



# THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

## Letter of Information and Consent

**Project title:** Stress and its impact on digital preservationists in Canada

**Principal investigator:**

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### **Invitation to participate**

If you work in a Canadian memory institution<sup>1</sup> and view your role as being at least partially responsible for the digital preservation<sup>2</sup> of born-digital materials<sup>3</sup> in the holdings of your institution, then you are invited to participate in this research study. All digital preservationists in Canadian memory institutions are invited to participate.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the study is to identify and rank the common stressors facing digital preservationists; identify correlations between stressors, working conditions, and other demographics; and explore whether there is evidence to support the theory that the inherent challenges of digital preservation (e.g. volume of work, fragility/ephemerality of the materials, rapid technological obsolescence, lack of available resources, etc.) are contributing to burnout and/or anxiety/depression among digital preservationists.

### **Methods**

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an online questionnaire. The questionnaire includes questions about stressors related to the components of your digital preservation program; stress related to your use of technology; the impacts of your role as a digital preservationist on your stress and anxiety levels; your satisfaction with your job; your

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<sup>1</sup> The Expert Panel on Memory Institutions and the Digital Revolution identified libraries, archives, museums, and galleries as the core memory institutions in Canada with mandates to preserve Canadian heritage. Expert Panel on Memory Institutions and the Digital Revolution. *Leading in the Digital World: Opportunities for Canada's Memory Institutions*. Council of Canadian Academies, 2015, p. 9. [https://cca-reports.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/cofca\\_14-377\\_memoryinstitutions\\_web\\_e.pdf](https://cca-reports.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/cofca_14-377_memoryinstitutions_web_e.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this study, digital preservation is broadly defined, according to the Glossary of the Digital Preservation Coalition's Digital Preservation Handbook, as "the series of managed activities necessary to ensure continued access to digital materials for as long as necessary." Digital Preservation Coalition. "Digital Preservation Handbook – Glossary," <https://www.dpconline.org/handbook/glossary>.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*. Born-digital materials are defined as, "Digital materials which are not intended to have an analogue equivalent, either as the originating source or as a result of conversion to analogue form." The preservation of digital materials created as a result of converting analogue materials through digitization is not addressed in this study.

susceptibility to burnout; and your perceptions of your levels of generalized stress and anxiety. You will also be asked to identify your mood as well as any symptoms related to anxiety/depression that may have recently resulted from the stress of your work. There will also be questions pertaining to your age, gender, employment, and working conditions. The questionnaire includes both close-ended and open-ended questions.

### **Duration**

Your participation in this study will consist of completing the online questionnaire. Completion of the questionnaire is anticipated to take approximately 30 minutes.

### **Anticipated risks and benefits**

The anticipated risks or discomforts associated with participating in this study are minimal. The questionnaire will ask you to reply to questions pertaining to the stress and anxiety you feel at work, your satisfaction with your job, your perceived level of burnout, and to identify your recent mood and any symptoms related to anxiety and/or depression. These questions could cause emotional distress or secondary trauma in recounting these experiences. **Should you feel emotional distress and require support as a result of completing this questionnaire, you are encouraged to contact the [mental health resource centre](#) or [crisis support centre](#) nearest you, or for immediate support, call the Canada Suicide Prevention Service line at 1-833-456-4566.**

You may directly benefit from participating in the study by being provided with a forum to share your thoughts and feelings on workplace stress in a safe and anonymized environment. Publishing the study results may also benefit the entire community of digital preservationists in Canada by contributing to the de-stigmatization of stress and mental health in the workforce and inspiring administrators to remedy stressful conditions for their employees.

### **Participants' rights**

Participation in the study is entirely voluntary. Even if you consent to participate, you have the option to decline to respond to any question or to exit the questionnaire at any point prior to submitting your completed responses without consequence. Following the submission of your questionnaire, should you wish to view or modify your responses or withdraw from the study, please contact the Principal Investigator. Requests for withdrawal or modifications can only be honoured prior to the study's data analysis phase.

### **Compensation**

You will not be compensated for your participation in this research.

