

## ADULT RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM

### Brief Description

The purpose of this research is to investigate software design related to social media. Individuals who volunteer to participate in this study will engage with an interactive social media experience and complete two surveys. It will take about one hour of your time. The risks to participants in this study may include exposure to hot-button topics of conversation comparable in nature to using popular social media platforms such as X, Instagram, Bluesky, Reddit, and others. If you agree to participate, and if you are taking a class taught by a participating professor in the Fall of 2025, you will receive extra-credit points in that class as specified by your professor. **Please read the remainder of this form before deciding if you want to volunteer to be in this research study.**

My name is [Bethanie Hackett / Garrett McKenzie / Laura Rider], I am an undergraduate student at the University of Mary Washington, and I am seeking your consent to participate in this research study. Involvement in the study is voluntary, so you may choose to participate or not. The information below explains the study in detail. Before volunteering, please ask any questions that you may have about the research; I will be happy to explain anything in greater detail.

### Details of Participant Involvement

I am interested in learning more about software design related to social media. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete an interactive activity and two surveys. The interactive activity will involve using a site we built for this study where you and others will contribute to discussions on a custom social-media platform. You will be able to choose which prompt to discuss before starting. The surveys will involve answering questions on your social media habits, your experience using our site, and other questions relevant to our research. To preserve the integrity of our research, we will withhold some information regarding the purpose of our study, which we will debrief you on afterward.

### Privacy and Confidentiality

All information about participants will be kept confidential. This means that I will assign a number or pseudonym to your data, and only I will have the key to indicate which data belongs to which participant. I will never reveal any information about you to anyone that would directly or indirectly enable you to be identified. Within 2 years of completing the research, I will destroy all participant data.

### Risks and Benefits of Participation

The risks to you for participating in this study may include potential exposure to heated discussion or uncomfortable topics comparable in nature to those found on popular social media platforms such as X, Instagram, Bluesky, Reddit, and others. These risks will be minimized by providing a selection of topics to discuss. You will be able to choose your preference. Should you determine that your participation is detrimental to your well-being, you may opt out at any time. If you should experience any difficulties during the study, please tell me immediately so that I may take appropriate action. The benefit of this research is that it may contribute to better general understanding of software design related to social media. There are no direct benefits from the outcome of our research to you as a participant, beyond contributing to scientific exploration.

### Participant Rights

You have the right to **ask any questions you have** before, during or after participation, and I encourage you to do so. If you do not want to be in this study, there will be no penalties or loss of benefits that you are entitled to. If you volunteer to be in this study and later change your mind, you have the right to

withdraw. You may withdraw by filling out this form. We will remove any information you have already submitted from our system without viewing it. As a voluntary participant in this research, you have the right to refuse to perform any activities and answer any questions that I ask of you. This research has been approved by the University of Mary Washington Institutional Review Board, a committee responsible for ensuring that the safety and rights of research participants are protected. For information about your rights as a research participant, contact the IRB chairs, Dr. Paul Fallon (pfallon@umw.edu) and Dr. Hilary Stebbins (hstebbin@umw.edu).

### **Contact Information**

For more information about this research before, during or after your participation, please contact me or a member of my team:

- Bethanie Hackett (bhackett@mail.umw.edu)
- Garrett McKenzie (gmckenzi@mail.umw.edu)
- Laura Rider (lrider@mail.umw.edu)

Or my university supervisor, Dr. Stephen Davies (sdavies@umw.edu). To report any unanticipated problems relating to the research that you experience during or following your participation, contact my university supervisor, Dr. Stephen Davies (above).

**Before signing this form, please ask me any questions you have about participation in this study.**

### **To be Completed by Participant**

I have read all of the information on this form, and all of my questions and concerns about the research described above have been addressed. I choose, voluntarily, to participate in this research project. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age.

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Print name of participant

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Signature of participant

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Date

### **To be completed by Researcher**

I confirm that the participant named above has been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered to the best of my knowledge and ability. A copy of this Consent Form has been provided to the participant, and I will keep the original for a minimum of three years.

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Print name of investigator

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Signature of investigator

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Date