

Consent forms for participants and covering letter for parents/careers of the children



The Principal Investigator(s) and project title

Dr Nigel Newbutt
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Project title

Virtual Reality Technology used by Autistic groups

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the information that you need to consider in deciding whether to participate in this study.

Project Description

This project aims to ask you some questions related to your use of a head-mounted display to experience a virtual reality environment. This will involve using a HMD in your school with your teacher. We will work together to make sure you are happy to use this technology and are able to stop if you ask/gesture. You will only be asked to experience the HMD for 30-40 seconds, initially. You will have the chance to use it for longer if you prefer. I will be capturing certain data, including asking you about your experience (a short interview using field notes to capture what is said) and asking if you would complete one questionnaire. I will use some of this information, without your names or identifying you in any way, in publishable material (i.e. an academic article). I will also take some pictures of you working / using the HMD. Your face or identifying features will be pixelated/burred.

When the study is completed I will present my findings at the school, of which you will all be able to attend. A copy of any written materials will be available in the school. You are also free to contact me at any time (using the above email) to request any outputs/materials captured through this work.

An assessment using the Autism Quotient (AQ) will be administered to capture information related to participants' autism diagnosis.

Confidentiality of the Data

All data will be stored on a password-protected computer and saved in password protected MS Word documents. Furthermore, this will be backed up on a safe and secure network. Paper-based materials will be stored in a locked cabinet at the University of West of England. All paper materials, and digital archives will be kept stored in a locked cabinet for 12 months after the study and then destroyed. At no point during or after this study will real names be used in dissemination of this study, in addition the school will not be named (helping to ensure participants are kept anonymous).

Any data collected during the study will be destroyed from local and networked versions – deletion of file/s.

Location

This project will take place at: The Mendip School, Edmund Rack Road, Prestleigh, Shepton Mallet. BA4 4FZ.

Within this school a case study group will be studied and asked to report their experiences of using a head-mounted display and the virtual reality experience therein.

Remuneration

During the research, donations will be made to the Somerset branch of the NAS, as a way to thank the school, and you, for participation in this work.

Disclaimer

You are not obliged to take part in this study, and are free to withdraw at any time during the time we use the head mounted display and virtual reality experiences. Should you choose to withdraw from the programme you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason. You may withdraw from the study up to and including 22nd January 2018 (when the study starts) and may withdraw from the study (along with any data you've provided) after participating in the study; you just need to inform the school, your teacher or the researcher.



PARTICIPANTS/CHILDREN
Consent to Participate in a Research Programme Involving the Use of Human
Participants

“Virtual Reality Technology used by Autistic groups”

I have read the information relating to the above programme of research in which I have been asked to participate and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.

I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researcher involved in the study will have access to the data. It has been explained to me what will happen to the data once the research programme has been completed. I also understand that my name will not be used and that the name of the school will also not be used in publications/presentations after the study; ensuring total anonymity.

I hereby fully and freely consent to participate in the study, which has been fully explained to me.

Having given this consent, I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the programme at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason. In addition, I understand that I may withdraw from the study at anytime after the study has finished, by informing their teacher, the school or the researcher.

Participant's name (BLOCK CAPITALS):

.....

Participant's signature:

.....

Investigator's name:

.....

Investigator's signature:

.....

Date:/...../20.....

Consent forms for parents/careers of the children



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Project title

Virtual Reality Technology used by Autistic groups

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the information that you need to consider in deciding whether you would like your child to participate in the study.

Project Description

This project aims to use a head-mounted display and virtual reality (for information in the "information leaflet" included) within your child's school to better understand their experiences of using such a technology. Once we are better placed to understand the views of children using this technology we will be able to further enquire as to how this might be used as an intervention to support various skills (i.e. social skills, communication, etc...). The project will involve using a head-mounted display in your child's classroom with their teacher. I will be led by the teacher and your child in their willingness to use the technology. We will do this across several weeks (about 4 weeks in total) to include as many children as possible. I will be capturing certain data; using questionnaires and interviews (taking notes of what is said), as well as observational data (photographs and written descriptions). I will use some of this information, without real names, in publishable material (i.e. an academic article). I might also take some pictures of your child using the head-mounted display. Faces or identifying features will be pixelated/burred.

When the study is completed I will present my findings at the school, of which you will all be able to attend. A copy of any written materials will be available in the school. You are also free to contact me at any time (using the above email) to request any outputs/materials captured through this work.

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Disclaimer

You are not obliged to take part in this study, and are free to withdraw at any time during the time we use the head mounted display and virtual reality experiences. Should you choose to withdraw from the programme you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason. You may withdraw from the study up to and including 22nd January 2018 (when the study starts) and may withdraw from the study (along with any data you've provided) after participating in the study; you just need to inform the school, your teacher or the researcher.



