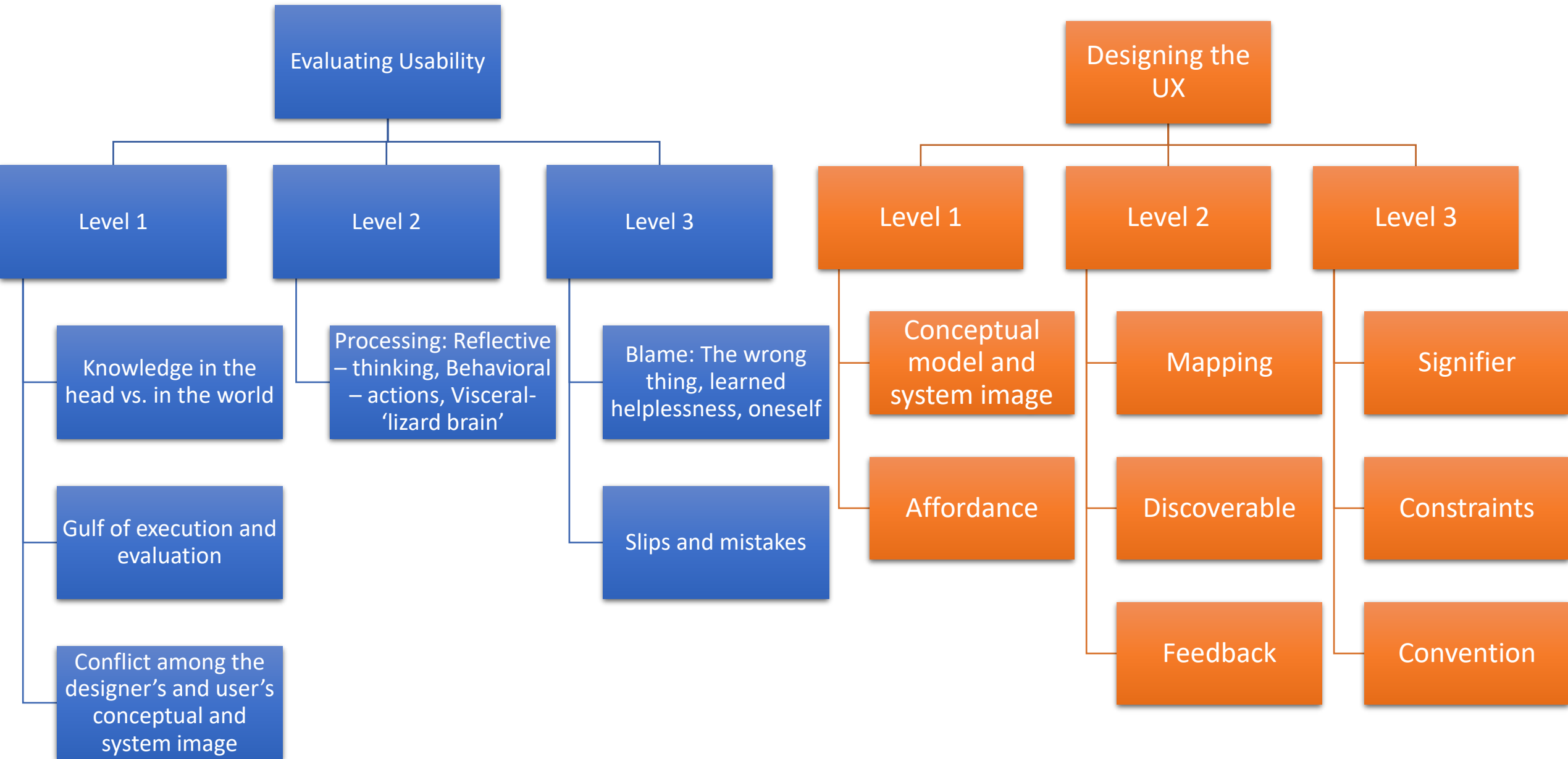


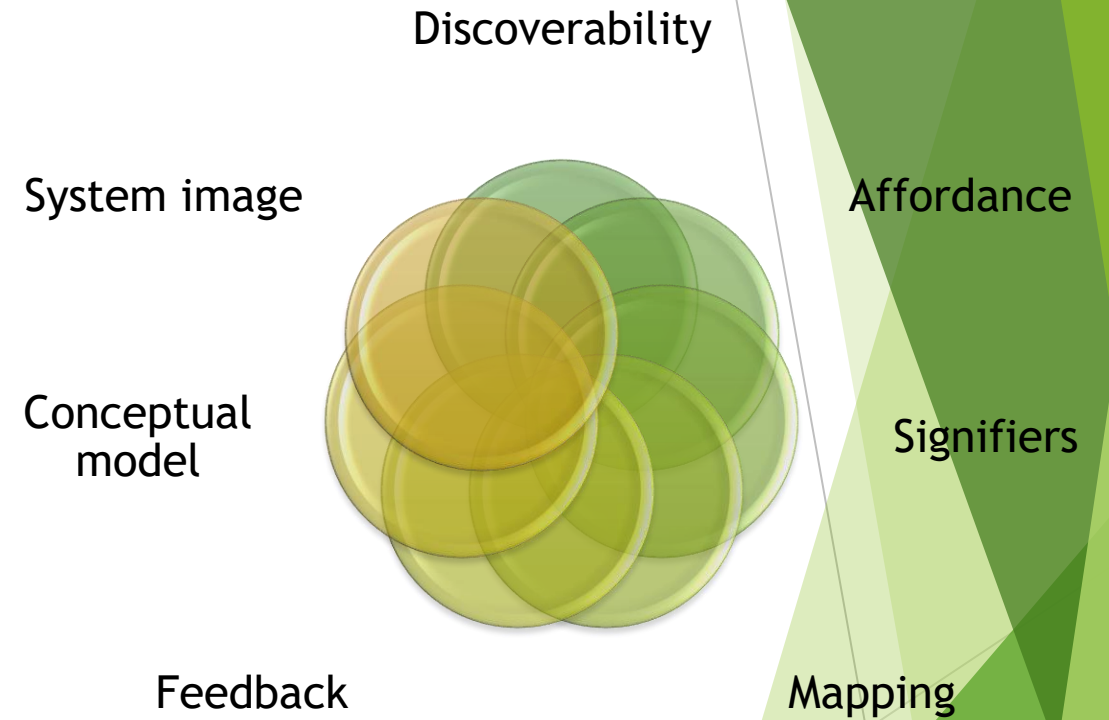
# MIS3506: Design & Blame

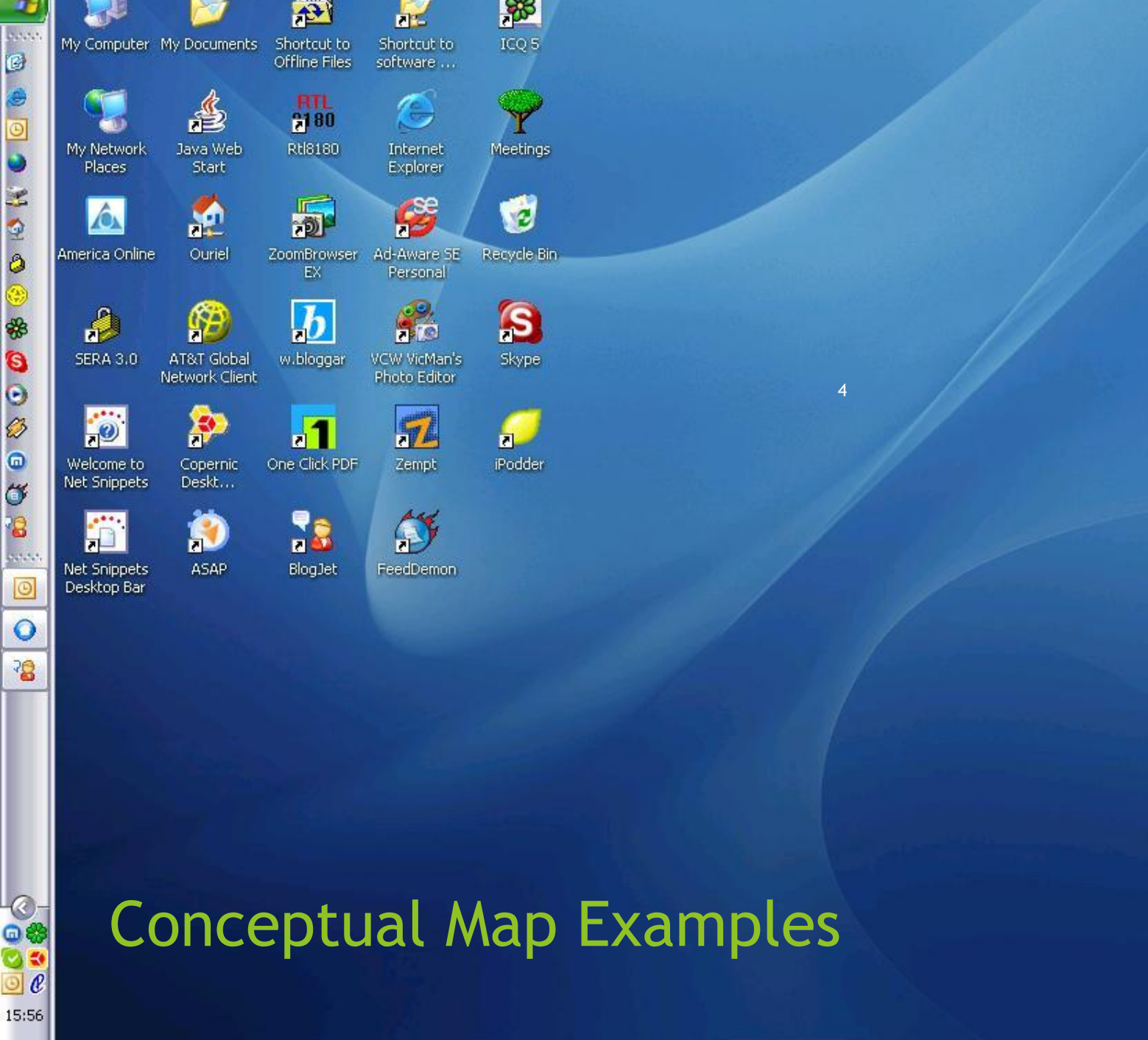
Lavin \* Spring 2025

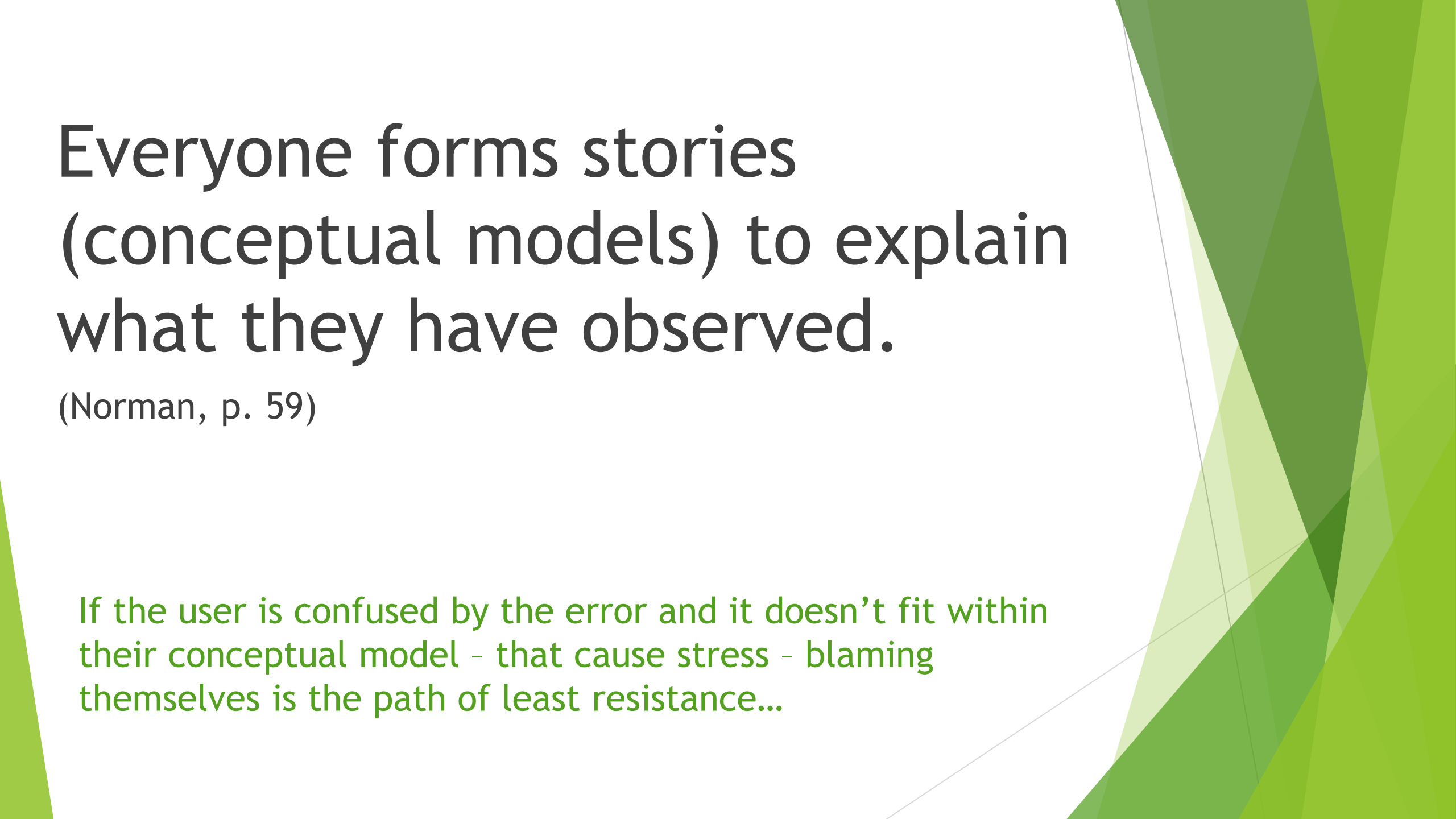


# Conceptual Model

- ▶ Represent our understanding of how things work
- ▶ Framed by the affordances, signifiers, constraints and mappings
- ▶ Mental Model





The background of the slide features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes, primarily triangles and polygons, in various shades of green, creating a modern and dynamic visual effect.

# Everyone forms stories (conceptual models) to explain what they have observed.

(Norman, p. 59)

If the user is confused by the error and it doesn't fit within their conceptual model - that cause stress - blaming themselves is the path of least resistance...



# When things go wrong

- ▶ I hate uncertainty - don't you? Think about the period of time in which we are living - complete uncertainty.
- ▶ We/Users will do anything to escape uncertainty
- ▶ Our brains want the world to be easy to navigate

In UX design, the concept of "blame" refers to the tendency for users to internalize errors or frustrations caused by poor design, leading to feelings of inadequacy or frustration, rather than recognizing the design as the problem.

