

Initial Ethics Review Form

Application # _____

Project Title:

An Exploratory Interview Study on End Users Developing LLM Agents via Low/No-Code Platforms

Project Description

Project Aims

The growing accessibility of large language models (LLMs) has enabled a surge in the development of LLM-based agents, supporting intelligent task automation across various domains. Alongside code-first frameworks like LangChain, low-code/no-code (LCNC) platforms such as Coze and Dify have emerged, empowering non-technical users, so-called “citizen developers”, to create and deploy agents through visual tools and templates. However, while these platforms aim to democratize LLM agent development, we still lack an in-depth understanding of how non-experts actually engage with them in practice.

This study aims to investigate how non-professional users develop LLM agents using LCNC platforms. It seeks to uncover users’ development workflows, the challenges they encounter, and how they navigate design trade-offs such as expressiveness versus control.

In this project, we will conduct semi-structured interviews with end users who have built at least one LLM agent using an LCNC platform. Participants will discuss their goals, development strategies, pain points, and expectations around the platform experience. The discussion will be analyzed to identify common practices, challenges, and design implications that can inform platform design, research directions, and end-user support in the emerging landscape of LLM agent creation.

Output: A scientific publication

Research Methods

We will conduct semi-structured interviews with end users who have created at least one LLM-based agent using an LCNC platform. A prepared interview protocol will guide the sessions. Each interview is expected to last 45–60 minutes and will be audio-recorded and transcribed for subsequent qualitative analysis.

Participant Pool

Participants are recruited from [anonymous university], where a university-hosted LCNC platform is actively used for LLM agent development. Eligibility criteria require participants to have created at least one functional LLM-based agent using an LCNC platform. The study will be advertised on campus through various channels, such as social media and campus forums. Drawing on recommendations for qualitative studies to achieve depth and diversity, we plan to recruit 12–18 participants to allow for potential dropouts. Participants will be contacted individually via WeChat to schedule the meeting.

In all cases, the requests will be made under the following conditions:

- Participants will receive a compensation of 100 Yuan for their time.
- It will be made clear that participation is voluntary.

Data Management

All data collected during the study will be anonymized, with no personally identifiable information (e.g., names) being recorded. The data will be securely stored and analyzed locally by the research team only. No data will be shared with third parties.

Funding and External Contractors

N.A.

Project Location(s): [Anonymous Building/Office]

Proposed Start Date: 25 May 2025

Proposed Finish Date: 8 June 2025

Ethical Considerations

Please check the relevant box to answer **Yes** or **No** to each of the following questions. If answering **Yes** to any questions, please ensure further details are provided in the project description above.

1. **Has this project been reviewed and conditionally approved or rejected by another ethics committee?**

☐ Yes ☒ No

2. **Is the project being externally funded or provided with in-kind support by an external party?**
☐ Yes ☒ No
3. **Is the project designed to provide market research or a consultancy service fully paid for by a client?**
☐ Yes ☒ No
4. **Will there be any restrictions (or restrictive procedures) placed on the publication of results from this project as a result of the funding or support arrangements?**
☐ Yes ☒ No
5. **Will any part of the project be undertaken by or outsourced to a third party?**
☐ Yes ☒ No
6. **Are there any potential conflicts of interest for the research team or organisation(s) associated with the project?**
(e.g., arising from any involvement or role that researchers may have with other projects or external organisations, or an existing relationship between a member of the research team and the potential participants)
☐ Yes ☒ No
7. **Will consent for participation in this project be sought from all participants?**
☒ Yes ☐ No
8. **Will there be any incentive / payment (e.g., money, movie tickets, food vouchers) or reimbursement (e.g., travel expenses) given to participants?**
☒ Yes ☐ No
9. **Will the information being collected from and stored about participants be in an individually identifiable, potentially identifiable, or re-identifiable form?**
☐ Yes ☒ No
10. **Does the project involve limited disclosure to participants or active concealment?**
☐ Yes ☒ No
11. **Are there any risks (e.g., social, psychological, financial, physical, legal) to participants, the research team or others arising from their involvement in the research which cannot be mitigated / negated through project design?**
☐ Yes ☒ No
12. **Is it likely that the project will involve the disclosure of unlawful conduct, or concealment of a crime, by individuals or definable groups?**
☐ Yes ☒ No
13. **Will this research project involve access to, use, collection or acquisition of culturally sensitive materials or artefacts?**
☐ Yes ☒ No
14. **Will the information to be collected about participants during the project come from any of the following sources?**
☐ Yes ☒ No

If **Yes**, please specify:

- ☐ Another person about the research participant
- ☐ An agency, authority, or organisation other than [Anonymous Institution]

- ☐ A data source collected previously by [Anonymous Institution] for a purpose other than this research project

15. Will the project involve the collection, handling and/or storage of personal information?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Additional Notes

- If any questions are answered **Yes**, please provide detailed explanations in the **Project Description** section or as an attachment.
 - Ensure that all ethical considerations are addressed in the research design and methodology.
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Certification

Principal Researcher / Project Leader

Name: [Name]

Position: [Position]

Business Unit: [Business Unit]

Research Group: [Research Group]

Location: [Location]

Phone: [Phone]

Email: [Email]

Certification:

As Principal Researcher / Project Leader for this research project, I certify that:

- The information provided in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge.
- I will notify the ethics committee of any ethically relevant variations to the project.
- I will immediately report any adverse events or harm to participants.
- Data will be managed and stored in accordance with [Anonymous Institution]'s policies and relevant legislation.

Signed: [Electronic Signature]

Name: [Name]

Date: [Date]