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## **CONSENT**

OMSI's consent and assent policies are described below. The consent policies apply to adult individuals who are legally able to give consent, mentally able to process the information, and emotionally and socially able to make decisions. The assent policies apply to minors (persons under the age of eighteen) and must be obtained in conjunction with written consent from a parent or guardian (see *Minors in All Settings*, below). Adult individuals will be asked to provide either verbal or written consent, depending upon the information collected. These consent policies apply to all data collection methods. Directly following these consent and assent policies, each of the individual methods that will be used is described; when additional consent or assent procedures apply, these are enumerated under the respective method.

### **OMSI's General Consent Positions**

#### ***Adults in Non-invitational, Public Settings***

When adult individuals participate in evaluation activities in a public, non-invitational setting (e.g., on the museum floor), a sign will be posted that states the purpose of the evaluation/research, how the information collected will be used, who to contact with questions/concerns, and that individuals have the right not to participate. If an individual chooses to enter the area under observation (be it audio/video observation or individual observation), this indicates the individual's consent.

Specifically for audio and video recording, OMSI will use a method developed by the Exploratorium and published in *Curator* (Gutwill 2003). This method involves alerting visitors to the fact that recording is taking place by posting signs about the evaluation/research activities at the entrance to the museum, the entrances to the exhibit area, and on the exhibits themselves. (See Appendices A, B, C, and D for sample signs. These are described in more detail in the Methods section of the protocol.) Any audio and/or video recording of visitors in non-invitational, public settings will only be used for the purposes of exhibit/program development and will only be shown in educational settings<sup>1</sup>. All recordings from non-invitational, public settings created for the purpose of the study will be attached to the evaluation document file and labeled "for exhibit/program development research only."

#### ***Adults in Invitational Settings***

When adult individuals are directly invited to participate in an evaluation activity (i.e. an interview, focus group, etc.) they may be asked to provide either written or verbal consent. In instances where no identifying information is collected (e.g. an interview or survey), verbal consent will suffice. In instances where identifying information is collected, participants will be asked to complete a written consent form before initiating their participation.

Specifically for audio and video recording, participants will be asked to sign a consent form before the beginning of the data collection session (see OMSI Consent Form, Appendix F). This consent form will also specify in which settings recordings of participants can be shown. Participants will be given ample time to review and sign the form (which will be provided in both English and Spanish, depending upon participants' needs); data collectors will not coerce

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this protocol, educational settings are defined as: invitational OMSI or non-OMSI settings in which *Access Algebra* project staff, volunteers, consultants, or advisors or professional peers have access to the information and it is used for the purposes of sharing methods, research and evaluation findings, and/or analysis, interpretation, or synthesis of data to inform the project or advance the field.

participants to sign the form. Audio and/or video footage from invitational settings may be used for exhibit/program development and/or educational purposes, and may be included in a DVD for training museum interpretive staff.

It is possible that program staff will create presentations for conferences and/or workshops that may be posted on the Internet; it is also possible that the training DVD will be posted on the internet. Any footage that program staff wish to place on the Internet will require an additional, post facto consent waiver from individuals who are featured in that footage. Unless participants give written consent to use the recordings in conference and workshop settings or on the Internet, the recordings will be attached to the evaluation document file and labeled “for exhibit/program development research only.”

### ***Minors in All Settings***

When any data is collected with participants under eighteen years of age (either in public non-invitational or invitational settings), the data collector will obtain the signature of the minor’s parent or legal guardian before beginning any evaluation activities. Only parents or legal guardians will be allowed to grant this permission. In the instance in which identifying information is collected, verbal assent will be solicited from participating minors under the age of seven, and written assent will be solicited from participating minors aged seven and over, in addition to the written consent from the participating minor’s parent or legal guardian.

The consent/assent procedures for use of recordings of minors are the same as those outlined above for adults. The only distinction is that minors (7 and older) must provide a written assent form, in addition to the signed consent form, when providing identifying information in invitational settings; for minors under age seven, this assent process will be verbal. In addition, it should be noted that the language on the assent form for minors aged seven to fourteen will be adapted for that audience. Minors aged fifteen to seventeen will use the same consent/assent form used by adults. (See Consent/Assent Forms in Appendix F.)