# I am only human



Blame the wrong thing



Look for cause & effect



Learned helplessness

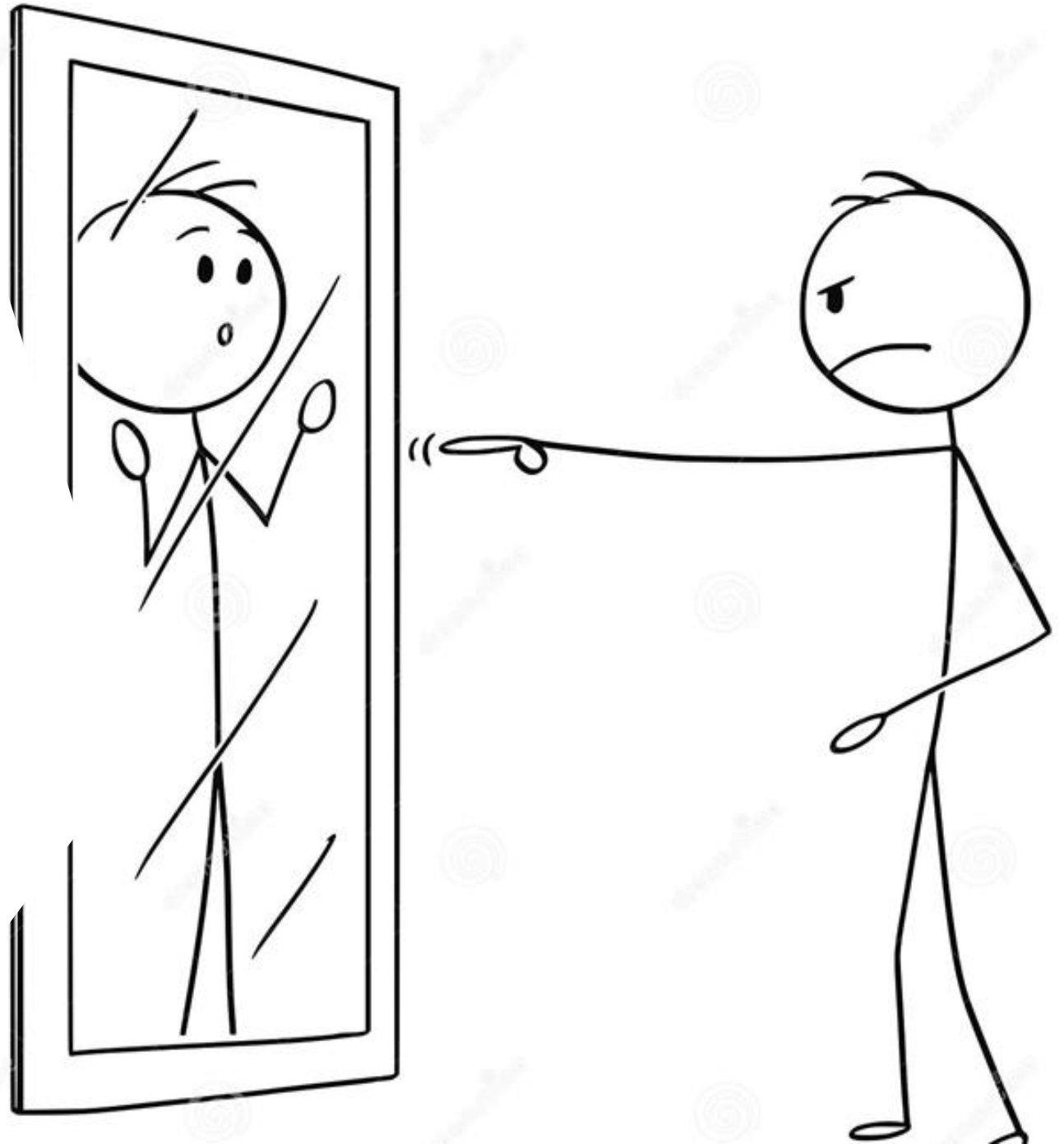


Positive psychology (not!)



Blame yourself

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L3wKzyIN1yk>

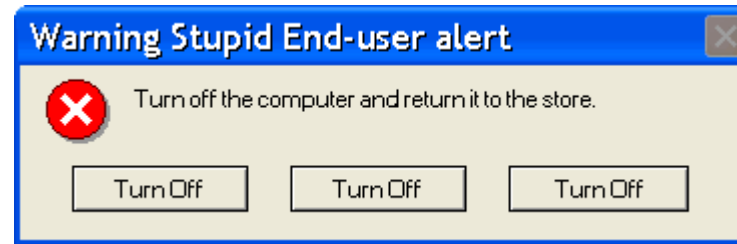




Learned  
helplessness:  
Repeated failure at  
task - decide the  
task cannot be done

