#### IRB SYNOPSIS OF PROPOSAL

Social Capital and Civic Engagement of Marginalized Youth on MySpace

1)

The subject population is marginalized youth between the ages of 14-21 who use MySpace. Recruitment will occur through programs within Texas State University that serve these marginalized youth. This includes the TRIO programs administered through the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs, comprised of Upward Bound, Rural and Urban Talent Search, and Student Support Services. In addition, Texas State students who are marginalized will be recruited via classes and student organizations. If not meeting the target of 100 participants from within the Texas State community, then researchers will recruit from central Texas agencies that provide services for marginalized youth. In addition, youth aged 18-22 will be recruited online through a MySpace homepage created for the study. After the results of the survey have been collected, 15 youth will be identified for follow-up qualitative interviews.

Inclusion criteria are marginalized youth who are users of MySpace. Researchers will identify these marginalized youth who receive specialized programs for various reasons, such as disadvantages associated with class, gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, and other demographic variables that may limit access to power and resources for non-dominant groups in U.S. society.

2)

Consent will be sought by the Co-PI’s, Dr. Anne Deepak and Dr. Amy Russell. Recruitment will occur through contacting programs within Texas State University and central Texas that serve marginalized youth who use MySpace. Drs. Deepak and Russell will first approach program administrators about the study, providing an information packet containing study materials, and then schedule a convenient and unobtrusive time to explain the study, recruit participants, and/or contact parents for consent for their child/youth to potentially participate in the study. Youth and/or parents will be given a copy of the consent for their records and the researchers will read and explain the consent verbally. Youth who express an interest will be given a consent form if 18 or above. For youth below the age of 18, parent/guardians will be contacted, consent will be explained, and the youth will be given an assent form. After consent is obtained, youth will have the option of completing the survey online or offline. A second method of recruitment of youth ages 18 and above will be online. Co-PI’s will design a MySpace page with a link to the survey. Recruitment will occur through posting an invitation to various interest groups within MySpace. All research participants will be informed of the purpose of the study. Offline consent will be documented with signed consent/assent forms while online consent will be documented by clicking yes after reading through the same consent form online.

3)

The proposed research studies social capital and civic engagement of marginalized youth on MySpace. The purpose of this pilot study is to explore relationships among social capital, civic engagement, and MySpace usage for marginalized youth, exploring the ways in which marginalized youth may be creating new forms of social capital. Specifically, the researchers will be seeking answers to the following questions; 1) For marginalized youth, does MySpace usage facilitate civic engagement?; 2) How do civically engaged youth use MySpace?; and, 3) Are marginalized youth creating new dimensions of social capital via MySpace?

This study is an exploratory one-group, cross-sectional study design, using non-probability, purposive sampling techniques. Researchers will collect 100 surveys and then analyze these surveys using descriptive and inferential statistics, mainly utilizing logistic regression for predictors and indicators of civic engagement and social capital. If meeting criteria of high civic engagement and social capital, researchers will recruit from the original sample 15 participants and conduct qualitative interviews to add meaning and depth to the quantitative results. The investigators will create and monitor MySpace profiles, specifically designed for this study in order to connect with participants and provide continuous support and study information.

4)

There are no foreseen risks to participating in this study. The study is confidential and will have no identifying information attached to data collection materials. Participants do not need to answer any questions if they feel uncomfortable. The major concern would be the time it will take to complete the survey. However, participants may complete the survey whenever it is convenient for them. There are no more than minimal risks associated with participating in this research study, no different than those issues anticipated day to day.

5)

All efforts will be made to ensure and maintain the confidentiality of participants. The primary confidentiality safeguard is that each participant’s name will be paired with a code number by the researchers. This code number will appear on all written materials. The list pairing the participant’s name to the assigned code number will be kept separate from all research materials and will be available only to Drs. Deepak and Russell. Confidentiality will be maintained according to legal requirements. All data will be kept in a locked file cabinet to which only the researchers have access. The data collected will be kept for a duration that is approved by the Institutional Review Board. Any data collected and transferred to computer files will be password protected. Analysis of data will be completed in another password protected file that is solely accessed by Dr. Russell and Dr. Deepak. Neither the computer program nor our final reports will provide any information that will allow the linking of names to specific comments.

6)

A benefit to participating in this study is that youth will have an opportunity to contribute to knowledge about the impact of MySpace on social capital and civic engagement. The results of this study will be beneficial to society as they will be used to further understand the strengths of marginalized youth in order to better serve this population through interventions and program development that builds on these strengths.

7)

There will be no compensation provided to the participants.

8)

Benefits outweigh risks for participants and society in general in relation to this study.

Risks are minimal to participants in that they are no different than in situations where consent is not given or what youth encounter daily, compared to the benefits to society that may reveal strengths-based and empowering strategies about this sample of youth and their ability to build social capital, be civically engaged, and create new dimension of social capital through technology.

9)

Recruitment will occur through programs within Texas State University that serve these marginalized youth. This includes the TRIO programs administered through the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs, comprised of Upward Bound, Rural and Urban Talent Search, and Student Support Services. In addition, Texas State students who are marginalized will be recruited via classes and student organizations. A letter of approval from the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs is attached.

10-12) N/A

13)

Only Drs. Deepak and Russell will have access to the raw data. After the data has been analyzed, Dr. Deepak and Dr. Russell will have access to the results of this study and intend to publish them in professional and/or scientific journals. Results may also be used for educational purposes and/or professional presentations. The audiences that may be interested in the findings are: social work, communications, psychology, sociology, technology, etc. A requirement of research is sharing the information to expand the knowledge base.

**In addition to this synopsis, you are required to submit all relevant documentation for review. This may include, but is not necessarily limited to: 1) recruiting documents (e.g., flyers, letter, e-mails, brochures, etc.), 2) a consent form, 3) an assent form, 4) letters of approval from relevant organization(s), 5) surveys/instruments/questionnaires, esp. those created by the researcher, 6) a list of questions that the researcher may ask (e.g., focus groups questions, questions for qualitative studies, etc.), and 7) all documents in translated versions.**