



Dublin City University
School of Computing

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF AN UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROJECT INVOLVING **HUMAN PARTICIPANTS**

- ☐ **Applications must be submitted via the project dashboard**
- ☐ **Student applicants must include their supervisor as the Principal Investigator (PI).** The form should be checked, approved and signed in digital form by the supervisor in advance of submission.
- ☐ **The application should consist of one electronic file only, in PDF format,** with an electronic signature from the PI (the project supervisor) and yourselves, the students. The completed application must incorporate all supplementary documentation, especially those being given to the proposed participants.
- ☐ **All sections of the application form must be answered as instructed and within the word limits given.**

Applications must be completed on the form; answers in the form of attachments will not be accepted, except where indicated. No hardcopy applications will be accepted. **The project must not commence until approval has been received from the School Research Ethics Committee.**

PROJECT TITLE	Emotion Classification of User Online Browsing History
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S)	Dr. Jennifer Foster
START AND END DATE	05/10/2020 - 07/05/2021
STUDENT NAME(S), COURSE AND YEAR (E.G. EC4)	Gerard Slowey CASE4, Michael Savage CASE4
LEVEL OF RISK	Notification only: YES

1. ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

1.1 WILL THE PROJECT BE UNDERTAKEN ON-SITE AT DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY?

YES or NO

YES

If NO, state details of the off-campus location – provide details of the approval to gain access to that location in section 2.7.

DECLARATION BY PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR / SUPERVISOR

The information contained herein is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate. I have read the University's current research ethics guidelines, and accept responsibility for the conduct of the procedures set out in the attached application in accordance with the form guidelines, the REC guidelines (<https://www.dcu.ie/researchsupport/researchethics.shtml>), the University's policy on Conflict of Interest, Code of Good Research Practice and any other condition laid down by the Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee. I have attempted to identify all risks related to the project that may arise in conducting this project and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants.

If there exists any affiliation or financial interest for researcher(s) in this project or its outcomes or any other circumstances which might represent a perceived, potential or actual conflict of interest this should be declared in accordance with Dublin City University policy on Conflicts of Interest.

I and my co-investigators and/or supporting staff have the appropriate qualifications, experience and facilities to conduct the project set out in the attached application and to deal with any emergencies and contingencies related to the project that may arise. Supervisor(s) signature(s) are required as evidence that they have read and approved the submission.

Please note:

1. Any amendments to the original approved proposal must receive prior School Ethics Committee approval.
2. As a condition of approval investigators are required to document and report immediately to the School of Computing Ethics Committee any adverse events, any issues which might negatively impact on the conduct of the project and/or any complaint from a participant relating to their participation in the study

Electronic Signature(s):

Principal investigator / Supervisor: Jennifer Foster

Print Name(s) here: JENNIFER FOSTER

Date: 06/12/2020

We, the students on this proposal, have read and approve this submission

Student(s) signature(s): Gerard Slowey, Michael Savage

Print Name(s) here: GERARD SLOWEY, MICHAEL SAVAGE

Date: 06/12/2020

2. PROJECT OUTLINE

2.1 LAY DESCRIPTION, AIMS & JUSTIFICATION, METHODOLOGY

Our project aims indicate to the user the sentiment of the material they are reading online by analysing the websites they are browsing.

The user will be required to install a program on their computer which with the users permissions accesses the browser history database stored locally on their computer.

The program will run in the background and will visit websites by selecting web links from the database. The program will visit these sites and copy text from these sites. This text will then be stored and analysed for sentiment (negativity and positivity) and emotion classification (happy, sad, angry etc.).

2.2 PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Different groups of participants will be selected for this project.

Participant group 1 will include students who regularly browse websites related to their academic studies as well as social media. This sample will consist of 5 to 10 people with an age range of 18 to 25 years old, these students will currently be attending DCU.

Participant group 2 will include people aged between 25 years old and 70 years old exclusive. This group will focus on participants who browse social media and read daily news articles. This sample will consist of 3 to 5 people.

