

## **TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN**

### **INFORMATION SHEET FOR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANTS**

**Project Title:** Applying Ethical Considerations in Linked Open Data Integration

**Name of Lead Researcher:** Isabelle Bryans

**Name of Supervisor:** Prof. Declan O'Sullivan

#### **Background:**

You are invited to participate in this study on assessing ethical considerations when integrating linked open datasets, by using and evaluating the tool developed which aims to aid data integrators conduct comprehensive ethical assessments for data integration processes. The research addresses the existing gap in exploring ethical dimensions of open data usage, which is crucial to responsible management of the ever-expanding pool of open data. Your participation is valuable in contributing to a more ethical approach to data integration, particularly in the LOD community.

#### **Who is conducting this experiment:**

This study is being carried out as part of an M.A.I. in Computer Engineering at Trinity College Dublin, conducted by the student Isabelle Bryans and under the supervision of Prof. Declan O'Sullivan.

#### **Who we are looking for:**

We are seeking participants who are interested in the use of open data and the integration of data for developing an application.

#### **Study procedures:**

You will be asked to engage with an online tool designed to assist you in performing ethical assessments on a provided set of linked open datasets, simulating integration scenarios. You will be asked to provide feedback on the evaluation of the tool through an anonymous survey. The survey will ask for your technical background and questions on the effectiveness of the tool as part of an ethical assessment when performing data integration of linked open datasets. It is important to note that the survey is completely anonymous and the answers on technical background cannot identify a participant.

A link to the Participant Information form and Informed Consent form will be sent to you by email. Upon consenting to participate in the evaluation by completing the Informed Consent form, you will gain access to the tool and subsequent questionnaire.

#### **The expected duration:**

We expect the participation to take approximately 20 minutes, where you will use the tool to do some simple tasks and share your insights in the survey.

#### **Anticipated risks/benefits to the participant:**

We anticipate no risks to participants throughout the study. Both tool usage and survey submission are completely anonymous, with no personal data stored on the participant. Participation is entirely voluntary, and data relating to participants' technical backgrounds will be requested voluntarily in the survey. There is no risk of de-anonymization from this data, as the experiment's sample size will be large.

The linked datasets provided for the integration scenarios will be sourced from open data portals published by governments or research groups. It is important to note that these datasets will not contain any confidential information or information that is likely to cause upset. However, for the purpose of evaluating the tool in an ethical assessment scenario, the integrated datasets may produce data that could potentially pose ethical issues if misused. The objective is to assess the tool's effectiveness in identifying such issues, thereby preventing unethical consequences of open data use.

While participation will not benefit the participants directly, the research will support the increased awareness of ethical considerations of open data usage and the development of better tools for ethical assessments of Linked Open Data (LOD), benefiting the LOD community.

**Voluntary participation and withdrawal:**

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time up until you have submitted the evaluation questionnaire. Until the survey is submitted, you may stop the experimentation at any time without penalty, or knowledge of anyone else involved. By exiting the survey before submitting, your response will not be recorded. Once the survey is submitted, it is no longer possible to withdraw your response as the survey is anonymous, so there is no way to identify an individual participant once it is submitted.

**Optional questions:**

Each question is optional. Feel free to omit a response to any question; however the researcher would be grateful if all questions are responded to.

**Debriefing after participation:**

At the end of the survey, an email will be provided to you to contact with any questions you may have on the research. It will be the same email provided at the end of this document. The dissertation will be available on the SCSS website when it is completed.

**Preservation of anonymity in analysis and publication of results:**

The questionnaire is completely anonymous and cannot be linked to an identifiable participant. The survey results will be analysed to assess the effectiveness of the developed tool in an ethical assessment environment, and the relevance of its elements in assessing the ethical stance of LOD. The results will be published as part of the MAI dissertation on the SCSS website of Trinity College Dublin.

**Cautions about inadvertent discovery of illicit activities:**

While it is unlikely that illicit activities would be disclosed, if you do so, we would be obliged

report them to the appropriate authorities.

**Conflicts of interest:**

We declare that this research complies with ethical standards and all efforts will be taken to maintain the scientific rigor of the study. It is important to note that this research is not solely pursued for its own sake but also serves degree requirements for the MAI of Computer Engineering.

In the recruitment process for this study, we acknowledge the possibility of conflicts of interest arising from personal relationships, particularly within the researcher's immediate academic and professional network. The researcher is extending the invitation to participate in the evaluation survey to colleagues within their class, some of whom may be friends, as well as researchers in the School of Computer Science and Statistics at Trinity College. This acknowledgement is made to address any concerns regarding the impact of personal connections on participant recruitment and responses. While every effort will be made to ensure the objectivity and impartiality of the research, participants are encouraged to provide honest and unbiased feedback.

**Contact Details:**

If you have any queries, feel free to contact Isabelle Bryans at [bryansi@tcd.ie](mailto:bryansi@tcd.ie) and we will be happy to answer questions about the project.