

## EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

### Software Developers

**Project ID:** 41060

**Project title:** Investigation of the impact of empathy on the interactions between Software Professionals and Customers

#### Investigators

Prof John Grundy, Faculty of Information Technology, Monash University, Australia,

[john.grundy@monash.edu](mailto:john.grundy@monash.edu)

A/Prof Rashina Hoda, Faculty of Information Technology, Monash University, Australia,

[rashina.hoda@monash.edu](mailto:rashina.hoda@monash.edu)

Dr Ingo Mueller, Faculty of Information Technology, Monash University, Australia,

[ingo.mueller@monash.edu](mailto:ingo.mueller@monash.edu)

#### Student Investigator

Hashini Gunatilake, Faculty of Information Technology, Monash University, Australia,

[hashini.gunatilake@monash.edu](mailto:hashini.gunatilake@monash.edu)

You are invited to take part in a research project aimed at understanding empathy enablers, barriers, and impact of empathy on the interactions between software developers and other stakeholders who directly interact with developers. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before deciding whether or not to participate in this research. If you would like further information regarding any aspect of this project, you are encouraged to contact the researchers via the email addresses listed above.

This study is conducted as a part of PhD project at the HumaniSE Lab, Faculty of Information Technology, Monash University, Australia. This research is funded by the Australian Research Council Australian Laureate Fellowship (FL190100035).

#### Why were you chosen for this research?

You are invited to participate in this research as you are a software developer who interact with other stakeholders (Product Owner, Business Analyst, Tester, Customer, End User) during your work. You have been personally contacted via email invitation to participate in this research, or you may have seen our advertisement shared via LinkedIn and Twitter and contacted us expressing your interest to participate in our study. As a software developer who interact with other stakeholders, we believe you can provide valuable insights on this topic. **Please note that Indonesian participants are not eligible to participate in this study due to ethics restrictions.**

#### What does the research involve?

In this study we aim to identify your empathy enablers, barriers to empathy and impact of empathy considering your interactions with other stakeholders using two data collection methods: online survey and interview.

The online survey contains demographic questions and a standard empathy test (Questionnaire of Cognitive and Affective Empathy). The test serves as a measure of empathy, which is the ability to understand the point of view of

another person. Upon your consent, we will email you the link to the survey. Completing the survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes, and upon request, we will provide you with your empathy profile afterward.

After the completion of online survey, we will reach out to schedule an in-person/Zoom interview based on your preference. The interview will be conducted by the student researcher and will take about 40-60 minutes. The interview questionnaire is designed to get detailed feedback on enablers and barriers of empathy as well as its impact.

Your estimated overall time commitment is a maximum of 1 hour and 15 minutes, including 15 minutes for the survey and 60 minutes for the interview.

It will greatly aid data collection if interviews are audio or video recorded. We will proceed with recording only upon obtaining your prior consent.

### **Consenting to participate in the project**

You have been invited to participate in this study from one of the ways mentioned above. As part of this, you have been provided with this Explanatory Statement and a Consent Form. Please read them in full. If you agree to participate in this study in-person or online, please return the signed PDF file of Consent Form (electronic sign is also possible). Once we receive your signed Consent Form, you will be contacted by the student investigator to plan the interview session.

### **Withdrawing from the research**

You can withdraw your participation at any time up to 30 days after the interview - verbally or in writing (email). During the interview, you can request the recorder to be turned off and note-taking to be stopped without giving a reason. Moreover, your online survey responses will be destroyed if you decide to withdraw.

### **Possible benefits and risks to participants**

You will be reimbursed for your participation in this study with a 30-dollar (AUD) online voucher. The vouchers will be handed out after the interview. A private process will be followed to distribute the vouchers where the online vouchers will be emailed to the email address of the participant.

There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this research. Please note that you can opt out from this research at any time up to 30 days after the interview and that you do not have to answer any questions that you are not comfortable with.

### **Confidentiality**

Even though some personal data will be collected (e.g. your name, email address), all data will be processed, analysed and reported only in de-identified form. This will be done by allocating unique identifiers to your name and email address hence it will not be traceable back to you. The audio recordings of the interviews will be transcribed by either the researchers or uploaded to a secure commercial server (e.g., otter.ai or NVivo) for transcription. Once the transcription is complete, all recordings will be promptly deleted from the server. While your collected personal details will be deidentified, there is a possibility that you will not remain anonymous during the reimbursement as your name and email address may be given to the Monash finance team for auditing purposes. Your personal information shall only be accessible by the investigators of this research. They will keep your identity confidential.

In general, all data collected during this research will be de-identified in storage where possible (especially audio, text, notes/sketches) and processed in an anonymised fashion. After the data collection is completed, not even the investigators will be able to re-identify the data. Further any potentially identifying material in the responses will be removed. Any papers published as a result of this research will not identify you and the responses you make will be published anonymously in these papers.

### **Storage, Retention, Destruction and Future Use of data**

Collected data will be stored securely on a secure Monash server and the investigators' computers during different phases of data collection, analysis, and reporting. All these systems and computers have access controls in place and cannot be accessed by unauthorised parties. We will not store any data externally to the Monash network. All data will be destroyed after five years. Carefully analysed and anonymised data may be uploaded to the IEEE Data Port if required.

### **Use of data for other purposes**

The data collected during this research may be used for other related studies by the investigators within five years. In case of the data being reused, it will still be in an anonymised form.

### **Results**

The results of this study will be published in peer reviewed academic conferences and/or journals and may be summarised at relevant industry workshops. A research report will also be available to participants upon request.

### **Complaints**

Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of the research, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC):

Executive Officer  
Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)  
Room 111, Chancellery Building D,  
26 Sports Walk, Clayton Campus  
Research Office  
Monash University VIC 3800

Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 | Email: [muhrec@monash.edu](mailto:muhrec@monash.edu) | Fax: +61 3 9905 3831

Thank you,  
ARC Laureate Professor John Grundy