Request for Proposal:

Dark Patterns and Trusted Design Policy Workshops

About the Web Foundation

The World Wide Web Foundation was established in 2009 by web inventor Sir Tim Berners-Lee and Rosemary Leith to advance the open web as a public good and a basic right. We are an independent, international organisation fighting for digital equality — a world where everyone can access the web freely and fully and use it to improve their lives.

Policy Design Workshops

Problem: Everything we do online is influenced by how the tools we use are built. **Dark patterns** are design practices built into user interfaces that obscure or impair consumer autonomy or choice and can alter decision-making or trick users into taking actions they might not otherwise take. This [harmful design phenomenon](#) is — intentionally or unintentionally — [unfortunately widespread](#) today. Dark patterns go to the heart of people's ability to live their lives online with dignity, autonomy, and a sense of trust in the products and services offered to them by businesses and governments alike.

While unfair and deceptive practices are not new or unique to the web, the rise of digital services, in combination with inadequate regulation, has created a space where individuals, particularly from vulnerable groups, can be overwhelmed by the volume of information and easily manipulated through the multiple default design choices confronting them on a daily basis. There has been some important focus on this issue in design and policy circles, including by the [Norwegian Consumer Council](#) and [US Federal Trade Commission](#) — but there is still a long way to go to make sure everyone is protected.

Approach: We built the [Tech Policy Design Lab](#) to advance the [Contract for the Web's](#) mission of bringing together governments, companies and civil society and use human-centered design and design thinking to develop policy and legal frameworks and products and services that address the most challenging tech policy issues of our time. The

Lab is a virtual space to accelerate multi-sector collaboration so that we can work together constructively to redesign our digital spaces and make our web inclusive, safe, and empowering.

Our successful pilot project brought together diverse groups of experts to take on the devastating rise of online abuse and harassment against women and girls. The consultations, policy workshops and advocacy we led resulted in Facebook, Google, TikTok and Twitter making unprecedented commitments to tackle the abuse of women on their platforms.

As part of our continued commitment to tackle all forms of digital inequality, the Web Foundation is planning to host a series of policy design workshops to produce evidence-based solutions to the increasing prevalence of dark patterns so that we can move towards trusted design. We will be working with multiple stakeholders to better understand the many challenges around dark patterns and their potential harms, taking various lenses to understand who it impacts the most, and how they affect the most marginalized communities. We believe meaningful change happens when a diversity of perspectives, sectors and industries work together. And our outputs — product prototypes and policy frameworks — have a higher chance of success when stakeholders are involved in their creation.

We believe tackling dark patterns and moving towards trusted design is vital to empowering every user and making the web safe and secure. We will work with stakeholders to develop both product prototypes and policy solutions that put people and their needs first in two distinct phases:
- **Phase 1 objective:** Develop alternatives for a more ethical and empathetic design that puts people's needs first, using new purposeful/trusted patterns in building an empowering and safe web. We will be using human-centered design and design thinking to develop a portfolio of (UX/UI) design prototypes that tech platforms and companies can adopt or use as benchmarks to guide future product development that protect web users from deceptive practices.
- **Phase 2 objective:** Transform the evidence generated in Phase 1 into concrete outputs directed towards governments. This would involve developing a series of public policy principles such as public policy frameworks, standards, guidelines,

code of conduct, legislative principles, etc., that governments would be keen to adopt in order to regulate deceptive practices.

Call for Design Firms

The Web Foundation is inviting design firms to submit proposals to facilitate the policy design workshops which will take place approximately between March and June 2022. **We encourage early applications where possible, and proposals must be submitted by 5:00pm (GMT) on November 15th, 2021.**

Objectives and Scope of Work

The Web Foundation would like to ensure that these workshops are:
- Open and iterative
- Data and evidence-driven, building on the findings of our primary and secondary research as well as other potential inputs
- Building concrete product and policy solutions to tackling dark patterns and moving towards purposeful design based on human-centered design principles
- Promote interdisciplinary collaboration among governments, companies and civil society organisations and other participants

The Web Foundation is seeking a design firm that will help our team:
- Identify the scope of the workshops based on guidance of the Web Foundation team and the input from expert consultations undertaken by the Web Foundation
- Decide the structure and focus of the virtual workshops, including the number of workshops, number of participants, agenda, and any identifying relevant software needed to convene participants.
- Refine evidence from the previous research inputs to identity the most promising areas for concrete policy and/or product interventions
- Design and facilitate the multistakeholder workshops, including assisting our team while in the process to develop concrete product and policy interventions
- Facilitate the creation of concrete outputs targeted at companies in Phase 1, such as UX designs and prototypes, and their transformation into government-centered outputs in Phase 2, which will be focused on creating legislative principles/standards and public policy frameworks

- Analyse the results of the consultation and produce an evaluation report of the initiative, and other materials to be featured on the project microsite we are building.

