Research Permission Form for Parents of Minor Subjects

You are being asked to allow your child to be in a research study.

Purpose:
The purpose of this study is to examine Internet online communities. We hope to learn more about experiences of their participants as well as their practices.

Most of the researchers in this study are students in the Online Communities course taught by Dr. Bruckman. (more information at http://www.cc.gatech.edu/classes/AY2001/cs6470_fall/). This research study is part of their educational experience.

Procedures:
If you decide to allow your child to be in this study, his/her part will involve:

- Consent to an interview to be conducted via telephone, in person, or through e-mail, that should take approximately an hour and a half.
- The interview will be focused on your experience as a participant of an online community.
- In the case of face-to-face and phone interviews, the session will be audio taped. For electronic interviews, a transcript of the session will be saved for future reference.

Risks/Discomforts
The following risks/discomforts may occur as a result of your child’s participation in this study:

- There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts in this study. The risks involved are no greater than those involved in daily activities such as speaking on the telephone or using e-mail.
- Since many of the researchers are students, there is a slight chance that they will make mistakes or not conduct themselves appropriately during the interview. If this should happen, please contact Dr. Amy Bruckman at telephone (404) 894-9222.

Benefits
The following benefits to your child are possible as a result of being in this study:
Your child is not likely to benefit in any way from joining this study. However, participation in this study will contribute to our understanding of this type of activity.

Compensation to You/Your Child
There is no compensation for participation.

Confidentiality
The following procedures will be followed to keep your child’s personal information confidential in this study:
To protect his/her confidentiality, his/her name will not appear in any publications; a pseudonym (a fake name) will be used instead. However, in the case of quotations from things that have been done online (such as blog entries, forum posts, etc), this disguise could be vulnerable – a determined and skillful person could potentially break it. Since many online sites are open to the world, search engines (i.e. Google) index them. As such, a person could take a quotation and use a search engine to find the actual page, thereby breaking the pseudonym disguise. We do not anticipate that this research will uncover sensitive information, but in case it does, we will omit direct quotes that could be found in a search engine.

The data that is collected about you will be kept private to the extent allowed by law. To make sure that this research is being carried out in the proper way, the Georgia Institute of Technology IRB will review study records. The Office of Human Research Protections may also look at study records.

In the case of electronic communications and web-based consent, you should be aware, however, that the experiment is not being run from a "secure" https server of the kind typically used to handle credit card transactions, so there is a small possibility that responses could be viewed by unauthorized third parties (e.g., computer hackers).

Costs to You
There are no costs to you or your child, except for your time.

In Case of Injury/Harm
If your child is injured as a result of being in this study, please contact Dr. Amy Bruckman at telephone (404) 894-9222. Neither the Principal Investigator nor
Subject Rights

- Your child’s participation in this study is voluntary. You do not have to allow your child to be in this study if you don’t want him/her to be involved (or ‘to participate’).
- You have the right to change your mind and remove your child from the study at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty.
- Any new information that may make you change your mind about allowing your child to participate in this study will be given to you.
- You will be given a copy of this permission form to keep.
- You do not waive any of your or your child’s legal rights by signing this permission form.

Questions about the Study or Your Child’s Rights as a Research Subject

- If you have any questions about the study, you may contact Dr. Amy Bruckman, at telephone (404) 894-9222.
- If you have any questions about your child’s rights as a research subject, you may contact Melanie Clark, Georgia Institute of Technology IRB at (404) 894-6942.

If you sign below, it means that you have read (or have had read to you) the information given in this permission form, and you would like your child to participate in this study.

____________________________________
Subject Name

______________________________________  ______________________
Parental Signature                     Date

Please either fax the signed form to Amy Bruckman at fax (404)-894-3146 or mail it to the following address:

Dr. Amy Bruckman
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Georgia Institute of Technology
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Atlanta, GA 30332-0760