A group size of 5 to 10 people for group 1 will be sufficient for providing us insights into browsing sentiment for a younger audience who generally are more active online, and who view different material. A group size of 3 to 5 people will be suitable when judging the system usage by an older audience, who most likely will focus on different online material and websites than a younger audience.

2.3 PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

Members of both participant groups will be acquired from family, friends and other academic year group members who will be willing to participate in testing our system and providing feedback to us. Any potential participants will be asked if they are willing to participate in testing while being provided with an overview of the program and its functions.

As face to face contact is not possible in the current pandemic, video calls may be required to speak with possible participants and provide them with an opportunity to ask questions and clarify queries.

2.4 IS IT LIKELY THAT ANY PARTICIPANTS COULD BE CONSIDERED POTENTIALLY VULNERABLE?

YES or NO

NO

If Yes, please state and describe what this vulnerability (or vulnerabilities) is and justify why this research is being done with such participants

2.5 WILL THE IDENTITY OF THE PARTICIPANTS BE PROTECTED?

YES or NO

YES

If NO, please explain why

IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO 2.5, PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

2.6 HOW WILL THE ANONYMITY OF THE PARTICIPANTS BE RESPECTED?

We plan to solely collect participants' feedback and opinions on our program. No user browsing history will be transmitted from the users computer or collected during usage of the application. During the feedback gathering stage, the identity of participants will be protected by providing anonymous surveys which do not require a participant to disclose any information that may personally identify them.

2.7 LEGAL LIMITATIONS TO DATA CONFIDENTIALITY

State how and where participants will be informed of these limitations

Before initializing testing the program with a user they will be informed that any data provided could be requested under the limitations of the law.

2.8(a) EXPLAIN HOW PARTICIPANTS ARE TO BE RECRUITED

Members of both participant groups will be acquired from family, friends and other academic year group members who will be willing to participate in testing our system and providing feedback to us. Any potential participants will be asked if they are willing to participate in testing while being provided with an overview of the program and its functions.

As face to face contact is not possible in the current pandemic, video calls may be required to speak with possible participants and provide them with an opportunity to ask questions and clarify queries..

2.8(b) CHILD PARTICIPANTS (anyone under 18 years old)

Policies and Procedures supporting Child Protection at DCU" - available at:

https://www4.dcu.ie/sites/default/files/policy/157%20-%20child_protection_handbook_rev1%282%29%281%29.pdf

Please indicate your compliance with the following guidelines:	Mark here
We confirm that we have read and agree to act in accordance with the DCU Child Protection policy and procedures	YES
We confirm that we have put in place safeguards for the children participating in the project	YES
We confirm that we have supports in place for children who may disclose current or historical abuse (whether or not this is the focus of the project)	YES

2.9 PLEASE EXPLAIN WHEN, HOW, WHERE, AND TO WHOM RESULTS WILL BE DISSEMINATED, INCLUDING WHETHER PARTICIPANTS WILL BE PROVIDED WITH ANY INFORMATION AS TO THE FINDINGS OR OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECT?

Any survey results collected will be confidentially disseminated between the researching group members (Gerard and Michael) and the project supervisor (Jennifer Foster). Participants will not be provided with results.

2.10 ARE OTHER APPROVALS REQUIRED TO GAIN ACCESS TO ANOTHER LOCATION, ORGANISATION, SCHOOL ETC.?

YES or NO

NO

If YES, please specify from whom and attach a copy of the approval documentation.

3. RISK AND RISK MANAGEMENT

3.1 EXPLAIN AND JUSTIFY THE STATED LEVEL OF RISK TO PARTICIPANTS

The risk to participants is notification only. We will be collecting anonymous feedback on the users' experience of our program. The users will not be exposed to harm beyond what is faced online on a daily basis.