Purpose and Deliverables

In addition to facilitation of the workshops, and depending on the final focus and structure of the workshops, deliverables could include:

- **Phase 1:** A portfolio of (UX/UI) ethical design prototypes that tech platforms — including smaller ones — could use as benchmarks to guide future product development.
- **Phase 2:** A series of public policy principles (public policy frameworks, standards, guidelines, code of conduct, legislative principles, etc.) that governments and companies could adopt to ensure that individuals are protected from deceptive practices.

Available Resources

In order to conduct the work outlined above, the successful candidate will receive the following support from the Web Foundation team:

- Timely feedback and input through meetings or email from the project staff team
- Introductions to key stakeholders when necessary, including governments, tech companies, civil society experts, or any other individuals and organisations working on ethical design
- Access to internal documentation related to the project, including existing feedback, briefs and meeting notes
- A dedicated project manager as a key point of contact within the Web Foundation

Budget

We welcome proposals between $80,000 and $100,000 USD.

This range reflects our flexibility in the types of proposals we will accept for this project. The budget allocated for this project will depend on the number, fit, and rate of proposals

we receive. Please provide a budget within the aforementioned range that works best for the format for your workshop(s) and your availability between March and June 2021.

Candidate Qualifications and Proposal Process

Candidate Qualifications

The ideal candidate will have the following:

- Strong portfolio demonstrating expertise in facilitating projects with different stakeholders, including experience facilitating discussions between public/private sector and technology companies and/or tech-oriented civil society organisations specifically
- Experience producing evidence-based, concrete product or tech policy outputs as well as public policy oriented outputs from workshops or similar initiatives
- Confidence and experience in organizing, facilitating and delivering successful design workshop initiatives virtually
- Demonstrated commitment and expertise working on social justice initiatives, with a preference for expertise in facilitating conversations dealing with issues of power / race / sexuality / age / ability / gender
- Demonstrated experience working on similar tech policy areas with diverse communities, including women's rights communities and communities from the Global South
- Previous experience in the area of dark patterns/deceptive design/ethical design/trusted design with a strong understanding of behavioural science in design is a plus.

Application Process

The proposal process will include a written submission using this [form](#). **We encourage early applications where possible, and proposals must be submitted by 5:00pm (GMT) on November 15th, 2021.** This will be followed by interviews with Web Foundation staff. Submissions should include:

- **Proposal:** A 2-3 page high-level overview of your proposal outlining how you will approach delivering this project. The overview should include your proposed format

for delivering the workshop(s), a range for the number of participants, and a proposed timeline for delivery.

- **Statement of Interest:** A statement of no longer than 2 pages that details relevant experience and why this project is of interest to you.
- **Portfolio:** A portfolio of relevant work.
- **Cost Estimate:** An estimated cost for implementing your proposal, including a rough description of how the budget will be allocated.

We especially welcome proposals from firms led by women, firms led by other marginalised communities and firms from the Global South.

All documents should be uploaded as a PDF file. Each document should not be larger than 10MB. In the Portfolio upload section of the form, you will be able to upload five attachments, totalling 100MB, with file types of your choice, such as documents, PDFs, presentations, videos, audio, images, etc. You are also welcome to provide links to any other online references and/or samples of your work.

If you have any questions or require further clarification, please reach out to us at tpdlab@webfoundation.org

Evaluation Criteria

- **60%** of the evaluation will be based on your proposal. This will include:
    - Timeline, including feasibility to complete by June 2022
    - Demonstrated ability to create concrete outputs at the end of the workshops
    - Accessibility considerations for convening workshops, including with regards to timezones, broadband access, and languages
    - Flexibility, in particular the ability to adapt to external factors like scheduling/availability of participants
    - Ability to engage with diverse communities, including women's rights communities and communities from the Global South
    - Consideration of the intersection between policy issues and product design
- **40%** of the evaluation will be based on your statement of interest, portfolio, and cost estimate. Statements that can demonstrate previous experience in delivering workshops on UX and human centred design approaches are desirable.