### **Confidentiality and anonymity**

Throughout the course of the study, your data will remain anonymous and the risk of you being identified is low. In order to protect your anonymity, the questionnaire will not directly request personally identifiable information such as your name. However, the questionnaire will request information relating to the type of organization where you work, your role, your salary range, your professional experience, as well as unidentifiable personal information including your age and your gender. Given the relatively small size of the digital preservation community in Canada and given that the principal investigator is a member of this community, it is possible that he may be able to triangulate an individual response and identify you. In addition, should the investigator be able to identify you in this way, he could also be made aware of your personal health information should you choose to submit questionnaire responses relating to your perceived levels of stress, job satisfaction, and recent mood and anxiety/depression symptoms. However, the principal investigator would have no reason to record this information for the study as survey data would be aggregated and will only be analyzed in the aggregate. As the sole investigator on the project, he would be the only individual with access to this information and would make no overt attempts to identify individuals and their related health conditions.

Your questionnaire responses will be collected anonymously through a secure online survey platform called Qualtrics. Your name and email address will not be requested and your IP address will not be recorded. Qualtrics uses encryption technology and restricted access authorizations to protect all data collected. The principal investigator would be the sole individual authorized to access the survey data in Qualtrics. You may read Qualtrics' privacy statement here: <https://www.qualtrics.com/privacy-statement/>.

### **Data storage and retention**

Your survey data will be stored on Qualtrics servers located in Canada. Qualtrics routinely backs up their data and adheres to international standards of data security. Once the survey closes, the data will also be exported out of Qualtrics and saved on the investigator's secured personal laptop and a backup copy will be saved on a password-protected external hard drive to be stored in a physically secured location.

This data would be retained for the duration of the study, estimated to be no more than 2 years, to protect against the potential loss of the aggregated data and to enable replications of data analysis procedures in the event of this loss. Your data would remain confidential and would only be used by the principal investigator in these circumstances. This data would be destroyed by the principal investigator following the completion of the study and the publication of the study results.

During the data analysis phase of the study, the data would be aggregated, de-identified, and subjected to data analytics procedures using software installed on the principal investigator's personal laptop. Identifiable information in responses to open-ended questions would also be disassociated from other questionnaire responses in the aggregated dataset in order to protect your anonymity. The aggregated, de-identified dataset would be stored on the principal

investigator's personal laptop and backed up on an external hard drive as described above for the duration of the study.

### **Future use of data**

Following the completion of the study, the principal investigator plans to deposit the aggregated, de-identified dataset in the University of Winnipeg Research Data Repository, a public research data repository, part of Borealis, the Canadian Dataverse Repository, hosted on University of Toronto servers. The investigator would allow for the dataset to be open to the public without restrictions for 7 years, at which point it may be decided to retain it indefinitely. Consequently, the study's data will be made freely available for reuse and could be repurposed by the broader academic community. By consenting to participate in this study, you are agreeing that your data can be used beyond the purposes of this present study by the principal investigator. However, the data that will be shared in the Research Data Repository will not contain any information that can identify you or your personal health information.

### **Reporting of study results**

Any reporting of the study results would also be centered on the anonymous aggregated data. The principal investigator intends to document the study and results in an article for publication in an academic journal, and to present and discuss the findings at academic conferences, webinars, blogs, podcasts, or other opportunities that may arise. A preprint of any academic journal article would also be made freely available through deposit in the University of Winnipeg's institutional repository, WinnSpace. The principal investigator expects the reporting of results to occur within the next two years.

### **Contact information**

If you have questions about this research study please contact the Principal Investigator, Brett Lougheed, at [b.lougheed@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:b.lougheed@uwinnipeg.ca).

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or the conduct of this study, you may contact the Ethics Program Officer of the University Human Research Ethics Board at [ethics@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:ethics@uwinnipeg.ca).

You are encouraged to retain a copy of this letter for your records. **Click here for a pdf version.**

By proceeding to the survey questionnaire, you are indicating that you have read the information letter; understand the purpose of the research, the nature of your participation, any risks and the anticipated benefits of participation; and agree to participate.

**Click here to begin the questionnaire.**