POPROX News Subscriber Informed Consent Form

Sponsor / Study Title:	**National Science Foundation / "NSF CCRI 2232551: A Research News Recommender Infrastructure with Live Users for Algorithm and Interface Experimentation"**
Protocol Number:	**HRP-580**
Principal Investigator:	**Joseph A. Konstan**
Telephone:	+1 612 625-1831
Address:	University of Minnesota Department of Computer Science and Engineering 200 Union Street SE Minneapolis, MN 55455

1. Introduction

1.1. Overview

POPROX News is a daily newsletter operated by a team of researchers from five universities. Our goal is to support studies (run by others as well as ourselves) that test ways to improve the newsletter experience. Such studies may include personalization, new interfaces, and other attempts to make the newsletter more pleasing and useful. This consent form explains how we will study POPROX News subscribers, your right to withdraw from being studied at any time, and other information to help you decide whether to proceed. We plan to enroll about 10,000 participants as POPROX subscribers to participate in these studies.

1.2. Eligibility

You must live in the U.S. be at least the age of majority in your home state or territory to be eligible to enroll in this platform (i.e., 18 in most of the US, 21 in Mississippi or Puerto Rico, 19 in Alabama or Nebraska). You may choose to not participate or you may withdraw from the study for any reason without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

1.3. Consent Process

By accepting this agreement, you give us consent to observe and study your usage of POPROX News.

1.3.1. **Withdraw Consent**. If you do not wish to participate in POPROX any longer, you can either inform us via the contact email, or click the

"unsubscribe" button contained in every newsletter email. As part of unsubscribing, you may choose to remove your contact information from the system so we have no way to contact you or associate any data with you in the future.

1.3.2. **Updates**. If substantial changes occur which may influence your willingness to continue participation in the study, we will inform you and seek your consent to continue participating.

1.3.3. **Copy of your Consent**. We will email a copy of this consent form to you after you finish reading and agreeing to it.

1.4. Overview

1.4.1. **What is POPROX?** POPROX is a personalized email newsletter. It is also a research platform where we study how to personalize news.

1.4.2. **Usage Tracking**. We keep track of what we send you and record what you read. We occasionally ask you questions.

1.4.3. **Studies.** One of the major purposes of POPROX is to enable studies. We invite researchers from around the world to try out their ideas on POPROX subscribers and measure how successful their different newsletters are. That means you will get different versions of personalized newsletters based on different study buckets you are assigned into.

1.4.4. **No Harm.** All studies proposed by researchers are guided to be benevolent based on a detailed rule set. The POPROX core platform team and advisory board will thoroughly review and approve all studies before enrolling users. Researchers also must have their studies reviewed by their institutional review board (IRB) responsible for research with human participants.

- I understand my eligibility, the consent procedure, and the nature of POPROX as an experimental research platform.

2. Studies

2.1. **What is a study?** A study is defined as a variant of either a newsletter, a survey, a new interface, etc.

2.2. **Source of studies.** Studies come from researchers with review by their institutions and POPROX-required standards.

2.3. **Special Study Consent**. In some cases, researchers may ask us to run a study containing potential risks. Some examples may include content selected for reasons that don't match your interests. In those cases, you will be asked whether you agree to participate in that study separately, and informed of the

nature and risks of the study. You will always have the option to opt out of a particular study and return to the normal POPROX newsletter.

2.4. **Opting out of a specific study** Any time you're receiving a study newsletter, there will be an option (at the bottom of the newsletter) allowing you to opt out of that study. You cannot opt out of being selected for future studies except by unsubscribing from POPROX News entirely, but will always be able to opt out once you are part of a specific study.

- I understand the definition of POPROX studies and opt-out options.

3. POPROX Platform

3.1. Data Collection

3.1.1. **How You Are Identified?** We need to know your email address to be able to send you the newsletter, and to contact you if necessary. We will keep your personal contact information separate from all other data, and will not share that with researchers conducting studies using the POPROX system. We also explicitly prohibit these researchers from contacting you separately or from trying to figure out your identity.

3.1.2. **What We Log?** We will collect your usage log data, including: 1) open of newsletter, click of articles, session time when reading individual articles, etc. 2) survey responses and demographic data; 3) pop-up window feedback, including reactions to articles or short in-line feedback.

