Communication in Group Decision-Making Study Consent Form

You are being asked to take part in a research study of how agent-based models aid in communication for groups making decisions.

This study is being conducted **by Shelrie Houlton**, a doctoral student of **Dr. Sven Fuhrmann** in the Department of Geography at Texas State University-San Marcos. This research is a part of the dissertation to be written to fulfill the doctoral program.

**What the study is about:** The purpose of this study is to learn how a virtual world model of a school shooting scenario will aid in group decision-making between different exit choices. The results will be compared to the use of maps and images for groups making the same decsions.

**You have been chosen**: You have been asked to participate because you signed up for the research in a voluntary sign-up sheet asking graduate students to participate in the research.

**What we will ask you to do:** If you agree to be in this study, you will participate in two sessions. Both sessions will take 1 hour and will require you to work in a group of 5 subjects to discuss exit solutions for school shooting scenarios. One of the sessions will provide maps and images while the other session will provide an agent-based model within a computer environment. The discussion among the groups will be videotaped and there will be a questionnaire to fill out at the end of each session.

**Risks and benefits:**

The physical risk equates to sitting at a desk and discussing information with other participants, sometimes with the use of a computer. The information in the school shooting scenario is not of a graphic nature, but if at any point you are uncomfortable, you can leave the session.

If you feel the experience of the study is uncomfortable and need to talk to someone concerning the experience, you can contact counselors at the following centers:

1. Texas State University Health Center (free to registered Texas State students): <http://www.counseling.txstate.edu/resources/shoverview/mental.html>
2. Theravive Counseling (San Marcos): <http://www.theravive.com/cities/tx/counseling-san-marcos.aspx>
3. Apa Center (Austin): <http://www.apacenter.com/>

The benefits are in learning to better work with other members of a group in discussing options for group decision-making.

**Compensation:** There is no compensation for these sessions.

**Your answers will be confidential.** The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we make public we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researchers will have access to the records. The video tapes of the sessions will be erased after the sessions have been transcribed and analyzed, which is estimated to take 6 months.

**Taking part is voluntary:** Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide not to take part or to skip some of the questions, it will not affect your current or future relationship with Texas State University. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

**If you have questions please contact:** The researcher conducting this study is **Shelrie Houlton**. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Shelrie Houlton at [sh28518@txstate.edu](mailto:sh28518@txstate.edu) or **Dr. Sven Fuhrmann** at [fuhrmann@txstate.edu](mailto:fuhrmann@txstate.edu). If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the IRB chair, **Dr. Jon Lasser** (512-245-3413 – [lasser@txstate.edu](mailto:lasser@txstate.edu)), or **Ms. Becky Northcut**, Compliance Specialist (512-245-2102).

**Copy of findings:** If you require a summary of findings, contact Shelrie Houlton at [sh28518@txstate.edu](mailto:sh28518@txstate.edu) and she will provide a copy to you when they are available.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

**Statement of Consent:** I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Your Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Your Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

In addition to agreeing to participate, I also consent to having the discussion sessions taped and to answering written questions.

Your Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person obtaining consent \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Printed name of person obtaining consent \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study and was approved by the IRB on [date], IRB approval number [number].*