Positive psychology:  
Fail often, fail fast -  
a positive learning  
experience

# It's not me... it's you....





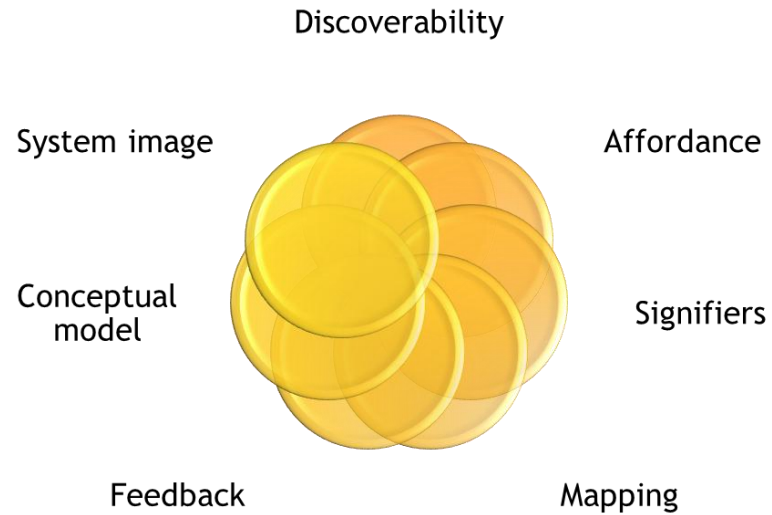


What does the addition of these two things change about the user experience?









# Anticipate that things will not always go smoothly...

- ▶ Designers have an obligation to ensure that the behavior of the machine is understandable to the people who interact with them.
- ▶ Strive to minimize the chance of inappropriate actions through the design framework
- ▶ Use affordances, signifiers, mapping and constraints to guide actions

# 7 Stages of Action Checklist



Review these concepts in your design:

- ▶ **Discoverability** - is it possible to discover what actions are possible
- ▶ **Feedback** - Full and continuous info about the actions and current state
- ▶ **Conceptual Model** - Design projects so all of the info needed is available and enhances discoverability and execution
- ▶ **Affordances** - desired actions are possible
- ▶ **Signifiers** - Ensure discoverability and feedback is well communicated
- ▶ **Mappings** - relationships between controls and actions follow good principles
- ▶ **Constraints** - Physical, logical semantic and cultural constraints guide actions & are easy to interpret



# Advice to designers:



Do not blame  
people



Take difficulties as  
signifiers for  
improvement



Eliminate error  
messages - provide  
help and guidance



Make corrections  
possible



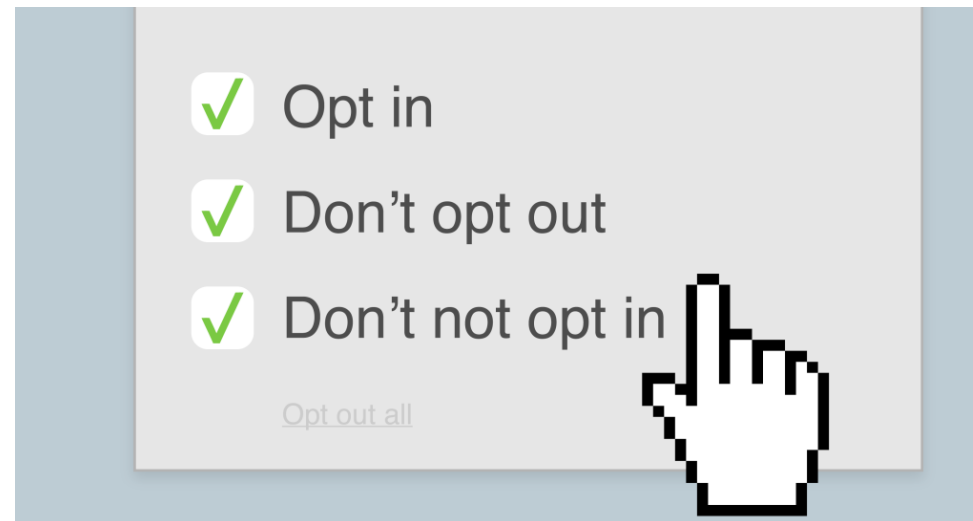
Think positively

Don't criticize unless you can do better!



