

Consent Form

Diffusion of Innovation in a Social Network

We are a research team from the College of Computing and Information Science at Cornell University studying the diffusion of innovation in a social network. Research on the diffusion of innovation examines how people influence each other to adopt new technologies, ideas, and information. This particular study focuses on the diffusion of a Facebook application called “Friendship Quiz.” As someone interested in adding the “Friendship Quiz” application, you are invited to participate in this study. This form explains the study in more detail so that you can make an informed decision about whether you would like to participate. Please read this form carefully and post any questions you may have on the Discussion Board (<http://www.facebook.com/apps/application.php?id=2373072738&ref=pr>). If you decide to participate, you will then be able to add the Friendship Quiz application to your Facebook profile. You may decide at any time to stop participating by simply deleting the application from your profile.

What the study is about: The purpose of this study is to examine how friends influence one another to adopt the application. In particular, we want to know if this influence depends in part on their similarity, and if so, which attributes are most important.

What we will ask you to do: If you agree to be in this study, we will ask that you add the “Friendship Quiz” application to your Facebook profile. Some information from your current Facebook profile will then be automatically collected. We only collect information from your profile that you have made public to anyone who might happen to click on your page, and we do not collect information like name, birthday, street address, email, or phone number that could be used to identify you personally. You will be assigned an identification number and all data we collect will be identifiable only by this number, and not by your name. You will be completely anonymous.

The “Friendship Quiz” application allows you to answer multiple choice questions from friends who have invited you to participate, and it also allows you to pose questions to friends whom you invite. The application has a template with suggested questions, but each user can customize the Quiz with just those questions they want to include, and you can create entirely new questions as well, so long as they are in the multiple choice format.

None of the information that you provide for the “Friendship Quiz” application will be collected. We do not collect information about the questions you choose to include or about the answers you give. The only personal information we collect is what already appears on your Facebook Profile. We also record all invitations you send to others and whether these invitations are accepted, and we collect public information from the Facebook Profiles of those to whom you send invitations.

Once you have added the “Friendship Quiz” application, you will have the option to invite your friends to add this application by sending out Facebook invitations. It is not necessary for you to do this. If you do not invite friends to add the application, you can still use the application to respond to any friends who have invited you to use it.

Risks and benefits:

The study poses no risks, and participating in this research is completely voluntary. All data collected are fully anonymized. It will only take you about 1 to 10 seconds to add this application and send invitations. The time required to answer a friend’s Quiz or to create a Quiz of your own will depend on the number of questions and associated choices in the Quiz. However, on average, we estimate that it will take you about 1 to 5 seconds to answer a question of the Quiz from the friend who invited you, and it will take about 1 to 5 minutes to create a multiple-choice question for a Quiz of your own.

The Friendship Quiz application is played as a personal quiz game, and it is fun to participate. The application allows your friends to see how well you know them and it allows you to see how well your friends know you. You can also use the Quiz to collect any information you want, on any topic. For example, you could create a political opinion poll or you could use it to organize a party (by finding out when people are available and what foods they prefer). The main benefit for you is the entertainment and knowledge gained. Creating your own Quizzes and answering the Quizzes from your friends is a creative and entertaining process.

Another benefit is the satisfaction of knowing that you have contributed to scientific knowledge about the diffusion of innovation. This topic is increasingly important to the scientific community because of the growing reliance on social networks in deciding what products to purchase, what candidates to support, what groups to join, and what technologies to use. Although this knowledge is also useful to advertisers and politicians, we will not share our data with anyone else, and we only use what we learn to publish reports in scientific journals.

Compensation: There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to add the Friendship Quiz application or remove it anytime in the future. We will appreciate your interest in this research, whether or not you choose to participate.

Your answers will be confidential. All the data we collect are anonymous. The individual-level data we collect will be kept private. In any report we publish or make public, we will include only aggregate data, not data from any particular individual. Research records will be kept in an encrypted database; only the researchers will have access to the records.

If you have questions: The researchers conducting this study are Shaomei Wu and Prof. Michael Macy. Please refer to the Discussion Board of the “Friendship Quiz” application

if you have any questions. There you will find answers to the most frequently asked questions. You can also post your questions on the Discussion Board and send messages to the research team through Facebook for further assistance. In addition, you may contact Shaomei Wu at shaomei@gmail.com or at 607-279-9513. You can also reach Prof. Michael Macy at mwm14@cornell.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 607-255-5138 or access their website at <http://www.irb.cornell.edu>.

You can save a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

By clicking on “add this application” below you indicate that you understand the information provided in the consent form and are willing to participate in this study.

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study and was approved by the IRB on August, 27, 2008.