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Faculty of Engineering Research Ethics Committee

Upon completion this application form should be uploaded as an attachment, together with documents referred to in the application, to your online ethics submission. This form should be completed in conjunction with the guidance form.

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Questions 1-12
Contact Information and Study Details

1. Title of the research:

Overcoming Writer's Block With Mobile App

2. Applicant details:

Student Name or Principal Investigator: Janie Tey
Job or Course Title (UG or PG): UG Computer Science BSc
Contact number: 07724823475
Email: Jt17196@bristol.ac.uk

3. Details of Supervisor (if applicant is a postgraduate or undergraduate student)

Name: Simon Lock
Title: Dr
Contact number: +44 (0) 117 954 5145
Email: simon.lock@bristol.ac.uk

4. Other investigator(s) involved, with job title:

n/a

5. Source of funding:

n/a

6. Start Date and Project Duration:

Start Date: November 2019
Duration: 6 months

7. Where will the study take place?

Online

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8.	**Background and aims of the study:**

1. Background:

Writer's block is, as usually defined, the inability of an author or a creator to write new works. The cause of writer's block varies from creative slowdown, to lack of motivation or inspiration, to perfectionism, stress, or health issues. One of the ways writers tend to fight back writer's block is to write as much as they can every day without stressing themselves too much, whether the quality is the best or not. Therefore, word count is significantly important to writers.

"Writing Blocks" is a simple mobile collection game to track a writer's word count every day and reward them in-game coins based on the amount of words. Writers can also customize their own daily goal, and they will be rewarded extra coins if they achieve their goal. However, to not overstress the writers, the game will encourage smaller goals to be made, as the extra coins rewarded will not increase even if the daily goal increases. Then, with the in-game currency, writers can exchange game items and characters. To make the rewards worth the effort, the exchangeable items and characters will also focus on being visually attractive or interesting.

Some writers would also usually prefer taking a break from technology, searching for ideas and inspirations. Hence, this simple application is meant to be only used approximately 5 minutes every day. It will be designed to be non-intrusive so that writers do not get overly distracted by just playing the game and not actually making any progress in writing. As an extra feature, the game will also provide a random prompt generator for writers who need a drive of creativity and inspiration.

The application will be developed in Unity using C# as the main programming language.

2. Aims:

- To research what are the potential causes of writer's block
- To research what are the most recommended ways to overcome writer's block
- To research what are the implications of using technology such as a mobile app to overcome writer's block

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9.	**Outline the design of the study and list the procedures to which the participants will be subjected, the anticipated testing time and any treatments administered:**
	1) A quick survey was conducted to propose the idea of the mobile app and collect ideas on what causes writer's block and how to overcome it. 2) Online research was also done to investigate for more scientific reasonings. 3) Mobile app was developed. 4) A demo / prototype version is then given out to participants in the form of either an APK file or a PC program. Participants then will need to download the application to run and test it. 5) Participants will then need to fill in an evaluation form to review the application. 6) There was initially going to be a public demonstration session, but due to the COVID-19 outbreak, demonstrating in person became impossible and hence would need to be conducted online.
10.	**Does your study involve the collection or use of any human tissue or exudate? If yes, what is the material to be collected?**.
	Yes ☐ No ☑
	If yes, please explain:
10a.	**If you have answered 'yes' to Q10, has confirmation been obtained from your Departmental Human**

	Tissue Act Advisor that collection and storage of this material will be undertaken under an appropriate licence?
	Yes ☐ No ☑
11.	**Will the research involve working with animals?**
	Yes ☐ No ☑
	If yes, please identify how you will address any animal welfare issues and whether you have undertaken ethical review elsewhere (e.g. zoo or national park authorities). Please also see the relevant guidance.
12.	**Has this study been subjected to peer review?**
	Yes ☐ No ☑

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	Questions 13-22 **Recruitment and Informed Consent**
13.	**Who will be recruited to participate in this study?**
	- Initially, people from the Creative Writing Society would be recruited. - But due to the COVID-19 outbreak, I will be recruiting anyone who is willing to give the application a try.
14.	**Are there any potential participants who will be excluded? If so, what are the exclusion criteria?**
	n/a
15.	**How many participants will be recruited?**
	- Ideally 5 to 10.
16.	**How will the participants be recruited?**
	- Via online, by downloading and testing the app themselves and filling in the evaluation form online.
17.	**How will informed consent be obtained from all participants or their parents/guardians prior to individuals entering the research study?**
	- A short form will be filled out.
18.	**How long will potential participants have to decide whether to give consent?**
	- As soon as within a day or two
19.	**Will participants be kept informed of new information that becomes available during the study which may influence their continued participation**?
	- Not necessary

