

Submitted by: Vito D'Orazio
Date Submitted: April 17, 2013
IRB#: 42955
PI: Glenn Palmer
Review Type: Exemption
Protocol Subclass: Social Science
Approval Expiration: -pending-
Class Project: No

Study Title

1>Study Title

Using crowdsourcing to measure complex social concepts: A pilot study

2>Type of eSubmission

New

Home Department for Study

3>Department where research is being conducted or if a student study, the department overseeing this research study.

Political Science

Review Level

4>What level of review do you expect this research to need? NOTE: The final determination of the review level will be determined by the IRB Administrative Office.

Choose from one of the following:

Exemption

5>Exempt Review Categories:

Choose one or more of the following categories that apply to your research. You may choose more than one category but your research must meet one of the following categories to be considered for exempt review.

Information about the review categories can also be found in the Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Part 46 Subpart A Section 101: <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.html#46.101>. Information that is bolded below is additional clarification provided by Penn State, as allowed by federal law.

Category 2: Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observations of public behavior unless:

Category 4: Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records,

pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that participants cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the participants.

Basic Information: Association with Other Studies

6>Is this research study associated with other IRB-approved studies, e.g., this study is an extension study of an ongoing study or this study will use data or tissue from another ongoing study?

No

7>Where will this research study take place? Choose all that apply.

University Park

Other Site(s)

8>Specify the building, and room at University Park where this research study will take place. If not yet known, indicate as such.

We will be conducting research in the Department of Political Science in Pond Lab and in the College of Information Sciences and Technology.

You have indicated that the research study location will include an outside laboratory or other non-PSU site(s).

9>List each site and provide contact information [name & address] for each site.

The human participants will be working at a computer at some off-site location with an internet location. The physical sites are unknown to us and are located wherever the volunteers regularly utilize their computers.

Recruitment will be conducted using the Mechanical Turk website (<https://www.mturk.com/>).

10>Do any of these sites have an IRB?

No

If you answer "No" to the above question, provide a letter of agreement/permission from an individual in a decision making position indicating their willingness to participate in the research study.

11>Does this research study involve any of the following Penn State Research Centers?

None of these centers are involved in this study

12>Describe the facilities available to conduct the research for the duration of the study.

No facilities are required.

13>Is this study being conducted as part of a class requirement? For additional information regarding the difference between a research study and a class requirement, see IRB Policy I – “Student Class Assignments/Projects” located at <http://www.research.psu.edu/policies/research-protections/irb/irb-policy-1>.

No

Personnel

14>Personnel List

PSU User ID	Name	Department Affiliation	Role in this study	Added
gop2	Palmer, Glenn	Political Science	Principal Investigator	
vjd125	D'Orazio, Vito James	Political Science	Co-Investigator	
mrk245	Kenwick, Michael R	Political Science	Research Support	
mal5529	Lane, Matthew Austin	Political Science	Research Support	
dtr17	Reitter, David T	Information Sciences and Technology	Co-Investigator	
mgs15	Schmierbach, Michael Grant	Film/Video and Media Studies	Co-Investigator	

Palmer, Glenn (Principal Investigator)	
PSU User ID: gop2	Phone: 865 5594
Email: gpalmer@psu.edu	Alt:
Email Notifications: Yes	Pager:
PSU Person Type: Faculty	Fax:
Dept: Political Science	
Address 1: 201 Pond Lab	
Address 2:	
Mail Stop:	
City, State, Zip: University Park, PA 16802	
Procedures: Palmer will work to construct the questions that will be asked to human participants and to compare the participant's answers to those of his research assistants.	
Experience: Palmer has been the PI on several past Militarized Interstate Dispute projects.	

D'Orazio, Vito James (Co-Investigator)	
PSU User ID: vjd125	Phone:
Email: vjd125@psu.edu	Alt:
Email Notifications: No	Pager:
PSU Person Type: Graduate Student	Fax:
Dept: Political Science	
Address 1: 221 Pond Lab	
Address 2:	
Mail Stop:	
City, State, Zip:	
Procedures: D'Orazio will work to construct the questions that will be asked to human participants and to upload the news stories and questions to the crowdsourcing platform.	
Experience: D'Orazio has experience with computational methods and computer programming.	

Kenwick, Michael R (Research Support)	
PSU User ID: mrk245	Phone:
Email: mrk245@psu.edu	Alt:
Email Notifications: No	Pager:

PSU Person Type: Graduate Student	Fax:
Dept: Political Science	
Address 1: No address provided	
Address 2:	
Mail Stop:	
City, State, Zip:	
Procedures: Kenwick will work to construct the questions that will be asked to human participants and to upload the news stories and questions to the crowdsourcing platform.	
Experience: Kenwick has worked as a research assistant to answer questions similar to those we will be asking to the human participants. He also has a basic knowledge of computer programming.	

