



Dublin City University
School of Computing
ETHICS COMMITTEE (SEC)

NOTIFICATION FORM FOR LOW-RISK
PROJECTS AT UNDERGRADUATE OR
TAUGHT MASTERS LEVELS

Please read the following information carefully before completing your application. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will make your submission ineligible for review.

1. Download this form, complete the appropriate fields, attach additional pages (e.g. plain language statement) as appropriate and save as a PDF file
2. Completed applications must be uploaded to your School of Computing GitLab repo, and must be located in "docs/ethics.pdf".
3. Your SUPERVISOR will then be notified automatically and must approve your approach initially.
4. Your application should consist of one electronic file (PDF) only. The completed application must include this form and also must incorporate all supplementary documentation, especially that being given to the proposed participants e.g consent forms, plain English language statement. It must be proofread and spell-checked before submission.
5. All sections of the application form must be answered as instructed and within the word limits given.
6. Your ethics approval submission will be circulated to the School's Research Ethics Committee and you will be notified if/when it is approved
7. All projects must have either a derogation from an ethics approval requirement (as determined by your supervisor) OR must have an approved ethics submission (this form), before work with human subjects commences.

Applications which do not adhere to these requirements will not be accepted for review and will require resubmission

Applications must be completed on this form; answers in the form of attachments will not be accepted, except where indicated. No hard copy applications will be accepted. The project must not commence work with human subjects until written approval has been received from the School of Computing Ethics Committee (SEC).

PROJECT TITLE

String Theory

PROJECT SUPERVISOR(S)	Dr Mark Roantree
START AND END DATE	27/2/2020 - 6/3/2020

Please ensure that all supplementary information is included in your application (in one electronic copy). If questionnaire or interview questions are submitted in draft form, please indicate this by putting (draft) after YES. A copy of the final documentation must be submitted for final approval when available.

My application has been collated as one electronic file which includes the following documentation:	INCLUDED (mark as YES)	NOT APPLICABLE (mark as N/A)
Bibliography		N/A
Recruitment advertisement (How are you getting volunteers?)		N/A
Plain language statement/Information statement	YES	
Informed consent form	YES	
Personal Data Security Schedule https://www.dcu.ie/sites/default/files/info/3._blank_data_security_schedule.xls		N/A
Evidence of external approvals related to the research		N/A
Questionnaire/Survey	YES	
Interview/Focus Group Questions		N/A
Debriefing material		N/A
Other (e.g. local government approval)		N/A

Please note:

- Any amendments to the original approved proposal must receive prior SCEC approval.
- As a condition of approval investigators are required to document and report immediately to SCEC any adverse events, any issues which might negatively impact on the conduct of the research and/or any complaint from a participant relating to their participation in the study

1. ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Project Type (select one): Undergraduate Project – Final Year

Undergraduate Project – non-final Year

Taught Masters (Practicum)

YES

(projects at other levels, e.g. PhD or research Masters, should be approved by the University's REC if necessary)

1.1 INVESTIGATOR CONTACT DETAILS

SUPERVISOR(S): *Your supervisor and other academic staff who are assisting, it should be clear who is the person who is carrying out the research procedures.*

<i>NAME</i>	<i>SCHOOL/UNIT</i>	<i>EMAIL</i>
Dr Mark Roantree	Computing	mark.roantree.dcu.ie

STUDENT(S):

<i>NAME</i>	<i>SCHOOL/UNIT</i>	<i>EMAIL</i>
Paul Treanor	Computing	paul.treanor5@mail.dcu.ie
Colin Gorman	Computing	colin.gorman23@mail.dcu.ie

DECLARATION BY SUPERVISOR(S)

The information contained herein is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate. I have read the University's current research ethics guidelines, and accept responsibility for the conduct of the procedures set out in the attached application in accordance with the form guidelines, the SCEC guidelines (<https://www.dcu.ie/researchsupport/researchethics.shtml>), the University's policy on Conflict of Interest, Code of Good Research Practice and any other condition laid down by the Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee. I have attempted to identify all risks related to the research that may arise in conducting this research and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants.

