 The Open University [](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/)  

**DIGITAL BRAIN SWITCH RESEARCH PROJECT**

**INFORMATION SHEET**

**What is the aim of this research?**

Using a combination of different research methods, this project aims to investigate:

* how individuals manage switches between identities in both the physical and digital worlds
* how the use of digital technologies creates or erodes boundaries between these identities
* how these issues impact on work-life balance.

**What does the research project involve?**

The project is made up of a two stages. The first is a video diary and interview study. The aim is to help us understand the practices involved when people switch between identities.

This part of the study will involve:

* Attending a briefing meeting
* Being asked to record a ‘week in your life’ using a video camcorder
* Having a short debriefing over the telephone
* Attending a face-to-face interview at either your home, office or place of study, or over Skype (whichever you prefer) with a member of the research team. This interview will allow you to discuss the ‘week in your life’ data within the context of your broader work-life balance issues and will be recorded.

The second stage will develop ideas and findings from the video diary and interview study and will focus on developing ways to support how people switch identities using a web-based research platform.

This stage of the research will involve some or all of the following:

* Discussing ideas about work life balance through forums hosted on the platform
* Co-designing experiments with the research team.
* Uploading data to the research platform
* Sharing this (if you choose) with other users

You have the option of being involved in either the first or second stage part of the project – or, indeed, both if you wish.

**How will my data be used?**

You will be asked if you consent to the use of your data (including audio or visual data from which you might be identifiable) in the research project (e.g. extracts of data on the project website, in academic conferences and in published results of the research).

Data used in this way will be analysed by members of the research team. Data from the first stage of the project will also be used to inform the development of the second stage of the research.

**Is it confidential?**

Your participation will be treated in **strict confidence** in accordance with the Data Protection Act. The data generated will be stored on secure servers hosted by the research team’s universities and on a limited number of password-protected pcs used by the research team. It will be retained in accordance with the timescales stipulated by the research funding body (the EPSRC) and then destroyed as confidential waste.

Subject to the usage above, no additional personal information will be passed to anyone outside the research team unless reasonable concerns are raised regarding child abuse, neglect, self-harm or serious suicidal thoughts. In these circumstances, information may be passed onto an appropriate agency for follow-up.

**Why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

You have been identified as someone from one of the following groups:

1. People working for large companies including knowledge workers;
2. Students in higher education;
3. Social entrepreneurs and members of community groups.

These groups represent a variety of work settings with potentially different work life balance challenges, perceptions of technology use and range of workplaces. For these reasons we would like to invite you to participate in this study.

**Will I be paid?**

If you take part, you will receive your reasonable travel expenses for attending meetings. Your name will also be entered in a prize draw at the end of the project and the winners will get one of the video camcorders used.

**Where can I find more information?**

Further information about the research can be found on the project website <http://www.scc.lancs.ac.uk/research/projects/DBS/>

The ‘Get Involved’ section includes details of what will happen if you wish to take part. There are also a number of documents that you can download. These include, for example, details of what we would like you to record for the video diary which are set out in the ‘Instructions to Participants’ document.

**Who is conducting the research and who is it for?**

The full Digital Brain Switch Research Team is made up of:

Professor Jon Whittle (Principal Investigator, Lancaster University)

Dr Jim Ang (Co-Investigator, University of Kent),

Dr Helen Roby (Co-Investigator, Open University)

Professor Gillian Symon (Co-Investigator, Royal Holloway, University of London)

Ming Ki Chong (Research Associate, Lancaster University),

Dr Rebecca Whiting (Research Associate, Open University)

Petros Chamakiotis (Research Associate, Royal Holloway, University of London)

Dr Umar Rashid (Research Associate, University of Kent)

The Team are carrying out this research on behalf of the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council.

**What happens now?**

If you have already expressed an interest in taking part in this research then, over the next few weeks, someone from the Digital Brain Switch Research Team will contact you by telephone or email. They will ask you a few questions about yourself and your availability.

If you haven’t yet expressed interest in taking part, but would like to do so, please contact the research team via email: DBS-Project@open.ac.uk

What if I have other questions?

If you have any queries about the project or your participation in it, please contact the Digital Brain Switch research team via email: [DBS-Project@open.ac.uk](mailto:DBS-Project@open.ac.uk) or telephone 01908 654686 or 01784 276213.