



Rensselaer

DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY STUDIES

12/20/2007

Dear Colleagues

It is my pleasure to write this memo for Toluwalogo B. Odumosu. I have reviewed Tolu's excellent IRB proposal and did not find it lacking in any way. He is an absolutely outstanding scholar and has my highest recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron Eglash".

Dr. Ron Eglash
Associate Professor, STS
eglash@rpi.edu

Title of Proposal:

Interrogating Mobiles

Researcher:

Toluwalogo B. Odumosu
Department Of Science and Technology Studies
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Troy NY 12180
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Research Adviser:

Ron Eglash, Associate Professor, Science and Technology Studies

Department:

Department of Science and Technology Studies

Is this proposal related to a sponsored project?

No.

Objective:

To study and document the introduction and use of mobile phones in Lagos Nigeria by interviewing multiple different users, design engineers, policy makers, and other individuals associated with the mobile industry.

Methods:Interviews

There are two broad categories of human subjects in this work.

- A. Targeted Interview Subjects
- B. Interview Subjects recruited through snowball sampling.

Targeted Interview subjects will be identified based on administrative positions they hold, or roles they play which are determined to be relevant by the researcher. For example, the CEO of the Nigerian Communications Commission is a subject that the researcher has identified as an essential interviewee.

The other group of subjects will be recruited through snowball sampling. Here previously existing relationships that the researcher has with engineers in the Nigerian

Telecommunications industry will be re-established. These subjects will recruit future subjects from amongst their acquaintances.

All interviews will be semi-structured. Some of the interviews may be recorded as an aid in documenting the entirety of the conversation. Where such recordings are made they will be undertaken with the permission of the subject being recorded, and once transcription has been effected, the digital audio files will be destroyed.

Video and Image Recordings

Video recordings will be made documenting the diffusion of mobile phones into different audio-visual media, like Television, and outdoor kinetic advertisements. **No video recordings of human subjects will be made.** Images may also be recorded of advertisements, configurations of equipment and interesting scenarios. All image recordings will be taken in such a way as to minimize risk to affected human subjects by as much as possible rendering them anonymous.

Image Recordings are digital still pictures taken with a digital camera or digitized with the aid of a scanner. These recordings will be used to document images on bill-boards, in newspapers, and other writing on the city walls directly relevant to the research. For example, a mobile phone number scribbled on a doorsill acting a geographic identifier.

Video Recordings are moving images and sounds recorded with a camera, or from over the air broadcast into a digital format stored on the researcher's PC. These recordings are rich material for investigation and critique of visual and auditory culture. Examples include adverts which highlight the place of the mobile phone in society.

Effects on Subjects:

All subjects will be at minimal risk.

Measures to Minimize Risk:

During both data collection and analysis, anonymity of subjects will be preserved, except in cases where the subject is in a decision making capacity and does not wish or require anonymity. All audio recordings made to facilitate transcription of interviews will be destroyed as soon as transcription is completed. Identifying codes will be used in place of names in the transcripts of all interview conversations. The table linking real names with code names will be destroyed at the end of the research process rendering all interview subjects anonymous. Video recordings will not feature any human subjects. Image recordings will have the faces of individual subjects blurred, as long as doing so does not impair the visual impact of the image. Any images which include human subjects will be framed in a manner respectful of local customs and expectations of privacy.

Likelihood of Harm:

Minimal. Subjects will be answering questions that would NOT place them at risk of criminal or civil liability, and NOT be damaging to their financial standing, employability, insurability, reputation or be stigmatizing in any way.

Documentation of Risks:

While the researcher will strive to ensure anonymity, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that an engineer sharing information about the technical details of the mobile networks under study might come under scrutiny by the organization said engineer is employed by if her employers discovered that she had shared such information. However, at the time of writing this IRB application, this researcher is unaware of the existence of any such restrictions by mobile phone corporations in Lagos. Furthermore, the researcher has undertaken to implement all the risk minimizing measures outlined in this proposal, further reducing the possibility of such an occurrence.

Benefits to Participants:

All participants will have the opportunity to share their history, perceptions and observations with the researcher and an avenue to tell their stories. Policy recommendations resulting from this study could potentially benefit all participants.

Alternate Method Not Using Human Subjects:

None exists. The study is framed around understanding and documenting the processes through which humans make sense of and appropriate telecommunications technologies in Lagos Nigeria, thus making it impossible to conduct the study without human subjects.