If there exists any affiliation or financial interest for researcher(s) in this research or its outcomes or any other circumstances which might represent a perceived, potential or actual conflict of interest this should be declared in accordance with Dublin City University policy on Conflicts of Interest.

I and my co-investigators or supporting staff have the appropriate qualifications, experience and facilities to conduct the research set out in the attached application and to deal with any emergencies and contingencies related to the research that may arise.

Electronic Signature(s):

Supervisor(s): _____

Print here: _____

Name(s)

Date: _____

2. PROJECT OUTLINE

2.1 SIMPLE DESCRIPTION (Max. 300 words)

Please outline, in terms that any non-expert would understand, what your research project is about, including what participants will be required to do. Please explain any technical terms or discipline-specific phrases.

The aim of our research is to get user feedback and user test results for a guitar learning android app. Users of various guitar playing abilities will be asked to follow a simple tutorial while playing a real guitar, then use the app to practice, and then play a real guitar again. They will then be asked if they felt the app improved their guitar playing. Users will fill in a survey with questions about their experience with the app.

2.2 AIMS OF AND JUSTIFICATION FOR THE RESEARCH (Max. 400 words)

State the aims and significance of the project. Where relevant, state the specific hypothesis to be tested. Please provide a brief description of background research, a justification as to why this research project should proceed in that context and an explanation of any expected benefits to the community. NB – all references cited should be listed in an attached bibliography.

The aim of the research is to identify any potential improvements that could be made to the app. We will be testing if the guitar playing abilities of the users improves with use of the app, as well as how users respond to the general design of the app.

This information will then be used to make improvements to the apps design and functionality.

2.3 DESCRIBE THE METHODOLOGY BEING USED TO ACHIEVE YOUR STATED AIMS

Provide an outline of the proposed method and state who is doing which task – include details of data collection techniques, the tasks participants will be asked to do, the estimated time commitment involved, and how data will be analysed. If the project includes any procedure which is beyond already established and accepted techniques please include a description of it. There should be enough detail provided to facilitate ethical review, but applicants are encouraged to keep it as succinct as possible.

The user will be asked to play a real guitar and use our app then answer a short survey. We are using Google Forms for our survey and to collect our data. No login is needed to answer the survey so no personal data is stored, only the data on the user's experience with the app. The survey should take around five to ten minutes to play guitar, use the app and complete the survey, as most of the questions are just checkbox answer questions. There are some text based open answered questions at the end of the survey asking the user for their opinions. These answers will only be viewed by the group members and used to further improve the app.

2.4 PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Provide the number, age range and source of participants. Please provide a justification of your proposed sample size. Please provide a justification for selecting a specific gender, age, or any other group if this is done in your project.

The participants will be a random small sample of piers and students around the campus. This can range in ages of 18-25. These participants are the most accessible for us but also more likely to use an application to improve guitar learning. Although, some adults may take part in the research as some walk through campus. The sample size would be 10-20 participants.

No specific gender, age or group will be selected as anyone can use the app to learn guitar.

2.4(a) PARTICIPANT VULNERABILITY

Are some or all of participants vulnerable in any way? (e.g by virtue of the group they belong to, people who have undergone traumatic or adverse emotional events, people with diminished cognitive ability, power relations between researchers and participants etc.)? If they are, state what this vulnerability (or vulnerabilities) is and justify why this research is being done with such participants.

No participants are vulnerable in any way.

