



THE NOT BASTARDS™ MANIFESTO.

A living document for people and organizations who want to build technology without treating users badly.

Revision history

Revision	State	Published	Notes
Revision 0.1	Draft	June 2026	Initial draft publication.
Revision 0.2	Draft	September 2026	Improved use of language.

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MANIFESTO

This is the maker-facing side of the document. It is not a mood board, a slogan set, or a brand exercise. It is a restraint system.

It is written for teams, companies, independents, institutions, and projects that want a public standard for building technology without contempt. It describes the habits worth adopting when product decisions become inconvenient, metrics become tempting, or when the easier choice would be to treat people worse.

1.1

Serve People

Technology should serve people, not advertisers, trackers, or growth-at-all-costs spreadsheets.

This manifesto is for people building tools for humans who have better things to do than decode hostile interfaces, surrender unnecessary data, or fight software that was designed to extract more than it gives.

Useful technology does not need to be manipulative. Profitable technology does not need to be predatory. Independent technology does not need to be amateurish.

Not Bastards exists so others can say, clearly and publicly, that the internet has enough bastards already.

1.2

Do Not Collect Loot

Data should never be collected as a loot.

Start from zero. If an app can work without personal information, it should. If limited information is necessary, the reason should be clear, the scope should be narrow, and the data should stay connected to the thing the user asked the app to do.

The safest data is the data we never collected. That is not a technical trick. It is a promise made in architecture.

1.3

Do Not Manipulate The User

Interfaces should help people make decisions, not trick them into decisions they would not otherwise make.

We do not hide cancellation. We do not disguise advertisements as navigation. We do not make the respectful choice harder than the profitable choice. We do not use confusion as a business model.

A button should mean what it says. A price should be understandable. A setting should be findable. Consent should be real.

1.4 **Do Not Use Creepy Tracking**

People are not impressions, funnels, leads, segments, or inventory. They are people.

Metrics can be useful, but metrics are not morality. If a dashboard rewards behavior that makes the product worse for humans, the dashboard is wrong.

We would rather grow slower than build something that depends on exploiting attention, anxiety, ignorance, or addiction.

1.5 **Do Not Steal The User's Time**

Attention is finite. Spending it should be a choice, not a tax imposed by clutter, popups, badges, notification spam, or artificial urgency.

Good tools get out of the way. They answer the question, perform the task, and let people leave without drama.

We will not measure success by how long we can keep someone trapped. We will measure success by whether the tool did its job well.

1.6 **Speak Plainly**

Legal documents have their place, but they should not be used as camouflage for bad behavior.

Explain what is happening in language people can understand. If something is complicated, make it clearer. If something sounds suspicious when explained plainly, reconsider doing it.

Trust is not created by saying "trust us." Trust is earned by being understandable, consistent, and willing to say no to easy compromises.