

**TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

LEAD RESEARCHER: Jonathan Barbara

BACKGROUND OF RESEARCH: This is a study on the use of virtual reality in representing uncertain knowledge about cultural heritage sites. This study particularly focuses on a Neolithic site about which the certainty of information is very limited, opening it up to biased interpretations, speculations, and conspiracy theories.

PROCEDURES OF THIS STUDY: Participants will be wearing a Virtual Reality (VR) headset that will project a 3D virtual representation of the Hal Tarxien Prehistoric Complex. A short tutorial will introduce the participant to the interaction mechanisms that allow one to navigate through information on a virtual screen, hold, open, and read notebooks, take photos inside the virtual experience, record their voiced response, and teleport from one location to another. Participants will then be virtually teleported to a particular location in the site and tasked to look up artefacts and read author interpretations about them in order to inform themselves sufficiently to share their answer to up to three questions about the site and its artefacts. After each answer, a short questionnaire about their response will then be answered in the experience. The VR experience is expected to last about 45 minutes. Short breaks can be taken in between if necessary.

Having removed the VR headset, participants will answer a short questionnaire measuring 7 aspects of the experience. Finally, participants will be presented with a claim about the information to which they would have been exposed in the experience and decide whether to sustain or rebut the claim.

We expect the VR session to take about 45 minutes, followed by 10 minutes for the first questionnaire and 5 for the claim sustain/rebuttal. In total, this will take about 60 minutes.

Anonymity of the participant is ensured through the use of a random number used to identify the in-experience and post-experience questionnaires. Furthermore, such code will be discarded once the responses to the two questionnaires are linked together. Level of education and country of origin will be used to determine your level of uncertainty avoidance at a cultural level and then discarded.

Please be aware that the research involves the wearing of a VR headset that may cause cybersickness or nausea, while those prone to claustrophobia may feel its onset. Should this be the case, you are to immediately remove the headset and sit down on a chair to help you regain stability and calm down. You will be free to choose whether to resume, maybe after a short break, or to be released from the participation altogether, to which you have every right. In such case, all your information will be discarded.

If you have any questions or concerns about the study or the potential risks, please do not hesitate to ask. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without penalty.

PUBLICATION: We plan to publish the results of our research in a doctoral dissertation with Trinity College Dublin, as well as in conferences and journals relevant to the field of study (such as the proceedings of the International Conference of Interactive Digital Storytelling (ICIDS) and the Journal of Interactive Narrative Research). As participant personal information will be discarded within 30 days, no identifying data will be published. Finally, individual results may be aggregated anonymously and research reported on these aggregate results.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: This research contributes to satisfying degree requirements for PhD research. It also helps develop further the academic field of interactive digital narratives and their portrayal of complexity in the context of uncertainty of prehistoric cultural heritage. However, there is no known commercialization potential that we are aware of and thus no such conflict of interest exists.

DECLARATION:

- I am 18 years or older and am competent to provide consent.
- I have read, or had read to me, a document providing information about this research and this consent form. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction and understand the description of the research that is being provided to me.
- I understand that the experiment involves wearing a virtual reality head mounted device and I may feel nausea due to cybersickness or feel claustrophobic, in which cases I am remove the headset and sit down, and then freely decide whether to resume or not.
- I agree that my data is used for scientific purposes and I have no objection that my data is published in scientific publications in a way that does not reveal my identity. Such data will be retained for up to 10 years.
- I understand that if I make illicit activities known, these will be reported to appropriate authorities.
- I understand that I may refuse to answer any question and that withdrawal of my data will not be possible unless I provide the random number used to identify the questionnaires. I understand that this will identify me as the owner of that data and lose its anonymity before deletion
- **I understand that if the results of the research have been published, or my data has been fully anonymised so that it can no longer be attributed to me (30 days after the experiment), then it will no longer be possible to withdraw**
- I freely and voluntarily agree to be part of this research study, though without prejudice to my legal and ethical rights.
- I understand that my participation is anonymous via the random code provided prior to the experiment and that personal details about me are limited to contact details, which will be deleted until data collection has been confirmed but no longer than 30 days.
- I understand that if I or anyone in my family has a history of epilepsy then I am proceeding at my own risk (there are no animations or flashes, so this risk is minimal).
- I have received a copy of this agreement.

By signing this document, I consent to participate in this study, and consent to the data processing necessary to enable my participation and to achieve the research goals of this study. As the interactive narrative provides prototype interactive narratives in Virtual Reality, there is a possibility of the anonymized data being used for secondary data analysis. In such circumstances, as the identifying code will have been discarded once the questionnaire's data has been linked, there is no chance whatsoever of participant identification in such analysis.

PARTICIPANT'S NAME: _____

Date: _____

Statement of investigator's responsibility: I have explained the nature and purpose of this research study, the procedures to be undertaken and any risks that may be involved. I have offered to answer any questions and fully answered such questions. I believe that the participant understands my explanation and has freely given informed consent.

RESEARCHER'S CONTACT DETAILS: Jonathan Barbara barbaraj@tcd.ie

RESEARCHER'S SIGNATURE:

Date:

If received in digital form, please type your name above and send to barbaraj@tcd.ie

If received in printed form, please write your name above and hand in to researcher