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20.	**Will the study involve actively deceiving, or withholding information from, the participants?**
	Yes ☐ No ☑
	If YES, explain why it is necessary to use deception and state how you will ensure that the participants are provided with sufficient information at the earliest stage, and how you intend to ameliorate possible distress caused by the deception, including a plan for subject debriefing.
21.	**Will participants be made aware that they can withdraw from the study at any time without having to give a reason for doing so?**
	Yes
22.	**Describe potential risks (physical, psychological, legal, social) arising from these procedures:**
	N/A
22b.	**Is there likely to be any risk to the investigator during this study?**
	Yes ☐ No ☑
	If yes, please explain how this will be minimised
22c.	**Is there likely to be any risk eg. legal, adverse publicity, to the UoB?**
	Yes ☐ No ☑
	If yes, please explain

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	Questions 23-32 **Outcomes and Data Protection**
23.	**How will participants be informed about the outcome of the study?**
	- Data from the feedback of participants shall stay anonymous
24.	**How will the results of the study be disseminated and reported?**
	- Through the final year thesis
25.	**Is any payment other than reimbursement of expenses to be made to participants?**
	Yes ☐ No ☑
	If YES, outline the reason for this and the amounts involved.
26.	**Will personal data, beyond that recorded on the consent form, be used in the research?**
	No
27.	**Will the participants be audio-taped or video-taped?**
	No
28.	**What arrangements have been put in place to ensure confidentiality and security of data gathered in the study? Will the data be stored in hard copy or electronically, and where will it be held?**
	- Data will be stored electronically in a sheet. Participants will evaluate the form anonymously and the data from the evaluation form will only be used in the thesis.
29.	**Has this proposal been seen by or submitted to another ethics committee?**
	No

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30.	**Do any of the investigators have any actual or potential conflict of interest in this study?**
	No
31.	**Is there any other relevant information you would like to make known to the committee?**
	N/A
32.	**How will the data be made available at the end of the project?** You must declare your level of access, see Data Access appendix
	Controlled – any access requests for my data should be referred to committee for review on a case-by-case basis
33.	**Have you read and understood the guidelines for completing this form (see last page)?**
	Yes ☑ No ☐

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	Appendices
	Informed Consent
	Obtaining informed consent from parents does not obviate the need to obtain informed consent or assent from children participating in research. Assent means that the child shows some form of agreement to participate in the research without necessarily comprehending the nature of the research sufficiently to give full informed consent. Investigators working with infants should take special effort to explain the research to the parents and be especially sensitive to any indication of discomfort or avoidance in the infant. It is good practice to ask participants on the consent form to confirm their consent to keep and make use of the data they have contributed. This allows someone, who for example becomes unhappy about their participation in the research, to prevent their data being used. The researcher should keep signed copies of consent forms securely and separately from the research data. For a questionnaire study, the researchers should consider if the questionnaires can be returned anonymously, in which case a consent form may not be necessary since consent is implied by the subject choosing to participate in the study. Under these circumstances, an information sheet is still required.
	Data Access
	Research funders and publishers increasingly require researchers to find a way to provide access to their research data, even if that data initially includes personal information. The University of Bristol requires you to assign an expected access level to your research data, your selection will be checked and signed off by the Ethics Committee. If you intend to create multiple datasets with different anticipated access levels you should select the most restrictive access level you expect to use. The four access levels are: •Open – my data can be made openly available through a data repository •Registration required – my data should only be available to bona fide researchers, on request •Controlled – any access requests for my data should be referred to committee for review on a case-by-case basis •Closed – my data should not available for sharing If, during the course of your research, you believe that your nominated access level will no longer be appropriate you should inform your Faculty Ethics Officer. You must also ensure that you get the appropriate level of consent from participants at the start of the project to allow for onward use. If you need more information about this please see the guidance on sensitive data http://data.bris.ac.uk/research/storage-and-security/sensitive-data/ or contact data-bris@bristol.ac.uk Guidance on access levels Open – this level can be assigned where consent has been given by participants to make their anonymised data publicly available through a repository, in addition the risk assessment of re-identification of this anonymised data has been classed as low. These data sets can be made openly available through data repositories, including the Bristol Research Data Repository. Registration required – this level can be assigned where consent has been given by participants to make their anonymised data available to bona fide researchers on request, within the terms of participant consent and the risk assessment of re-identification of the anonymised data is low. If the data is deposited with the University of Bristol Research Data Repository requests will be facilitated by the Research Data Service. Controlled – this covers cases where historical consent for sharing is very limited and/or the risk assessment of re-identification is classed as medium to high. If the data is deposited with the University of Bristol Research Data Repository the Research Data Service will forward on requests to a Data Access Committee who will work with you as the PI to decide if/what data is appropriate to be made available. Closed – this covers data that is not available for sharing (except by regulators) because of ethical, IPR, prior exclusive agreements or other constraints. This should only be assigned if you have got prior agreement from the funder that they are willing to allow the data to be completely closed.


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