

Participant Information Sheet (18 May 2012, v2.0)

Survey: Attitudes and Judgments of Scientific Information

Introduction

This study is jointly run by Dr Alastair Gill, Dr Maria Xenitidou, and Dr Corinna Elsenbroich who are Research Fellows at the Department of Sociology, University of Surrey.

We would like to invite you to take part in a research project. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve for you. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Talk to others about the study if you wish.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study seeks to examine scientists' attitudes and judgements of science related information such as authors and publications. In particular we are interested in how academics made decisions in relation to their own work, and how academic tools (e.g., literature search) can be better matched to the user's requirements.

Why have I been invited to take part in the study?

Because you are thought to be an active researcher: The focus groups are open to anyone who is currently engaged in research (Ph.D. student, post-doc, academic staff).

Do I have to take part?

No, you do not have to participate. There will be no adverse consequences in terms of your: (1) education, that is, there will be no impact on your assessment of your degree (in the case of research students); or (2) employment status (if staff member) if you decide not to participate. You can withdraw at any time without giving a reason by pressing the 'Exit and clear survey' button at the bottom of the page during the survey, or by contacting the researcher afterwards. Data provided up to the point of withdrawal will not be used in cases where the participant withdraws.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be asked to take part in a focus group, which will be a one-off discussion group of around 4-6 people moderated by a researcher involved with the study. The focus groups will take place during lunchtimes (on the University of Surrey campus), and are expected to take an hour; a light buffet-style lunch will be provided.

What will I have to do?

With other researchers in your own or a different discipline, you will discuss a series of statements and options relating to the way you perceive scientific information, and the way you participate in scientific communities. You will repeat this task several times for different questions, and in each case your group will summarise the main issues relating to the question and any conclusions that were reached.

What are the possible disadvantages or risks of taking part?

There are no risks expected to result from participating in this study.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

By taking part in this research you are helping us to build a better knowledge of how scientists rely upon various forms of information. This can help the wider scientific community, for example, by developing literature search tools which can produce more useful results. In addition you will gain a better knowledge of what other scientists in your own/related fields view about information and scientific knowledge which may be beneficial for your own research or publishing activities.

What happens when the research study stops?

When data collection is completed for this study, the responses will be analysed and disseminated to other researchers in the field. This dissemination will take the form of articles published in scholarly publications (e.g. journals), or internally to other project partners. Please see the project website for information about these publications and also a brief summary of the findings of the project (www.qlectives.eu).

What if there is a problem?

Any complaint or concern about any aspect of the way you have been dealt with during the course of the study will be addressed; please contact Professor Nigel Gilbert, Principal Investigator on Email: n.gilbert@surrey.ac.uk, Phone: 01483 68 9173.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Yes. All of the information you give will be anonymised so that those reading reports from the research will not know who has contributed to it.

Data will be stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Contact details of researcher and, where appropriate supervisor?

The researchers who are jointly running this study are based at the Department of Sociology at the University of Surrey:

- Dr Alastair Gill (Ph: 01483 683965; E: a.gill@surrey.ac.uk; Ad: 23 AD 04)
- Dr Maria Xenitidou (Ph: 01483 683762; E: m.xenitidou@surrey.ac.uk; Ad: 24 AD 04)

- Dr Corinna Elsenbroich (Ph: 01483 683760; E: c.elsenbroich@surrey.ac.uk; Ad: 25 AD 04)

Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is part of the QLectives project and is supported by the European Commission 7th Framework Programme (FP7) for Research and Technological Development under the Information and Communication Technologies Theme, Future and Emerging Technologies (FET) Proactive, Call 3: ICT-2007.8.4 Science of Complex Systems for socially intelligent ICT (COSI-ICT).

Who has reviewed the project?

The study has been reviewed and received a favourable opinion from the University of Surrey Ethics Committee.

Thank you for taking the time to read this Information Sheet.