3.2 POTENTIAL RISKS TO PARTICIPANTS AND RISK MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

Participants will not be exposed to any extra risk other than risks associated with usual internet browsing. Participants will be free to choose the websites they want to visit and will not be influenced or directed to visit any provided sites. There will be no psychological, social, legal or economic risks.

3.3 ARE THERE LIKELY TO BE ANY BENEFITS (DIRECT OR INDIRECT) TO PARTICIPANTS FROM THIS RESEARCH?

YES or NO

NO

If YES, provide details

3.4 ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC RISKS TO YOURSELVES IN CARRYING OUT THIS PROJECT?

YES or NO

NO

If YES, please describe and explain what risk management procedures will be put in place to minimise these risks

3.5 DEALING WITH ADVERSE/UNEXPECTED OUTCOMES

In the event of an unexpected outcome, DCU counselling and health services will be available for participants to interact with.

3.6 SUPPORT FOR PARTICIPANTS

In the event of an unexpected outcome, DCU counselling and health services will be available for participants to interact with.

3.7 HOW WILL THE CONDUCT OF THE PROJECT BE MONITORED?

The project supervisor will monitor the project progress. The project supervisor in coordination with the researchers will directly monitor any potential issues with participant interaction and project conduct.

Weekly updates will be supplied to the project supervisor who will analyse progress reports and highlight any unforeseen circumstances that may arise due to oversights.

3.8 DO YOU PROPOSE TO OFFER PAYMENTS OR INCENTIVES TO PARTICIPANTS?

YES or NO

NO

If YES, please provide further details

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3.9 DO ANY OF THE RESEARCHERS ON THIS PROJECT HAVE A PERSONAL, PHILOSOPHICAL, FINANCIAL, POLITICAL, IDEOLOGICAL, OR COMMERCIAL INTEREST IN ITS OUTCOME THAT MIGHT INFLUENCE THE INTEGRITY OF THE PROJECT OR BIAS THE CONDUCT OR REPORTING OF THE PROJECT, OR UNDULY DELAY OR OTHERWISE AFFECT THEIR PUBLICATION?

YES or NO

NO

If YES, please specify how this conflict of interest will be addressed

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4. PERSONAL DATA - COMPLIANCE WITH THE GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)

Applicant declaration:

0	I understand that the proposed project, as set out in this form, is to be carried out by me in my capacity as a student of Dublin City University.	YES or NO	YES
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What does “Personal Data” mean?

Personal data is any information about a living person, where that person is identified or could be identified, either from the data itself or when it is combined with other data.

Personal Data is defined in [Article 4\(1\) of the GDPR](#) and can include, but is not limited to the following: hard-copy information (e.g. files, records); electronic information (e.g. databases, online survey returns); written information; consent declarations, interview notes, still or moving images; audio & visual recordings; IP addresses; an individual's handwriting; clinical or medical data; diagnostic or other clinical imaging; etc.

Further information is available from the [DCU Data Protection Unit](#)

4.1 ASSESSING DATA PROTECTION RISKS & REQUIREMENTS

Note 1: What does ‘Minor’ and ‘Vulnerable Individual’ mean?

A **minor** is defined as an individual below 18 years of age. Where the processing relates to ‘electronic marketing’ the age limit is reduced to 16 years. A **vulnerable individual** may be anyone who is unable to consent to, or oppose, the processing of his or her personal data for any reason. Both of these are of particular importance if the project compels the provision of data from individuals.

Note 2: What does ‘large scale processing’ mean?

The GDPR does not define what constitutes large-scale. EU guidance recommends that the following factors, in particular, be considered when determining whether the processing is carried out on a large scale:

- the number of data subjects (either as a specific number or proportion of the relevant population);
- the volume of data and/or the range of different data items being processed;
- the duration, or permanence, of the data processing activity; &
- the geographical extent of the processing activity.

Examples of large-scale processing include, but are not limited to:

- processing of patient data in the regular course of business by a hospital;
- processing of travel data of individuals using a public transport system (e.g. tracking via travel cards);
- processing of real time geo-location data of customers of an international fast food chain for statistical purposes by a processor specialised in these activities;
- processing of customer data in the regular course of business by an insurance company or a bank;
- processing of personal data for behavioural advertising by a search engine; &
- processing of data (content, traffic, location) by telephone or internet service providers.

