

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Project Title: *An ethnographic study of the use of Bitcoin*

Investigators:

Professor Supriya Singh, Professor, Sociology of Communications,
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Professor Heather Horst, Director, Research Partnerships, School of
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Dr Alexia Maddox, Research Assistant, RMIT University,
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You are invited to participate in a research project being conducted through RMIT University. Please read this sheet carefully and be confident that you understand its contents before deciding whether to participate. If you have any questions about the project, please ask one of the investigators.

Who is involved in this research project? Why is it being conducted?

We are researchers primarily based at RMIT and are conducting an ethnographic study of Bitcoin use to understand how its social adoption reveals changing perspectives towards money and the associated conditions of trust, security and privacy within economic exchange in a cross-cultural context.

This research is being conducted because there is currently limited understanding of the role of Bitcoin, and cryptocurrencies more generally, as an alternative form of digital cash and its social adoption across diverse socio-cultural contexts.

The project has been approved by the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee, Ethics number. BCHEAN 19717

Why have you been approached?

You have been approached to participate in this study because you are present at an event or online space where a discussion of Bitcoin is taking place. The event co-ordinator or online moderator has also given us permission to approach members or attendees.

By inviting you to participate, we anticipate that you have used the cryptocurrency to conduct online purchases or engaged in the technology through mining bitcoins. You may also have been actively engaged with the community surrounding the development and use of Bitcoins and are likely to support the agenda to promote the social adoption of Bitcoin and/or its associated technologies.

What is the project about? What are the questions being addressed?

This study is about gaining insight into the user experience and social practices surrounding Bitcoin in diverse social and cultural contexts. We also seek to understand the role of Bitcoin alongside people's use of other currency forms, both digital and non-digital.

We will not be addressing questions about the illegal use of Bitcoin

For this study, we anticipate interviewing up to 50 people on their experiences of using Bitcoin and conducting participant observation over the course of 2016 at events and online forums where Bitcoin use is the primary focus.

If I agree to participate, what will I be required to do?

The interview may take up to 30 minutes or longer depending on your availability and on what you have to say. It will be audio-recorded if you consent.

We will not be asking you about illegal uses of Bitcoin. We recommend that you do not share information about illegal activities with the researcher.

During the interview you will be asked about your experiences of using Bitcoin, starting with the question of what you use it for and why. We are also interested in your use of Bitcoin in relation to other types of money, both digital and non-digital. Throughout the discussion we'll focus on your perspectives about the use of Bitcoin and where you see its advantages and limitations with regards to trust, privacy and security.

What are the possible risks or disadvantages?

We will be interviewing in a manner that will ensure there are no risks or disadvantages. We will only be asking about the use of Bitcoin for legal activities. You will not have to reveal discomforting facts or answer questions that you feel are uncomfortable.

What are the benefits associated with participation?

Your experience will contribute to the development of public awareness and knowledge surrounding the uses and applications of Bitcoin specifically, and cryptocurrencies more generally.

To symbolically acknowledge your contribution, we will transfer \$2(AUD) worth of Bitcoin to your wallet upon completion of the interview.

What will happen to the information I provide?

The information you provide will remain confidential. We will use a pseudonym to refer to you. Identifying details will be masked. Any potentially identifying information that you provide, such as place or event names, will not be reported in these publications.

The information you provide will be kept in a secure environment for five years after publication before being destroyed. The privacy of the information you provide will be safeguarded through encryption practices and researcher confidentiality.

Any information that you provide can be disclosed only if (1) it is to protect you or others from harm, (2) if specifically required or allowed by law, or (3) you provide the researchers with written permission.

The results of the research will be collated and analysed in reports, journal articles and conference presentations, with a public archive of these becoming available through RMIT. We can also provide it to you at your request.

What are my rights as a participant?

- The right to withdraw from participation at any time
- The right to request that any recording cease
- The right to have any unprocessed data withdrawn and destroyed, provided it can be reliably identified, and provided that so doing does not increase the risk for the participant.
- The right to be de-identified in any photographs intended for public publication, before the point of publication
- The right to have any questions answered at any time.

Whom should I contact if I have any questions?

If you are concerned about your responses to any of the interview questions or if you find participation in the project distressing, you should contact Professor Supriya Singh as soon as convenient. Supriya will discuss your concerns with you confidentially and suggest appropriate follow-up, if necessary.

What other issues should I be aware of before deciding whether to participate?

There are no other known issues.

Yours sincerely



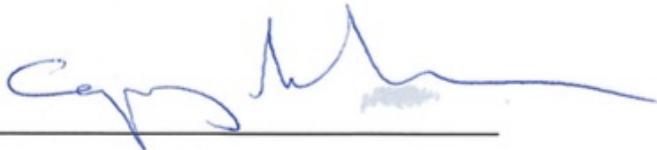
Professor Supriya Singh

Professor, Sociology of Communications, Graduate School of Business and Law, RMIT



Associate Professor Heather Horst

*Principal Research Fellow and a Vice-Chancellor's Senior Research Fellow,
School of Media and Communication, RMIT*



Dr Greg Adamson

Global Chair, IEEE, Society for Social Implications of Technology



Dr Alexia Maddox

Research Consultant, RMIT University,

If you have any concerns about your participation in this project, which you do not wish to discuss with the researchers, then you can contact the Ethics Officer, Research Integrity, Governance and Systems, RMIT University, GPO Box 2476V VIC 3001. Tel: (03) 9925 2251 or email human.ethics@rmit.edu.au

CONSENT

1. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the information sheet
2. I agree to participate in the research project as described
3. I agree:
 - to be interviewed
 - that my voice will be audio recorded
4. I acknowledge that:
 - (a) I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied (unless follow-up is needed for safety).
 - (b) The project is for the purpose of research. It may not be of direct benefit to me.
 - (c) The privacy of the personal information I provide will be safeguarded and only disclosed where I have consented to the disclosure or as required by law.
 - (d) The security of the research data will be protected during and after completion of the study. The data collected during the study may be published, and a report of the project outcomes will be provided to (researcher to specify). Any information which will identify me will not be used.

Participant's Consent

Participant: _____ Date: _____
(Signature)