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**Appendix B - Confidential**

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**Consent Form**

Please read and provide consent (below) prior to the interview. Return by email. Thank you!

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Project Title: Investigating Online Social Platforms with Proximity Chat for Older Adults

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Please take the time to read this carefully and to ensure you understand all the information.

This consent page should give you the basic idea of what this research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to contact Dr. Celine Latulipe.

([celine.latulipe@umanitoba.ca](mailto:celine.latulipe@umanitoba.ca)).

**General Study Information:**

You are being asked to participate in a study on the topic of online social platforms with proximity chat, with Gather.town being the application that is utilized during this study. The researchers are interested in understanding what types of activities or events older adults would like to participate in or host in online spaces. The study will be split up into 3 sessions over the period of one week, with sessions happening on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings. Sessions will take place virtually through Gather.town, which is an online website. You need to have a desktop or laptop computer and either the Chrome or Firefox web browser to access Gather.Town. You also need to have a webcam and a microphone. Instructions on how to log in and get started will be sent to you by email before the first session. The researchers will also provide tech support (we will provide you a phone number to call us at) to help you if you encounter any difficulties.

The first session introduces you and other participants to the Gather.town platform and involves creating an avatar (a cartoon representation of yourself) and playing some games. The second session shows you how to custom design rooms and spaces in Gather.town - you get to be an online decorator! The third session is about brainstorming ways to use Gather.town for events and activities aimed at older adults to fight social isolation - in this session you get to be a party planner! Participants will complete a pre-study online survey (with the link to the survey sent to your email address) and a post-

study online survey at the end of the third session. The pre-study survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes. Each Gather.Town session will take 90 minutes. The post-study survey will take approximately 10 minutes and is folded into the final session.

### **Data Collection and Privacy:**

The pre-survey is about your proficiency using technology and your perceptions of socializing in the pandemic. You will be sent the link to the pre-survey via email after you complete the consent form. The post-study survey is about your experiences using Gather.town and how you felt using it and whether you would recommend it to other people. All observational notes and survey responses will be kept confidential, and we will only report aggregate data or anonymized quotes in our research. All survey responses will be administered by Microsoft Forms, which stores your response data on the secure University of Manitoba Office 365 server. During the study you will be interacting with other older adults and so we ask that you not share any confidential information, and that if any of the other participants share information, that you keep that information confidential. Each participant will be assigned a unique ID for identification purposes such as P1, P2 etc. which will be used when writing observational notes about the sessions.

Observational notes from the sessions will be kept indefinitely on password-protected and encrypted computers, to which only researchers associated with this research will have access. The observational notes and survey data will be recorded in a written only format. Consent forms and contact information as well as survey data and observational data from the sessions will be deleted by December 2022.

### **Risks, Benefits and Compensation:**

The only risk to participating in this study is that participants may feel confusion or embarrassment in trying to understand how to utilize Gather.town. However, we will provide lots of instructions and support to help you feel comfortable with the technology. The direct benefit to you as a participant in this research is the opportunity to try out and learn about new technologies and socialize with other older adults. The indirect benefit is contributing to research about how online proximity chat platforms can support older adults in socializing.

We will compensate you for participating with \$30 cash per session (through e-Transfer), with a \$10 bonus if all three sessions are attended (total possible compensation of \$100).

### **Sharing Results:**

Results from this study will be submitted for review and publication to peer-reviewed academic journals and conferences (written and in presentation form). Once published, the results of this research will be made available to the public for free on the following

webpage: <https://celinelatulipe.net/participatory-design-study-older-adults-online-socializing/>. Again, no personal information about you will be included.

### **Your Rights & Right to Withdraw:**

In no way does this consent form waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without prejudice or consequence, by simply letting the principal investigator or research assistant know. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Completing the study will take 90 minutes per session, for a combined 270 minutes across the 3 sessions. You can quit the study at any time by leaving the Gather.town call during a session or emailing the principal investigator in between sessions. If you withdraw from the study, none of your survey responses will be saved and your data will not be used in the research. If you withdraw during a session, you will still receive compensation for attending the session partially. However, no observational data or notes taken by the PI or the assistant during the sessions can be omitted due to the group nature of the study. In addition, you cannot withdraw after August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 by 11:59 p.m. because data analysis will already have begun.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way. This research has been approved by the University of Manitoba Research Ethics Board, Fort Garry campus. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project, you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at (204) 474-7122 or [humanethics@umanitoba.ca](mailto:humanethics@umanitoba.ca). If you wish to have a copy of this consent form for your records and reference, you can [click here](#) to download a copy.

**If you are an older adult (age 65+), speak and read English, have an active email address (for session scheduling), and consider yourself to have reasonably good mental health, you are eligible to participate in this study.**

**The information collected in the sessions and surveys will be kept confidential and reported only in aggregate or as anonymized quotes. The information collected will help researchers to design better technologies to support older adults socializing online.**

Please indicate your response to each of the two sections below:

By checking this box, you certify that you live in Canada, that you are at least 65 years old, that you have understood to your satisfaction the information provided regarding your participation in the study, that you speak and read English and that you give your consent freely to being a participant in this study.

I consent

I do not consent

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Email (for scheduling): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(it is okay to type your full name again in lieu of a handwritten signature).

Please email this completed form to: [celine.latulipe@umanitoba.ca](mailto:celine.latulipe@umanitoba.ca)

### **SCHEDULING**

Please indicate (by adding an X in the blank) which set of dates you would prefer to participate in (check both if you are willing to participate in either set). Note that participating in this study means participating in all three sessions in whichever week you choose (though you are always free to withdraw from the study at any time):

\_\_\_\_\_ Option 1 (three sessions in the first week of August):

- Tuesday August 3rd, 10-11:30am,
- Wednesday August 4th, 10-11:30am, and
- Thursday August 5th, 10-11:30am

\_\_\_\_\_ Option 2 (three sessions in the second week of August):

- Monday August 9th, 9-10:30am,
- Tuesday August 10th, 9-10:30am, and
- Wednesday August 11th, 9-10:30am