

DEBRIEFING FORM

Thank you for taking part in this research on Improving Political Discussion on Social Media with Automated Bot Intervention!

Please read the material on this form carefully to learn important information about your experience in this study and ask me any questions that you have. After this debriefing, you may choose to have information I collected about you removed from this research study.

For this study, it was important that I withhold some information from you about some aspects of the study. Now that your participation is completed, I will describe what information was withheld and why. I will also answer any of your questions and give you the opportunity to decide whether you would like to have your data included in this study or removed from it.

What You Should Know About This Study

Before you started participating in this research, you were told that the purpose of the study was to investigate software design related to social media. However, the actual purpose of the study was to test the performance of automated social media bots (social media accounts that can perform autonomous actions such as posting and replying to conversations) in a simulated social media environment. We are testing their ability to mimic human language and encourage productive dialogue on political topics. I did not tell you the true purpose of the study because it was important that your responses were spontaneous and not influenced by having this information.

Your Right to Withdraw Data

Now that you know the true purpose of this research study, you may decide whether you want to have your data removed from the study or not. If you choose to have your data removed, please write your #ID (that you entered on the site) in the space provided below. We will delete the corresponding data without viewing it. There will be no penalties or negative consequences for you if you withdraw from the study. Even if you withdraw from the study, you are still entitled to earn extra credit as specified by your professor. Before making your decision, please ask me any questions you have.

Confidentiality

Whether you allow your data to be used in this study or not, please remember that the integrity of this research depended on keeping some of the details from you and the other participants. Therefore, **it is important that you do not tell anyone else about the details of this study until after November 25, 2025**, when my collection of data from other participants will be complete. Although the purpose of this study is different from what was originally explained to you,

everything else on the consent form is correct. I will keep all information I have about you completely confidential, including your decision about whether to withdraw from the study.

If You Have Any Questions or Concerns

We will provide a printed copy of this Debriefing Form for future reference. If you have any questions or concerns about this study and the research procedures used, you may contact me or a member of my team at:

Bethanie Hackett (bhackett@mail.umw.edu)

Garrett McKenzie (gmckenzi@mail.umw.edu)

Laura Rider (lrider@mail.umw.edu)

Or my UMW faculty supervisor, Dr. Stephen Davies at sdavies@umw.edu. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Co-Chairs of the UMW Institutional Review Board, Dr. Paul Fallon at pfallon@umw.edu and Dr. Hilary Stebbins at hstebbin@umw.edu. In case you experience any adverse effects that you feel result from being in this study, please contact my faculty supervisor (above). I am also giving you a list of counseling services where you may obtain help with any anxiety or discomfort you might experience.

To be completed by Participant

My signature below indicates that I have read and understand the information in this debriefing form, and (select one)

I give permission for the data collected from or about me to be included in the study.

I DO NOT give permission for the data collected from or about me to be included in the study. My #ID used on the site: _____

Print Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

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 Debriefing Form has been provided to the participant.

Print Name of Investigator

Signature of Investigator

Date