

ONLINE SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS

Section 7, Confidentiality

Below are some concerns regarding Confidentiality and Data Security with research when the Internet is used. Addressing these issues in the consent document is needed since there is always the risk of breach of confidentiality present in internet research:

- Address the efforts in place to protect the data (encryption, secure servers)
- Identify potential tracking measures if using work or public computers or recommend use of private computers
- Disclose what third party sites (e.g., Survey Monkey, Zoomerang, etc.) may be used for collection, storage, dissemination and that access by third parties is possible.
- Consider whether participant's anonymous data presented in the aggregate could be (re)identified if made publicly available.

Below are some examples of Confidentiality statements that may be adapted and stated in a IRB application.

- Participants will be presented with the informational/informed consent form [see Section 6 "Informed Consent" (E) below for more explanation about this form.] once they navigate to the study website. Participants will read the form and indicate that they consent by selecting the appropriate option. The participants will not be able to proceed with the study until this has been completed.
- Describe assigned identification method to be used:
 - (i) Each subject will be assigned a study identification number by the Survey Monkey administrator, through which all individual's data will be linked. OR
 - (ii) Participants will not be given the opportunity to add any personal identifying information during the study. A participant ID will be assigned to each participant for use during data analysis.
- Internet administration data will be collected via a secured website. The investigators will remove data stores periodically and backup data on a compact disk.

UHCL IRB informed consent documents require one of the following statements be provided under "Confidentiality" when participant data is collected via the Internet:

- Your confidentiality will be kept to the degree permitted by the technology being used. No guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties.



NOTE: If participants choose to access an online survey via an unprotected wireless network, their confidentiality and data is more easily compromised. A statement about this risk is included within the informed consent form under “Risks of Participation.”

Section 6, Informed Consent

Below are some examples of statements that may be adapted and provided in the Informed Consent for survey projects conducted online:

[NOTE: Even though you may be requesting waiver for documentation of informed consent (only waives requirement to obtain signatures as documentation of consent), UHCL IRB wants participants to be able to have access to read, download, and print an informational/informed consent document that includes the basic elements of consent for their consideration to volunteer or not. This document also gives contact information for researchers and for UHCL IRB if there are any questions or concerns about the study.]

- (A) Participants will be presented with the informed consent form once they navigate to the study website. A link for downloading and printing the informed consent document will be provided at this website. Participants will read the form and indicate that they consent by selecting the appropriate button that indicates that they agree to participate in the study. The participants will not be able to proceed with the study until this has been completed.
- (C) A link is provided for participants to download the consent form.
- (E) A waiver of informed consent documentation is requested for all participants, and justification for the waiver is as follows: Per 46.117(c)(2), Justification to waive documentation (*no signatures obtained*) of informed consent: Project is no more than minimal risk and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside the research context. Investigators/Faculty Sponsors are providing written explanation about the research projects (*the informational/informed consent document*) to volunteering participants.

Section 9, “Risks”

- During actual Internet communication procedures or accessing an unprotected wireless system, there is a possible risk of breach of confidentiality or data security.