



Analyzing and Modernizing Victoria City Council's Communications

You are invited to participate in a study entitled Analyzing and Modernizing Victoria City Council's Communications that is being conducted by Roshni Jain, Kimberlee Graham-Knight, Myan Panikkar, Tian Geng and Nigel Dufty.

Roshni, Kimberlee, Myan, Tian and Nigel are undergraduate and graduate students in the department of Computer Science at the University of Victoria. You may contact them if you have further questions by emailing roshni.jain46@gmail.com, kimberleegk@gmail.com, myanpanikkar@gmail.com, tian2.geng@gmail.com, or nigeldufty@gmail.com.

This project is being explored as a part of a course at the University of Victoria called *Computer-Supported Collaborative Work*. This course is taught by Margaret Storey through the department of Computer Science, and this project is a requirement for successful completion of this course. You may contact Margaret at (250)-472-5713 or mastorey@gmail.com should you have concerns regarding the purpose of this project.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research project is to analyze the current uses of technology in Victoria City Council for collaboration purposes, and to compare these to uses of technology in Vancouver. By analyzing how technology is used in the city of Victoria to encourage and facilitate collaboration, we hope to answer the following research questions:

1. What technologies are being used to help city councilors in their meetings for document sharing and communications?
2. What issues are they currently facing with their present technology?
3. How can we improve communication between city councilors?

Our goal with answering these questions is to encourage healthier dialogue within the city itself, and to allow for more transparency on city operations for its citizens. We hope to gain insight on how technology is utilized on a daily basis for communication and how it used to facilitate meetings. In particular, we want to focus on two areas: how council meetings are prepared and conducted via technology, and how documents are generated, shared and collaborated on within your organization.

One of the key aspects of our research is to compare the data gathered in Victoria with that gathered from another city, namely Vancouver. We chose Vancouver because of its proximity to Victoria and because we have personal connections with some of the councilors.

Importance of this Research

Conducting research on collaboration between elected officials is important, as they serve as the backbone for our city. Any research that has previously been conducted on studying collaboration between city officials is either not current or has been conducted on other cities. By conducting our research, we hope to alleviate this gap and provide a more modern perspective on current practices. This type of research affords a greater understanding on city operations, and can provide transparency on how councilors communicate with each other and with the public.

Participants Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are currently a city councilor or mayor in Vancouver.

What is involved?

If you consent to participate in this research, your participation will include an interview with one of our researchers. This interview should last no longer than 30 minutes. We will pose a series of questions about how you currently use technology in your everyday work, how meetings are facilitated and managed through technology, and your comfort level and feelings on the current solutions being used. Should you feel uncomfortable with the questions being asked, you can choose to not answer the immediate question or end the interview.

We will be taking an audio recording of the interview alongside any notes taken during the process. This recording will only be shared amongst our research team, and will be deleted once this project is complete.

Risks

There are some potential risks to you by participating in this research. Due to the size of your city council, any other members who may read our research may be able to connect any data gathered from this interview back to you. We will not include your name or position in our research paper, and will anonymize interview results as best as we can.

Benefits

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include learning about new technologies that may benefit the council's operations, including their direct benefit to you.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without need for explanation or consequence. If you withdraw from the study, any audio recordings taken during the interview will be deleted and any other data connected to you will not be used in our research.

Confidentiality

As previously mentioned, we will be recording audio from the conducted interviews. These audio recordings will only be shared amongst members of the research team. Any connections between you and your answers will be made anonymous.

Dissemination of Results

The results of this study will be shared with others via in-class presentations and a finalized written report due at the end of the semester.

Disposal of Data

Data from this study will be disposed of immediately after completion of the study by deletion of any audio recordings related to the interviews conducted.

Contact Information

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include the class professor, Margaret Storey, at mastorey@gmail.com or (250)-472-5713, or any of the researchers at their respective email addresses: Roshni Jain at roshni.jain46@gmail.com, Kimberlee Graham-Knight at kimberleegk@gmail.com, Nigel Dufty at Nigeldufty@gmail.com, Tian Geng at tian2.geng@gmail.com, and Myan Panikkar at myanpanikkar@gmail.com.

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you consent to participate in this research project.

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.