

# Informed Consent Form Template

## How to use

- This is a template form, duplicate it and fill it with your own content
- Don't worry, it's a long document because it contains explanations and examples (written in orange)
- Send this to participants in advance of the session so they have an opportunity to read it and ask questions before hand
- Rather than asking people to just read the consent form and then sign it, before the participant signs the form, highlight the key concepts a. For example, you could say, "Before you sign the form, I just want to point out some things on it...". Then highlight issues such as confidentiality and freedom to withdraw.
- Don't mix up the NDA with the Informed Consent Form
- This contains personal information and must be kept in a secure place under lock and key
- This form has been adapted from the World Health Organisation's templates for [Informed Consent](http://www.who.int/rpc/research_ethics/informed_consent/en/)  
[http://www.who.int/rpc/research\\_ethics/informed\\_consent/en/](http://www.who.int/rpc/research_ethics/informed_consent/en/)

# Informed Consent Form

This informed consent form is for\_\_\_\_ who we are inviting to participate in \_\_\_\_ research, titled “ \_\_\_\_”

Name the group of individuals for whom this consent is written. Because research for a single project is often carried out with a number of different groups of individuals - for example customers, community members, clients of services - it is important that you identify which group this particular consent is for.

**Example:** This informed consent form is for people who have bought digital products, who we are inviting to participate in interview research, titled "Trust in digital products".

[Name of Principle Researcher]

[Name of Organisation]

[Link to Organisations privacy policy/ To learn more about how IF uses data visit <https://projectsbyif.com/how-if-uses-data>]

[Name of Sponsor]

[Name of Project and Version]

## **This Informed Consent Form has two parts:**

- Information sheet (to share information about the research with you)
- Certificate of consent (for signatures if you choose to participate)

**You will be given a copy of the full Informed Consent Form**

## Part 1: Information sheet

### Introduction

- Briefly state who you are and that you are inviting them to participate in research which you are doing.
- Inform them that they may talk to anyone they feel comfortable talking with about the research (if the project allows) and that they can take time to reflect on whether they want to participate or not.
- Assure the participant that if they do not understand some of the words or concepts, that you will take time to explain them as you go along and that they can ask questions at anytime.

**Example:** I am Georgina, a designer working for IF. I am doing research on people make decisions to trust the things they buy. I am going to give you information and invite you to be part of this research. This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask me to stop as we go through the information and I will take time to explain. If you have questions later, you can ask them of me or of another member of my team.

### Purpose of the research

- Explain the research question in simple terms which will clarify rather than confuse. Use local and simplified words rather than scientific terms and professional jargon.
- In your explanation, consider local beliefs and knowledge when deciding how best to provide the information.

**Example:** People need to be confident the products they buy aren't going to break or to cause them any harm. We want to find ways of giving people that confidence when they buy products that connect to the internet. We believe that you can help us by telling us about the digital products you recently bought and how you made the decision to buy them.

We want to learn how people decide to trust a product and how they're relationship with it changes after they've bought. This knowledge might help us to learn how to design better tools to help keep track of products people have already bought.

### **Type of research intervention**

Briefly state the type of intervention that will be undertaken. This will be expanded upon in the procedures section but it may be helpful and less confusing to the participant if they know from the very beginning whether, for example, the research involves an interview, a questionnaire, or testing a prototype.

**Example:** This research will involve your participation in an interview that will take about one hour.

### **Participant selection**

Indicate why you have chosen this person to participate in this research. People wonder why they have been chosen and may be fearful, confused or concerned.

**Example:** You are being invited to take part in this research because we feel that because you buy digital products regularly you can contribute much to our understanding and knowledge of how people make decisions about the things they buy.

- **Example of question to check participant has understood:** *Do you know why we are asking you to take part in this study? Do you know what the study is about?*

### **Voluntary participation**

- Indicate clearly that they can choose to participate or not.
- State, if applicable, that they will still receive all the services they usually do if they choose not to participate or to assure them that their choosing to participate or not will not have any bearing on their job or job-related evaluations.
- It is important to state clearly at the beginning of the form that participation is voluntary so that the other information can be heard in this context. Although, if the interview or group discussion has already taken place, the person cannot 'stop participation' but request that the information provided by them not be used in the research study.

**Example:** Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not.

**OR**

The choice that you make will have no bearing on your job or on any work-related evaluations or reports. You may change your mind later and stop participating even if you agreed earlier.

- **Example of question to check participant has understood:** *If you decide not to take part in this research study, do you know what your options are? Do you know that you do not have to take part in this research, if you do not wish to? Do you have any questions?*

## Procedures

A. Provide a brief introduction to the format of the research study.

**Example:** We are asking you to help us learn more about how people make decisions to buy digital products. We are inviting you to take part in this research project. If you accept, you will be asked to.....:

B. Explain the type of questions that the participants are likely to be asked in the focus group, the interviews, or the survey. If the research involves questions or discussion which may be sensitive or potentially cause embarrassment, inform the participant of this.

