

Participant Consent Form:

Building Digital Commons: Prototyping University-Managed Online Communities

You are invited to participate in a research study led by Dr. Amy Zidulka at Royal Roads University. Please take the time to read this consent form carefully and discuss any questions you may have with Dr. Zidulka at amy.zidulka@royalroads.ca

The Royal Roads University Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

Purpose of the Study

Social media sites offer unprecedented affordances for learning and community. Movements like Black Lives Matter and Me Too have demonstrated that those engaged in social media-based activism acquire subject-matter expertise, develop capabilities such as organising, and impact real-world change. With social media having emerged as a dominant educational space of our era, it is problematic that these platforms are owned by corporations with neither skill nor motivation to promote learning for public good.

The premise of this research is that, with the digital sphere having opened opportunities for people to learn informally, continually, and in self-directed ways, universities should consider evolving so that their identity lies not primarily in the offering of formal classes but more broadly in the provision of spaces that foster learning and community. This research aims to (1) contribute to scholarship on post-digital, hybrid, and networked learning by exploring how universities might serve as stewards of online learning communities, and (2) contribute to RRU's potential to impact positive change for students, community members, and the world at large by prototyping and testing university-managed online communities through the Centre for Creative Changemaking.

Study Procedures

Data about your engagement activity within the platform — for example, what types of events or discussions you participate in — will be collected and analyzed as part of the research. These data will focus on patterns of engagement rather than on the content of what you or other community members express. Your views on the topics discussed within the community will not be collected or analyzed as research data.

Surveys: You may be invited to complete surveys of approximately 10–15 minutes at the midpoint and end of each community's active phase, asking about your experience as a community member.

Interviews: A subset of participants will be invited to participate in an interview of approximately 60 minutes, exploring barriers and enablers experienced as part of the community.

With your permission, interviews will be audio and/or video recorded in order to ensure accuracy.

Consent and Data Review

I am seeking consent to use your participation data in aggregate form as well as specific quotes or ideas to illustrate overall themes. Your data will be analyzed along with that of other participants to identify patterns and themes. In granting consent, you are granting permission to extract themes from your aggregate data and communicate them, and to use specific quotes from your conversations, survey responses, or interview, or paraphrasing that would potentially make you identifiable.

When this research is disseminated publicly, for example at conferences and in journals, you will be identified by your role and will not be individually identifiable.

Confidentiality

Should you agree to participate, you will share identifying information, such as your name, role, and email address, with the researcher. Findings gathered in this research study may be published or presented in public academic and non-academic forums (RRU meetings, internal documents, academic journal articles, conference presentations, and other sources for wider publication). As noted above, in some cases you may be identifiable.

Only the researcher and research assistant will have access to your data. All data will be kept in a locked locale and/or on a password-protected computer accessible only to the research team. Raw data will be destroyed by July 2029, as it will no longer be needed.

Potential Conflict of Interest

As an employee of Royal Roads and Co-Director of the Centre for Creative Changemaking, I could potentially be involved in continuing or expanding the online communities beyond the study period, if that were to go forward. This may foster the perception in you, as a participant, that I am seeking positive responses to the communities. Please know that I am seeking your true perspective, and that I would value your honesty above all else.

Signatures

Your signature on this form indicates that 1) you understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) you agree to participate in the research project. A return email indicating consent is also sufficient.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Please indicate your response to each of the following by ticking the appropriate box, or by using the email reply block at the end of this form:

	Yes	No	N/A
I grant permission for my community engagement activity to be used as research data.	Yes ☐	No ☐	
I grant permission to complete surveys about my experience as a community member.	Yes ☐	No ☐	
I grant permission to be contacted about participating in an interview.	Yes ☐	No ☐	
I grant permission to be audio/video recorded if interviewed.	Yes ☐	No ☐	N/A ☐

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: (please print) _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Questions/Concerns

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact:

Dr. Amy Zidulka | Royal Roads University | 250-884-8532 | amy.zidulka@royalroads.ca

For confirmation of this research project's association with Royal Roads University or other administrative questions or concerns, please contact:

Dr. Robert Mittelman, Interim Dean, School of Business | Royal Roads University | 250-391-2600 #4309 | Robert.mittelman@royalroads.ca

If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact the Research Ethics Office, Royal Roads University at 1-250-391-2600 ext. 4425; or email at ethicalreview@royalroads.ca

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigators have kept a copy of the consent form.

Responding by Email

If you prefer to respond by email rather than returning a signed copy of this form, please copy the text below, paste it into an email to amy.zidulka@royalroads.ca, and replace each blank with Yes, No, or N/A as appropriate.

To: amy.zidulka@royalroads.ca
Subject: Consent — Building Digital Commons Research

I have read the Participant Consent Form for the project “Building Digital Commons: Prototyping University-Managed Online Communities” and agree to participate on the following terms:

1. I grant permission for my community engagement activity to be used as research data (y/n): ____
2. I grant permission to complete surveys about my experience as a community member (y/n): ____
3. I grant permission to be contacted about participating in an interview (y/n): ____
4. I grant permission to be audio/video recorded if interviewed (y/n) ____

Full name: _____

Role/organization: _____

Date: _____