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THE SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY, SOUTH CHINA NORMAL UNIVERSITY

Human Research Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Faculties

Application Form for Ethical Approval

Please complete Parts A - B and F – H. If you are collecting new data, please also complete Part C. If you are studying existing personal data, document or records, please also complete Part D. If you are collecting new data, and seeking a waiver of informed Consent, please also complete Part E.

Part A: Summary

Principal Investigator

* Surname: Kay First Name: Judy

Department: Faculty of Engineering and IT

Position / Staff Grade: Professor Staff No.:

Office telephone: PI email:

For students, please provide the following additional information:

Name: Changhao Li Degree Programme/Year: BAC (Hons) SCNU Student No.: N/A

Name of Supervisor: Prof Judy Kay Supervisor email: Judy.Kay@sydney.edu.au

Co-Investigator(s), if any

*Name: Staff No:
*Position: *Department/Unit:
Degree Programme/Year (for students only):

Name: Staff No:
Position: Department/Unit:
Degree Programme/Year (for students only):

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Position: Department/Unit:
Degree Programme/Year (for students only):

Research Proposal/Project:

Title: Keep Elders in Touch under Covid-19: Analysing WeChat's Usability for Chinese Elders

Start date: October 1, 2022 Expected completion date: October 30, 2022

Funding Source (please tick as appropriate):			
University internal research grants #	☐	National/Provincial Natural Science funding	☐
Innovation Technology Fund	☐	National/Provincial Social Science funding	☐
Contract Research #	☐	Public Policy Research	☐
Self-funded	☐	Other external grant #	☐

Please specify funding source: _____N/A_____

**Delete as appropriate*

Part B: Research Proposal

Please summarise on ONE page the objectives of the project and methodology used, and attach a copy of your proposal including any questionnaire and informed consent form to be used.

Objectives of the proposal:
Social connections are important for everyone but are critically important for older people. Considerable research from around the globe has already shown that regular social interaction helps to delay the onset of cognitive decline and frailty. Since elderly people in care homes are particularly at risk of loss of social connection since they lose their regular contact with family and friends, gerontological "age-in-place" is gaining momentum both among academics and real-life practitioners. To support elders' aging-in-place processes, modern communication technologies which enable elders to keep in touch with their family and friends are a vital component. Elders can utilize smartphones and apps to contact people. Trending commercial solutions for everyone to keep in touch with each other might include LINE, Messenger, Telegram, WeChat, etc. However, the key challenge is that those applications are built by young people and mostly for the younger generation, instead of the elders, given the fact that elders often feel confused and inconvenient when using such applications.

Research plan and methodology:
[Background] Social connections are important for everyone but are critically important for older people. Considerable research from around the globe has already shown that regular social interaction helps to delay the onset of cognitive decline and frailty. Since elderly people in care homes are particularly at risk of loss of social connection since they lose their regular contact with family and friends, gerontological "age-in-place" is gaining momentum both among academics and real-life practitioners. [Challenge] To support elders' aging-in-place processes, modern communication technologies which enable elders to keep in touch with their family and friends are a vital component. Elders can utilize smartphones and apps to contact people. Trending commercial solutions for everyone to keep in touch with each other might include LINE, Messenger, Telegram, WeChat, etc. However, the key challenge is that those applications are built by young people and mostly for the younger generation, instead of the elders, given the fact that elders often feel confused and inconvenient when using such applications. [Aim] This thesis project aims to investigate current situation of Chinese elders keeping in touch with their family and friends under potential Covid-19 lockdown or self-isolation, examine WeChat's usability and its design flaws via HCI methodologies, including think aloud, cognitive walk-through, heuristic evaluation and surveying. [Methodology] User study is the major component of the project. To identify and comprehend elder behaviors, I applied various methods from the field of human-computer interaction (HCI) and gerontology, including think-aloud, heuristics evaluation, cognitive walkthrough, contextual inquiry, and questionnaire surveying. Furthermore, knowledge from Positive Psychology is also drawn, including the use of selected questions from the UCLA Loneliness Scale and the PERMA model by Martin Seligman.

Part C: Risk Assessment for Newly Collected Data

Please answer the following questions, if your proposal involves any newly collected data, to decide if your proposal should be submitted for expedited review.	Yes	No
a) Will the study involve action/participatory/treatment research?	☐	☐
b) Is it possible that the study will involve greater than minimal privacy risks, which could induce stress to research participants, such as political behaviour, illegal conduct, drug or alcohol use and sexual conduct?	☐	☐
c) Is it possible that the participants' burden to complete the procedures will induce greater than	☐	☐

	minimal stress, in particular, for children, given their age and capacity?		
d)	Is it possible that the study will induce greater than minimal physical or psychological stress/pain/discomfort?	☐	☐
e)	Is it possible that the study will expose participants to greater than minimal physical or medical risk?	☐	☐
f)	Will deception be used during the study?	☐	☐
g)	Will video-recording be used during the study?	☐	☐
h)	Will audio-recording be used during the study?	☐	☐
i)	Is there potential conflict of interests? (e.g. financial gain to the investigators, power over participants such as teacher/student relationship)	☐	☐
j)	Will the study involve vulnerable participants who are unable to give informed consent, e.g. under the age of 18, mentally handicapped individuals? - If "Yes", please specify details of the age group and/or vulnerability: _____ (Parent/Guardian Consent Form should be attached.)	☐	☐

For Expedited Review:

- If you have answered "No" to all of the questions (a) – (j) above, your application may qualify for an expedited review, meaning that your research involves minimal risk[1]. However, informed consent is still required unless reasons why this is infeasible are adequately justified.

[1] Minimal risk means that the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examination or tests.