### Example 1 (for focus group discussions)

take part in a discussion with 7-8 other persons with similar experiences. This discussion will be guided by [name of moderator/guider] or myself.

The group discussion will start with me, or the focus group guide or moderator (use the local word for group discussion leader), making sure that you are comfortable. We can also answer questions about the research that you might have. Then we will ask you questions about buying digital products and give you time to share your knowledge. The questions will be about how you decided to buy that product, why you felt you could trust that product, how your relationship changed with the product after you purchased it.

We will also talk about digital products more generally because this will give us a chance to understand different attitudes to digital products. These are the types of questions we will ask..... **We will not ask you to share any knowledge that you are not comfortable sharing.**

The discussion will take place in [location], and no one else but the people who take part in the discussion and guide or myself will be present during this discussion. The entire discussion will be audio and video-recorded, but no-one will be identified by name on the films. The audio and video files will be kept [explain how the files will be stored]. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else except [name of person(s)] will have access to the files. The audio and video files will be destroyed after \_\_\_\_number of days/weeks.

### Example 2 (for interviews)

participate in an interview with [name of interviewer] or myself.

During the interview, I or another interviewer will sit down with you in a comfortable place at the [location]. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions during the interview, you may say so and the interviewer will move on to the next question. There will be one other person in the room taking notes, but they can leave if you don't feel comfortable / No one else but the interviewer will be present unless you would like someone else to be there. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else except [name of person(s)] will have access to the information documented during your interview. The entire interview will be audio and video-recorded, but no-one will be identified by name on the films. The audio and video files will be kept [explain how the files will be stored]. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else except [name of person(s)] will have access to the files. The audio and video files will be destroyed after \_\_\_\_\_number of days/weeks.

### Example 3 (for questionnaire surveys)

fill out a survey which will be provided by [name of distributor of blank surveys] and collected by [name of collector of completed surveys].

**OR**

You may answer the questionnaire yourself, or it can be read to you and you can say out loud the answer you want me to write down.

If you do not wish to answer any of the questions included in the survey, you may skip them and move on to the next question. [Describe how the survey will be distributed and collected]. The information recorded is confidential, your name is not being included on the forms, only a number will identify you, and no one else except [name of person(s) with access to the information] will have access to your survey.

### Duration

Include a statement about the time commitments of the research for the participant including both the duration of the research and follow-up, if relevant.

**Example:** The research takes place over 1 day. During that time, you will visit us for the 1 hour interview.

- **Examples of question to check understanding:** If you decide to take part in the study, do you know how much time will the interview take? Where will it take

place? Do you know how much time will the discussion with other people take? If you agree to take part, do you know if you can stop participating? Do you know that you may not respond to the questions that you do not wish to respond to? Etc. Do you have any more questions?

## **Risks**

- Explain and describe any risks that you anticipate or that are possible.
- The risks depend upon the nature and type of research, and should be, tailored to the specific issue and situation.

**Example:** If the discussion is on sensitive and personal issues e.g. your health, personal habits etc. then an example of text could be something like "We are asking you to share with us some very personal and confidential information, and you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. You do not have to answer any question or take part in the discussion/interview/survey if you don't wish to do so, and that is also fine. You do not have to give us any reason for not responding to any question, or for refusing to take part in the interview"

## **OR**

If for example, the discussion is on opinions on government policies and community beliefs, and in general no personal information is sought, then the text under risks could read something like "There is a risk that you may share some personal or confidential information by chance, or that you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. However, we do not wish for this to happen. You do not have to answer any question or take part in the discussion/interview/survey if you feel the question(s) are too personal or if talking about them makes you uncomfortable.

## **Benefits**

Benefits may be divided into benefits to the individual, benefits to the community in which the individual resides, and benefits to society as a whole as a result of finding an answer to the research question. Mention only those activities that will be actual benefits and not those to which they are entitled regardless of participation.

**Example:** There will be no direct benefit to you, but your participation is likely to help us learn how to design better tools to help people monitor their connected products.

## **Reimbursements**

- State clearly what you will provide the participants with as a result of their participation.
- These may include, for example, travel costs and reimbursement for time lost.

**Example:** You will not be provided any incentive to take part in the research. However, we will give you [provide a figure, if money is involved] for your time, and travel expense (if applicable).

- **Example of question to check participant has understood:** *Can you tell me if you have understood correctly the benefits that you will have if you take part in the study? Do you know if the study will pay for your travel costs and time lost, and do you know how much you will be re-imbursed? Do you have any other questions?*

## **Confidentiality**

- Explain how the research team will maintain the confidentiality of data with respect to both information about the participant and information that the participant shares.
- Include links to any public documents about how your organisation uses data
- Outline any limits to confidentiality.
- If the research is sensitive and/or involves participants who are highly vulnerable - research concerning violence against women for example - explain to the participant any extra precautions you will take to ensure safety and anonymity.

