Research Project Description (Plain Language Statement)

Project title: Mobile Social Networking for Smoking Cessation


The purpose of this study is to trial an iPhone-based social networking application designed to help people quit smoking by providing tips and distractions to cope with cravings. In this study you will be asked to try out the iPhone app over several weeks and to comment on it in a diary and through interviews.

Who can participate?

We are looking for adults (over the age of 18 years) who are about to quit smoking or who have recently quit. You need to own an iPhone to install the app. Ideally you are already using other social networking services like Facebook on your iPhone.

Students or staff directly supervised by any of the above investigators cannot take part in this trial to ensure that this research will not affect ongoing relationships and collaborations.

What will I be asked to do?

Should you agree to participate, you would be asked to try out the social networking application on your iPhone over a period of approximately 3 weeks while you are quitting smoking. (The duration will depend on the timing of your quit attempt.) The iPhone app will offer you tips and distractions to assist you in the lead up to your quit date as well as in the weeks afterwards, and you can interact with other users who are also quitting. We hope that the app will offer you support for a few minutes on a daily basis. However, it is up to you to decide how often and how long you use the app. With your permission, we will collect log data of your interactions with the iPhone app.

While trying out the iPhone app, we would encourage you to keep a diary of your experiences in using the app. You can use the voice recorder or the notes on your iPhone to create your entries, and you would be expected to create an entry at least once every 3 days. This should take no longer than 3 minutes per entry. We will collect the diary entries at the end of the study for our analysis.

Finally, you will be invited for two interviews, one at the start and one at the end of the trial. Questions will concern your experience with giving up smoking, your usage of the app, and your interactions with other people and technologies that help you quit. These interviews will be audio or video recorded so that we can ensure that we make an accurate record of what you say. The interviews will last between 60 and 90 minutes. You will be reimbursed $25 per interview to contribute towards travel expenses and data charges.

Why should I participate?

We hope that the iPhone app will offer you valuable tips and support from other people in the same situation to help you quit. Furthermore, the app will offer you distractions to take your mind off cigarettes.

Your feedback on this iPhone app will help to improve the services of Quit Victoria to help Australians give up smoking and to benefit from improved health.

Does this study involve any potential risks?

There is no reason that the app will introduce any special risk. We know that trying to quit smoking can be stressful, and the tips provided through the app may not be sufficient to cope with all the difficulties that may arise during that time. However, you can find additional information about medication and counselling services through Quit Victoria's website on http://www.quit.org.au/. You can also call the Quitline on 13 7848 if you prefer talking to a person. Quit's friendly professional

Department of Computing & Information Systems
The University of Melbourne, Level 8, Room 5, Doug McDonell Building, Parkville Victoria 3010 Australia
T: +61 3 8344 1500  F: +61 3 9349 4596
W: www.cis.unimelb.edu.au
advisors are there to help you. Your call is confidential. This means you don't have to give your name if you don't want to.

You may also encounter tips and distractions through the app that may increase your desire to smoke or which you may deem inappropriate in some other way. However, we will moderate all tips and distractions on the app to minimise this risk.

Finally, the app is designed to protect your privacy. It will not ask you for any identifying information. You can share information with other users either anonymously or under a pseudonym. Only participants who sign up for this study will have access to the app (through a link via email to download the application onto the iPhone).

How will my confidentiality be protected?

We intend to protect your anonymity and the confidentiality of your responses to the fullest possible extent, within the limits of the law. Your name and contact details will be kept in a separate, password-protected computer file from any data that you supply. In the final report, you will be referred to by a pseudonym. We will remove any references to personal information that might allow someone to guess your identity, however, you should note that as the number of people we seek to interview is very small, it is possible that someone may still be able to identify you. The data will be kept securely in the Department of Computing and Information Systems for five years from the date of publication, before being destroyed.

How will I receive feedback?

You can indicate on the consent form if you wish to receive a brief summary of the research findings and copies of any papers arising from this research via email. It is also possible that the results will be presented at academic conferences, in lectures to students or public presentations at the University of Melbourne.

Will participation prejudice me in any way?

Please be advised that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw at any stage, or to withdraw any unprocessed data you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice.

Where can I get further information?

Should you require any further information, or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact either of the researchers listed below.

Dr. Bernd Ploderer 03 8344 1511, ploderer@unimelb.edu.au
Dr. Wally Smith 03 8344 1494, wsmith@unimelb.edu.au
Prof. Steve Howard 03 8344 1493, showard@unimelb.edu.au
Dr. Jon Pearce 03 8344 1495, j.pearce@unimelb.edu.au
Prof. Ron Borland 03 9635 5185, ron.borland@cancervicc.org.au
Ms. Cinzia Marocco 03 9635 5523, cinzia.marocco@cancervicc.org.au
Mr. Luke Atkin 03 9635 5526, luke.atkin@cancervicc.org.au

This research project has been approved by the University of Melbourne's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC Reference #1238430). Should you have any concerns about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne, on phone: 8344 2073, or fax: 9347 6739.

How do I agree to participate?

If you would like to participate, please get in contact with Bernd Ploderer (03 8344 1511, ploderer@unimelb.edu.au) to arrange an interview at a mutually convenient time. At the interview you will also have to indicate that you have read and understood this information by signing the accompanying consent form.

Thank you for your support.