

Department of Communication (MC 132)
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
1007 West Harrison Street, BSB 1140
Chicago, Illinois 60607-7137

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Ginnifer Mastarone and I am a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Communication at the University of Illinois at Chicago. I would like to invite you to participate in my dissertation research study which examines the effects of Internet health information design practices on the ehealth literacy of the brain injury population. The purpose of this research study is to learn more about how brain injury survivors and their caregivers interact with videos and web pages that provide information about brain injury. Your participation may help information designers improve the web sites they design for persons with brain injury.

You may be eligible to take part in this research if you are over 18 years old and 1) have been diagnosed with a brain injury, 2) are the family caregiver of a person diagnosed with a brain injury, OR 3) are a medical/healthcare professional that provides services for people with brain injury. Also, you must not have a legally authorized representative (e.g. legal guardian) and must speak English.

Participants will be asked to take part in a 1 – 1.5 hour interview with the researcher that includes:

- A 10 minute assessment of memory, attention, organization, language and spatial ability.
- A 10 minute survey questionnaire that asks you about how you search for health information
- A 40 minute usability evaluation where the researchers will observe you while you look at a brain injury web site. The researchers will also ask you questions related to the information.

The research locations for the study are:

- Ohio County Public Library Meeting Room. 52 16th Street, Wheeling, WV 26003
- Mt. Lebanon Public Library Study Room. 16 Castle Shannon Boulevard, Pittsburgh, PA 15228
- Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh– Squirrel Hill Branch, Small Meeting Room. 5801 Forbes Avenue. Pittsburgh, PA 15217.
- Multnomah County Library-Central Library Branch, Room 2B. 801 SW 10th Ave., Portland, OR 97201
- Hillsboro Public Library - Main Branch Study Rooms, 2850 NE Brookwood Pkwy, Hillsboro, Oregon 97124

There are no medical risks involved with this study. The risks involved with audio recordings include the possibility that you may be recognized by your voice. Your participation in the online survey involves risks similar to a person's everyday use of the Internet. Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Data security risks include the possibility that someone other than the researcher gains access to your survey, audio or computer screen recordings. All data will be securely stored for up to five years with a code, but not with personally identifiable information. Only researchers will have access to the data, and the password-protected code key will be stored separately.

Participants for the study will be compensated with \$20 at the completion of the evaluation. Approximately 200 people will take part in this research project.

It is important to know that this letter is not to tell you to join this study. It is your decision. Your participation is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time. You also have the right to leave a study at any time without penalty. Whether or not you participate in this study will have no effect on your relationship with the University of Illinois at Chicago.

If you would like to know more information about this study or participate, please email me at gmasta2@uic.edu or call me at 971-258-2116. You may also contact my dissertation advisor, Dr. Sharon Meraz, Ph.D., at smeraz@uic.edu if you have any questions. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Mastarone', written in a cursive style.

Ginnifer Mastarone, M.S., Ph.D. Candidate