# Dark Patterns

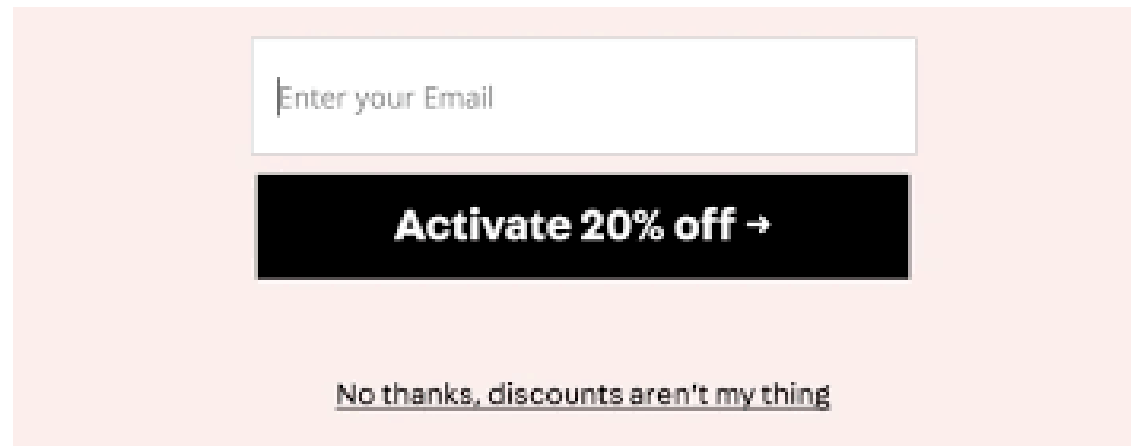
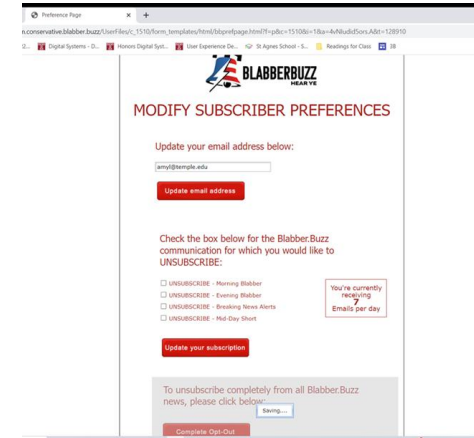
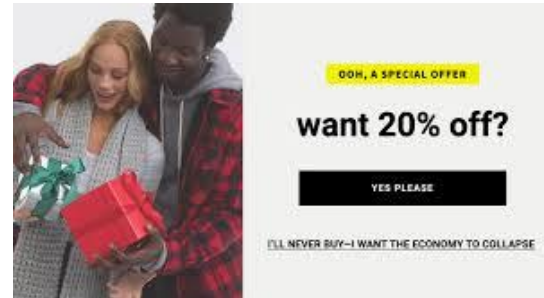
- ▶ Tricks used in websites and apps that make you do things that you didn't mean to, like buying or signing up for something.
  - ▶ GPS/Location detail
  - ▶ Sign up
  - ▶ No visible anti-action of confirmation
  - ▶ Unclear or impossible touch actions
- ▶ Dark patterns are deceptive user experience designs that exploit our typical behavior on websites and apps to get us to do something we didn't intend.





