

## Information Letter

**Title of the study:** University Website UX

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To help you make an informed decision regarding your participation, this letter will explain what the study is about, the possible risks and benefits, and your rights as a research participant. If you do not understand something in the letter, please ask one of the investigators prior to consenting to the study. You will be provided with a copy of the information and consent form if you choose to participate in the study.

### What is the study about?

You are invited to participate in a research study about university website user experience. The purpose of the study is to investigate the factors why students apply for universities, such as locations, weather, ranking, professors, program and funding. We also want to find out whether content organization in official university websites is good for students, in other words, whether students can find information, such as application deadlines, in a short time.

This study is being undertaken as part of our (Chengxi Luo and Enamul Haque) course project.

### I. Your responsibilities as a participant

#### What does participation involve?

The whole study involves two phases: 1) You will be asked to complete a pre-questionnaire about your demographic information, including the question about the important factors why you apply for universities. After you finish this questionnaire, we will give you the link to the second phase (approx. 5min). 2) We will give you some university websites and a few tasks to complete on them. We will measure their design based on the time it takes and clicks. (approx. 30min) You will be asked to complete a post-questionnaire about your feelings and experience. (approx. 5min) The post-questionnaires are from WAMMI which is based on psychometric analysis and NASA-TLX work load for assessing how difficult/demanding was the task.

Due to Covid-19, all the experiment and questionnaires will be online. Only the researchers involved in the study will have direct access to the data. With your permission, anonymous quotations may be used in publications and/or presentations. No names or personal information will be shared.

**Who may participate in the study?**

In order to participate in the study you must be a prospective graduate student and able to speak and understand English.

**II. Your rights as a participant****Is participation in the study voluntary?**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide to leave the study at any time by communicating this to the focus group facilitator. Any information you provided up to that point will not be used. You may decline to answer any question(s) you prefer not to answer. You can request your data be removed from the study up until August 2020 as it is not possible to withdraw your data once my thesis has been submitted.

**What are the risks associated with the study?**

When information is transmitted over the internet privacy cannot be guaranteed. There is always a risk your responses may be intercepted by a third party (e.g., government agencies, hackers). University of Waterloo researchers will not collect or use internet protocol (IP) addresses or other information which could link your participation to your computer or electronic device without first informing you.

**Will my identity be known to others?**

The research team will know what you said.

**Will my information be kept confidential?**

The information participants share will be kept confidential. The electronic data will be retained for a minimum of 2 years, after which they will be destroyed. Data will be stored in an encrypted folder on my password-protected laptop. Only the research team will have access to study data. No identifying information will be used in our reports or any presentations or publications based on this research.

**III. Questions, comments, or concerns****Has the study received ethics clearance?**

This study will be reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. If you have questions for the Committee contact the Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or [oreceo@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:oreceo@uwaterloo.ca).

**Who should I contact if I have questions regarding my participation in the study?**

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact Enamul Haque by email at [enamul.haque@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:enamul.haque@uwaterloo.ca).

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### Consent Form

By providing your consent, you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator(s) or involved institution(s) from their legal and professional responsibilities.

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I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study conducted by Chengxi Luo and Enamul Haque, under the supervision of Dr. Edward Lank, Cheriton School of Computer Science, University of Waterloo. I have had the opportunity to ask questions related to the study and have received satisfactory answers to my questions and any additional details.

I was informed that participation in the study is voluntary and that I can withdraw this consent by informing the researcher.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE# 99999). If you have questions for the Committee contact the Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or [oreceo@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:oreceo@uwaterloo.ca).

For all other questions contact Enamul Haque by email at [enamul.haque@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:enamul.haque@uwaterloo.ca).

- ☐ I am aware the focus group will be audio recorded to ensure accurate transcription and analysis.
- ☐
- ☐ I give permission for the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes from this research.

I agree of my own free will to participate in the study.

Participant's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's/Witness' signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_