**PARENTS/GUARDIANS:
Consent to Participate in a Research Programme Involving the Use of Human
Participants**

"Virtual Reality Technology used by Autistic groups"

I have read the information relating to the above programme of research in which my child(ren) have been asked to participate and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which my child(ren) will be involved have been explained to me.

I understand that my child's involvement in this study, and various data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researcher involved in the study will have access to the data. It has been explained to me what will happen to the data once the research programme has been completed. I also understand that no names will be used and that the school name will also not be used in publications/presentations after the study; ensuring total anonymity for all involved.

I hereby fully and freely consent for my child(ren) to participate in the study, which has been fully explained to me.

Having given this consent, I understand that me and my child(ren) have the right to withdraw from the programme at any time without disadvantage to myself or my child (and their academic progress at school) and without being obliged to give any reason. In addition, I understand that my child(ren) may withdraw from the study at anytime after the study has finished, by informing their teacher, the school or the researcher.

Participant's name (BLOCK CAPITALS):

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Participant's signature:

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Investigator's name:

.....

Investigator's signature:

.....

Date:/...../20.....



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Dear Parent / Guardian,

I am a researcher at the University of the West of England investigating the use and role of technology used by people on the autism spectrum. I have previously undertaken studies in schools working with teachers and pupils with autism to support social communication opportunities. To this end the Mendip School have very kindly offered to support a study investigating the way children with autism experience using head-mounted displays and virtual reality (more on this in the enclosed leaflet).

I am writing to you to obtain your consent for your child to be involved in this study. Therefore I have included a '*participant information leaflet*' and '*parent / guardian consent form*'. I would be most grateful if you would read these, sign if you are happy, and return to the school (in the enclosed envelope) to enable your child to be involved. We are also holding an information evening for you to attend to ask any questions and to experience the virtual reality experiences yourselves. We will be in touch regarding a date/time for this.

The information leaflet explains the study in more detail, as does the consent form. I have tried to include as many visuals as possible to help contextualise the technology involved. However, I would like to take this opportunity to underline that the proposed work involves your child using a head-mounted display and virtual reality experiences at their school. Most importantly, and at no point will your child be made to use the equipment. I will work closely with the teachers and be guided by them (as they know them best). Your child will be offered the chance to use the technology and will be helped to wear this (if they want). The experiences will be slowly introduced to them, with only a few seconds 'exposure' to virtual scenes at a time. This will help to build confidence and ensure they are happy to continue with the study. Your child will be able to leave the study and experience(s) at any time and the teachers will be sure to tell them how to exit the study. There is the slight risk of your child (or any user) experiencing slight discomfort (like motion sickness) and we will monitor this closely. Your child will be monitored throughout the day in case of any follow on side effects. In previous studies I have run with older autistic groups, we have not experienced any concerns that were not addressed by removing the headset if/when discomfort was experienced.

In collecting data I intend to ask your child questions and distribute **one** questionnaire. I will also collect observational data (watching what they do and how they respond). This data will be analysed and used in publishing the results of this study. No names or personal data/information will be presented at any point. No pictures identifying your child will be used, either.

At no time will your child be in danger and risk assessments have been carried out and approved by the University of the West of England. The study will last across 6-8 weeks from the end-Jan 2018 until mid-March 2018.

I hope that you have all the information required to enable you to make an informed decision, and that your child will be able to participate in this study. If you have any further questions/queries please don't hesitate to contact me via the details at the top of this letter.

Please also find an envelope in which to return the consent form.

Many thanks for your time and supporting this work.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. A. Newbutt', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr Nigel Newbutt
PhD, FRSA

Inc. Information leaflet, consent form/s, envelope to return consent form

Information leaflet explaining the study in lay terms with some visual materials to help communicate the technology and experiences in this study



Virtual Reality used by children with autism

Information related to the proposed Virtual Reality project

During this project your child will be involved in three stages of a project assessing the potential of VR for people with autism. The stages are described below.

- **Stage 1:** Your child will be invited to use a head mounted display, similar to the one in the image at the top-right of this leaflet. The set up (PC, HMD and input device) in the proposed study will be very similar.
- **Stage 2:** The user will have the chance to use the head-mounted display and tour a house, garden and an under-water experience with fish and sharks. This will be staged in terms of exposure times, and only last for between 20-40 secs. This will be slowly increased as/ if the user feels able to continue.
NOTE: At all times, the user will have the chance to leave / exit the experience(s)
- **Stage 3:** The experience will end and two sets of questionnaires will be administered by the teacher and researcher enquiring about the experience and potential applications for this.

The reason for undertaking this project is two-fold. Firstly, VR has been identified as a space for autistic people to practice and rehearse certain skills. In some cases to understand typical social skills or to develop job interviewing skills. Secondly, the field of study is in the early stages of progress. I am keen therefore, to capture the experiences of autistic children (having already worked with older populations in the USA) and listen to what they think about VR technology and the possible applications for this. The project will inform the field and help to advance the application of technology for a range of users.