Letter of Information and Consent

Project Title: Visual Verity: A Study of AI Generated Art/Image
Document Title: Letter of Information and Consent for the Study of AI Generated Art/Images

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1. Invitation to Participate:

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled "Visual Verity: A Study of AI Generated Art/Images," led by Dr. Umair Rehman and his team from Western University. We are seeking your perspective on AI-generated art and images to understand public perception and to improve AI technology in art creation. Your insights into the quality, photorealism, and text alignment of AI-generated artworks are vital for advancing our understanding and enhancing these technologies.

2. Why is this study being done?

This study aims to explore public perceptions of art and images produced by artificial intelligence (AI). We seek to understand how these AI-created artworks are viewed and interpreted across different audiences. By gathering your feedback on their quality, photorealism, and alignment with text descriptions, we aim to derive insights that could lead to significant enhancements in AI's capability to produce more resonant and culturally relevant art. This research is crucial for advancing our understanding of the intersection between AI and artistic expression.

3. How long will you be in this study?
Your participation will involve a single session lasting approximately 30 minutes. During this session, you will view a series of AI-generated images and complete a questionnaire related to each image.

4. What are the study procedures?

If you agree to participate, the following will be your activities in the study:

a) Initial Survey: Start by providing some demographic information such as your age, education, and familiarity with digital art.
b) Viewing Art/Images: You will view a selection of images generated by AI.
c) Questionnaire Response: For each image, you will answer questions assessing your impressions of the image's aesthetics, emotional impact, and how well it aligns with any provided textual descriptions.
d) Analysis of Responses: We will analyze your responses to understand general perceptions about AI-generated art.

5. What are the risks and harms of participating in this study?

There are minimal risks involved in participating in this study. Viewing and evaluating images is considered safe and poses no significant risk to participants. However, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time if you feel uncomfortable.

6. What are the benefits of participating in this study?

While there may not be direct personal benefits from participating, your input will significantly contribute to advancements in AI and artistic fields. The insights obtained from this study will help improve AI applications in creating art that is more appealing and relevant to human audiences. This contribution not only aids technological advancements but also enhances the cultural relevance of AI-generated art.

7. Can participants choose to leave the study?

Yes, you have the right to stop participating in this study at any time, for any reason, without any negative consequences. If you choose to withdraw, you can do so by sending an email to the Principal Investigator. Please include your Prolific ID in the email to help us identify your data.

Upon receiving your request, we will remove your data from our records. Please note that while you will still receive compensation for participating, once the study results have been published, we will not be able to remove your data as it will be anonymized and aggregated with other data, making it impossible to identify or extract individual contributions.

To withdraw, please contact:

- Dr. Umair Rehman
  - Email: urehman6@uwo.ca

This withdrawal policy ensures that your data is handled with respect and confidentiality and clarifies the limitations regarding data removal post-publication.

8. How will participants' information be kept confidential?

Protection of Privacy and Data Security: Your privacy is paramount in this study. We collect your Prolific ID to link your survey responses to your profile without revealing your personal identity. Here is how we ensure the confidentiality and security of your information:

a) Data Collection: Only your responses to the demographics, survey questions and your Prolific ID are collected. No other personal identifiers are collected.

b) Use of Third-Party Service (Qualtrics): The survey is administered using Qualtrics, a secure online platform. For more information about their privacy policies, please visit Qualtrics Privacy Policy. The data is stored on servers located in the US, adhering to stringent data protection regulations.

c) Data Storage and Security: After collection via Qualtrics, all data, including your Prolific ID, is securely transferred to encrypted servers hosted by Western University. Access to this data is restricted to the research team only.

d) Data Usage: The information collected will only be used for research purposes. The results of the study will be reported in aggregate form in scientific publications and presentations, ensuring that no individual participant can be identified.

e) Access to Data: In addition to the research team, delegated institutional representatives of Western University and its Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may require access to your study-related records to monitor the research. This access is strictly for regulatory compliance and to ensure the ethical conduct of the study.

f) Data Retention and Destruction: All personal data will be kept confidential and stored for a period of seven years, as stipulated by Western University's research data retention policy. After this period, all data will be securely destroyed.

g) Limitations to Confidentiality: While we implement comprehensive measures to protect your data, no system is completely infallible. There is a slight risk of data breaches, but strong security measures have been put in place to minimize this risk.

9. Are participants compensated to be in this study?

Yes, participants will be compensated for their involvement in this study. Each participant will receive $10 after completing the survey. This compensation is a token of appreciation for your time and is not dependent on the outcomes of your participation.