For Full Review:

- If you have answered "Yes" to any of the above questions (a) – (j), please give more details on your study design and methodology in the questions (k) to (t).

k) The selection and recruitment of participants (Attach any initial letter of contact and Consent Form)

The preliminary survey: paper-based survey, in author's neighbourhood and align with Chinese pandemic regulations.

The WeChat Usability Survey: via online questionnaire platform "Survey Star".

l) Rationale for sample size calculation?

Initial think aloud and cognitive walk-through typically require 3 to 5 participants.

m) How will participants be recruited/identified?

By age: equal to or above 65 years old.

n) What are the inclusion and exclusion criteria?

N/A

o) Description of any specific data collection, such as interviews, questionnaire (including telephone) survey or experimental procedures like deception (please attach Deception Form) and any treatment or intervention.

Interview used in heuristic evaluation and cognitive walkthrough;

Questionnaire used in surveys via both paper and online platform.

p) Please state who will perform the data collection, how long it will take and where the data collection will take place.

The thesis author will perform data collection.

All data collection processed are performed in Guangzhou and in October, 2022.

q) Can the participants be allowed to withdraw at any time without prejudice?

Yes.

r) Will there be any stress/discomfort to participants?

No.

s) Please provide details of any audio and/or video recording including the justifications for the recording.

The audio recordings are saved within the border of China and will not be transferred to foreign countries.

Justification of such recordings could be verified via the China Notary Association (http://www.chinanotary.org.cn/).

t) Please identify any potential conflict of interests and how that potential conflict will be addressed.

N/A.

Part D: Using Existing Documents or Records containing Personal Data

Please complete this section if you are using existing documents or records that contain any personal data.

Will existing documents or records containing any personal data be used? Yes ☐ No ☐

- If "Yes", please give more details of the personal data being obtained by answering questions (a) – (h) in the following.
- If "No", please skip this Part D.

a) What is the source of the data?

b) Were the data originally collected for research purposes? Yes ☐ No ☐

- If "Yes" is checked, please attach a copy of the Consent Form for the original collection of data.
- If "No" is checked, please provide the Personal Information Collection Statement.
- For all situations, please explain how this research is consistent with the purpose and use specified when the data were originally collected.

c) Please list the types of personal data being used, if not already listed in the Consent Form for the original collection of data or Personal Information Collection Statement.

d) Are any of the data listed above sensitive? Yes ☐ No ☐

- If "Yes", please provide full details.

e) Is the source of data publicly available[2]? Yes ☐ No ☐

f) How are data identified when they are made available to your research team? (Please indicate by marking the appropriate box below.)

i) ☐ Direct Identifier (i.e. name, address, ID card number, medical record number, etc.)

ii) ☐ Indirect Identifier (i.e. an assigned code which could be used by the investigator or the source providing data to identify a subject, such as tracking code used by the source.)

iii) ☐ No Identifier (i.e. neither the researcher nor the source providing the data can identify a subject based upon information provided with the data.)

g) If i) or ii) is checked above and you are requesting permission to study archived data, will you abstract and record any subject identifiers as a part of the data collection process?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Does Not Apply ☐

[2] Please note that the term "publicly available" means that the general public can obtain the data. Sources are not considered "publicly available" if access to the data is limited to researchers.

h) Will any data be collected from subjects after the submission of this application?

Yes ☐ No ☐

- If "Yes", please complete Part C

Part E: Assessment for a Waiver of Written Informed Consent

The waiver of written informed consent is only applicable to data without personal identifiers, e.g. where data are tabulated or where oral consent is audio-recorded, PIs are required to clearly specify that they are using data without personal identifiers in their research grant proposals.

Please answer the following questions if you are collecting new data, and wish to apply for a waiver of informed consent.

When conducting research where seeking written consent is not practical or too sensitive, oral consent might be less of a privacy risk than written consent and can be considered as an alternative. Please submit a full justification below and attach an information sheet to this application.

a) Will there be oral consent? Yes ☐ No ☐

If "Yes", will the oral consent be audio recorded? Yes ☐ No ☐

b) Is participation anonymous? Yes ☐ No ☐

If "No", i.e. participation is not anonymous, your proposed research is not normally qualified for a waiver of informed consent. Measures should be taken to code the data collected and delete all personal identifiers on the spot.

c) If participation is not anonymous, please explain why the study is not practicable without a waiver.

N/A.

d) Please explain why the proposed study presents no more than minimal risk to the participants.

Because the study only involves the investigation into current WeChat use, which poses no harm.

e) Please explain why a waiver of informed consent will not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the participants.

N/A. The consent is based on paper.

Part F: Benefits

Please state any possible benefit to participants.

N/A. The survey participation is voluntary.

Part G: Attachments

Please tick as appropriate to indicate which of the following documents are enclosed to this application.

(1) Full research proposal including any questionnaire and/or interview script. (Note i)	☑
(2) Parent/Guardian Consent Form	☐
(3) Informed Consent Form (Note ii)	☑
(4) Deception: post debriefing consent form	☐

Notes:

(i) Mandatory

(ii) Mandatory unless waiver has been applied for or no data collection is being undertaken.

Part H: Declaration

In making this application, I certify that I have read and understand the University's *Policy for Ethical Practice*, and I will comply with the ethical principles of these documents. I will submit, as appropriate, a *Report for Research Progress or Amendment of an Approved Project* if there are significant changes to my research, or an adverse incident, or when the report for annual progress due.

Date: 2022-09-30 Signature: Changhao Li

(Signature of Applicant)

Date: 2022-09-30 Signature: Judy Kay

(Signature of supervisor)

(for RPG/TPG students only)

I hereby endorse this application with my approval and confirm that the investigator(s) are appropriately qualified in the research area involved to conduct the proposed research project, and am capable of undertaking this research study in a safe and ethical manner.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Head of Department/Dean of Faculty