



Technology Design Course Project for CS449/649
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University of Waterloo
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Participant Information Letter and Consent Form

Overview

You are being asked to volunteer in a study 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.

We invite you to participate in the first phase of the study. If you agree to participate in this study, we will interview you one or more times and observe you as you perform tasks. The interviews will be conducted via video conferencing software (e.g., Zoom, Google Hangout) where you will be provided with a link to join the meeting. No video or audio recordings of the interviews will be made.

If the interview is conducted at a workplace (skip otherwise):

_____ (Senior Manager's name) has given permission for this project
to be conducted at _____ (name of organization).

Study Details

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may stop at any time. If you agree to participate, we will conduct two or three interviews (lasting within 20-30 minutes each). The first interview will provide us with an overview of your work process. Later interviews will help us clarify issues or questions that may have arisen since the first interview.

We might also observe you in your natural work, school or home environment as you perform typical tasks. The best technologies are those that work well in realistic conditions. Thus, we will ask to shadow you as you perform real tasks at work, at school or at home. The length of these observations is dependent on our respective schedules, but should last at least 20 minutes each.

During the interviews, your honest feedback is important to us. The instructor will evaluate this course project based on how well we engage in the design process. As a result, both positive and negative comments will help us to validate what we have done well, to improve our understanding of your tasks and to assess the extent to which our solution will help you accomplish tasks, and to make suggestions for future directions or modifications to our project. How much you like or dislike our project is irrelevant to the grade we receive in the course.

Risks

There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant 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. Even though we may present our findings to the class or publish our results in papers, only the course instructor and our project group will have access to the data collected. Your name or any other personal identifying information will not appear in any publication resulting from this study. No video or audio recordings will be made. However, with your permission, anonymous quotations and pictures may be used. Notes and images 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.

You may decline to answer particular questions, if you wish, and may withdraw participation at any time.

The interview will be conducted over the platform of choice by the student team, e.g., Zoom, Google Meet, MS Teams, and other video conferencing software. When information is transmitted over the internet privacy cannot be guaranteed. There is always a risk your responses may be intercepted by a third party. University of Waterloo researchers will not collect or use internet protocol (IP) addresses or other information which could link your participation to your computer or electronic device without first informing you.

Remuneration

You will not be remunerated for participation in the study. However, the information you provide 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.

Verbal Consent

I agree, of my own free will, to participate in a study being conducted by

(Student Names)

for the course CS449/649 (Human Computer Interaction) at the University of Waterloo. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in this Information-Consent Letter and have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time by telling the students or course instructor.

YES NO

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

YES NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any presentation or report that comes of this study.

YES NO

I agree to allow pictures to be taken. The pictures might be used in teaching, scientific presentations and/or publications. I or others I work with will not be identifiable in the pictures. I am aware that I may withdraw this consent at any time without penalty.

YES NO

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the students or course instructor.

YES NO