Examples that do **not** constitute large-scale processing include, but are not limited to:

- processing of patient data by an individual physician; and
- processing of personal data relating to criminal convictions and offences by an individual lawyer.

A. Applicant Data Protection Assessment Questionnaire – Part I

1	Does your project include living human subjects?	YES or NO	YES
2	Does your project include the use of any information (i.e. ‘Personal Data’) relating to an identified, or identifiable, person?	YES or NO	NO

3	Does your project include the use of identifiers such as: a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier, or other similar identifiers?	YES or NO	NO
4	Does your project include the use of Personal Data specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of any living individual?	YES or NO	YES

If you answered 'Yes' to one or more of Questions 1-4 above, please continue to Part II below (otherwise proceed to the next section of this form). You should also consult with your Supervisor / Principal Investigator to ensure adequate Data Protection compliance measures are in place.

B. Applicant Data Protection Assessment Questionnaire – Part II			
5(a)	Does your project include the use of Personal Data of individuals which reveals any of the attributes or characteristics below? If 'Yes,' please indicate which will be used in your project (tick all that apply):	YES or NO	YES
	<i>racial or ethnic origin</i>	YES or NO	NO
	<i>political opinions</i>	YES or NO	YES
	<i>religious or philosophical beliefs</i>	YES or NO	YES
	<i>trade union membership</i>	YES or NO	NO
	<i>genetic data</i>	YES or NO	NO
	<i>biometric data</i>	YES or NO	NO
	<i>data concerning health</i>	YES or NO	YES
	<i>data concerning a natural person's sex life or sexual orientation</i>	YES or NO	YES
5(b)	Does your project include the use of Personal Data relating to minors or vulnerable individuals? (<i>See Note 1, below</i>)	YES or NO	NO
6	Does your project include the use of Personal Data of individuals relating to their criminal convictions and/or offences?	YES or NO	NO
7	Does your project include large-scale processing of personal data relating to living individuals? <i>This may include: a wide range or large volume of personal data; processing which takes place over a large geographical area; or where a large number of people are affected (e.g. over 100 individuals); or where the processing is extensive or has long-lasting effects. (See Note 2, below)</i>	YES or NO	NO
8	Does your project include any form of automated processing of personal data, used to evaluate certain personal aspects relating to a living individual? <i>In particular, to analyse or predict aspects concerning that person's performance at work, economic situation, health, personal preferences, interests, reliability, behaviour, location or movements</i>	YES or NO	YES
9	Does your project include any partners which are third parties outside of DCU? <i>e.g. Research partners, third party software providers or other providers such as translation or transcription services, etc.</i>	YES or NO	YES

10 (a)	Does your project involve the sharing or processing of Personal Data outside the EU or the EEA? <i>i.e. the EEA is the European Economic Area (the EU plus Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland)</i>	YES or NO	NO
10 (b)	If 'Yes', please state which non-EU or EEA country is involved:		
11	Does the project require the matching or combining of separate datasets of information on individuals in a way that would exceed their reasonable expectations of privacy? <i>An example would be combining mobile phone location data along with any other dataset to identify individuals.</i>	YES or NO	NO

If you answered 'Yes' to one or more of these questions, you should make sure that you have strong and secure data privacy risk mitigation safeguards in place, discuss these with your supervisor.

4.2 WILL ANONYMISATION OR PSEUDONYMISATION OF THE PERSONAL DATA, WHERE APPLICABLE, BE UNDERTAKEN?

Anonymisation is the process of removing personal identifiers, both direct and indirect, that may lead to an individual being identified. **Pseudonymisation** is the processing of personal data in such a manner that the personal data can no longer be attributed to a specific living individual without the use of additional information, provided that such additional information is kept separately and is subject to technical and organisational measures to ensure its security.

