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Participant Information Sheet

Warren: An online design student network developed through action research to engage with campus design culture.

You're invited to join a focus group coordinated for an honours' student project being conducted by Joshua Crowley with supervision by UWS Staff, Samantha Edwards-Vandenhoeck, Sarah Waterson and Alison Gill. This project has the approval of the UWS Ethics Committee and is based in UWS' School of Communication Arts.

To be eligible for this focus group, you must be a 4th Year Bachelor of Design (Visual Communication) student, studying unit 101024 Communication Design Professional Brief.

The focus groups will engage with the expansion and evaluation of Warren, a website in development for students in your course. Your involvements will mean that you'll be asked for opinions and insights regarding your course experience. You'll actively participate in the design process of developing Warren, influencing decisions and evaluating choices that will work towards improving the design culture on campus.

Volunteering for this project involves participating in a focus group for up to one hour each fortnight during semester. The focus group will meet on campus at Werrington South and will occur just after your major project class. The focus group will be strictly open to 10 students studying in 4th year Bachelor of Design Professional Practice stream and your participation is entirely voluntarily. There will be 4 sessions at monthly intervals during UWS autumn and spring academic session, one hour in length.

A step by step of a typical session activity:

- Introduction of the sessions tasks - presentation.
- Identify problem areas and turn them into assessable criteria - discussion.
- Use the website with criteria in mind - individual testing on a iMac
- Re-evaluate problem areas and start discussion on observations and findings - discussion
- Brainstorm and Discussion on responding actions to implement - group task
- Elect a suitable source of data in which to evaluate implemented actions - discussion.
- Choose an action to implement - discussion.
- Conclusion and final comments - discussion.

A good participant would feel comfortable:

- With collaborating with other students and their ideas.
- Voicing honest opinions and constructive criticism.
- Debating with their peers and evaluating arguments.
- Staying around after class for up to an hour.
- Getting passionate about developing design culture at UWS.
- Being recorded through film, still photography and audio recordings.

Participants can expect to:

- Learn more about sustaining productive collaboration.
- Learn more about web based design and web services, e.g. Google Analytics & CMS.
- Develop an understanding of participatory research design, useful in the context of close collaborations with clients.
- Continue to develop their individual design practice and process.

FAQ

What is Warren?

Warren is a website in development for the use of students that study Vis Com at UWS. It's a website that will help develop the design culture in the course, creating a space for students to exchange and network.

Do I get paid, where's the funding coming from?

No, unfortunately not, though during sessions you will be provided with food and drink as a sign of goodwill. The project is self-funded by the Primary Researcher Joshua Crowley.

How will the results be shared and can I access them?

Yes, you can access them, on request at the end of the research process. The results will be published online, through a website and through the print publication of an exegesis.

Will anyone else know the results and that I was involved?

Yes, results of the study will be openly published and some of the information collected may identify you as an individual e.g. photographs, quotes, audio recordings.

What exactly is involved in the study, what can I expect?

The focus group participants will basically respond to discussion and activities led by the primary researcher. Such activities include group brainstorming, concept mapping, case study discussions and user testing of the website.

Can I withdraw from the study?

Yes, at any time throughout the project you may withdraw from participation, without reason, without penalty.

Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you can tell other people about the study by providing them with the chief investigator's contact details. They can contact the chief investigator to discuss their participation in the research project and obtain an information sheet.

What if I require further information?

You can access further information by getting in contact with the Primary Researcher, Joshua Crowley (joshua.crowley@gmail.com) or the following supervisors, Samantha Edwards, Sarah Waterson and Alison Gill. Emails are available on the UWS website.

What if I have a complaint?

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Office of Research Services on Tel 02-4736 0883 Fax 02-4736 0013 or email humanethics@uws.edu.au.

The Protocol Number for this project is H8114.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Please feel free to contact the Primary Researcher with any questions or concerns:

If you're interested in being involved, please pick up a participant's consent form or contact Joshua Crowley.

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