3.1.3. **How We Store and Protect Your Data?** First, we protect your data by storing it separate from any personally identifying information. The data is kept on secure servers, both at the University of Minnesota and in the cloud. To further protect your data, access is only provided to researchers who have contractually agreed to protect the privacy of data and not attempt to re-identify you or any other participants. These researchers will not have access to your identifying information. The POPROX platform team will have access to your identifying information (specifically your email address) as that is needed to send you newsletters. Additionally, under some circumstances the National Science Foundation and the Institutional Review Board(IRB) may be able to inspect and copy study-related records which identify you by your email address. While every effort will be made to protect the confidentiality of your information, absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

3.1.4. **How We Share the Data?** We share your data in two ways:

3.1.4.1. Study data is available only to the researchers conducting a particular study; they are bound by a legal contract to not re-distribute any data with third parties or for non-study purpose.

3.1.4.2. Collections of data (without any identifying information) will be distributed as a Public research dataset. Researchers may obtain access to this dataset by agreeing to a data usage license that prevents attempts to re-identify or contact POPROX users. None of these datasets include your contact information.

3.2. Withdraw and Disenroll

3.2.1. **Withdraw Data For Future Use.** If you quit POPROX, you also may choose to withdraw your data from our database. We cannot recall data that has already been shared with researchers (though none of this data is associated with your email or other identifying information), but we can ensure that future researchers do not see your data. If you wish to withdraw your data, you must do it while we still have your contact information – after you've withdrawn contact information we can no longer tell which data was yours.

3.2.2. **Disenroll**. The sponsor or the study investigator may stop your participation in the study without your consent. We reserve the right to disenroll a user if:

3.2.2.1. The newsletter bounces repeatedly from the provided email address.

3.2.2.2. No interaction is logged with the newsletter for a sustained period.

3.2.2.3. We observed behaviors harmful to the POPROX platform or studies.

- I understand the data collection and withdraw / disenroll policies of the POPROX platform.

4. Compensation

You will not receive any monetary compensation for your participation as a subscriber to the POPROX newsletter.

Some individual studies may provide modest compensation for your time. We may also provide modest compensation as a reward for participation and/or longevity. We will ask you to select from compensation options that you can change later when you are ready to get paid.

- I understand the compensation opportunity of the POPROX platform.

5. Risks

The foreseeable risks involved in this study are minimal. They include possible discomfort in reading uninterested or controversial news, minimum stress in answering survey questions, or potential concerns about privacy associated with data logging. These risks can be mitigated by the fact that you can freely choose to read whatever news you feel most interested in, your voluntary participation in surveys, and your right to quit the survey at any time. Since participant data will be fully de-identified, the privacy concern is also addressed. There may be risks which are currently unknown.

6. Benefits

The potential benefits participants may gain include: 1) participants can get personalized daily news recommendations and improve their news awareness; 2) participants can understand their news preferences and consumption behaviors better.

7. Alternatives to Participation

This research study is for research purposes only. The only alternative is to not participate in this study.

8. Costs

There will be no charge to you for your participation in this study.

9. Whom To Contact About This Study

During the study, if you experience any medical problems, suffer a research-related injury, or have questions, concerns or complaints about the study such as:

- Whom to contact in the case of a research-related injury or illness;
- Payment or compensation for being in the study, if any;
- Your responsibilities as a research participant;
- Eligibility to participate in the study;
- The study investigator's or study site's decision to withdraw you from participation;
- Results of tests and/or procedures;

Please contact the study investigator at the telephone number listed on the first page of this consent document.

If you seek emergency care, or hospitalization is required, alert the treating physician that you are participating in this research study.

An institutional review board (IRB) is an independent committee established to help protect the rights of research participants. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, contact:

- By **mail**:
  Study Subject Adviser
  Advarra IRB
  6100 Merriweather Dr., Suite 600
  Columbia, MD 21044
- or call **toll free**: 877-992-4724
- or by **email**: adviser@advarra.com

Please reference the following number when contacting the Study Subject Adviser: Pro00080473.

10. Final Confirmation

If you have questions for us, you can reach us at support@poprox.ai. If you have no further questions and would like to enroll in/subscribe to POPROX News, please click below and submit.

☐ I have had an opportunity to review the agreement. I have no more questions and agree to participate in POPROX. I do not give up any of my legal rights by agreeing to participate in this study. I will receive a copy of this consent document.

Thanks for agreeing to use our platform. We look forward to recommending personalized news to you soon!