

Centre for Cultural Research
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Participant Information Sheet

Dear [staff member],

Thank you for considering being involved in this research study. This information sheet provides more details of the research I am conducting and what the research involves. Once you have read through the information sheet and have confirmed that you would like to participate, please print out and sign the consent form and return it by fax to the number provided. I will collect the original consent form at the interview session.

Research Overview

I am a PhD Candidate at the Centre for Cultural Research at the University of Western Sydney. I am conducting research into the use of computers and other technology by office workers in contemporary office environments. The project is also concerned with the evolution of the office, and current trends in its development.

The study will cover issues including:

- Everyday experiences including problems with computing technology
- Previous user experience with computer technologies
- Use of personal technologies such as mobile phones, blackberries, PDA's
- Organisational and self-management, personalisation and customisation of individual workspaces and collaborative environments
- Perceptions of change on work practices, self and the organisation particularly those associated with information and communication technologies

This study is an exploration of your experiences, ideas and feelings about computers and other technology that you use every day. You do not need to consider yourself an expert in technology to participate in the study. This study is concerned with your experiences and perceptions and is not an assessment of your skills or knowledge.

By participating in this research you and other participants will be contributing to the development of new methods for understanding and evaluating how workers negotiate and adapt to contemporary office work environments. You will also be expanding our knowledge of the implications of environmental and technological change on perceptions of self, work practices and the organisation.

What the research involves?

Participation in the research will involve one interview and one observation session. You will also be asked to keep a private technology diary for two weeks following the interview.

The interview will be carried out in a private setting and at a time and venue convenient to you and to the organisation. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes and will be recorded on a voice recorder.

The technology diary will be given to you at the time of the interview. It will be a hard copy book with plain paper structured as a diary. You will be encouraged to jot down thoughts and feelings describing or illustrating issues and experiences while using technology in your work environment for one fortnight following the interview. Simple instructions and headings will be provided to stimulate writing and to act as guides on various themes. You will be asked to spend about 10 minutes a day completing the diary. The technology diary will be collected at the end of the observation session.

The observation session will take place at your primary work area and will also be recorded on voice recorder. The observation will take approximately 45 minutes. You can request to postpone or halt recording at any time during the interview and observation session. The last 15 minutes of the observation session will focus on discussing the contents of the technology diary.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to choose to take part and can withdraw your participation at any time without providing any reason. I will work closely with your organisation to ensure that allowance is made for you to participate in this research during normal work hours at a time that is convenient for you and for the organisation.

What about my confidentiality?

Any personal information about you that is obtained in connection with this study will remain strictly confidential and will be disclosed only with your written permission. Pseudonyms will be used when discussing or writing up the information you offer to protect your anonymity.

How do I agree to participate?

If you agree to take part in this research study I request that you please sign the attached consent form and return it to the fax number provided on the form. I will be in contact with you to confirm your involvement in the research and to arrange a convenient day and time to conduct the interview and observation session.

Further information

I am very happy to answer any questions you have about participating in this research. I will be available for any questions throughout the research process. I can be contacted on the details provided below.

Contact Details:

Justine Humphry, Researcher
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I hope that you will consider participating in this study and I look forward to meeting you.

Yours sincerely,

Justine Humphry
Researcher

Note: This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officers (telephone: 02 47 360 883). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.