2.4(b) CHILD PARTICIPANTS (anyone under 18 years old)

If your participants include children, you must confirm that you are in compliance with the research specific guidelines as detailed in "Keeping Children Safe - Policies and Procedures supporting Child Protection at DCU" - available at: https://www4.dcu.ie/sites/default/files/policy/157%20-%20child_protection_handbook_rev1%282%29%281%29.pdf

<i>Please indicate your compliance with the following guidelines:</i>	Mark here
We confirm that we have read and agree to act in accordance with the DCU Child Protection policy and procedures	Yes
We confirm that we have put in place safeguards for the children participating in the research	Yes
We confirm that we have supports in place for children who may disclose current or historical abuse (whether or not this is the focus of the research)	Yes

2.5 EXPLAIN HOW PARTICIPANTS ARE TO BE RECRUITED

Please provide specific details as to how you will be recruiting participants. How will people be informed that you are doing this research? How will they be approached and asked if they are willing to participate? If you are mailing or phoning people, please explain how you have obtained their names and contact details. If a recruitment advertisement is to be used, please ensure you attach a copy to this application.

We will take a random sample of piers walking around campus during an average college day. Some of the participants will also include selected piers as we want to ensure our sample includes people with different guitar playing abilities

- 2.6 PLEASE EXPLAIN WHEN, HOW, WHERE, AND TO WHOM RESULTS WILL BE DISSEMINATED, INCLUDING WHETHER PARTICIPANTS WILL BE PROVIDED WITH ANY INFORMATION AS TO THE FINDINGS OR OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECT?

Results will only be available to the researchers, their supervisor, and the examiners of the project. They will be accessed through the student's DCU google drive and gitlab.

- 2.7 ARE OTHER APPROVALS REQUIRED TO GAIN ACCESS TO ANOTHER LOCATION, ORGANISATION ETC.? (e.g. a School or company)

YES or NO

NO

(If YES, please specify from whom and attach a copy of the approval documentation. If this is not yet available, please explain when this will be obtained.)

3. RISK AND RISK MANAGEMENT

3.1 JUSTIFICATION OF STATED LEVEL OF RISK TO RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

You must provide a justification for the stated level of risk, as indicated on the cover page of your application. Note that the level of risk may be influenced by the vulnerability of the research group, the methods employed and the nature of the research itself. For further information on risk levels, please refer to the Levels of Review information on the website: <https://www.dcu.ie/researchsupport/researchethics.shtml>

There is little-to-no level of risk to research participants.

3.2 DOES THE RESEARCH INVOLVE:

	YES or NO
• use of a questionnaire? (attach copy)?	YES
• interviews (attach interview questions)?	NO
• observation of participants without their knowledge?	NO
• participant observation (provide details in section 2)?	YES
• audio- or video-taping interviewees or events?	NO
• access to personal and/or confidential data (including student, patient or client data) without the participant's specific consent?	NO
• administration of any stimuli, tasks, investigations or procedures which may be experienced by participants as physically or mentally painful, stressful or unpleasant during or after the research process?	NO
• performance of any acts which might diminish the self-esteem of participants or cause them to experience embarrassment, regret or depression?	NO
• investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	NO
• procedures that involve deception of participants?	NO
• administration of any substance or agent?	NO
• use of non-treatment of placebo control conditions?	NO
• collection of body tissues or fluid samples?	NO
• collection and/or testing of DNA samples?	NO
• participation in a clinical trial?	NO
• administration of ionising radiation to participants?	NO

3.3 POTENTIAL RISKS TO PARTICIPANTS AND RISK MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

Identify, as far as possible, all potential risks to participants (physical, psychological, social, legal, economic, etc.), associated with the proposed research. Please explain what risk management procedures will be put in place to minimise these risks.

There are no physical, psychological, legal, economic risks.
The participant may feel uncomfortable trying to play guitar in front of the researchers. If this is the case, then the participant does not have to participate.

3.4 ARE THERE LIKELY TO BE ANY BENEFITS (DIRECT OR INDIRECT) TO PARTICIPANTS FROM THIS RESEARCH?

YES or NO

YES

(If YES, provide details.)

The participant will learn a few basic chords

3.5 ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC RISKS TO RESEARCHERS?

Examples include use of dangerous materials, asking certain types of questions, research being undertaken in certain locations, researchers working alone in isolated areas, etc.

