**The Study Procedure**

**Purpose of the research:**

The goal of this study is to improve technical decision-making in the early stages of software startups. The study aims to understand the major technical decisions that are made, explore the impacts of these decisions on the startups, and identify best practices in making these decisions.

**Expected duration of the study:**

After you register your interest (sign up) to participate in this study, the researcher will contact you through email to schedule the interview within the next month. The interview will last for about 45 – 60 minutes. There will be 10 to 20 participants recruited for this study.

**Voluntary participation & right to withdraw from the study:**

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. If you choose to withdraw from the study, the investigator may use your information up to the time you decide to withdraw. You have been informed that once the interview is conducted, the data collected will be retained by the investigator and analyzed even if you choose to withdraw from the research.

**Procedures:**

The interview will be conducted either in person, by Skype, or through any online conference call platform of your choosing. In the interview, you will be asked general information about your startup and discuss some of the technical decisions you made or were involved in during the early stages of your startup. Before beginning the interview, the researcher will seek your consent to use audio recording during the interview. The audio recording will be used only for study purposes, and it will be immediately destroyed after the study is completed. The audio recording will be stored in a password-protected shared drive that is only accessible by the study researchers. After the study is completed, all the audio recordings will be destroyed immediately.

At the end of the interview, the researcher will ask if you are interested in a short follow-up interview later within one year from the first interview. The follow-up interview will be about 15 minutes, and conducted either in person, by Skype, or through any online conference call platform of your choosing. If you agree, you will be contact for the follow-up interview within

one year from the first interview. In this interview, the researcher will present the initial study findings, and ask about your feedback and comment.

**Risks and benefits:** There is no risk associated with participating in this study. No controversial or potentially embarrassing subjects will be discussed. We acknowledge that your participation in this research will not benefit you personally, but it will contribute to the overall knowledge of technical decision-making in software startups, and it will serve software startup communities around the globe.

**Confidentiality:**

Any information learned and collected from this study in which you might be identified will be kept confidential and will be disclosed ONLY if you give permission. To help protect your confidentiality, the information from this study will be stored in a password-protected laptop and a shared drive that is only accessible by the investigators. The researchers will use an identification key to link information to the participants, and only the researchers will have access to the identification key. Also, there will be no personal identifying information written while conducting the interview. If some identifying information is revealed, this information will be kept only in the audio record and will not be transcribed or used in the study.

Consenting to participate in this research also indicates my agreement that all information collected from me individually may be used by current and future researchers in such a fashion that my personal identity will be protected. Such use will include presentations at scientific or professional meetings, publishing in scientific journals, sharing anonymous information with other researchers for checking the accuracy of study findings and for future approved research that has the potential for improving human knowledge.