



Participant Information Sheet/Consent Form

Title	Sharing animal pictures on social media: pandemic strategies of care
Chief Investigator/Senior Supervisor	Larissa Hjorth

1. Introduction

You are invited to take part in this research project, which is called *Sharing Animal pictures on social media: pandemic strategies of care*.

You have been invited to participate as part of a general call to the Facebook network calling for participants who share images of animals during the pandemic. You have been invited because you contacted the researcher, Larissa, via IM.

This Participant Information Sheet tells you about the research project. It explains the processes involved with taking part. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the research. Please read this information carefully. Ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this research is **voluntary**. If you don't wish to take part, you don't have to. If you begin participating, you can also stop at any time.

If you decide you want to take part in the research project, you just need to contact the researcher, Larissa, via IM to confirm (implied consent). You can access the Participant Information and Consent Form on the Facebook page.

2. What is the purpose of this research?

The aim of this research is to understand the motivations, and collect examples, of sharing animal pictures on social media as part of pandemic strategies of care. It seeks to provide details into meanings as part of this cultural practice.

3. What does participation in this research involve?

If you decide to take part in this project, you can send the researcher, Larissa, an IM (instant message) on FB with the posted images and a sentence or two about the motivations and meanings of sharing the images and the responses.

4. Other relevant information about the research project

We are aiming to talk to 30 responses in this pilot (first) stage of the project.

5. Do I have to take part in this research project?

Participation in any research project is voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you do not have to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage. You may stop the interview at any time and ask for any recordings and information you have provided to be erased and not included in the study results. You may also refuse to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer during the interview.

If you do decide to take part, you can confirm by sending the pictures and text to the researcher's IM.

Your decision whether to take part or not to take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will not affect your relationship with the researchers.

6. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Your participation helps to gain insights into the important role animals have played during the pandemic. Ideally, this research will help us learn from these experiences.

7. What are the risks and disadvantages of taking part?

Participation in the study is not expected to have any particular risks for interviewees. Much of the sharing of animal images during the pandemic has been about hope, joy and care. In the unlikely event of any distress as a result of your participation in the research project, please contact Larissa who will be able to discuss appropriate support for you including health services.

8. What if I withdraw from this research project?

You can withdraw your image at any time before it goes to publication. The researcher will endeavour to make posts anonymous unless the participant states that they want to be named for whatever reason.

9. Who is organising and funding the research?

This research project is being conducted by Larissa Hjorth at RMIT University.

10. What happens when the research project ends?

The findings from the research will be used to inform resources around understanding the important role animals play in supporting humans—especially during the pandemic. for intergenerational literacy. The research may also be published as reports, creative outputs or in academic journals, as books chapters or as a book, news media articles, and/or presented at conferences. This may take 12 months or more. It is anticipated that the results of this research project will be published and/or presented in a variety of forums. In a publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified, except with your express permission.

11. What will happen to information about me?

By signing the consent form, you consent to the researcher collecting and using information from you for the research project and future related research. Any information obtained in connection with this research project that can identify you will remain confidential. The images will be kept on a secure RMIT server for seven years, then being destroyed. After data has been de-identified, only the researcher will have access to the data.

In accordance with relevant Australian privacy and other relevant laws, you have the right to request access to the information about you that is collected and stored by the research team. You also have the right to request that any information with which you disagree be corrected. Please inform the research team member named at the end of this document if you would like to access your information.

Any information that you provide can be disclosed only if (1) it is to protect you or others from harm, (2) specifically allowed by law, (3) you provide the researchers with written permission. Any information obtained for the purpose of this research project that can identify you will be treated as confidential and securely stored.

12. Who has reviewed the research project?

All research in Australia involving humans is reviewed by an independent group of people called a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). This research project has been approved by the RMIT University HREC. This project will be carried out according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007). This statement has been developed to protect the interests of people who agree to participate in human research studies.

13. Further information and who to contact

If you want any further information concerning this project, you can contact the researcher on

larissa.hjorth@rmit.edu.au

Research contact person

Name	Larissa Hjorth
Position	Chief investigator / Senior supervisor
Telephone	0430311063
Email	larissa.hjorth@rmit.edu.au

14. Complaints

Should you have any concerns or questions about this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the researchers listed in this document, then you may contact:

Reviewing HREC name	RMIT University
HREC Secretary	Peter Burke
Telephone	03 9925 2251
Email	human.ethics@rmit.edu.au
Mailing address	Research Ethics Co-ordinator Research Integrity Governance and Systems RMIT University GPO Box 2476 MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Consent Form

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Chief Investigator/Senior Supervisor	Professor Larissa Hjorth

Acknowledgement by Participant

I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet.

I understand the purposes, procedures and risks of the research described in the project.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the answers I have received.

I freely agree to participate in this research project as described and understand that I am free to withdraw at any time during the project without affecting my relationship with RMIT.

I understand that I will be given a signed copy of this document to keep.

My confirmation to participate has been noted in my contacting of the researcher Larissa.

Declaration by Researcher*

I have given an explanation of the research project, its procedures and risks and I believe that the participant has understood that explanation.

Name of Researcher* (please print) _____
Signature _____ Date _____

* An appropriately qualified member of the research team must provide the explanation of, and information concerning, the research project.

Note: All parties signing the consent section must date their own signature.