Procedures for Public Trials

A PD-Net Study-Design Process Template

The PD-Net project will conduct a number of studies to explore how members of the public interact with networked public display systems in the wild, i.e., in a public or semi-public setting. In this document we describe our operating guidelines for such studies. All such studies will follow local guidelines and additionally conform to the rules and procedures set out in this document.

## Definition of Public Trials

Public trials allow researchers to investigate actual use of a public display system in people’s everyday lives. Public trials do not involve an explicit user recruitment step but instead observe the interaction of a potentially large set of passers-by that happen to encounter a specifically fielded system by chance. However, public trials might trigger (or run concurrently to) a volunteer study, where people can personally register as volunteer participants. Public trials can be conducted in a range of locations including public places, offices, or universities. In all cases explicit permission of the corresponding authorities (e.g., university or city council) will be obtained.

## Nature of Studies

Public trials in PD-Net typically involve observing non-recruited participants interacting with publicly (or semi-publicly) accessible public displays. For example, passers-by in a shopping street might come upon a public display installation running a PD-Net application, such as a digital notice board where they can post classifieds via a touch screen. Note that such applications might also entail an online component, where non-recruited participants can, e.g., post messages on a Web form. Observations of such interactions can be direct, i.e., using a researcher on-site taking written notes, making audio-recordings, or capturing video footage (in accordance with local rules and regulations), or indirect, i.e., based on interaction logs, click-stream information, and network traffic data. Information about both direct and indirect observations would be available at or through the installation, e.g., in the form of an information brochure or an online notice. PD-Net public trials never involve activities that place members of the public at risk of bodily harm. The experimental procedure for the studies varies according to the nature of the research but will always be overseen by a local PI.

## Participants

Careful thought will always be given to the location of our public trials in order to ensure that applications and content are appropriate for those who become part of the study. No vulnerable participants (e.g., children or people with cognitive disorders) will be targeted.

A brief description of the PD-Net project, as well as a comprehensive description of the study and contact details on appropriate headed paper will be available to members of the public on request.

## Data

Data collection, storage, and use of personally identifiable information (PII) in PD-Net in general will follow the EU legal framework, as well as individual national legislation on data protection. The project has produced information sheets to help ensure researchers are familiar with these requirements. Where local legislation requires it information will be posted notifying members of the public about the ongoing study. This information might, e.g., describe the data being collected, the purpose of this data collection (i.e., the particular research aspect under investigation), the recipients of this data (i.e., only researchers involved in PD-Net), the use of the data (i.e., that data will only be published in anonymous form), the name and full contact information of the PI responsible for the data collection, access information (i.e., how to get a copy of the data collected about oneself), and how long data will be retained.

All collected data will use *pseudonymous* *identifiers* for all subjects whenever possible, or use appropriate secure storage procedures to safeguard PII where such anonymisation at collection time is not possible (such as photographs). PII collected through indirect observations (e.g., clickstream data, form filling data) that pertain to non-recruited participants will be deleted or anonymized prior to archival. We have produced an information sheet to provide researchers with guidance on secure data storage. Collected data will be deleted at most 3 months after PD-Net ends, though earlier times are possible. All publications will only use fully anonymized data when reporting qualitative and quantitative data.

## Documentation

Details of each public trial will be recorded on a PD-Net ethics worksheet and these worksheets will be uploaded to and stored on the project’s secure wiki.