Lane, Matthew Austin (Research Support)	
PSU User ID: mal5529	Phone:
Email: mal5529@psu.edu	Alt:
Email Notifications: No	Pager:
PSU Person Type: Graduate Student	Fax:
Dept: Political Science	
Address 1: 850 Cricklewood Drive	
Address 2: Apt 116	
Mail Stop:	
City, State, Zip: State College, PA 16803	
Procedures: Lane will work to construct the questions that will be asked to human participants.	
Experience: Lane's job as a research assistant for the past three years has been to answer questions similar to those that we are asking the human participants to answer.	

Reitter, David T (Co-Investigator)	
PSU User ID: dtr17	Phone: 814 867 3159
Email: reitter@psu.edu	Alt:
Email Notifications: No	Pager:
PSU Person Type: Faculty	Fax:
Dept: Information Sciences and Technology	
Address 1: 316D INFO SCI & TECH BL	
Address 2:	
Mail Stop:	
City, State, Zip: UNIVERSITY PARK, PA 16802	
Procedures: Reitter will work to construct the crowdsourcing infrastructure necessary for administering the data collection.	
Experience: Reitter is highly experienced with computer programming and crowdsourcing software.	

Schmierbach, Michael Grant (Co-Investigator)	
PSU User ID: mgs15	Phone: 814 865 9582
Email: mgs15@psu.edu	Alt:
Email Notifications: No	Pager:
PSU Person Type: Faculty	Fax:
Dept: Film/Video and Media Studies	

Address 1: 217 Carnegie Building
Address 2:
Mail Stop:
City, State, Zip: University Park, PA 16802
Procedures: Schmierbach will work to construct the questions that will be asked to human participants and to ensure we stay within a generalized content analysis framework.
Experience: Schmierbach is an expert in content analysis and is working on a textbook for various methodologies used in Communications.

Funding Source

15>Is this research study funded? Funding could include the sponsor providing drugs or devices for the study.

Pending

NOTE: If the study is funded or funding is pending, submit a copy of the grant proposal or statement of work for review.

16>Sponsor List

Sponsor Name

Penn State Social Science Research Institute

- **Sponsor Name**

Penn State Social Science Research Institute

Sponsor address or other contact information

Our contact at the SSRI has been Douglas Teti:

Douglas Teti, Ph.D., Associate Director, SSRI/CYFC, Phone: (814) 863-9570, dmt16@psu.edu

17>Is the funding awarded through a subcontract?

No

18>Is the sponsor providing drug, device, etc, free of charge?

No

19>If funding is not awarded, will the research still be conducted?

No

20>Does this research study involve prospectively providing treatment or therapy to participants?

No

Conflict of Interest

21>Do any of the investigator(s), key personnel, and/or their spouses or dependent children have a financial or business interest(s) as defined by PSU Policy RA20, "Individual Conflict of Interest," associated with this research? NOTE: There is no de minimus in human participant research

studies (i.e., all amount must be reported).

No

Exemption Prescreening Questions (Prisoners)

22>Does this research study involve prisoners?

No

23>Does this research study involve the use of deception?

No

24>Does this research study involve any FDA regulated drug, biologic or medical device?

No

25>Does this research study involve the use of protected health information covered under the Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA)?

No

26>Does this study involve any foreseeable risks and/or discomforts (i.e., physical, psychological, social, legal or other) to participants?

No

27>Will information collected from participants during the research study be recorded in such a manner that participants can be identified directly or indirectly through identifiers linked to the participants?

No

Exemption Questions: Objectives

28>Summarize the research study's key objectives, aims or goals.

While distributed labor (i.e. crowdsourcing) has been used for the purposes of measurement in social science, the conventional wisdom is that its potential for measuring complex social concepts is limited and that such concepts may only be measured by trained experts. Our primary objective is to demonstrate that crowdsourcing can be used to measure complex social concepts without the use of trained experts in the coding phase. In our pilot study we conduct a series of crowdsourcing experiments using platforms such as Mechanical Turk. The purpose of these experiments is to determine the accuracy of non-expert data collection about facts contained in news stories.

29>Provide the background information and rationale for performing the research study.

Currently, many data collection projects use trained, expert coders to read through news reports in search of information about some concept of interest. In our study, we propose to experiment with using crowdsourcing in place of the trained experts to collect this information. Doing so would save both time and money, provided that the workers who answer the questions are capable of accurately answering them.

30>Summarize the research study's procedures by providing a step-by-step process of what each group of participants will be asked to do after informed consent has been obtained.

Workers begin by reading a news story, generally between one and six paragraphs in length. Then, workers will be prompted to answer some very general questions about facts in the story. Their answers

are then used to determine the increasingly specific, fact-based questions that will be asked next. The decision to participate in our study is completely voluntary and workers will be paid for their services.

31>List the data collection measures/instruments that will be used in this study. Upload all instruments, measures, interview questions, and/or focus group topics/questions for review. Data collection instruments are a required element of the review process.

Does this story also include words that mention or reference one or more country?

Which countries does this story mention or refer to?

