

# Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Thank you.

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## Research Project Title: CyCAT Project

### 1. What is the project's purpose?

The purpose of this study is to understand bias in news search engine results. Specifically, we would like to investigate what bias users would like to be informed of when they search for news articles, and how it should be visualised. This study is funded via the H2020 project CyCAT, whose aim is to raise awareness of algorithmic bias and transparency in social and cultural setting.

### 2. Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to participate because you are currently enrolled in Computer Science / Information Science programme offered by one of the following institutions: University of Haifa, University of Sheffield, University of Cyprus and University of Trento.

### 3. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form). You can withdraw at any time without any negative consequences (please inform the researchers, see ne. 13). Please note that dependent on the time of your withdrawal, it might not be possible to remove from the study any input you have provided, such as your contributions to group discussions.

### 4. What will happen to me if I take part? What do I have to do?

Your respective university will invite you to a session, which could be a part of a seminar session, an invited tutorial or as a part of a module that you are attending. If you do decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to fill in a questionnaire containing a small number of demographic survey questions. You will then be assigned to a focus group to carry out two activities:

- a. To discuss the types of bias you would like to be made aware of when you access a search engine, e.g., to look for news or other information.
- b. To discuss and propose a mock-up tool that can visualise this bias.

Within two months after your initial session, we will send you an email showing a demo of a bias intervention tool which we would have created based on the findings of the first session. You will then be asked to fill in an online questionnaire to provide some feedback of this tool.

### 5. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

The risks of taking part in the focus group is no more than those experienced in group discussion during lectures. You are free to contribute as little or as much as you like, and there will be no consequences if you choose not to participate in the discussion.

You will be able to fill in the questionnaire at any time that is convenient for you and take any breaks in between (if needed). The risks of taking part in the questionnaire are the same as experienced in daily life.

**6. What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will increase participants' awareness with regards to understanding bias and identifying bias in search engine results.

**7. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?**

All the information that we collect about you during the study will be kept strictly confidential and will only be accessible to members of the research team. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications unless you have given your explicit consent for this

**8. What is the legal basis for processing my personal data?**

We will collect some demographics data (such as age, academic background, nationality, countries of residence) to allow a comparison to be carried out between participants with different background. No other personal data will be collected during this study.

**9. What will happen to the data collected, and the results of the research project?**

The data collected in the focus group will be used by the project researchers to understand the types of bias that users would like to be made aware of in their search tasks. We also aim to analyse the mock-up design to get some feedback on how bias should be visualised and presented to search engine users. These findings will also be used to create a Web-based intervention tool to visualise bias. The data from the questionnaire will then be used to evaluate a design iteration of this tool.

All the data collected in this study will only be accessible to the researchers in the CyCAT project. The results may be published in project reports, journal articles or conference papers. Participants will not be able to be identified in any report or publication.

**10. Who is organising and funding the research?**

This research study is funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 810105.

**11. Who is the Data Controller?**

The University of Sheffield will act as the Data Controller for this study. This means that the University is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

**12. Who has ethically reviewed the project?**

This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by the Information School. The University's Research Ethics Committee monitors the application and delivery of the University's Ethics Review Procedure across the University.

**13. Contact for further information**

If you wish to obtain further information about this study, please do not hesitate to contact us:

- Dr Monica Paramita, University of Sheffield ([m.paramita@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:m.paramita@sheffield.ac.uk))
- Dr Frank Hopfgartner, University of Sheffield ([f.hopfgartner@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:f.hopfgartner@sheffield.ac.uk))

**Thank you in advance for taking part in the project.**