YES or NO

NO

(If YES, please describe and explain what risk management procedures will be put in place to minimise these risks.)

3.6 DEALING WITH ADVERSE/UNEXPECTED OUTCOMES

Please describe what measures/protocols you have put in place in the event that there are any unexpected outcomes or adverse effects to participants arising from involvement in the project.

The participant may feel uncomfortable trying to play guitar on campus. If this is the case, the participant will be allowed to participate out of sight of other piers. If the participant is still uncomfortable playing in front of us, the researchers, then the participant does not have to partake.

3.7 HOW WILL THE CONDUCT OF THE PROJECT BE MONITORED?

Please explain how the supervisor will monitor the conduct of the project (especially where several people are involved in recruiting or interviewing, administering procedures, etc.) to ensure that it conforms with the procedures set out in this application

The supervisor has read over our survey and approves of it. He will then review the results of the survey to ensure only data concerning the application was received.

3.8 SUPPORT FOR PARTICIPANTS

Depending on risks to participants you may need to consider having additional support for participants during/after the study. Consider whether your project would require additional support, e.g., external counselling available to participants. Please advise what support will be available.

No additional support is needed because there is no risk involved in the research.

3.9 DO YOU PROPOSE TO OFFER PAYMENTS OR INCENTIVES TO PARTICIPANTS?

YES or NO

NO

(If YES, please provide further details.)

3.10 DO ANY OF THE RESEARCHERS ON THIS PROJECT HAVE A PERSONAL, PHILOSOPHICAL, FINANCIAL OR COMMERCIAL INTEREST IN ITS OUTCOME THAT MIGHT INFLUENCE THE INTEGRITY OF THE RESEARCH, OR BIAS THE CONDUCT OR REPORTING OF THE RESEARCH, OR UNDULY DELAY OR OTHERWISE AFFECT THEIR PUBLICATION?

YES or NO

NO

(If YES, please specify how this conflict of interest will be addressed.)

4. CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY

4.1 WILL THE IDENTITY OF THE PARTICIPANTS BE PROTECTED?

YES or NO

YES

(If NO, please explain why.)

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IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO 4.1, PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

4.2 HOW WILL THE ANONYMITY OF THE PARTICIPANTS BE RESPECTED?

Please bear in mind that where the sample size is very small, it may be impossible to guarantee anonymity/confidentiality of participant identity. Participants involved in such projects need to be advised of this limitation in the Plain Language Statement/Information Sheet. If you intend to fully anonymize the data, please provide details

We will not be recording any information that could be used to identify participants, such as names, student numbers, or email addresses. All data that we do we collect will only be shared between the 2 researchers, their supervisor, and the examiners of the project.

4.3 LEGAL LIMITATIONS TO DATA CONFIDENTIALITY

Participants need to be made aware that confidentiality of information provided cannot always be guaranteed by researchers and can only be protected within the limitations of the law - i.e., it is possible for data to be subject to subpoena, freedom of information claim or mandated reporting by some professions. This information should be included in your Plain Language Statement and Informed Consent Form. Depending on the research proposal and academic discipline, you may need to state additional specific limitations.

State how and where participants will be informed of these limitations

We stated that it is possible for users' data to be subject to a subpoena, freedom of information claim or mandated reporting by some professions in the signature section of our consent form.

5. PERSONAL DATA - COMPLIANCE WITH THE GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION

Personal data is data relating to a living individual (i.e. the 'Data Subject') who is, or can be, identified either from the data itself or from the data in conjunction with other information that is in, or is likely to come into, the possession of the 'Data Controller' (i.e. DCU and its constituent units e.g. research teams etc.). Further information on personal data is available from the DCU Data Protection Unit at <https://www.dcu.ie/ocoo/dp/guides.shtml>

