

COOP
DESIGN
RESEARCH

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M.Sc.
PROGRAM

COLLECTING DESIGN STRATEGIES FOR ETHI- CAL SOCIAL MEDIA

POSSIBILITIES TO PROTECT DEMOCRACY

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ABSTRACT

In the last years, there has been a rising concern between researchers (Constanza-Chock 2020; New_Public 2020; Zuckeman 2020) and designers (Monteiro 2019; Bowles 2019) on ethics applied to digital design. These concerns are more accentuated in social media, where academia and the media have discussed the harmful effects of the platforms in human relations, cognition, and politics, besides being identified as a vehicle for misinformation. (Turkle 2016; Center for Humane Technology 2021; Empoli 2019; Cadwalladr and Graham-Harrison 2018; El-Bermawy 2016). Assuming that designers should be responsible for their products and their consequences in society, there is a need to reformulate social media. Although academia has approached new ways of designing these platforms, there is a lack of an overview on this subject. This thesis will address this gap from a UX designer's perspective collecting design strategies that envision how designers can build social media more ethically. Following the proposals of Richard Buchanan (2001) and Gui Bonsiepe (2012) that design should aim to reinforce human dignity, empower communities and the democratic system, the main focus of this work will be to collect strategies that protect democratic values by design. This work then proposes to answer the following question: How can UX designers contribute to more ethical social media platforms that preserve the democratic system? With this aim, this thesis will connect dots between studies and practical projects that suggest paths that: increase ethical conscience between UX designers; increase equity and inclusion; reduce cognitive damages; promote transparency and accountability; safeguard freedom of speech and the right to trustworthy information.

Keywords: social media; digital design; UX design; strategies; ethics; democracy; design justice; literature review