

**Customer Testing for Course Project CS445 /  
ECE451 / CS645**

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**Participant Information Letter and Consent Form****Overview**

You are being asked to volunteer in a study as part of a Software Engineering course project at the University of Waterloo. To help you make an informed decision regarding your participation, this letter will explain what the study is about, the possible risks and benefits, and your rights as a research participant. If you do not understand something in the letter, please ask one of the investigators prior to consenting to the study. You will be provided with a copy of this information and consent form if you choose to participate in the study.

**Invitation to participate**

You are invited to participate in a research study that assesses ideas for a new software product. The process for evaluating a new software product involves interviews and consultation with representatives of the target customer and user classes – people who can comment and provide feedback on whether an idea for a new software product is of interest to them, whether it solves a problem of theirs, whether it looks to be better than their current solutions to problems, and which of the proposed ideas would be the most valuable to them as a software product. Conducting this research in advance of developing the software can make the difference between building software that people need and will find useful versus building software that goes unused.

**What does participation involve?**

Participation in the study will involve participating in three 30-minute interviews – as a representative of the kind of customer or user we are targeting for a future software product we are investigating. The first interview would occur around the third or fourth week of September, the second would occur around the third week of October, and the third would occur around the third or fourth week of November. Interviews would be conducted via video conferencing software (e.g., Zoom), for which you will be provided a link to join the meeting, or by phone. No video or audio recordings of the interviews will be made.

**Study Details**

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may stop at any time. If you agree to participate, we will conduct three interviews (lasting within 30 minutes each). The first interview will ask participants about the importance of a particular problem that could be addressed by software. The second interview will ask participants about how they would

prioritize particular features or aspects related to that problem (e.g., whether they would prioritize software that educates the user, or collects data, or informs the use about events, or performs tasks for the user). The third interview will ask participants to provide feedback on a prototype of a proposed software product that aims to address the chosen problem.

In all of these interviews, we seek your honest feedback on our ideas. Both positive and negative comments will help us to validate the value and utility of our ideas, help us to understand better what kinds of new software (e.g., apps) would be of interest to you, and help us to improve our ideas and plans for a proposed software product or to pivot to a better idea. How much you like or dislike our project is irrelevant to the grade we receive in the course. The instructor will evaluate this course project based on how well we engage in the development process.

### **Compensation**

You will not be compensated for participation in the study. However, the information you provide will help us understand how current development processes can help software developers to create better software.

### **Benefits of the Study**

Participation in this study may not provide any personal benefit to you. The study will benefit the student interviewers in helping them to understand practices that lead towards software products that provide higher value to their potential customers and users.

### **Risks**

There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study other than those associated with the normal use of computers or mobile computing devices (e.g., smartphones, iPods, Web sites, etc.).

### **Confidentiality and Data Retention**

All data collected is considered confidential. Codes, rather than names or other identifying information, will be used in notes. Even though we may present our findings to the class or publish our results in papers, only the course instructor and our project group will have access to the data collected. Your name or any other personal identifying information will not appear in any publication resulting from this study. No video or audio recordings will be made. However, with your permission, anonymous quotations might be used. Notes collected during this study will not contain identifiable information and will be retained for a minimum of 1 year on a password-protected computer, data server and/or cloud service.

You may decline to answer particular questions, if you wish, and may withdraw participation at any time.

## Questions

If you have any questions about participation in this study or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact Joanne Atlee via email at [jmatlee@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:jmatlee@uwaterloo.ca).

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE#42501). If you have questions for the Committee contact the Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or [ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca).

## Verbal Consent

I agree, of my own free will, to participate in a study being conducted by [Student Names] for the course CS445 / ECE451 / CS645 (Software Requirements Specification and Analysis) at the University of Waterloo. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in this Information-Consent Letter and have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time by telling the students or course instructor.

YES  NO

I confirm that I am at least 13 years of age.

YES  NO

I confirm that I am not a close friend or family member of the Interviewers named above.

YES  NO

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the students or course instructor.

YES  NO