**Faculty of Engineering**

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**Participant Information Sheet**

**University of Bristol – Interactive Devices Unit Research**

Thank you for your interest in this study. We would like to invite you to take part in this research project. Before you decide whether or not to participate, we have provided further information on this study to inform you about it.

We are a group of MEng students in Computer Science at the University of Bristol and we are completing the course Interactive Devices COMSM0058. As part of this unit, we have been tasked to research, design or implement an interactive technology prototype to be used in the home.

**What is the purpose of the study?**

As part of this interaction design coursework, we are engaging participants to try to understand the design space better, to find out about design requirements, and to evaluate our designs. This data collection will take place using a range of online methods, such as focus groups, design workshops, questionnaires, interviews, and observations of the use of our designs. By engaging potential users in the initial design activities of these interactive prototypes, we hope to ensure that our designs are both useful and usable. By engaging participants in the evaluation of our prototypes or existing technologies, we hope to discover how a digital pet/companion might be designed to help encourage user focus.

**Why have I been invited to participate?**

If you are reading this document, that means that you have shown an interest in taking part in this study and that you meet the eligibility criteria for taking part, which are:

* That you must be over the age of 18 years old
* That you have internet access to participate in online data collection.

You will not be the only person taking part in this study. There will be up to 19 other participants.

**Do I have to take part?**

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide you would like to go ahead with the study and take part, we will ask you to provide verbal consent and I will give you a copy of this information sheet to keep. Before we begin any data collection, we will describe the study again and check that you are happy to participate still. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. By taking part in this University of Bristol research, there will be no identifiable health benefits to you.

**What will happen to me if I take part and what will I have to do?**

If you agree to take part you will be asked to fill in a survey consisting primarily of multiple choice questions. At the end of the survey you will be asked to provide an email so that we may contact you for an interview. If you provide an email you may be contacted to arrange an in-person or online interview depending on availability. Should you agree to the interview, you will be asked more in-depth questions about your typical work routine and focus methods. If you participate in an in-person interview, you will also be asked to try our digital pet and provide feedback on the experience.

**What are the possible disadvantages and risks involved in taking part in the project?**

There are no known risks involved with this data collection and you will not be asked in-depth questions about your medical history. If you feel uncomfortable answering a question at any time, you can tell the researcher to move on, or stop the interview. We will ask to arrange all data collection events with you at a time that is convenient for you, where you will be comfortable and free to answer the questions without time pressure. If you are a affiliated with the University of Bristol, there will be no disadvantages to your status with the University should you wish to withdraw from this study before its completion.

**What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

It is hoped that the outcomes of this study will provide benefits educational benefits in human-computer interaction research, as well as by contributing knowledge of how to better design technologies to be used in the home. It is hoped this study will advance knowledge in the field of computer science and might potentially lead to a publication, beyond the coursework involved in this course.

**Will my participation in this project be kept confidential?**

No personally identifying information will be recorded on the questionnaires, interviews, or observations. Any personal information recorded as part of the consent process will be kept strictly confidential. Any final write-ups of the data gathered will not include any information that can be linked directly to you.

All data will be stored so that your name is not associated with it (using an arbitrary participant number) and no photographs, audio recordings, or video recordings will be shared other than for data analysis by the students and their lecturers. Any photos will be explicitly agreed to be part of publications or presentations by the participant after the data collection is complete. All data will be handled confidentially and anonymously. The data collected from this study will be used in a coursework submission to the University of Bristol. It potentially may also be used in articles for publication in journals and conference proceedings. Results from the research will be presented in accordance with rules for anonymity such that the results cannot be traced to individual participants.

If you have any questions about the management of your data please do not hesitate to ask.

**Right to Withdraw: You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without losing any advertised benefits.** **Participants do not need to provide any reason for withdrawing.** Withdrawal from the study will not affect your personal or academic status or your access to services at the university. If you withdraw, the data you have provided will be deleted from the study and destroyed. In addition, you are free to not answer specific items or questions within an interview. If you withdraw from the study after 14th April 2025, then your data may have been included in an aggregate analysis, anonymised and written up as a report or paper. It will only be possible to withdraw raw data after this point, although information that could be used to personally identify you will have been removed.

Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. If you have further questions concerning matters related to this research, please contact masterminds-id2025@bristol.ac.uk.

**Questions:** If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to ask at any point; you are also free to contact the researchers provided above if you have questions at a later time. This study has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Bristol Faculty Of Engineering Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Faculty Ethics Officer (http://www.bris.ac.uk/red/support/governance/ethics/ethics.html). Please note that you are free to withdraw from participation at any time.

**What will happen to the results of the research project?**

The outcomes of this study will be written up to help support coursework as part of the Interaction Design Unit and to contribute to knowledge in the field of computer science. The finalised, anonymised coursework will be shared with you, when it is complete. You will then be able to review the paper and let us know if you want to change anything about how you are represented in this work, if it is revised and sent for publication.

**Who is organising and funding the research?**

The University of Bristol School of Computer Science, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, and Engineering Maths is organising and funding this teaching and this research.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

The study has been reviewed by the unit director, Prof. Anne Roudaut. It has been approved by the University of Bristol, Faculty of Engineering Research Ethics committee.

**Further information and contact details**

Thank you for your interest and cooperation and if you would like more information about the research project or have any questions about this work, please feel free to contact the unit organiser at Anne.Roudaut@bristol.ac.uk

If you have any concerns related to the study or about your participation in this study, please contact the Faculty of Engineering Research Ethics Committee, via the Research Governance Team, research-governance@bristol.ac.uk

Yours faithfully,

Yiwen Liang

Zhiming Liu

Lihan Shen

Navdeep Lachlan Bhamrah Harley