

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Software Developers

Project ID: 32281

Project title: Investigation of the impact of human aspects on collaboration and interactions in software development projects

Investigators

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Student Investigator

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You are invited to take part in a research project aimed at understanding how empathy is practised between software developers and end users. 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 in the AskPCOS Industry Experience Studio project with ID 31007 on which this meta-study is based. The AskPCOS project is a good example of modern software development projects. Hence, we believe you can help us shed light on various understudied human aspects under real-world conditions.

What does the research involve?

In this study we aim to observe how you empathise with end-users using three data collection methods: online survey, observations and interview.

The online survey contains an empathy test. Empathy is the ability to understand the point of view of another person which is important when eliciting user needs and requirements. Please note, that this research will not measure your performance in the AskPCOS project nor your personality but rather attempts to determine if and how empathy may change over time. For this reason, you will be asked to fill out the survey several times during the remainder of your project.

Observations will be conducted by our student investigator and one co-investigators during usability testing sessions that you participate in as part of the AskPCOS project. You are not required to prepare for the observation hence it will not require any additional time commitment from you beyond what is agreed as part of the AskPCOS project. Observations will be performed in-person or via zoom, subject to the mode chosen by you as part of the AskPCOS project.

At the end of the semester, you will be interviewed once. The interview will be conducted by the student researcher and will take about 30 minutes.

The estimated overall time commitment for you is 1.5h, including 4x15 minutes for 4 surveys + 30 minutes for the final interview.

It will greatly aid data collection, if observed sessions and interviews are audio or video recorded. We will only do so with prior consent of all participants of an observed session and interview.

Consenting to participate in the project

You have been invited to participate in this study by one of the investigators. 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 Consent Form. 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 - verbally or in writing (email). During the observations and interview, you can request the recorder to be turned off and note-taking to be stopped without giving a reason. However, please note that it may not be possible to remove all your data (especially audio and video recordings involving other participants), if you withdraw during or after an observed session. 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 online voucher. The vouchers will be handed out in Week 12 of this semester (17-21 October 2022). 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 and that you do not have to answer any questions that you are not comfortable with.

Services on offer if adversely affected: Although we do not expect that this research will cause you any distress, should you become concerned about issues that arise throughout or after the study, we can provide you with a list of counselling services and advise you to seek medical advice from your General Practitioner.

Confidentiality

Even though some personal data will be collected (e.g. your name and 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. 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 of these systems and computers have access controls in place and cannot be accessed by unauthorised parties. 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,
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Thank you,
Dr Ingo Mueller