



Information Sheet

Harnessing digital data to study 21st-century adolescence

Dear Participant,

We are inviting you to participate in the research project 'Harnessing digital data to study 21st-century adolescence' conducted by Dr Amy Orben, Professor Daniel Oberski, Dr Laura Boeschoten, Dr Sebastian Kurten, Dr Amanda Ferguson, Dr Jasmine Fardouly, Amira Skeggs, Amelia Leyland-Craggs, and Valerie Yap in collaboration with the University of Cambridge and Utrecht University.

Before beginning the research project, it is important that you take note of the procedures we will apply. Please read this information sheet carefully, and if anything is unclear do not hesitate to contact Dr. Sebastian Kurten orben.group@mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk of the University of Cambridge.

Purpose of the research project

The online world is central to the lives of young people today, but remains understudied by scientists. This means that there is very limited understanding of how online platforms, such as social media, impact the lives of young people. It is important to conduct research on the online world to ensure we can keep it safe, and help those who need it.

The Medical Research Council (MRC) is launching a large-scale study to investigate the health and wellbeing of young people in the UK. The purpose of this research project is to show how digital data donation can be used in research, and how this might offer us the opportunity to learn more about the online world.

What is Digital Data Donation?

Digital data donation uses individuals' data rights; as a user of digital platforms, you are entitled to request your data from these platforms and are then free to share it with anyone you want. To allow us to exercise these rights, most digital platforms have introduced 'download your data' pages or services on their sites. Members of our team have developed a software where individuals are able to donate their social media data to researchers in a private and ethical way. Using this software, individuals are able to see their data package in an easy-to-read format, and select what information they are willing to donate for research. For example, this software could be used to share how many hours each day you spend on TikTok, but to withhold information about how many videos you liked on these days. Anything that is not selected for donation **can not** be accessed by the research team, and **will not** be stored in our software. This gives you control over your own data, meaning you can participate in social media research in a way they feel comfortable.

Who can take part in this study?

You can take part in this study if you meet all of the following criteria:

1. Between 13-18 years of age
2. Own a smartphone and have an account on Instagram and/or TikTok that you use regularly

What will happen in the study?

This project collects data electronically over approximately two weeks. During the two weeks, you will complete two sets of questionnaires (15 mins each) about your social media use, wellbeing, and demographics. You will also complete very short questionnaires (<3 mins each) three times per day for two weeks on your

mobile phone. These short questionnaires will ask you about your social media use and feelings in the moment. Finally, you will be asked to download your social media data from TikTok and/or Instagram. You will then have the option of viewing information about your social media use (e.g., when and how much you use it), and you will have the option of donating this data to us for research purposes.

Instructions and Procedures

You will need to provide consent and if you are under 16, consent must be obtained from a parent or legal guardian. Once you have provided consent, you will be asked to fill out some online questionnaires about your demographics, your social media use, and your attitudes towards social media. We will also ask you questions about your general attitudes and preferences. The initial questionnaires will take around 15 minutes to complete.

Next, you will be provided with an invitation code for an app called M-path, which you can download from Android or Apple app stores onto your mobile phone. You don't need to provide any personal information to M-path – all you need to register is the unique invitation code that we will provide to you.

After registering with the invitation code, M-path will send notifications three times per day (not overlapping with school times) for the following 2 weeks. To ensure the information is relevant to your daily life, we will coordinate personalised timings based on when you wake up, go to bed, and your school schedule. On both weekdays and weekends, you will receive notifications, within specific time periods: you'll receive one in the morning, one after school, and one in the evening.

The notifications will ask you about your recent online and offline social activities and current wellbeing. This approach allows us to gain valuable insights into the connections between your social media use, emotional wellbeing, and daily life.

At the end of the 2 weeks, you will be asked to download your social media data for TikTok or Instagram. We will provide detailed instructions of how to do this, and the research team are always happy to answer questions. We will also ask you to fill out a final set of questionnaires (which should take around 15 minutes to complete).

Once your downloaded social media data becomes available, you can enter it into the data donation software to see your social media use over the last 6 months, and decide which parts you are happy to share with researchers!

Participant Compensation

General Policy: You will be compensated at £10/hour, and the maximum compensation achievable is £66 if all activities are completed. The total payment reflects active participation in the study. The table below describes the different study activities and their payment. Compensation will be paid out if it is 20£ or higher.

Study Activity	Time Required	Payment
Initial Education Session and Sign Up	~60 mins	£10
Initial Questionnaire	~30 mins	£5
Final Questionnaire and Data donation	~30 mins	£5
Answering Every 5 Notifications	<3 mins each	£5 (max £40)
Final Two Notifications (higher rate)	<3 mins each	£3 each (max £6)

GDPR Compliance

M-path is GDPR compliant and does not store any personally identifying information. The data collected by m-path will only be linked to participants by a unique code known only to the research team. We process participants' personal data on the basis of your consent, in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (AGV) and the General data Protection Regulation Implementation Act (UAVG). Data will only be



accessed by members of the research team in the University of Cambridge and Utrecht University, who hold up to date GDPR training.

Voluntary Participation

You will be participating in this research project on a voluntary basis. This means that you are free to withdraw your consent without giving reasons. This does not affect you and you are not obligated to complete the procedures described earlier. You can decide to withdraw consent at any stage of the study. If you decide to withdraw consent, all of your data collected up until the time of withdrawal will be retained unless otherwise specified, but we will no longer use this as part of our research, and it will not be included in any research papers.

You can withdraw your consent at any time by contacting orben.group@mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk

Access to your data by third parties

Your personal data will **not** be accessed by third parties without your explicit consent.

Confidential treatment and storage of your data

The information collected during this study will only be used for further analysis and publication in scientific journals. Your personal information will not be used in these publications, and we guarantee that you will remain anonymous under all circumstances in any published output.

The data collected during the study will be encrypted and stored separately from personal information. This personal data and the encryption key can only be accessed by members of the research team. Anonymized data will be kept for up to 7 years on secure servers at the MRC Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit, University of Cambridge.

Data Subject Request

As a data subject, you have the right to make a request, and have access to the personal data processed about you. You can have your data corrected, erased or object to the processing of certain data. You can submit this request to orben.group@mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk

Discomfort, risk and insurance

Given that we would request participants to use their social media accounts as normal in the time periods where social media data will be collected from, the risks of participating in this research are no greater than in everyday situations on social media. Previous experience with similar research has shown that participants experienced little or no discomfort. Standard liability insurance applies to all research at the University of Cambridge and Utrecht University.

Further Information

This research has been reviewed by the Cambridge Psychology Research Ethics Committee. Confidential treatment of your complaint is guaranteed. You also have the right to lodge a complaint about the handling of your personal data or get advice from the Information Commissioners Office. More information on this can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/data-protection/make-a-complaint>

General information about how the University uses personal data can be found here <https://www.information-compliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/data-protection/research-participant-data>