FoPSE Ethics Committee
ERGO application form
FoPSE EC Study Protocol Ver 6.5

Refer to the *Instructions* and to the *Guide* documents for a glossary of the key phrases in **bold** and for an explanation of the information required in each section. The *Templates* document provides some text that may be helpful in presenting some of the required information.

Replace the highlighted text with the appropriate information.

Note that the size of the text entry boxes provided on this form does **not** indicate the expected amount of information; instead, refer to the *Instructions* and to the *Guide* documents in providing the complete information required in each section. Do not duplicate information from one text box to another.

Reference number: **ERGO/**FoPSE**/9496**	Version: 1	Date: 2014-03-19
Name of **investigator**(s): Peter West, Noura N Alomar, Yu Qi Zuo		
Name of supervisor(s) (if student **investigator**(s)): David Millard		
Title of study: A survey of social network service users to identify the occurrence and nature of heterophily		
Expected start date: 19th March 2014	Expected end date: 30th April 2014	

The investigator(s) undertake to:

- Ensure the study Reference number ERGO/FoPSE/9496 is prominently displayed on all advertising and study materials;
- Conduct the study in accordance with the information provided in the Study Protocol, its appendices, and any other documents submitted;
- Conduct the study in accordance with University policy governing research involving human **participants** (http://www.southampton.ac.uk/corporateservices/rgo/);
- Submit the study for re-review (as an amendment through ERGO) if any changes, circumstances, or outcomes materially affect the information given;
- Promptly advise an appropriate authority (Research Governance Office) of any adverse study outcomes, changes, or circumstances (via an adverse event notification through ERGO);
- Seek FoPSE EC advice in the event of material changes to the study following approval.
- Submit an end-of-study form as may be required by the Research Governance Office upon completion of the study.

REFER TO THE INSTRUCTIONS *DOCUMENT WHEN COMPLETING THIS FORM.*

PRE-STUDY

Characterise the proposed **participants:**
The proposed participants are a random sample of students attending the University of Southampton, and friends. No further inclusion or exclusion criteria will apply.

Describe how **participants** will be approached:
As the target for our product is the general population, we are able to approach a random sample of people directly. We will approach potential participants and ask them if they have a few minutes to fill out a questionnaire about their use of social networks. We have made the survey short and minimal to maximise the likelihood of agreement, we will also make it clear to any potential participant that no personally identifiable information will be collected and that they will not be contacted about their responses. They will be able to access the survey either by navigating to a URL in a browser if they have an available device or they will be provided with a laptop to use in order to participate.

Describe how inclusion and/or exclusion criteria will be applied (if any):
Participants must be 18 or over. No further inclusion or exclusion criteria will apply.

Describe how **participants** will decide whether to take part:
Participants will be informed that participation is voluntary and will be presented with an opportunity to participate. They choose if they wish to participate or not. Those who do wish the participate will give their consent and will be given a participant information sheet giving an overview of the study and how their data will be used -- i.e., the sample will be those individuals who consent to fill in our questionnaire during the study period.

Participant Information

Provide the **Participant Information** in the form that it will be given to **participants** as an appendix.

Consent Form

Provide the **Consent Form** (or the request for consent) in the form that it will be given to **participants** as an appendix.

DURING THE STUDY

Describe the study procedures as they will be experienced by the **participant**:

Firstly a potential participant will be approached by one of the researchers and asked if they have a few moments to fill out a short questionnaire about their use of social networks. If they agree, the researcher will explain that no personally identifiable information will be collected and will provide the participant with an information sheet and remain present to answer any questions while they read it. Once they are happy they understand the procedure, they may terminate their involvement or will be given access to the questionnaire by the researcher on a laptop or given the URL if they prefer to use their own device. The user will then fill out an anonymous questionnaire using a Google Form, and on completion will return the laptop to the researcher if it was used. The participant will then be thanked and no further interaction will be required.

Identify how, when, where, and what kind of data will be recorded:

A participant who is chosen will be given the option to participate. If they participate, they are provided with an information sheet and must give consent. After giving consent, the participant may proceed to an online questionnaire.

The questionnaire will ask for basic demographics information, but will not be detailed enough to be personally identifiable. These details are age group, gender and type of place of residence (city, town, village). Questions will then be asked about how the participant uses social networks for heterophily - i.e., whether they participate in groups of people they may not necessarily otherwise know. This will be both quantitative (e.g. likert scales) and qualitative. The participant should expect to take no longer than 15 minutes completing the questionnaire.

