Participant Information Sheet: Evaluating University Web Search

Thanks for your interest in this research project. The project is being run by Vincent Li, a postgraduate student at the Australian National University Research School of Computer Science.

Outline: In this project, we are investigating different techniques for building a university's web search engine. To understand which techniques work well, and which do not, we are asking people to tell us what they think of search results; by accumulating these, we can measure how effective each technique is. This will let us make recommendations for future search engines, at universities and elsewhere.

Data we collect will be used in a thesis, and may be used in scientific publications. We will never publish any data which will identify our participants: we will only publish aggregate data (for example, "10% of people chose..." or "in two-thirds of cases, ...").

If you would like more information about this project, please contact Vincent at u4959060@anu.edu.au.

Your involvement: Participation is completely voluntary. If you consent to be involved, you can participate by using our search software through your web browser. Our software will give you sets of results from a web search at the ANU: for example, the search might be for an examination timetable. The software will ask you to look the results and click a button to tell us how useful you think they are. If you like, you can repeat the process for another search. If you close the window, you can come back and participate later if you like.

You can participate from your own computer and in your own time, for as long or as short a time as you like. Each search should only take a minute.

There are no particular risks or discomforts associated with this research. Your involvement is **purely voluntary** and you can participate for as long or as short a time as you like. You can decline to take part, refuse to answer a question, or you can withdraw at any time without providing an explanation. You can do this just by closing the browser window. If you do withdraw, there will be no adverse consequences. Since your participation is anonymous, however, we won't be able to find your past responses or delete them.

Confidentiality: All data will be kept on password-protected computers and only the researchers will have access. Since this is an anonymous, online study, we will not be able to match you to your responses. As far as the law allows, we will keep all responses confidential.

Data will be stored for at least five years, after which time we will delete it.

Queries and concerns: If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Vincent (details above) or the project supervisors:
Paul Thomas (paul.thomas@anu.edu.au, phone +61 (0) 2 6216 7065, fax +61 (0) 2 6216 7111) or
David Hawking (david.hawking@funnelback.com, phone +61 (0) 2 6176 3160, fax +61 (0) 2 6230 7313).

The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns or complaints about how this research has been conducted, please contact:

Ethics Manager
The ANU Human Research Ethics Committee
The Australian National University
Telephone: +61 (0) 2 6125 3427
Email: Human.Ethics.Officer@anu.edu.au

Thanks again for your interest.