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### **Data Collection**

#### ***Questionnaire Method***

Questionnaires will be administered either in hard-copy form in person or online. At the museum, family groups, stakeholders, and OMSI interpretive staff may be given a questionnaire before, during or immediately after viewing a museum offering, such as an exhibit or activity (including exhibit prototypes). Online questionnaires will be administered some time after a participant has viewed an offering. Questionnaires may include open-ended, categorical, ranking and/or likert-scale questions.

#### ***Participants***

Signage is posted to inform individuals that a questionnaire is being administered in the museum that day. The same signage will invite individuals to direct their questions about the questionnaire to staff, and inform them to tell staff if they choose not to participate. For in-person questionnaires, a goal of fifty or more will be set. For web-based questionnaires, a goal of one-hundred or more will be set.

#### ***Consent***

For in-person questionnaires, an administrator will introduce him/herself to the visitor as an OMSI staff member and outline the purpose of the questionnaire, how the information will be

used, and ask the visitor if s/he agrees to participate. Those who verbally agree will be given the questionnaire. If no identifying information is collected, individuals' participation in filling out the questionnaire will be considered an acknowledgement of their consent. A sign will also alert participants to the fact that data collection is taking place. See sample in Appendix A.

For online questionnaires, a consent request will be stated explicitly either at the beginning of the questionnaire or in an accompanying email that transmits the questionnaire URL. An option will be provided for each participant to initial or signify that s/he consents to completing it; and, in accordance with continual consent, online participants will not be forced to answer any questions or to complete the questionnaire. If identifying information is collected, online participants will be asked to consent before providing that information. If no identifying information is collected, completing the questionnaire will signify participants' consent. However, additional protections for online questionnaire participants will be enforced. All web-based questionnaires will have the confidentiality of their content protected (whether or not identifying information is collected) through the use of SSL encoding, provided by the survey administrator, SurveyMonkey. For additional information about this company's security policies, please view Appendix G, or visit: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/HelpCenter/Answer.aspx?HelpID=42>. In addition, for electronic surveys, the IP address of participants will not be recorded.

For all questionnaires, participants will be identified only by a case number—demographic information (age, gender, educational level, area of residence) will be documented, but more personal information, including the name of the visitor, will not be requested.

### *Interview Method*

Individuals, visiting groups, recruited members of the target audience, stakeholders, or OMSI interpretive staff will talk with an interviewer on the floor of the museum, in a non-museum setting such as a classroom or out-of-school time club, or over the phone. Interviews will take place either before and/or after a participant has experienced a museum offering, such as an exhibit or activity (including exhibit prototypes), and will typically focus on participants' self-reported experience with that offering. Interviews will often assess attitudes, understanding, demographics and/or psychographics (i.e. characteristics relating to personality, values, attitudes, interests, or lifestyles). Interviews will be recorded through note-taking or audio/video-recording devices.

### *Participants*

Participants may be asked to participate individually or in groups. Participants will be recruited by an OMSI badge-wearing evaluation staff member and invited to participate in an interview. Recruitment is handled in two ways, depending on whether the visitor is recruited before experiencing the offering (cued), during, and/or afterwards (un-cued). In either case, participants will be given an invitation to try the exhibit (either via a sign or verbal cue) and informed of the purpose of the interview (to evaluate the exhibit/activity), how the information will be used, and the fact that s/he has the right to choose not to participate in the evaluation. For interviews in the museum, a goal of fifty or less will be set. For interviews in non-museum settings, a goal of thirty or less will be set.

### *Consent*

Signage will be posted at the point-of-use and at the entrance(s) to the exhibit hall. Signage at the entrance(s) to the hall will include the purpose of the interviews (to evaluate the exhibit), how the information will be used, an invitation to try the exhibits informs individuals of their right to choose not to participate in the evaluation, and directs visitor questions about the interviews to

staff. Point-of-use signs inform individuals where interviews are being conducted. (See Appendix A for a sample sign.)

In interviews that do not obtain identifying information (e.g., names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, photos, or audio/video records), the interviewer will simply ask individuals if they would be willing to participate. Verbal agreement will be taken as consent.

In the instance of a follow-up phone interview, names and telephone numbers will be documented on a written consent form signed by consenting adults and the parents of children wanting to participate.