YES or NO
YES

If YES, please explain below the methods by which you intend to anonymise/pseudonymise the personal data:

We plan to solely collect participants' feedback and opinions on our program. No user browsing history will be transmitted from the users computer or collected during usage of the application. During the feedback gathering stage, the identity of participants will be protected by providing anonymous surveys which do not require a participant to disclose any information that may personally identify them. Individual user feedback will be combined with other feedback gathered to further anonymise the data.

5. DATA/SAMPLE STORAGE, SECURITY AND DISPOSAL

5.1 HOW AND WHERE WILL THE DATA/SAMPLES BE STORED?

Any feedback data received from anonymous surveys will be stored using a DCU google drive account associated with the primary project researchers.

5.2 WHO WILL HAVE ACCESS TO DATA/SAMPLES?

Both researchers and the project supervisor will have access to the data only. A summarisation of the data may be provided to the grading lecturer during the final presentation phases, however no personal or individual data will be made available.

5.3 HOW LONG IS THE DATA TO BE HELD OR RETAINED?

The data will be retained for the duration of the academic year, this is expected to be no later than September 1st 2021.

5.4

IF YOUR PROJECT DOES INVOLVE THE USE OF PERSONAL DATA THEN WILL THIS BE USED AT A LATER DATE FOR THE PURPOSE OF PUBLICATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE PROJECT?

YES or NO

NO

Where it is intended that the personal data used in the project will be used at a later date for the purposes of publication please explain how consent to do so will be obtained.

5.5 IF THE DATA/SAMPLES ARE TO BE DISPOSED OF AT THE END OF THE PROJECT PLEASE EXPLAIN HOW, WHEN AND BY WHOM THIS WILL BE DONE?

How will the data/samples be disposed of? Please describe the means by which the personal data will be deleted or destroyed. This includes personal data held in hard copy and digital formats.	Any responses collected will be stored digitally and will permanently be deleted from where they are stored on the DCU Google Drive account.
By whom will the data /samples be disposed of? Please indicate the designated team member(s) with responsibility for deletion and/or destruction of the research project's personal data.	Michael will be responsible for the disposal of collected feedback data and any project data that contains personal samples.

6. PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT *(Attach to this document. Up to a max of 400 words)*

PLEASE CONFIRM WHETHER THE FOLLOWING ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED IN YOUR PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT/ INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS:

Note that this list is a check-list of all of the things that you should include in your plain language statement, if they are relevant (they are in most cases). In the earlier sections of this form you have already written the text that can be used to create your plain language statement. References to the relevant sections are provided on each line.

	YES or NO
Introductory Statement (Student(s) and supervisor names, school, title of the project) [Table, p 1]	YES
What is this project about? [section 2.1]	YES
Why is this project being conducted? [section 2.1]	YES
What will the participant be expected to do/have to do if they decide to participate in the study? [section 2.1]	YES
How will their privacy be protected? [section 2.5, section 2.6]	YES
How will the data be used and subsequently disposed of? [section 5.3]	YES
What are the legal limitations to data confidentiality? [section 2.7]	YES
Are there any benefits of taking part in the study? [section 3.3]	YES
Are there any risks of taking part in the study? [section 3.2]	YES
Confirmation that participants can change their mind at any stage and withdraw from the study [see plain language statement template, appendix 1]	YES
How will participants find out what happens with the project? [section 2.9]	YES
Contact details for further information [see plain language statement template, appendix 1]	YES

If any of these issues are marked NO, please justify their exclusion:

7. INFORMED CONSENT FORM *(Attach to this document. Approx. 300 words, see appendices 2 and 3 for templates.)*

NB – IF AN INFORMED CONSENT FORM IS NOT BEING USED, THE REASON FOR THIS MUST BE JUSTIFIED HERE.

8. ASSENT FORM & PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT FOR CHILDREN *(Attach to this document.)*

NB – IF AN ASSENT FORM IS NOT BEING USED, THE REASON FOR THIS MUST BE JUSTIFIED HERE.

