

January 22, 2021

Matthew Barnidge, Ph.D.  
Journalism and Creative Media  
Communication & Information Sciences  
Box 870172

Re: IRB # 20-12-4136: "News and Social Relationship Study"

Dear Dr. Barnidge,

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your proposed research. Your application has been given exempt approval according to 45 CFR part 46. Approval has been given under exempt review category 2(i) as outlined below:

*(2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if: (i) the information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.*

The approval for your application will lapse on January 21, 2022. If your research will continue beyond this date, please submit the annual report to the IRB as required by University policy before the lapse. Please note, any modifications made in research design, methodology, or procedures must be submitted to and approved by the IRB before implementation. Please submit a final report form when the study is complete.

Please use reproductions of the IRB-approved informed consent form to obtain consent from your participants.

Sincerely,

*Carpantato Myles*

Carpantato T. Myles, MSM, CIM, CIP, EXCS™  
Director & Research Compliance Officer

Jessup Building | Box 870127 | Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0127 | 205-348-8461  
Fax 205-348-7189 | Toll Free 1-877-820-3066 | [rscompliance@research.ua.edu](mailto:rscompliance@research.ua.edu)

**Please read this informed consent carefully before you decide to participate in the study.**

**Consent Form Key Information:**

- Participate in a 20-minute online survey
- No information collected that will connect identity with responses
- There are no direct benefits of participating in this study

**Purpose of the research study:** The study will explore the connections between news exposure, ideological/partisan difference, affect in interpersonal relationships, and a sense of belongingness to a broader community.

**What you will do in the study:** If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked to take a relatively brief online survey. This study will gather data from 600 participants.

**Time required:** Your participation will last approximately 20 minutes.

**Risks:** We don't anticipate anything more than minimal risks to you from participation in this study.

**Benefits:** We don't expect any direct benefits to you from participation in this study. There are benefits to science and society. A well-informed public is essential for a properly functioning democracy. This study has the potential to generate important new insights about the role played by social media use in how individuals become informed about topics of public concern.

**Confidentiality:** This study is confidential. Neither your name or any other identifiable information will be published. Only approved members of the research team will have access to the data collected as part of this survey. No identifying information about individual survey participants will be provided to the research team. Nonetheless, all of the data will be securely stored - data will be kept in secure, password protected servers using protocols that have been developed to protect data from unauthorized access and/or use.

**Voluntary participation:** Your participation in the study is completely voluntary.

**Right to withdraw from the study:** You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

**How to withdraw from the study:** To withdraw from the study, simply exit the online survey by closing your browser window. There is no penalty for withdrawing. You will still receive full compensation for the study.

**Compensation/Reimbursement:** You will receive compensation as agreed upon by Qualtrics. You will be compensated for your participation after completing the survey.

**If you have questions about the study or need to report a study related issue please contact:**

Name of Principal Investigator: Matthew Barnidge

Title: Assistant Professor

Department Name: Department of Journalism & Creative Media

Telephone: 205-348-8599

Email address: mharnidge@ua.edu

**If you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research study, would like to make suggestions or file complaints and concerns about the research study, please contact:**

Ms. Tanta Myles, the University of Alabama Research Compliance Officer at (205)-348-8461 or toll-free at 1-877-820-3066. You may also ask questions, make suggestions, or file complaints and concerns through the IRB Outreach Website at <http://ovpred.ua.edu/research-compliance/prco/>. You may email the Office for Research Compliance at [rscompliance@research.ua.edu](mailto:rscompliance@research.ua.edu).

**Agreement:**

- ☐ I agree to participate in the research study described above.
- ☐ I do not agree to participate in the research study described above.