Technology Design Course Project for CS449/649
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Managerial Information Letter and Consent Form

Overview

You are being asked to allow us to conduct a study within your organization as part of a course project at the University of Waterloo. The intent of the course project is to learn how to design technology that makes people's lives easier, whether at work, home, or play. The course instructor is Prof. Edith Law.

Designing better technology is a process that requires interviews, observations, and the evaluation of new prototypes. The study involves two phases. In the first phase, we interview people and observe them as they perform tasks at work, at school or at home. The results from the interviews and observations suggest ways technology could be improved. In the second phase, we prototype new or improved systems and ask people to try out (evaluate) the new prototypes to understand what needs to be improved in our designs. As an example, suppose we wish to improve an architect's work process. We would first interview architects and observe them as they perform their day-to-day tasks. We would then develop prototypes of new systems and ask architects to try them out to see how our designs could be further improved. During the first phase, no video or audio recordings of the interviews will be made. During the second phase, only screen and audio recordings (without identifying information) will be made to capture the prototype evaluation process.

If members of your organization have permission to participate and agree to participate in this study, we will interview individuals one or more times and observe them as they work. We will also ask them to try out and evaluate prototype systems we design to improve their workflow.

Study Details

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and may be terminated at any time. We first conduct two or three interviews (lasting within 20-30 minutes each). The first interview provides us with an overview of work practices. Later interviews help us clarify issues or questions that may have arisen since the first interview.

Study participants may decline to answer particular questions, if they wish, and may withdraw participation at any time.

We then might observe individuals in their natural work environment as they perform typical tasks. The best technologies are those that work well in realistic conditions. Thus, we will ask to shadow individuals as they perform real work. The length of these observations is dependent on availability, but each should last at least 20 minutes.

Approximately one month later, we will ask individuals to try out (evaluate) our prototype designs. An evaluation will last 20-40 minutes. We may conduct a second evaluation after receiving their feedback on the first prototype.

Risks
There are no known or anticipated risks to participate in this study other than those associated with the normal use of computers or mobile computing devices (e.g., BlackBerries, iPods, etc.).

Confidentiality and Data Retention
All personal data collected is considered confidential. Codes, rather than names or other identifying information, will be used in notes and/or recordings. The name of the institution or organization will not be revealed, and will be described only in generic terms (e.g. a local architecture firm, a public secondary school, etc.). Even though we may present our findings to the class or to the broader academic community, only the course instructor and our project group will have access to the data collected. Names and any other identifying information will not appear in any publication resulting from this study. However, with your permission and the permission of the participant(s), anonymous quotations and pictures may be used. Audio recordings may be transcribed. Notes, images, screen recordings and audio recordings /transcriptions collected during this study will not contain identifiable information (e.g., names, faces) and will be retained for a minimum of 1 year on a password-protected computer, data server and/or cloud service.

Note that while we treat any personal data collected as confidential, we *cannot* sign non-disclosure agreements as part of this study.

Remuneration
Participants will not be remunerated for participation in the study. However, the information provided will help us understand how current computer-based tools could be improved to better support the design process.

Questions
If you have any questions about participation in this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact Prof. Edith Law via email at edith.law@uwaterloo.ca.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE#30130). If you have questions for the Committee contact the Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca.

Permission Form

I agree to allow the researchers to invite employee/staff of this organization to participate in the study being conducted by

_____

(Student Names)

for the course CS449/649 (Human Computer Interaction) at the University of Waterloo. The course instructors are [Instructor 1 Name] and [Instructor 2 Name]. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in this Information Letter and have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study. I understand that I may withdraw this permission at any time by telling the students or course instructor.

___ YES   ___ NO

I agree to allow anonymous quotations to be used in any presentation or report that comes of this study.

___ YES   ___ NO

I agree to allow pictures to be taken. The pictures will be used in teaching, scientific presentations and/or publications. I or others I work with will not be identifiable in the pictures

___ YES   ___ NO

I am aware that no audio and/or video recording devices will be used during the first phase of the study.

___ YES ___ NO

I agree to allow screen and audio recordings (without identifying information) to be made during the second phase of the study to capture the prototype evaluation process.

___ YES   ___ NO

_____ (Please print)
Name of person granting authorization

_____
Signature of person granting authorization

_____
Title of person granting authorization

_____
Date

_____ (Please print)
Name of witness (student)

_____
Signature of witness

_____
Date