Qualifications of Researcher:

The researcher has been trained in social science research methods during coursework at Rensselaer and holds masters' and bachelor's degrees in Electrical Engineering. In addition the researcher has previously interacted with mobile phone users and the mobile industry in Lagos while living in the city as a native.

Recruiting of Subjects:

As explained above, some subjects will be initially recruited through the researcher's social network and they then would introduce the researcher to members of their own social networks, and thus, the trend continues. Other subjects have been pre-identified as interesting and relevant interview subjects because they occupy strategic positions in the organizations being studied, or because they possess knowledge about mobile phones in Lagos by virtue of the social positions, or the mere fact that they are users of the technology. These subjects will be approached directly and interviews requested.

As English is the Lingua Franca in Nigeria, there is no need to translate the Consent Form into any other language. While there are over 250+ languages spoken in Nigeria, everyone inter-

communicates using English. Perhaps if this project were taking place in the countryside, non-English speaking individuals might be encountered. However, all interview subjects live in the large urban cities of Lagos and Abuja and speak and read English fluently.

Confidentiality:

For interview subjects that prefer anonymity, the entire interview will be conducted with the aid of pseudonyms. Their real names will never enter into the record. The interview list which would show the mapping of real names to pseudonyms will be destroyed (paper copy) and the file (digital copy) erased at the end of the research process. At all times, full and total confidentiality will be the watchword.

Data Storage

Any notes made during interviews will be stored in the researcher's journal. Those notes along with any audio recordings will be used to generate a transcript of the interview. All audio recordings, notes and files relating to the interview will be stored on researcher's PC in files which are only accessible by the researcher. The PC is password protected and will always be in the researcher's personal possession. The journal likewise will be kept in a secure location at all times.

List of Possible Interview Questions for the Semi-Structured Interview (subject to change as questions are adapted based on duties and responsibilities of the interviewee)

1. Kindly give me an idea of your role in the organization?
2. What kind of tasks do you carry out on a daily basis?
3. How does your work impact the design and use of the mobile network?
4. Do you interact directly with mobile users?
5. Can you relate any interesting or problematic issues that have arisen recently in your work?
6. Can you think of any way in which you have had to adapt the technology you use to achieve a goal or aim that it was not originally designed for?
7. Please tell me more about the differences between Contract and Pay-As-You-Go services.
8. Does the network handle them differently?
9. What do you think are the challenges that your organization faces in operating in the current environment?
10. In what ways are you dealing with these challenges?
11. Why do you think users are finding it so difficult to place calls?
12. As a mobile user yourself, how many phones do you carry?
13. What networks are they on?
14. Why do you think people refer to mobile CDMA phones as 'landline' and GSM phones as 'cell phones' aren't they both mobile?
15. What are your opinions of the regulatory environment?
16. What type of phone(s) do you use?

**Institutional Review Board
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute**

**Informed Consent Form
(Student Researcher)**

I understand that **Toluwalogo B. Odumosu** is a graduate student research assistant who wishes to interview me as part of the research project on Mobile Phones in Lagos, Nigeria that he is working on with Professor Ron Eglash of the Science and Technology Studies Department at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. I understand that he will be making his best possible effort to guarantee me every possible protection, including the following:

1. I am under no obligation to be interviewed if I do not wish to do so.
2. I am not obligated to answer any of the questions. I may decline to answer any or all of the questions, and I may terminate the interview at any point. My permission is required before any audio recording is made of this interview.
3. If there is anything that I do not wish to have quoted, I may say so at any point during or after the interview say what I wish to have kept "off the record," and it will not be quoted. If I do not wish a portion of the interview to be recorded I may say so at any point and the audio recording will end.
4. I understand that if Toluwalogo B. Odumosu decides to use any portions of this interview in subsequent publications, that he will send me a copy of the portions of the interview, including any quotations and paraphrases that Tolu decides to use, for my editing and written approval. I will have the right to edit the material and I will receive a copy of the final publication. Tolu will only use the material that I have approved.
5. I understand that I may choose to remain anonymous or have my name revealed. I may also change my mind at any point up to and including the review of any quotations and paraphrases that might be used (check one):
 I choose to remain anonymous.
 I choose to reveal my name.
6. Based on reading this form (check one):
 I agree to be interviewed and allow an audio recording to be made.
 I agree to be interviewed and do not wish to be recorded.
 I do not agree to be interviewed.

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

For further information contact:

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