We will only be asking people who are 18 years old or older who regularly browse websites related to their academic studies as well as social media to participate.

9. SUBMISSION CHECKLIST *(Attach to this document)*

My application has been collated as one electronic PDF file which includes the following documentation:	INCLUDED (mark as YES)	NOT APPLICABLE (mark as N/A)
Recruitment advertisement [consistent with section 2.3]	YES	
Plain language statement/Information Statement [see section 6 and appendix 1]	YES	
Informed Consent form [see appendices 2 and 3]	YES	
Informed Assent form (children only)		N/A
Evidence of external approvals related to the research [see sections 1.1 and 2.10]		N/A
Questionnaire/Survey	YES	
Interview/Focus Group Questions		N/A

Appendix 1

DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY

Sample Template – Plain Language Statement

Research Study Title: User feedback and opinions on the eMot emotion classification system.

Students: Michael Savage and Gerard Slowey.

Supervisor: Dr. Jennifer Foster, School of Computing, Dublin City University.

Introduction to the Study

You are invited to take part in a research study project to examine users' opinions of the eMot system that classifies the users online browsing history. This research project aims to learn more about the usability of the system by gathering anonymous feedback from users who browse the web with the eMot system installed.

Before deciding to take part in this, it is important to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take a few minutes to read the following information about the project.

Data Protection/Privacy Notice (Personal Data – GDPR Compliance)

As part of this study, I have to inform you of our data protection policies and how we will use your data. Any feedback you provide will be used in the development of our project. Your data will be stored on the DCU Google Drive and as such is subject to DCU and Google privacy policies.

You reserve the right to lodge a complaint with the Irish Data Protection Commission. You can also contact the

DCU Data Protection Officer:

Mr. Martin Ward (data.protection@dcu.ie Ph: 7005118 / 7008257).

Your participation will involve the completion of an anonymous survey about your opinions on our program. Your browsing history will not be transmitted from your computer or collected at any stage of the application and there will be no risks involved in this research project. Your personal information is not used.

You are by no means obligated to partake in this study. It is an optional study and you can always withdraw at any time. Upon withdrawing from participation, any previously provided data will be retained for the duration of the academic year (this is expected to be no later than September 1st 2021 before being deleted.)

Please be advised:

You need to be aware that confidentiality of information can only be protected within the limitations of the law.

If participants have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000, e-mail rec@dcu.ie

Appendix 2

DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent Form

Research Study Title: User feedback and opinions on the eMot emotion classification system.

Students: Michael Savage and Gerard Slowey.

Supervisor: Dr. Jennifer Foster, School of Computing, Dublin City University.

Introduction to the Study

You are invited to take part in a research study project to examine users' opinions of the eMot system that classifies the users online browsing history. This research project aims to learn more about the usability of the system by gathering anonymous feedback from users who browse the web.

Participant – please complete the following (Circle Yes or No for each question)

I have read the Plain Language Statement (or had it read to me)	Yes/No
I understand the information provided	Yes/No
I understand the information provided in relation to data protection	Yes/No
I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study	Yes/No
I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions	Yes/No
I am aware that I may withdraw from the study at any point.	Yes/No

Your anonymous data will be stored on the DCU Google Drive and as such is subject to DCU and Google privacy policies. Upon withdrawing from participation, any previously provided data will be retained for the duration of the academic year (this is expected to be no later than September 1st 2021) before being deleted.

Please be advised:

You need to be aware that confidentiality of information can only be protected within the limitations of the law.

Signature:

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researchers, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this project.

Participants Signature: _____

Name in Block Capitals: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3

Anonymous Online Consent Form

The anonymous Google survey consists of two pages.

The first page is a required consent form that the participant must agree to before advancing to the second page.

The second contains opinion questions that the participant can answer.

The online consent form can be found here:

<https://forms.gle/XZsaNRWF8zGPamVh8>