### ***Observation Method***

Individuals, visiting groups, recruited members of the target audience, stakeholders, or OMSI interpretive staff will be observed by a data collector on the museum floor. Observation will take place while a participant experiences a museum offering, such as an exhibit or activity (this includes exhibit prototypes). Observation will record the order in which a participant experiences an offering, a participant's actions while s/he is experiencing an offering, and comments that s/he might make about an offering. At times, observation may be coupled with surveying or interviewing. A data collector may observe a participant and then approach him/her for an interview. In the instance that a survey or interview is conducted, the participant may be asked to provide identifying information. When observation by itself is being conducted, identifying data will not be collected. Observations will be recorded through note-taking or audio/video-recording devices.

### ***Participants***

Signage will be posted to inform individuals that observation is taking place in the museum that day. Additional signage will signal the specific area where observation is taking place, will instruct participants to direct their questions about the observations to staff, and inform them to tell staff if they choose not to participate. For observations on the museum floor, a goal of fifty or less will be set.

### ***Consent***

Signage will be posted at the point-of-use and at the entrance(s) to the exhibit hall. Signage at the entrance(s) to the hall includes information about the purpose of the observations (to evaluate the exhibit), how the information will be used, an invitation to try the exhibits, individuals' right to choose not to participate in the evaluation, and directs visitor questions about the observations to staff. Point-of-use signs inform individuals where observations are being conducted. (See Appendix A for a sample sign.)

### ***Focus Group Method***

This method is similar to the interviews described above, but the focus groups will be conducted with people from the target audience (e.g., family groups and groups of youth) and with members of OMSI's interpretive staff to test exhibits and/or activities. . Testing of the training materials with OMSI's interpretive staff will also take place under the focus group format. The focus groups may be conducted within the museum or at an outreach program site. Focus groups are typically recorded by an audio/video device, or an electronic transcript of the discussion.

### ***Participants***

Members of the target audience will be recruited through the OMSI Science Club at the local Blazer's Boys and Girls Club (BBGC), and museum interpretive staff will be recruited on site at OMSI or via email. Focus groups will typically contain between six and twenty participants.

#### *Consent*

Each participant will be asked to read and sign a written consent form at the beginning of the focus group session. The form will explain that data is collected and reported for the purpose of exhibit or activity development and/or improvement. It will also explain that data is confidential and used only by OMSI, program partners, and/or program funders.

In the instance that the focus group is taking place in an outreach program setting, written consent forms will be distributed to and obtained from guardians of all minors (under 18 years of age) prior to the event. In addition, each minor participant will be asked to sign an assent form prior to beginning the group session. The BBGC Outreach Instructor will be responsible for obtaining informed consent from guardians. For efficiency, at outreach sites, such as BBGC, the consent form can be part of a participation form developed by OMSI or developed in conjunction with an outreach partner organization.

#### ***Method of Photographing Visitors on the Museum Floor***

Visitors may be photographed to illustrate information needed to inform exhibit development.

#### *Participants*

Visitors will not be actively recruited and will not interact directly with research staff. Only in the instance that a photo contains a face or other trait by which the visitor can be identified, will the researcher ask the adults and/or parents to sign a written consent form. In the case that a visitor chooses not to have his/her picture recorded, the image(s) will be destroyed; this will be made explicit both on the sign bearing a picture of a photographic camera and/or in the process that leads to written consent (for identifying photos). Photographs will be taken of an indeterminate number of participants; however, the total number of photographs bearing written consent will be approximately twenty or less.

#### *Consent*

In most cases, faces will not be photographed unless adults and/or parents sign a written consent form (see Appendix E). Photos that contain faces (when consent is in question) will be modified digitally (e.g., blur the face) so the visitor cannot be identified. Photos of visitors taken without consent or digital modification will not be included in reports, presentations, or documentation that will be published or widely disseminated. Written consent/release will be obtained for any photographs that contain clearly visible faces intended for use in publication or other dissemination needs. All photos for the purpose of the exhibit research will be attached to the evaluation documents file and labeled "for exhibit/program development research only." (See Appendix A for a sample sign.)