5.1 IS PERSONAL DATA BEING PROCESSED AS PART OF THIS PROJECT?

YES or NO

NO

<i>If YES, Please indicate your compliance with the following guidelines:</i>	Mark here
We confirm that we have read and agree to act in accordance with DCU Data Protection Unit guidance and procedures regarding personal data	
We confirm that we have put in place a Personal Data Security Schedule (PDSS) for the project and have attached it to this application	

Please see the GDPR and the Research Ethics Process section of the [SCEC main webpage](#) for guidance

IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO 5.1, PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

5.2 WHAT KIND OF PERSONAL DATA IS BEING PROCESSED?

Note special categories of personal data include health data, genetic data and/or data relating to ethnicity/race of participants, their sex lives and/or sexual orientation

5.3 WILL ANONYMISATION/PSEUDONYMISATION OF THE PERSONAL DATA BE UNDERTAKEN?

YES or NO

...

(If NO, please explain why.)

6. DATA/SAMPLE STORAGE, SECURITY AND DISPOSAL

For the purpose of this section, "Data" includes that in a raw or processed state (e.g. interview audiotape, transcript or analysis). "Samples" include body fluids or tissue samples.

6.1 HOW AND WHERE WILL THE DATA/SAMPLES BE STORED?

Note that the SCEC recommends that all data be stored on campus – please justify any off-site storage.

Data will be stored on the researcher's DCU Google drive and Gitlab accounts.

6.2 WHO WILL HAVE ACCESS TO DATA/SAMPLES?

If people other than the main researchers have access, please name who they are and explain for what purpose.

The project supervisor (Dr Mark Roantree) has access to the data as it is stored on the student's gitlab accounts. The examiners of the project will also have access to the gitlab accounts.

6.3 HOW LONG IS THE DATA TO BE HELD/RETAINED FOR?

Note that with very few exceptions personal data may not be retained indefinitely. It is up to the unit or research team to establish an upper retention limit for each category of personal data under its control.

Until the beginning of the next academic year (September 2020).

6.4 IF DATA/SAMPLES ARE TO BE DISPOSED OF, PLEASE EXPLAIN HOW, WHEN AND BY WHOM THIS WILL BE DONE?

Note that simply deleting files is not sufficiently secure. The additional steps to be taken to maintain data security should be given. Personal data must be disposed of in a safe and secure manner at the end of its retention period. If the data is stored in a: a) paper based format then shredding or disposal via a secure bin is recommended; or b) if it is stored in an electronic based format then deletion of the record or full anonymization of the data is recommended. If data/samples are NOT being disposed of, please justify this decision.

The researchers will remove the data from DCU's servers. There will be no physical copies of the data.

7. PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT (Attach to this document. Approx. 400 words)

A Plain Language Statement (PLS) should be used in all cases. This is written information in plain language that you will be providing to participants, outlining the nature of their involvement in the project and inviting their participation. The PLS should specifically describe what will be expected of participants, the risks and inconveniences for them, and other information relevant to their involvement. Please note that the language used must reflect the participant age group and corresponding comprehension level – if your participants have different comprehension levels (e.g. both adults and children) then separate forms should be prepared for each group. The PLS can be embedded in an email to which an online survey is attached, or handed/sent to individuals in advance of their consent being sought. See link to sample templates on the website: <https://www.dcu.ie/researchsupport/ethicsapproval.shtml>

PLEASE CONFIRM WHETHER THE FOLLOWING ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED IN YOUR PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT/ INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS:

	YES or NO
Introductory Statement (Supervisor and student names, school, title of the research)	YES
What is this research about?	YES
Why is this research being conducted?	YES
What will happen if the person decides to participate in the research study?	YES
How will their privacy be protected?	YES
How will the data be used and subsequently disposed of?	YES
What are the legal limitations to data confidentiality?	YES
What are the benefits of taking part in the research study (if any)?	YES
What are the risks of taking part in the research study?	YES
Confirmation that participants can change their mind at any stage and withdraw from the study	YES
How will participants find out what happens with the project?	YES
Contact details for further information (including SCEC contact details)	YES
Details relating to GDPR Compliance if Personal Data is being sought	N/A

