AI Transformation in Organizations: Course Project

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Participant Information Letter and Consent Form

Overview

You are invited to participate in a study as part of a course project at the University of Waterloo. The intent of the course project is to understand work processes, bottlenecks and challenges in organizations, and design a sociotechnical solution (involving a mix of AI, non-AI, and non-technology components) for addressing identified problems.

Designing sociotechnical solutions is a process that requires interviews, surveys, observations, and the evaluation of prototype solutions. The study may involve two parts. In the first part, we interview/survey people and observe them as they perform work tasks. The results from the interviews, surveys, and observations inform the initial design of a sociotechnical solution. In the second part, we ask people to try out and evaluate a prototype solution to understand what needs to be improved in our designs. These prototype solutions may be technological (e.g., an AI-powered app) or non-technological solutions (e.g., a checklist). As an example of the design process in our context, suppose we wish to improve a physiotherapist's work process. We would first interview/survey physiotherapists and observe them as they perform their day-to-day tasks. We would then develop prototypes and ask architects to try them out to see how our designs could be further improved.

We invite you to participate in the study, which may involve interviews, surveys, observations and prototype evaluation, conducted in-person or online. You may be reached out later to participate in more study sessions based on your willingness and availability. With your permission, screen, user interaction, and audio recording will be made to document the process. Any information that is recorded will not include any information that can identify you.

We may observe you in your work environment. Please ensure that your manager has given permission for us to be at your workplace for this activity.

Study Details

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may stop at any time. If you agree to participate, we may conduct one to three study sessions (lasting around 30 minutes each). Later sessions will help us clarify issues or questions that may have arisen since the first one. If conducted online, you will be provided with a link to join a video conferencing platform (e.g., Zoom, Google Meet, Teams). If completing a survey, you will receive an online survey link.

We might also observe you in your work environment as you perform [Relevant Tasks]. The best technologies are those that work well in realistic conditions. Thus, we will ask to shadow you as you perform real tasks at work. During our observations we will note [Relevant Activities] and ask you questions about [Project Topics]. The length of these observations is dependent on our respective schedules, but should last around 30 minutes each.

During the study sessions, your honest feedback is important to us. The instructor will evaluate this course project based on how well we engage in the design process. As a result, both positive and negative comments will help us to validate what we have done well, to improve our understanding of your tasks and to assess the extent to which our solution will help you accomplish tasks, and to make suggestions for future directions or modifications to our project. How much you like or dislike our project is irrelevant to the grade we receive in the course.

Observation Protocols

If you are interacting with a non-participant (e.g., client, colleague), we will silently observe and withhold questions until the end. We will not record any information about non-participants (e.g., clients, colleagues) who are present in the same online/physical space. If appropriate, you can ask non-participants for their permission before the observation takes place: "I have students from the University of Waterloo who would like to observe workflow to help us improve our processes but will not record anything about you. Do you give permission for them to be here?" Our goal is to understand your work processes without disrupting your workflows and client interactions.

We may stop and leave an observation should the situation be distressing (e.g. someone in distress, pain, trauma). You can also ask us to stop and leave an observation if it is in the best interest of everyone that may be involved. You are free to decide in which situations and areas it is appropriate for us to observe, and if appropriate, seek advice/approval from your manager.

Risks

There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

Rights to Withdraw

You may decline to answer particular questions or decide to withdraw from the study at any time by communicating this to the student investigators or course instructors. You can request your data be removed from the study up until two weeks after the participation as it is not possible to withdraw your data once publications (e.g., course reports) have been submitted.

Confidentiality and Data Retention

All personal data collected is considered confidential. Codes, rather than names or other identifying information, will be used in notes. Even though we may present our findings to the class or publish our results in papers, only the course instructor and our project group will have access to the data collected. Your name, organization name, or any other personal identifying information will not appear in any publication resulting from this study. However, with your

permission, anonymous quotations and pictures may be used. Audio recordings may be transcribed. Notes, images, interaction logs, screen recordings, and audio recordings/transcriptions collected during this study will not contain identifiable information (e.g., names, faces) and will be retained for a minimum of 1 year on a password-protected computer, data server and/or cloud service.

If the study is conducted online using a survey (e.g., Qualtrics) or video conferencing platform (e.g., Zoom, Google Meet, Teams), information is transmitted over the internet and privacy cannot be guaranteed. There is always a risk your responses may be intercepted by a third party. University of Waterloo researchers will not collect or use internet protocol (IP) addresses or other information which could link your participation to your computer or electronic device without first informing you.

Remuneration

You will not be remunerated for participation in the study. However, the information you provide will help us understand how AI technologies can be designed to facilitate processes and workflows in organization.

Questions

If you have any questions about participation in this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact Edith Law (edith.law@uwaterloo.ca) or Jennifer Yessis (jyessis@uwaterloo.ca) via email.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Board (REB #48645). If you have questions for the Board, contact the Office of Research Ethics, toll-free at 1-833-643-2379 (Canada and USA), 1-519-888-4440, or reb@uwaterloo.ca.

Consent Form

I agree, of my own free will, to participate in a study being conducted by

_____

_____
(Student Names)

for the course “AI Transformation in Organizations” at the University of Waterloo. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in this Information-consent Letter and have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study.

___ YES ___ NO

I agree to allow screen and audio recordings (without identifying information) to be made to capture the prototype evaluation process.

___ YES ___ NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any presentation or report that comes of this study.

___ YES ___ NO

I agree to allow pictures to be taken. The pictures might be used in teaching, scientific presentations and/or publications. I or others I work with will not be identifiable in the pictures.
___ YES ___ NO

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the students or course instructor.

___ YES ___ NO

By signing this consent form, you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator(s) or involved institution(s) from their legal and professional responsibilities.

_____ (Please print)
Name of participant

_____
Signature of participant

_____
Date

_____ (Please print)
Name of witness

_____
Signature of witness

_____
Date