At any stage, a participant may approach a researcher (as named in this document) for assistance, or to withdraw from the research.

This data will only be collected via an online questionnaire. An individual will do this questionnaire in their own time, wherever they wish, provided it is within the duration of the research. No personally identifiable information will be collected during any phase of the study. Data will be recorded using a Google Form, and stored in Google Drive.

Participant questionnaire

If there is a **participant** questionnaire, reproduce it in the form that it will be given to **participants** as an appendix.

POST-STUDY

Identify how, when, and where data will be stored, processed, and destroyed.

During the study, information will be stored only on an encrypted partition on the researcher's computer using TrueCrypt, and a password protected Google Drive document with a randomly generated 50 character password on the account. The computer is password protected. After the study the only data retained will be the anonymised questionnaire responses and collected data in aggregate form which may be published or used by anyone (including the participants). The raw data will be destroyed at the end of the research period.

Only the named researchers referenced in this document will have access to the data.

If Study Characteristic M.1 applies, provide this information in the **DPA Plan** as an appendix instead.

STUDY CHARACTERISTICS

(L.1) The study is funded by a commercial organisation: **No**

If 'Yes', provide details of the funder or funding agency:

(L.2) There are **restrictions** upon the study: **No**

If 'Yes', explain the nature and necessity of the **restrictions**:

(L.3) Access to **participants** is through a third party: **No**

If 'Yes', provide evidence of your permission to contact them as an appendix.

(M.1) **Personal data** is collected or processed: **No**
Data will be processed outside the UK: **No**

If 'Yes' to either question, provide the **DPA Plan** as an appendix.

(M.2) There is **inducement** to **participants**: **No**

If 'Yes', explain the nature and necessity of the inducement:

(M.3) The study is **intrusive**: **No**

If 'Yes', provide the **Risk Management Plan** and the **Debrief Plan** as appendices, and explain the nature and necessity of the intrusion(s) here:

(M.4) There is **risk of harm** during the study: **No**

If 'Yes', provide the **Risk Management Plan**, the **Contact Information**, and the **Debrief Plan** as appendices, and explain the necessity of the risks here:

(M.5) The true purpose of the study will be hidden from **participants**: **No**
The study involves **deception** of **participants**: **No**

If 'Yes' to either question, provide the **Debrief Plan** as an appendix, and explain the necessity of the deception here:

(M.6) **Participants** may be minors or otherwise have **diminished capacity**: **No** If 'Yes', AND if one or more Study Characteristics in categories M or H applies, provide the **Risk Management Plan** and the **Contact Information**, as appendices, and explain here the special arrangements that will be put in place that will ensure informed consent:

(M.7) **Sensitive data** is collected or processed: **No** If 'Yes', provide the **DPA Plan** as an appendix.

(H.1) The study involves: **invasive** equipment, material(s), or process(es); or **participants** who are not able to withdraw at any time and for any reason; or animals; or human tissue; or biological samples: **No** If 'Yes', provide further details and justifications as one or more appendices. Note that the study will require separate approval by the Research Governance Office.

Technical details

If one or more Study Characteristics in categories M.3 to M.7 or H applies, provide the description of the technical details of the experimental or study design, the power calculation(s) which yield the required sample size(s), and how the data will be analysed as appendices.

APPENDICES (AS REQUIRED)

While it is preferred that this information is included here in the Study Protocol document, it may be provided as separate documents.

If provided separately, be sure to name the files precisely as "Participant Information", "Questionnaire", "Consent Form", "DPA Plan", "Permission to contact", "Risk Management Plan", "Debrief Plan", "Contact Information", and/or "Technical details" as appropriate.

If provided separately, each document must specify the reference number in the form ERGO/FoPSE/xxxx, its version number, and its date of last edit.

Appendix (i): **Participant Information** in the form that it will be given to **participants.**

Appendix (ii): Questionnaire in the form that it will be given to **participants.**

Appendix (iii): **Consent Form** in the form that it will be given to **participants.**

Appendix (iv): **DPA Plan.**

Appendix (v): Evidence of permission to contact **participants** or prospective **participants** through any third party.

Appendix (vi): **Risk Management Plan**.

Appendix (vii): **Debrief Plan**.

Appendix (viii): **Contact Information**.

Appendix (ix): Technical details of the experimental or study design, the power calculation(s) for the required sample size(s), and how the data will be analysed.

Appendix (x): Further details and justifications in the case of **invasive** equipment, material(s), or process(es); **participants** who are not able to withdraw at any time and for any reason; animals; human tissue; or biological samples.