

BROCK UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD
Tuesday March 21, 2023
12:00 – 2:00 p.m.
Microsoft Teams

Minutes of the HREB Meeting

Attendance:

Lori Walker (non-voting)	Terrance Wade	Connie Schumacher
Chae Lynn Bush (non-voting)	Matthieu Dagenais	Michelle Vine
Carly MaGee (non-voting)	Chris Cochrane	Kirina Angrish
Stephen Cheung	Sara Madanat	Manal Alzghoul
Kimberly Gammage	Shawn Beaudette	Taranjot Dhillon
	Maureen Shantz	

Regrets:

Nicole Chimera

MINUTES		
ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION
1	<p>Motion to approve Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved <p>Motion to approve February Minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved <p>Motion to approve February Decision Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved 	<p>Motion to approve: KG Seconded: SB All in favour</p> <p>Motion to approve: TW Seconded: MV Abstentions: 2 due to absence All in favour</p> <p>Motion to approve: MV Seconded: TW All in favour</p>
2	<p>Discussion Items</p> <p>Online Research Tools (i.e., Prolific, MTurk, SONA) Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different online research tools were reviewed for board members beginning with SONA. SONA is a participant and recruitment tool used in Brock's Psychology department, specifically. Prolific and MTurk are online platforms that allow for both recruitment of participants and collection of data. MTurk is described as a crowdsourcing marketplace that provides jobs to individuals who sign up to be "workers." Jobs could include anything from conducting simple data validation and research to more subjective tasks like survey participation, content moderation, and more. Prolific was developed more recently for research tasks exclusively, whereas MTurk is used much more broadly (for research studies and beyond). On both platforms, researchers can launch their study through survey tools of their choice, such as Qualtrics. Brock has a Qualtrics license, so researchers are encouraged to use this survey tool. Further, when data are collected via the Brock Qualtrics license, data are stored in Canada. This removes the need to inform participants that because data are located on an American server, data are subject to American Homeland Security laws such as the Patriot Act. It has been of recent discussion among the REBs whether data collected using these sites are considered anonymous or confidential. To join the platform, an individual needs to provide personal information. This demographic information is used by the platform to make 	

