

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Department of Computer Science

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Research Project :

Acronym : Seco-Assist

Title : Automated Assistance for Developing Software in Ecosystems of the Future

Principal Investigators :

- BUSINGE John, ANSYMO Research Group, Universiteit Antwerpen (project coordinator)
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- DECAN Alexandre, Software Engineering Lab, Université de Mons
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- ZEROUALI Ahmed, Software Languages Lab, Vrije Universiteit Brussel
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- MENS Tom, Software Engineering Lab, Université de Mons
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Preamble :

We hereby request your participation in this research project that generally aimed at providing better assistance and recommendation of software development in the context of software ecosystems, i.e., collections of interdependent software projects having a common code base but maintained in parallel (variants) but also have an online community of collaborating contributors.

Before accepting to participate in this project, please take the time to read, understand and carefully consider the information provided below. We invite you to ask any question you might have to the researcher in charge of the study or the other members of the research team and to ask them to explain to you any information that should not be clear.

Presentation of the research project and its objectives :

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. Understanding the reasons for creating variants of projects and how communities collaborate.
2. Understand the social-technical factors and challenges that may impact the maintenance of variants.
3. Develop tools for locating interesting patches in one variant that will be recommended to other variants.
4. Develop tools for the automation of the extraction and integration of a patch from one variant to another.

In order to reach part of these objectives, we will conduct an online questionnaire to understand the reasons for creating variants with developers involved in the creation and maintenance of these software variants.

Nature and duration of your participation :

Your participation in this project consists of filling out an online questionnaire, lasting about **10 minutes**, which will focus on understanding the reasons why developers create variants.

Your answers to the questionnaire will be saved and processed by the Principal Investigators.

In order to participate in this online questionnaire, you must demonstrate that you meet the following criteria: have been involved in maintenance of a variant of a mainline repository, i.e., A **variant** is a software repository that is forked from another repository (**mainline**) and thereafter the two evolve into independent projects being maintained in parallel (as opposed to forks created in order to submit a pull request)

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Benefits resulting from your participation :

The anticipated personal benefits for participants are recommendations tools developed as part of the research (see project objectives) will be shared with the development community involved variants in software families.

If you wish, the conclusions of the project will be sent to you personally to thank you for your participation. We will also organize activities or conferences to share the findings of the project and upon your request we will send you the announcements in a timely manner.

Disadvantages resulting from your participation in the research project :

No specific disadvantages are expected to arise from your participation to this experiment.

Risks resulting from your participation in the research project :

The participation in this project will not involve any additional risk other than the risks you incur in your daily life.

If you do not know what to answer to an open-ended question, or do not wish to answer such a question, feel comfortable leaving the corresponding field blank.

Financial compensation :

No financial or other compensation will be provided for your participation.

Compensation in case of prejudice and rights of the participant :

Should you suffer any prejudice as a result of your participation in this project, be informed that you are not giving up any of your rights nor discharging the researchers, the granting agencies or the institution from their legal and professional duties.

Voluntary participation and withdrawal :

Your participation in this research project is on a voluntary basis. You can therefore choose to withdraw from it at any time without having to motivate your decision nor suffering any prejudice. In the event of your early withdrawal from the study, all data collected during the interview will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in future analyses.

Participants may be withdrawn without their consent should they not follow the instructions provided or should there be some administrative reasons to abandon the project, notably for safety or feasibility reasons.

Confidentiality :

Following the completion of the form, the researcher in charge will compile the answers to the questions asked. This researcher will use the data only for the purposes of the research project. Only the information required for the safe execution of the research project will be collected. All personal information gathered during the research project will remain strictly confidential to the extent permitted by Belgian law. The following measures will be applied to ensure the non-disclosure of the identity of the participants and the confidentiality of the information provided by the participants:

- The names or contact details of the participating individuals will not appear in any report;
- The various research documents will be codified and only the researcher in charge will have access to the list of names and codes;
- The individual results of the participants will never be disclosed;

- Research materials, including data and records, will be kept under lock and key in a dedicated file cabinet in the researcher's office, and the digitized data will be stored on a password-protected computer;
- No individual participant will be identifiable or recognizable in the scientific communications or publications of the research;
- The only people who will have access to the information collected are the members of the Seco-Assist research project.

You are entitled to consult your research file to verify the correctness of the collected information for as long as the researcher in charge of the project and the institution possess this information. However, to preserve the scientific integrity of the research project, you will have access to this information only at the termination of the study. The collected data will be kept until 10 years after the end of the research project, after which it will be destroyed.

Contact people :

Should you have any questions pertaining to the Seco-Assist research project, you can contact any of its Principal Investigators, identified at the beginning of this Consent Form.

Should you have any questions pertaining to your involvement in this research project by means of the questionnaire, you can contact the researcher(s) in charge: **John Businge, john.businge@uantwerpen.be**

Consent :

By ticking the corresponding box at the beginning of the questionnaire, you declare that you have carefully read this document. You were clearly explained what your participation consisted in. You were given enough time to decide whether you wanted to participate in this study or not and, should you initially have had any questions, a member of the research team answered them all. You hereby agree to participate in this research project in accordance with the conditions set out in this document.