# Examples of Dark Patterns

- ▶ Confirmshaming - my least favorite
- ▶ friend spam
- ▶ forced continuity
- ▶ disguised ads
- ▶ bait and switch
- ▶ hidden costs
- ▶ roach motel
- ▶ privacy suckering
- ▶ misdirection
- ▶ price comparison prevention
- ▶ trick questions
- ▶ sneak into basket



## Common Types of Dark Patterns



### Bait and Switch

When information says something else and a different action gets performed upon clicking

1



### Forced Continuity

Having to give information or card details to move ahead with using the website, a product, or a service

3



### Disguised Ads

When an ad banner looks similar to a useful button such as a download button, but a different action is performed when you click on it

5



### Asking More than Intended

Asking information from a user more than what they intend to tell in the name of knowing your users

7



### Social Proof

When you influence user actions and behavior by telling them a success story of other similar users

9

### Hidden Costs

The cost shown is different initially, but increases as the buyer moves ahead with the payment



2

### Confirm Shaming

When manipulative content is used to changes user action



4

### Roach Motel

Entering is easy, exit is equally tricky, i.e., subscription is easy, cancelling is difficult



6

### Triggering Fear

When a user is asked to not opt-out of a subscription or a feature selection as it can lead to negative consequences



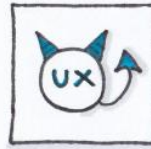
8

### Triggering FOMO (Fear of Missing Out)

This is prevalent on the eCommerce websites where a user is told "Flash sale ends in 10 min"



10



# DARK PATTERNS

©KRISTINA SZEROVAY  
WWW.SKETCHINGFORUX.COM

UX Knowledge Base Sketch #29



DARK PATTERNS ARE

## TRICKS

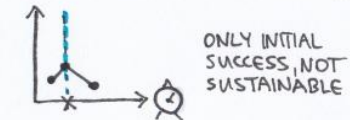
THAT MAKE THE USERS DO THINGS THEY DID NOT MEANTO.

FINE LINE BETWEEN INFLUENCING USERS' BEHAVIOR AND TRICKING THEM!

DARK PATTERNS CAN WORK IF SOMEONE IS LOOKING FOR SHORT-TERM RESULTS.

USING DARK PATTERNS HAS A NEGATIVE IMPACT IN THE LONG-TERM

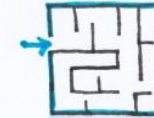
vs.



## THE MOST COMMON TYPES

### FORCED CONTINUITY

FREE TRIAL → CHANGES TO A PAYING SCHEME WITHOUT WARNING



ROACH MOTEL  
THE START IS EASY (SIGN UP/SUBSCRIPTION), QUITTING IS HARD



### GROWTH HACKING THE SPAMMING

YOU BECOME THE SPAMMER WITHOUT KNOWING IT

### DELIBERATE MISDIRECTION

FOCUSING THE USERS' ATTENTION ON THE MORE EXPENSIVE OPTION, HIDING THE CHEAPER WAY



OBSCURED PRICING  
MAKING IT HARD TO COMPARE THE PRICES



### SNEAK INTO BASKET

A RANDOM ADDITIONAL APPEARS IN YOUR BASKET (WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT)

### BAIT & SWITCH

USE A CONVENTION, PATTERN IN A WAY TO MAKE THE USER FALSELY ASSUME SOMETHING



DISGUISED ADS  
AN AD LOOKING LIKE ANOTHER TYPE OF CONTENT / NAVIGATION



### ROADBLOCK

A POP-UP INTERRUPTS YOUR INTENDED ACTION

### HIDDEN COSTS

AT THE CHECKOUT, A NEW, UNEXPECTED COST APPEARS



PRIVACY ZUCKERING  
SHARING MORE PRIVATE INFO THAN YOU WANT



### MISINFORMATION

E.G. CONFUSING COLOR, CONTRAST LANGUAGE

# In Class Discussion



**Find 3-4 examples of Dark Patterns by type**



**In teams, discuss the use of dark patterns in UX**



**Do you think it is an effective business strategy?**

As a user?

As a business owner?



- ▶ Instead of using dark patterns, UX designers should argue for treating customers with respect by giving them choices that are transparent and clear. While this won't lead to the same short-term gains as a dark pattern, it will lead to a less frustrating and much improved customer experience
- ▶ In the long-term this will also help companies retain customers, ultimately giving them a competitive advantage. Customers are far more likely to stay with companies, brands, and product experiences that are transparent, authentic, and trustworthy!