Procedures for Interviews and Surveys

DRAFT – FOR COMMENT BY THE ETHICS ADVISORY BOARD

PD-Net Study-Design Process Document

The PD-Net project will conduct a number of interviews and surveys in order to explore how users interact with networked public display systems. In this document we describe our operating procedures for studies that feature interview and/or questionnaire subjects. All such studies will conform to the rules and procedures set out in this document. Further details can be found in the PD-Net Ethics Handbook, which summarizes the overall ethical approach taken in PD-Net.

## Definition of Interviews and Surveys

Interviews are useful for soliciting qualitative information about attitudes and practices of a small set of specifically recruited participants. Interviews can be conducted in a range of locations, including laboratories, public spaces, and private properties (e.g., homes, offices). Interviewers may use written notes and may optionally (and with the explicit consent of the interview subject) use audio recordings. Interviews may also involve the collection of artifact records, i.e., descriptions, pictures, or video recordings of personal belongings and environments, to further illustrate the narrative record.

Surveys are useful for soliciting quantitative information about a larger set of participants, which may or may not remain anonymous. Surveys can be administered offline (i.e., using pen and paper) or online. In both cases, survey subjects may remain completely anonymous, depending on the demographic and contact information collected.

## Nature of Studies

Interviews in PD-Net typically involve a single participant discussing a set of topics with one or more interviewers. If more than one interviewer is present, note taking and interviewing activities can be split, allowing the interviewer to better focus on the interview. Interviews generally use voice recorders to aid in the data collection process, though individual interviews might also involve photographs or even video recordings. Any data collection beyond written notes will always require explicit written consent from the interview subject (beyond the general consent given for the interview).

Surveys in PD-Net typically reach out to a larger number of participants, which fill out a questionnaire online or offline. Interviews may also include the use of questionnaires, e.g., to aid in the collection of demographic information. Surveys may be conducted through a third-party online-survey service. These services may record the IP address of otherwise anonymous study subjects. PD-Net will only use online services that a) allow for the immediate deletion of IP address data, and b) are either based in Europe (and are thus subject to European Data Protection Law) or reside in the U.S. and have signed the Safe Harbor agreement.

## Volunteers

Interview participants will be recruited through local notice boards, online ads, professional recruiters, or similar channels. Study subjects will be recruited from healthy adult volunteers – no vulnerable participants (e.g., children or people with cognitive disorders) will be sought out or selected. All potential participants will be informed about the rules protecting people who participate in research, in particular their right to withdrawal and the right to have their data deleted at any time during the study. Participants will be handed a brief description of the PD-Net project, as well as a comprehensive description of the planned study and their role in it. This document will also explicitly list the above rights and fully disclose possible detriments by participating in the study. While written consent is preferred, oral consent might be more appropriate in some situations, e.g., walk-up interviews on public places. Volunteers may be remunerated for their time and expenses, and may be incentivized to participate through small prizes/lotteries. However, there will not be excessive payments that may affect a study subject’s wish to withdrawal.

## Data

Data collection, storage, and use of personally identifiable information (PII) in PD-Net in general will follow the EU legal framework, as well as individual national legislation on data protection. See the *PD-Net Ethics Handbook* for details. As part of the individual consent form, study subjects will be notified of the data collected, the purpose of this data collection (i.e., the particular research aspect under investigation), the recipients of this data (i.e., only researchers involved in PD-Net), the name and full contact information of the PI responsible for the data collection, access information (i.e., how to get a copy of the data collected about oneself), and how long data will be retained.

At the latest, collected PII data will be deleted 3 months after PD-Net ends, though earlier times are possible. All publications will only use fully anonymized data, both when reporting qualitative and quantitative data. As the anonymization of demographic information depends highly on background knowledge such as knowing the recruited user base, the PI will ensure that reasonable efforts have been made to minimize chances of accidental data disclosure under such circumstances.

See also the *PD-Net Guide for Obtaining Informed Consent* for more details on the informed consent process.

All collected data will use *anonymous* *identifiers* for all participants, and store the data that links the participants’ identity to those identifiers separately from the collected data (“coded identification”). Data will be stored in accordance to the security principles described in the *PD-Net Guide to Secure Data Storage*.

## Documentation

As described in the PD-Net Ethics Handbook, details of each lab study will be recorded in a PD-Net ethics worksheet prior to the planned beginning of a study. See the handbook for details. Ethics worksheets will be part of the deliverable a particular study was performed for.