

COOP
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M.Sc.
PROGRAM

DESIGNING SOCIAL MEDIA

AN ETHICAL APPROACH TO
THE DILEMMAS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

The evolution of technology and social media has changed how people communicate with one another. As social media influences our lives, designers are often faced with problematic demands to act as a social interventionist. This research is aimed to question the roles of the user interface (UI) and user experience (UX) designers within the ethical dilemmas of social media and to have a better understanding of what is considered as unethical design practice, model, and pattern; to the negative impacts that social media's users might occur in the future.

The ethical dilemmas of social media, such as the psychological effects (addiction, distraction, tethered society), biased algorithm, and the misuse of users' data, are viewed as a wicked problem in the sociotechnical world. The phenomenon concerning ethics online has been discussed through blogs, articles, and news. However, there is a lack of scientific research regarding the ethical challenges on social media from the designers' perspective. Thus, it is important to analyse the ethical challenges from UI and UX designers' point of view.

This research provides figures and discussion based on personal experience as a UI designer from Southeast Asia, and literature review from various backgrounds of UI, UX, Human-Computer Interaction, ethics, cognitive science, psychology, and neuroscience. Additionally, it explores how Facebook shifts toward an ethical approach because of its ethics scandals as a case study. As a result of my analysis, I propose a design framework by redesigning the User-Centered Design (UCD) approach affiliated with the Value Sensitive Design (VSD) approach. The combination of the two approaches as a design framework would guide the UI and UX designers to create a safe space online and protect individuals from harm by categorizing what considered as human rights and values.

Keywords: User Interface, User Experience, ethics, values, digital product, Human-Computer Interaction, social media.