**Example:** We will not be sharing personal information about you to anyone outside of the research team. Any personal information that we collect about you from this research project will be kept private. Any information we do share will have a number on it instead of your name and will not reveal anything personal about you. Only the researchers will know what your number is and we will lock that information up with a lock and key. For further information, visit <https://projectsbyif.com/how-if-uses-data>.

## **The following applies to focus groups:**

Focus groups provide a particular challenge to confidentiality because once something is said in the group it becomes common knowledge. Explain to the participant that you will encourage group participants to respect confidentiality, but that you cannot guarantee it.

**Example:** We will ask you and others in the group not to talk to people outside the group about what was said in the group. We will, in other words, ask each of you to keep what was said in the group confidential. You should know, however, that we cannot stop or prevent participants who were in the group from sharing things that should be confidential.



- **Example of question to check participant has understood:** *Did you understand the procedures that we will be using to make sure that any information that we as researchers collect about you will remain confidential? Do you understand that the we cannot guarantee complete confidentiality of information that you share with us in a group discussion Do you have any more questions?*

## Sharing the results

Your plan for sharing the outcomes of the research with the participants should be provided. If you have a plan and a timeline for the sharing of information, include the details. You may also inform the participant that the outcomes of the research will be shared more broadly, for example, on your website, or through publications and conferences.

### Example:

We may decide to share quotes, observations or insights from the information we gather today with people outside of the research team. This may be for external presentations, in blog posts or in public reports that explain the research findings. Nothing that you tell us today will be attributed to you by name.

The knowledge that we get from this research will help us to develop [name of product or service]. Following the meetings, we will keep participants informed of the progress of the project and share outcomes when we are able to do so.

## Right to refuse or withdraw

This is a reconfirmation that participation is voluntary and includes the right to withdraw. Tailor this section to ensure that it fits for the group for whom you are seeking consent. Participants should have an opportunity to review their remarks in individual interviews and erase part or all of the recording or note. Clearly display a contact email for participants to use if they want to withdraw their consent.

**Example:** You do not have to take part in this research if you do not wish to do so. You may withdraw your consent at any time, even after the project has ended. To learn more about withdrawing from research, contact [[paul@projectsbyif.com](mailto:paul@projectsbyif.com)].

**If applicable:** Choosing to participate will not affect your job or job-related evaluations in any way. You may stop participating in the [discussion/interview] at any time that you wish without your job being affected.

**If applicable:** I will give you an opportunity at the end of the interview/discussion to review your remarks, and you can ask to modify or remove portions of those, if you do not agree with my notes or if I did not understand you correctly.

**Who to contact**

*Provide the name and contact information of someone who is involved, informed and accessible - a local person who can actually be contacted.*

**Example:** If you have any questions, you can ask them now or later. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact any of the following: [name, address/telephone number/e-mail

- **Example of question to check participant has understood:** Do you know that you do not have to take part in this study if you do not wish to? You can say No if you wish to? Do you know that you can ask me questions later, if you wish to? Do you know that I have given the contact details of the person who can give you more information about the study? Etc.

You can ask me any more questions about any part of the research study, if you wish to. Do you have any questions?

## **Part II: Certificate of consent**

- This section must be written in the first person.
- It should include a few brief statements about the research and be followed by a statement similar the one in bold below.
- If the participant is illiterate but gives oral consent, a witness must sign.

- A researcher or the person going over the informed consent must sign each consent.
- Because the certificate is an integral part of the informed consent and not a stand-alone document, the layout or design of the form should reflect this.
- The certificate of consent should avoid statements that have "I understand...." phrases. The understanding should perhaps be better tested through targeted questions during the reading of the information sheet (some examples of questions are given above), or through the questions being asked at the end of the reading of the information sheet, if the potential participant is reading the information sheet him/herself.

**Example:** I have been invited to participate in an interview as part of research about buying digital products.

**(This section is mandatory)**

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. ☐

I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction. ☐

I consent for **notes to be taken/audio to be recorded** during the research session ☐

I consent for **quotes, observations and insights** to be shared outside this research session that do not personally identify me ☐

I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this research. ☐

**Print name of participant**\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of participant**\_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
day/month/year

**If less able to read**

I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions.

I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

**Print name of witness**\_\_\_\_\_

**Thumb print of participant**

**Signature of witness** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

day/month/year

### **Statement by the researcher/person taking consent**

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands that the following will be done:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability.



I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

**A copy of this ICF has been provided to the participant.**

**Print Name of Researcher/person taking the consent**\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent**\_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

Day/month/year