Does this story also include words or names that refer to individuals, persons, groups of people?

Do these individuals or groups live in the countries indicated in your answer above?

Do these individuals or groups have an association with the countries indicated in your answer above?

Are these individuals or groups residents of any of the countries indicated in your answer above?

Are these individuals or groups members or representatives of the governments in any of the countries you indicated above?

Do any of these individuals or groups have a title associated with their name? If so, what is the title?

Is there a threat in this story made by, issued by, or originate from a government or one of its officials?

Is there a target or object of the threat? If so, who?

Do the words of the threat involve the use of military force?

Does the threat refer to a specific place or geographic location?

On what date was this threat made?

Was military force used by one country against another country?

Were the military forces engaged against those of another country in any capacity and/or was there an intentional infliction of significant damage to, or possession of the territory, citizens or goods of another state?

Did the officials of one country declare war upon another state, make use of chemical, biological, or radiological weapons, or join an ongoing war between two or more states?

Did the armed forces of one country fire or inflict damage upon the armed forces, population, or territory of another country?

Did the armed forces of one country intervene on behalf of an insurgent group in an ongoing civil war in another country?

Did the armed forces or official personnel of one state capture or seize the official or unofficial goods, citizens, or property of another country?

Did the military forces of one state blockade another state?

Did the military forces of one state attempt to inhibit or impinge upon the flow of goods or personnel into or out of another country?

32>Provide the age range of the research participants. Check all that apply.

18 - 25 years

26 - 40 years

41 - 65 years

65 + years

33>Provide a brief description of the participant population.

The participant population consists of any individual over the age of 18 who voluntarily logs on to Amazon's Mechanical Turk website and participates in our study. Participants will come from all over the world and will be paid fair wages for their work. Mechanical Turk requires users to certify that they are at least 18 years of age (see <https://www.mturk.com/mturk/conditionsofuse>).

34>Does this research exclude any particular gender, ethnic or racial group, and/or a person based on sexual identity?

No

35>Describe the steps that will be used to identify and/or contact prospective participants. If applicable, explain how you have access to lists or records of potential participants. During this process, participants must be informed of the following information:

- **The researcher identifies him/herself as a Penn State researcher; and**
- **The study is being conducted for research purposes.**

We will upload the news stories and targeted questions to Mechanical Turk along with electronic consent forms. Workers will voluntarily log onto the crowdsourcing platform and choose to participate in our study. After agreeing to the electronic consent form, workers will read the story and answer the pertinent questions.

PLEASE NOTE: Submission of recruitment materials is not required for review, but may be requested on a case-by-case basis.

36>Explain how permission to take part in this research study will be obtained from potential participants (and parents, if minors are participants). During the consent process, participants must be informed of the following basic ethical principles of human participant research:

- **The researcher identifies him/herself as a Penn State researcher;**
- **The study is being conducted for research;**
- **A description of the procedures that the participant will undergo as part of the study;**
- **The individual's participation is voluntary;**
- **They may end their participation at any time; and**
- **Participants may choose not to answer specific questions.**

PLEASE NOTE: Submission of consent/assent forms is not required for review, but may be requested on a case-by-case basis.

We will begin by posting a news story to Mechanical Turk accompanied by all the associated information listed in numbers 1 through 6. At that point, potential participants decide whether or not they would like to work with us on our project. If they decide to participate, they will read a news story and answer between 1 and 12 questions about the news story. Participants will be paid for their services.

37>Will any type of recordings (e.g., audio, video, digital or photographs) be made during the conduct of this research study?

No

PLEASE NOTE: If audio or video recordings with audio are made, Pennsylvania state law requires agreement from all parties.

38>Is compensation being offered (e.g., money, extra/course credit, gift certificates, etc.)?

Yes

39>Describe the compensation being offered. PLEASE NOTE: If extra/course credit is being offered, also describe the alternative options for extra/course credit that will be offered. Please see Penn State IRB Guideline V for more information.

Participants will be paid for their services. For each story they read and answer questions about, they will be paid anywhere from 25 to 60 cents, depending on the number of questions answered.

40>Are student records (e.g., coursework, grades, test scores, etc.) being collected as part of this research study?

No

41>Please check the "I Agree" box below to confirm that all data (and recordings if applicable) are stored securely (e.g., locked cabinet, password protected computer, etc.) and accessible only to the research personnel listed on this application.

I agree

42>Please describe how data confidentiality (including recordings/photographs, if applicable) will be maintained AND how data will be reported when writing the results (use of code numbers, pseudonyms, without names attached, etc.). All data is to be stored in a confidential manner (even if identifiers are not connected to the responses), in locked locations, on password protected computers.

No personal information will be collected about the participants. The data collected will exclusively be fact-based data about news stories, and that data will be housed in a protected directory on university computers where only project personnel will have access. The data itself will not be released, and only analyses of the news story data will be published.

Document Upload

SUBMISSION FORMS

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