#### ***Method of Videotaping with Audio on the Museum Floor***

On the museum floor, visitors' and interpretive staff's interactions and within the exhibit will be captured by audio-video recording devices. The signage methods described under this method (videotaping with audio) and the aforementioned method (photographing) have been tested and shown to be effective through a recent study at the Exploratorium (Gutwill, 2003). The Exploratorium used the methods as part of a research study that was approved by an IRB (*Going APE: Achieving Active, Prolonged Engagement at Interactive Science Museum Exhibits*). This

implied consent procedure will be used with adults and children. Universal cues will be provided for non-readers including, a video camera image, the presence of an actual video camera, OMSI staff in the area, and stanchions restricting the area. In addition, in a museum environment, young non-readers are expected to be accompanied by an adult; it is understood that it is the responsibility of adults accompanying minors to monitor their entrance to the area.

### *Participants*

Visitors will not be actively recruited and will not interact directly with research staff. Interpretive staff and volunteers who work in the areas of the museum where recording will take place, will be made aware of the project scope and goals, informed as to the schedule of evaluation activities (prior to their occurrence) and given the option not to participate in these activities.

Researchers will record any individuals who choose to enter the areas under study; this will include individuals who enter the area that has been cordoned-off and any exhibits or activities that visitors may touch, use, or interact with in any way during recording. It will also include any verbal interactions that are loud enough to be recorded by the audio-video recording device. Audio/video footage will be recorded of an indeterminate number of participants (due to the inability of museum staff to determine the number of individuals who will enter the restricted filming area). Generally, recording will not exceed periods of four hours at a time and will not take place on more than ten days throughout the course of the project.

### *Consent*

Any time visitor interactions with exhibits will be recorded via audio or videotape, as in the case of other observation methods, signage will be posted at the point-of-use and at the entrance(s) to the exhibit hall. Signage at the entrance(s) to the museum will indicate that video recording is taking place within the museum that day (see Appendix B). If visitors do not want to be videotaped, they will have the option to leave the museum at that time.

In the exhibit hall where filming will take place, signage will indicate the purpose of the observations (to evaluate the exhibit/activity), how the information will be used, information about visitors' right to refuse participation in the evaluation, an invitation to try the prototype exhibit(s), and instructions to direct their questions about the taped observations to staff; this signage will also contain an image of a video camera. The signage will explicitly state that entering the specified area implies consent to participate in the evaluation/research activity (see Appendix C for a sample sign). The area where evaluation is being conducted will be stanchioned-off and point-of-use signs that contain an image of a video camera will be placed at all entrances to this area and in the center of the area. Additional signage with the image of a video camera will be placed in a visible location on all exhibits that are being filmed (see Appendix D for a sample sign). These signs will state that the visitor is being filmed at that exhibit. All audio-/video-recording devices will be in plain sight.

Recordings made without a visitor's written consent that contain identifying information will not be included in reports, presentations, or documentation that will be published or widely disseminated. Recordings that do not include identifying information may be used in these types of publications without written consent. All recordings for the purpose of the study will be attached to the evaluation document file and labeled "for exhibit development research only." If a recording is made of a visitor who later tells staff they don't wish to be recorded, the data will be discarded; this will be made explicit both on the sign bearing a picture of a video camera and/or in the process that leads to written consent (for video recording).

***Method of Videotaping with Audio in Invitational Settings***

Invited participants may be interviewed and/or video recorded with audio during focus groups sessions or “sneak preview” events that have been organized by OMSI. These focus groups may take place at OMSI or at an outreach site, like BBGC.

***Participants***

Visitors and interpretive staff will be actively recruited and may interact directly with research staff. Researchers will record any individuals who choose to participate in the invitational event (e.g. focus group or “sneak preview” night). Focus groups will typically contain between six and twenty participants.

***Consent***

Each participant will be asked to read and sign a written informed consent form at the beginning of the event. In the instance that the event is taking place in an outreach program setting, written informed consent forms will be distributed to and obtained from guardians of all minors (under 18 years of age) prior to the event. In addition, each minor participant will be asked to sign an assent form prior to the beginning of the event. The Outreach Instructor will be responsible for obtaining informed consent from guardians. For efficiency, the consent form can be part of a participation form developed by OMSI or developed in conjunction with an outreach partner organization.

The consent form will explain that data may be used for two purposes: to improve exhibits and/or activities or to train and/or educate museum professionals and researchers at conferences and workshops. It will explain that all data is confidential and will allow participants to consent to the circumstances under which the recordings may be shown, either with project staff only or in conference or workshop settings. Unless participants give written consent to use the recordings in conference and workshop settings, the recordings will be attached to the evaluation document file and labeled “for exhibit/program development research only.”

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