

**Title of Research Study:** Understanding Consumer Online Behavior

**Principal Investigator:** Guy Aridor, Marketing Department of Kellogg School of Management

Co-author: Sam Goldberg, Stanford Graduate School of Business

**Supported By:** This research is supported by the Marketing Department of Kellogg School of Management and Stanford Graduate School of Business.

**Collaborating Institutions:** Stanford Graduate School of Business

## Key Information about this research study:

The following is a short summary of this study to help you decide whether to be a part of this study. Information that is more detailed is explained later on in this form.

You will be asked to complete a survey that will take up to 15 minutes. Please only do so if you use Google Chrome as it is required to be in this study.

If you are eligible for part two, you will be asked to download a Chrome extension to keep on your computer for up to 2 months.

- The purpose of this study is to understand the browsing behavior and attitudes of consumers on the Internet.
- You will be asked to download a Chrome extension to keep on your computer for up to 2 months. It will collect the following data:
  - The time you spend on each domain.
  - The advertisements that you see on each domain.
  - The identities of all third parties each domain shares user data with.
  - It does NOT collect the content you browse or the data loaded into a page.
- The primary potential risk of participation is data privacy, although all necessary safeguards are in place to protect the privacy and confidentiality of your data.
- The main benefit of being in this study is you will receive truthful and accurate information about how you spend your time online. However, we cannot guarantee or promise any benefits from this study.

## Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?

We are asking you to take part in this research study because you are over 18 years old and living in the United States.

## How many people will be in this study?

We expect about 2000-5000 people will be in this research study, with up to 150 enrolled in this research study through Northwestern University and Stanford University.

## What should I know about participating in a research study?

- Whether or not you take part is up to you.
- You can choose not to take part.
- You can agree to take part and later change your mind.

- You must be an active user of Google Chrome to participate.
- Your decision will not be held against you.
- You can ask all the questions you want before you decide.

### **What happens if I say, “Yes, I want to be in this research”?**

You will be asked to install a chrome extension, for up to two months, to help us better understand how much you value different web sites and how different online factors influence your browsing decisions. Our extension will passively collect which sites you visit, how much time you spend on them, what advertisements you see, if you click on an ad, and how many partners each site shares your data with. We will **not** collect any information about the actual content you view. We may change the experience you have with online advertisements during the study, such as removing them entirely. All data will be held on a secure server and anonymized to protect your identity. We have built our extension to ensure the privacy of our participants is built in by design. Upon the completion of the study, any personally identifying information (i.e. your email address) will be deleted permanently.

At the conclusion of the study, we will send you an email informing you that the study is completed and information regarding your payment. Furthermore, we will provide you with information for how to remove the Chrome Extension: instructions are provided more broadly at this support link [https://support.google.com/chrome\\_webstore/answer/2664769?hl=en](https://support.google.com/chrome_webstore/answer/2664769?hl=en). Note that you will only receive the full payment from the second part of the study if you keep the Chrome Extension installed until you receive this email from us.

### **Will being in this study help me in any way?**

We cannot promise any benefits to you or others from your taking part in this research. However, possible benefits include greater awareness and understanding of data collection behaviors online.

### **Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?**

Although all necessary safeguards will be in place to protect the privacy and confidentiality of participant data, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet during study completion when third party software may be used.

A possible risk for any research is that confidentiality could be compromised – that is, that people outside the study might get hold of confidential study information. We will do everything we can to minimize this risk, as described in more detail later in this form.

Note that we may be required by law to report to appropriate NU authorities any information you provide to us that indicates sexual misconduct, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, self-harm, child abuse and sexual harassment. Therefore, I cannot promise you complete confidentiality of any information you share during the study consistent with this.

### **What happens if I do not want to be in this research, or I change my mind later?**

Participation in research is voluntary. You can decide to participate or not to participate. If you do not want to be in this study or withdraw from the study at any point, your decision will not affect your relationship with Northwestern University or Stanford University.

You can leave the research at any time and it will not be held against you. However, you will only receive the additional compensation beyond the survey compensation if you keep the extension installed for the duration of the study.

If you decide to withdraw from this study, the researchers will ask you if the information already collected from you can be used. We will do this via email once you notice that your extension has stopped providing us data or if you indicate to us, we will directly ask you whether we can use your information. If you explicitly tell us following this that you do not want us to use your information, we will promptly delete it.

### **How will the researchers protect my information?**

The research takes place online. All data will be stored on a secure and credentialed server for which only the two authors will have access. All data analysis will take place on password-protected university laptops. The only identifiable information we will collect is email addresses in order to make payments.

Identifiable data will be hashed to a unique random ID the key will be stored securely on a credentialed server for which only the two authors will have access. All data will be held on a secure server and anonymized to protect your identity. We have built our extension to ensure the privacy of our participants is built in by design. Upon the completion of the study, any personally identifying information (i.e. your email address) will be deleted permanently.

### **Who will have access to the information collected during this research study?**

Efforts will be made to limit the use and disclosure of your personal information, including research study records, to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete secrecy.

There are reasons why information about you may be used or seen by other people beyond the research team during or after this study. Examples include:

- University officials, government officials, study funders, auditors, and the Institutional Review Board may need access to the study information to make sure the study is done in a safe and appropriate manner.
- Collaborating researchers at other institutions who are involved with this study.

If we learn about current or ongoing self-harm, harm to others, child abuse or neglect, we may be required or permitted by law or policy to report this information to authorities.

### **How might the information collected in this study be shared in the future?**

We will keep the information we collect about you during this research study for study recordkeeping.

De-identified data from this study may be shared with the research community, with journals in which study results are published, and with databases and data repositories used for research.

### Will I be paid or given anything for taking part in this study?

You will receive up to \$50 as payment for your participation in this stage of our study. The exact [amount](#) will depend on your survey responses and the procedure we use based on these responses, documented in the baseline survey. [In particular, we will ask you how much you need to be compensated to install the software, randomly select an offer between \\$0 and \\$50. If your compensation request is lower than the randomly selected offer, then you will be invited to the study at the randomly selected offer.](#) Payment is contingent on completing the full 2 month data collection period. We will compensate you in the form of Amazon gift cards, unless your recruiting source (e.g., Northwestern or Stanford) has a direct system set up to send you payments.

### Who can I talk to?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, you can contact the Principal Investigator Professor Guy Aridor [guy.aridor@kellogg.northwestern.edu](mailto:guy.aridor@kellogg.northwestern.edu)

This research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (“IRB”) – an IRB is a committee that protects the rights of people who participate in research studies. You may contact the IRB by phone at 847-467-1723 or by email at [sbsirb@northwestern.edu](mailto:sbsirb@northwestern.edu) if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your rights as a research participant.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

If you want a copy of this consent for your records, you can print it from the screen.

If you cannot print the consent and would like a copy for your records, contact the Principal Investigator with the contact information above.

If you wish to participate, please click the “I Agree” button and you will be taken to the survey.

If you do not wish to participate in this study, please select “I Disagree” or select X in the corner of your browser.