		<p>specific studies available to each worker where they meet the inclusion criteria. However, the platforms indicate that an individual's data is not associated with this personal membership information – in other words, the platform only has access to personal information (and no data) and the researcher only has access to anonymous data (and no personal identifiers).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compensation is also provided in a way that does not associate identifiers with data: a participant receives a completion code from the researcher that they need to provide to the platform, who separately releases their compensation. • MTurk workers are paid through an Amazon account. • These platforms themselves set the minimum amount for payment which is around \$6/hour with MTurk and 9 pounds/hour for Prolific (a board member who uses Prolific confirmed the platform recommended they pay participants minimum wage). • When MTurk first started being used by our researchers, it was a big discussion whether these rates were reasonable. Since then, a lot of research has examined the quality of data obtained through these crowd sourcing methods. Research has shown the quality of data to be equitable to more traditional research methods and that respondents are diverse across several notable demographic dimensions such as age, gender, and income. • Previously, MTurk was only available to US citizen but now it has expanded everywhere (with the exception of Australia), contributing to the diverse respondents achieved. • Based on feedback from board members who have used both MTurk and Prolific, it was confirmed that Prolific seems to have more detailed screening tools to narrow down your participant pool based on your inclusion criteria. • Prolific also has ways to incorporate validity checks. The REB does not allow for compensation to be based on validity checks. So even if a participant fails the validity checks, they should still be compensated. This was an issue with a study at Brock in the past where the algorithm said a participant completed the task too quickly and was not paid – but this was rectified in consultation with our office (and the participant paid). • It was clarified that participants should still be paid if they decline to answer some questions, but still submit their survey. However, if they close the browser without submitting any responses, they do not need to be compensated. Once a participant clicks “submit” on the survey, it triggers a code be sent to the researcher, which they send to the participant to submit to the platform, to trigger them to release their payment. • We have collectively decided to consider this data anonymous. Although personal identifiers are collected, they are never connected to data at any point. This should be noted for future reviews. • Background to SONA was given: all students registered in Psych 1F90 are required to complete a research assignment (outlined in the syllabus). This can include any study posted on SONA, or, from an ethics perspective (to mitigate potential coercion) an alternate assignment equitable in educational benefit and time commitment. The REB generally uses the guidelines below to guide our review of studies using student research participation for course credit: • Students should be provided with a method for fulfilling course requirements that is equivalent to participating in research. Some examples of non-research options include reading and summarizing a journal article, observing an ongoing study or watching a video, and assisting in data collection. The alternate activity should be comparable to the research participation requirement option in time commitment, effort, accessibility, difficulty, evaluation, and attractiveness. • Students should be informed about research participation requirements before enrolment in the course (e.g., in the course calendar description). Instructors and teaching assistants should avoid recruiting directly from within their classes for their own studies. Someone other than the instructor or teaching assistant should present the study to students and solicit participants. Procedures must be in place to prevent the instructor or teaching assistant from knowing the identities of participants until after grades are assigned. • When possible, students should be given an opportunity to reflect on their research experience in order to maximize its pedagogical value, perhaps through seminar discussion or written assignment.
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	<p>data may be located outside the EEA. If so, then we will ensure that transfers by our appointed data processors will only be made lawfully.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was reiterated that these terms are with respect to signing up to use the platform as a worker, not a condition of the research. So, these would not be part of our review considerations. • Q: How does a researcher know who has been sent an invitation to participate? • A: With Prolific the researcher provides an inclusion and exclusion criteria and Prolific filters eligible participants using these criteria. They can also tell you how many of their members meet your inclusion criteria. • Q: Do potential participants receive emails repeatedly regarding a specific study? How does a participant receive information about a study they are eligible for? • A: Prolific can 1. send out a notice to people who meet your eligibility criteria (based on their profile information housed by Prolific) but can also 2. Accommodate individuals who search out a study themselves that they are eligible for and interested in. • Q: Is there risk of “spamming” participants? • A: Prolific only sends one invitation email and one follow up email at maximum. A worker can also choose the amount to be notified so it is based on their preferences. <p>Participant Parking Changes and Payment Confidentiality Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brock’s parking system is changing to HONK (a contactless payment solution for drivers to pay for parking without downloading an app or registering personal information). To reiterate, a researcher can pay for parking for a participant on HONK by entering the license plate of the participant and entering the duration of time they require the parking spot. • Since the last REB meeting, the office developed, in collaboration with the Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies, standard wording for researchers to add to their consent forms with respect to the new parking process. This has been distributed via email to all researchers at Brock: <p>In consultation with REB, all researchers currently providing on campus participant parking through the HONK app must add the following paragraph to their Consent Forms <u>immediately</u>.</p> <p>For the purpose of this study, parking on Brock University campus will be provided to participants. The research team will require your license plate in order for them to secure parking through the HONK app while participating in the study. Confidentiality will be maintained as your license plate and name will not be linked to the research project. The research team will hold these details for 7 years as required by tax law and in case of audit.</p> <p>As well, moving forward any future research studies providing on campus participant parking must contain information within the REB application regarding parking provisions through the HONK app.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To confirm, researchers will need this information (license plate and time of participation) from participants in advance of their arrival so researchers can prepay on a participant’s behalf. Names will not be collected for this purpose and information is not disclosed to Parking Services. • The participant does not need the HONK app. • Prior to this process, departments have paid for reserved parking spaces for participants. In most cases now, these are no longer available. Some research spaces (e.g., Lifespan) still have separate parking spots for their participants so the process above will not be a campus wide requirement. <p>Other Business</p>
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3	Adjourn	Meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.	Motion to adjourn: SC Seconded: TW All in favour