If any of these issues are marked NO, please justify their exclusion:

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8. INFORMED CONSENT FORM *(Attach to this document. Approx. 300 words)*

In most cases where interviews or focus groups are taking place, an Informed Consent Form is required. This is an important document requiring participants to indicate their consent to participate in the study, and give their signature. If your participants are minors (under 18), it is best practice to provide them with an assent form, while their parents/guardians will be given the Informed Consent Form. In cases where an anonymous questionnaire is being used, it is enough to include a tick box in the questionnaire (underneath the information section for participant), where participants can indicate their consent.

See link to sample templates on the website: <https://www.dcu.ie/researchsupport/ethicsapproval.shtml>

NB – IF AN INFORMED CONSENT FORM IS NOT BEING USED, THE REASON FOR THIS MUST BE JUSTIFIED HERE.

attached - appendix B

Appendix A - Plain Language Statement

Research Study Title: String Theory User Testing Survey

Investigator Supervisor: Dr Mark Roantree, School of Computing, Dublin City University.

Contact: mark.roantree.dcu.ie, Office L2.34, t: 353 1 700 5636

Introduction

You are being invited to take part in a survey to get feedback on an Android app. The app is called StringTheory and it aims to help users learn simple guitar chords. We are looking for user feedback so we can identify any potential issues with the app, and make informed changes to improve the user experience of the app.

Before deciding to take part in the survey we ask you to understand what you are expected to do as part of the research, what the information will be used for, and how the information will be handled.

Participation

You can withdraw from our user testing survey at any time during the research. First, you will be given a guitar and guided through playing several guitar chords. Then you will follow a guided

practice session with the app that will take approximately 5 minutes. During this part of the research, you will practice playing a series of guitar chords using the app. After this practice session with the app, you will be asked to play the real guitar again. You will then fill in the survey where you will be asked about your experience with the app, including whether or not you felt as if it improved your guitar playing ability.

Risks

There are no risks involved with this user testing. No personal data will be asked for or collected. All the data we will confidential and only be used for the purposes of improving our app.

Data Retention

Data will be stored on the researcher's private DCU Google Drive and GitLab accounts. The data will not be used in any further research and will be deleted at the beginning of the new academic year in September 2020.

Legal Limits of Data Confidentiality

Confidentiality of user information in the research can only be protected within the limitations of the law.

Further Information

There are no benefits for the participants of the study, other than learning a few guitar chords. The users will not be contacted again after the study nor will they be able to see how their data has affected the app unless the contact the researchers themselves.

If participants have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:

- The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation
- Support, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000, e-mail rec@dcu.ie

Appendix B - Informed Consent Form

Research Study Title

You are being asked to participate in a survey to gather user information on an Android app called “StringTheory”. The research is being conducted by 2 3rd year DCU School of Computing undergraduates Paul Treanor and Colin Gorman.

Purpose of Research

The aim of the survey is to gather information on how we can improve the app. In particular we want to see if users are improving their guitar playing skills using the app. We also want to get feedback from the users about the usability and design of the app.

Confirmation of particular requirements as highlighted in the Plain Language Statement

Participant - please read the following:

1. Have you read the Plain Language Statement?
2. Did you understand the information in the Plain Language Statement?
3. Have you had an opportunity to ask any questions and discuss the research?
4. Did you receive satisfactory answers?
5. Do you agree to allow the researchers to improve StringTheory using your data?

Participant’s involvement in the research is totally voluntary and you can withdraw from the research at any point. There will be no penalty for withdrawing before all the stages of the research have been completed.

Data Confidentiality

While no data that might reveal the participant’s identity will be collected, any user data that will be stored will be analysed only by the researchers in order to improve the app. The project supervisor and examiners will also have access to the data.

Signature

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researchers, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project.

Participant's signature: _____

Name in Block Capitals: _____

Date: _____