**Participant Information Sheet**

**Study Title**: Social interactions in online platforms

**Researcher**: Neslihan Ozhan, Dr Erich Graf, Prof Matt Garner, Diana Herlea, Lauren Fernee, Jack Tew, Simone Marchetti

**ERGO number:** 57202

You are being invited to take part in the above research study. To help you decide whether you would like to take part or not, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully and ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information before you decide to take part in this research. You may like to discuss it with others but it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to give your consent.

**What is the research about?**

Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD; also referred as ‘social phobia’) is often characterised

by feelings of being judged and evaluated negatively by others, leading to anxious feelings and hyperarousal before, during and after social situations. Although the factors that onset, maintain and prognose SAD have been well-researched in social encounters, the literature is lacking information on SAD and its characteristics in online social environments. We sought to explore SAD in digital social interaction platforms with reference to contemporary cognitive-behavioural models of social phobia (e.g. Clark & Wells, 1995; Rapee & Heimberg, 1997).

**Why have I been asked to participate?**

You have been invited to participate since you have enquired about our advertised studies.

**What will happen to me if I take part?**

This project will take place in two separate parts.

First, you will be screened to make sure you are eligible to continue in the study. Screening will be done online via Qualtrics survey tool and can be completed approximately within 10 minutes. You will be reimbursed (**£1)** for your participation. If you are **eligible**, then you will be asked to choose a convenient data & time to meet for the videoconferencing part. We will send you a re-invitation to the second project (videoconferencing) using your Prolific ID.

The videoconferencing task involves you preparing and delivering a short talk on a given topic during an online videoconferencing session. You will also be asked to complete self-report questionnaires administered online via Qualtrics. The videoconferencing session will last about 50 minutes and you will be reimbursed (**£5.50) upon the completion of the videoconferencing task.**

The second task (videoconferencing) will take place on your agreed date & time.

You have the right to withdraw at any time. You will still receive reimbursement for the time that you have spent in the research.

All data is anonymised and confidential. Your speech will be recorded to be used in the analysis. The original recordings will be completely deleted once they are transcribed.

**Are there any benefits in my taking part?**

Full completion of the study (both screening and videoconferencing) will be awarded with £6.50. If you are ineligible during the screening session, you will still be compensated for your time (£1).

Beyond this you should not expect to directly benefit from taking part in this research study. However, the information we get from this study may help us to understand and treat patients with anxiety disorders in the future.

**Are there any risks involved?**

Looking at the computer screen for a period of time might cause mild eye strain. You will have the right to withdraw at any time.

Throughout the online session, you will be asked some sensitive questions (i.e. your race) and asked to reflect upon your mental well-being through the research questionnaires. If at any point you are concerned about your mental or physical health then please contact your General Practitioner and NHS direct (for residents in the UK) or relevant authorities in the country that you currently reside

**What data will be collected?**

Questionnaire-based data will be collected via online survey (Qualtrics). Your personal information will not be used in the analysis or presentation of the data to ensure that they remain confidential. Recordings will be transcribed before being deleted. All data (self-report questionnaire and transcribed recordings) will be stored on password protected servers and accessed only by those directly involved in running the experiment or analysing the data.

**Will my participation be confidential?**

Your participation and the information we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential.

Only members of the research team and responsible members of the University of Southampton may be given access to data about you for monitoring purposes and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to your data. All of these people have a duty to keep your information, as a research participant, strictly confidential.

All data is anonymised and confidential. You will be assigned a unique participant number that will be used to identify your data – your Prolific ID will not be linked with or stored with any of your data. Any information and research study documentation taken for this research study will remain confidential and will be available only to the principal investigator and members of the research team directly involved in the project. As a limitation to confidentiality, if you provide any information that will cause us concern about your safety and well-being, my research team and I have a duty to disclose this information with the relevant authorities.

**Do I have to take part?**

No, it is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide you want to take part, you will need to give your online consent to show you have agreed to take part.

**What happens if I change my mind?**

You have the right to change your mind and withdraw at any time without giving a reason. If you withdraw from the study early, you will be reimbursed for the time you have spent in the study.

If you withdraw from the study, we may keep the information about you that we have already obtained for the purposes of achieving the objectives of the study only. However, you can request full deletion of your online / stored data if you wish to withdraw (You can contact the researcher via Prolific for such request).

**What will happen to the results of the research?**

Your personal details will remain strictly confidential. Research findings made available in any reports or publications will not include information that can directly identify you without your specific consent.

When the study has been completed, the research team will analyze the data and report the findings. The results will be included in research reports written by members of the research team, including research student projects and papers for publication/presentation at scientific conferences. You would not be identified in any way and if you would like a copy of the final paper, you may request this by contacting the researcher via Prolific .

**Where can I get more information?**

For further queries, please contact Neslihan Ozhan

n.ozhan@soton.ac.uk

**What happens if there is a problem?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the researchers (Neslihan Ozhan at [n.ozhan@soton.ac.uk](mailto:n.ozhan@soton.ac.uk), Erich Graf at [e.w.graf@soton.ac.uk](mailto:e.w.graf@soton.ac.uk) and Matt Garner at [m.j.garner@soton.ac.uk](mailto:m.j.garner@soton.ac.uk)) who will do their best to answer your questions.

If you remain unhappy or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance Manager (023 8059 5058, [rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk](mailto:rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk)).

**Data Protection Privacy Notice**

The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of research integrity. As a publicly-funded organisation, the University has to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information about people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, we will use information about you in the ways needed, and for the purposes specified, to conduct and complete the research project. Under data protection law, ‘Personal data’ means any information that relates to and is capable of identifying a living individual. The University’s data protection policy governing the use of personal data by the University can be found on its website (<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page>).

This Participant Information Sheet tells you what data will be collected for this project and whether this includes any personal data. Please ask the research team if you have any questions or are unclear what data is being collected about you.

Our privacy notice for research participants provides more information on how the University of Southampton collects and uses your personal data when you take part in one of our research projects and can be found at <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/sharepoint/intranet/ls/Public/Research%20and%20Integrity%20Privacy%20Notice/Privacy%20Notice%20for%20Research%20Participants.pdf>

Any personal data we collect in this study will be used only for the purposes of carrying out our research and will be handled according to the University’s policies in line with data protection law. If any personal data is used from which you can be identified directly, it will not be disclosed to anyone else without your consent unless the University of Southampton is required by law to disclose it.

Data protection law requires us to have a valid legal reason (‘lawful basis’) to process and use your Personal data. The lawful basis for processing personal information in this research study is for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. Personal data collected for research will not be used for any other purpose.

For the purposes of data protection law, the University of Southampton is the ‘Data Controller’ for this study, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The University of Southampton will keep identifiable information about you for 10 years after the study has finished after which time any link between you and your information will be removed.

To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personal data necessary to achieve our research study objectives. Your data protection rights – such as to access, change, or transfer such information - may be limited, however, in order for the research output to be reliable and accurate. The University will not do anything with your personal data that you would not reasonably expect.

If you have any questions about how your personal data is used, or wish to exercise any of your rights, please consult the University’s data protection webpage (https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page) where you can make a request using our online form. If you need further assistance, please contact the University’s Data Protection Officer ([data.protection@soton.ac.uk](mailto:data.protection@soton.ac.uk)).

**Thank you for taking the time to read the information sheet and considering taking part in the research.**