Details of Compensation:

a) Fixed Compensation: Compensation is set at $10 for the completion of the survey.

b) Compensation for Withdrawal: If you complete the survey and then decide to withdraw, you will still receive the full $10 compensation through Prolific. If you withdraw before completing the survey, Prolific's system does not support issuing a pro-rated payment directly. However, we will ensure that you receive compensation proportionate to the amount of the survey completed by issuing an additional payment through Prolific Bonus Payment feature, once your participation level is assessed.

c) Method of Payment: All payments will be processed through Prolific. After you complete the survey or your participation level is assessed post-withdrawal, the agreed compensation will be transferred to your Prolific account.

d) No Expenses Incurred: There are no costs associated with participating in this study. All activities are conducted online, and participation only requires your time.

10. What are the rights of participants?

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the following rights as a participant:

a) Voluntary Participation: You may choose not to participate in this study. If you decide to participate, you can choose not to answer any specific questions or to withdraw from the study at any point. Choosing not to participate or deciding to withdraw from the study will not affect you in any way, and there will be no consequences.

b) Right to Withdraw: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you withdraw after completing the survey, you will still receive full compensation for your participation. If you withdraw before completing the survey, compensation will be issued based on the portion of the study completed, processed through Prolific.

c) Legal Rights: By consenting to participate in this study, you do not waive any of your legal rights.

d) New Information: Should any new information arise during the course of the study that may influence your willingness to continue participating, we will provide this information to you promptly. This may include changes to the study procedures,

potential risks, or other relevant aspects of the study that could affect your decision to remain a participant.

11. Qualtrics Privacy Policy

We encourage you to read and understand Qualtrics Privacy Policy, it will help you understand confidentiality level in Qualtrics. Please click here to download and read Privacy Statement - Qualtrics

12. Whom do participants contact for questions?

If you have any questions about the study or your participation, you can contact the Principal Investigator:

Dr. Umair Rehman
Email: urehman6@uwo.ca
Tel: 519-661-2111 ext. 86962

For questions about your rights as a research participant or any concerns or complaints, you can contact the Office of Human Research Ethics at Western University:

- Office of Human Research Ethics
  - Phone: 519-661-3036
  - Email: ethics@uwo.ca

13. Additional Information:

Information concerning possible commercialization of research findings: There are no current plans to commercialize the findings of this research.

Information concerning real, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest: There are no known conflicts of interest affecting this research. All research activities are conducted independently by the academic staff at Western University, with no external influence from funding bodies or commercial entities.

Measures to be undertaken for dissemination of results, including results reported back to participants: The findings of this study will be submitted for publication in peer-reviewed academic journals and presented at conferences. Summaries of the research results will also be made available to participants via email upon request.

Information indicating who may have a duty to disclose information collected and to whom such disclosures could be made: Only aggregated and anonymized data will be used in public disclosures. Delegated representatives of Western University and its Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may access study-related records to monitor the research as per regulatory requirements.

Statement re: open access, if applicable: It is intended that the results of this study will be published in an open-access format to ensure broad dissemination. This will allow other researchers and the public to access the findings without restriction.

14. Consent

a) General Guidance on Consent: Consent for this study is primarily documented through an implied consent process, considering the nature of online research and the methods of data collection used. This process is in line with the conditions set out by the NMREB for studies that ensure participant anonymity and where written or verbal consent is not feasible.

b) Implied Consent: By proceeding to complete the online survey after reading this information, you are giving your implied consent to participate in this research study. Your completion of the survey indicates your voluntary agreement to participate and the data collected during this process will be used for research purposes as described in this document.

c) Explanation of Implied Consent: Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

d) Data Use and Confidentiality: The data collected from you will only include your responses to the survey and your Prolific ID, with no other personal identifiers. This information will be used solely for the purposes of this research.

e) Access to Data: Only the research team will have access to the data collected. Any publications or reports resulting from this study will use aggregated data and will not include any information that could be used to identify you individually.

f) Process of Implied Consent:

   I. Read the Letter of Information provided here.
   II. Understand that by starting and submitting the survey, you are consenting to participate in the study.
   III. You can withdraw at any point during the survey if you decide not to continue, and this will have no negative consequences.

This consent procedure ensures that you are fully informed about your participation and that your rights and privacy are protected throughout the study.

By completing and submitting this survey, you are implying your consent to participate in this research study.