

Guidelines for the use of video and photographs in Research

These guidelines should aid the University of Manitoba Research Ethics Boards (REBs) and researchers with the information they need to make an informed judgement on the ethical issues involved in the use of video in research.

The University upholds the principles of and follows The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) which was proclaimed on May 4, 1998 and was extended to local public bodies, including all educational institutions in the Province of Manitoba, on April 3, 2000.(University of Manitoba Policy: FIPPA AND PHIA .Effective Date: March 27, 2001).

Video and photographs are “records” as defined in section 1 of the FIPPA. The information contained in video and photographs is considered “personal information” as they present “recorded information about an identifiable individual”. The name of the person does not need to be included for the photograph or video to be considered personal information.

Videotaping research participants is a valid and useful method to collect, share, study and present detailed information, however, the use of videotapes increases an investigator’s need to clearly specify the steps taken to maintain the confidentiality of this identifiable information. Although video-data is inherently non-anonymous, confidentiality can be protected by restricting access to the video and to personal information such as the names of the participants or the institutions in which data will be collected.

Under the general principles stated in the TCPS2 of respect for persons, concern for welfare and justice,(Chapter 1, section b) the investigator using video in his research is obliged to follow an informed consent process in which, using a non-technical language , participants are fully informed on the following:

- the purposes, risks and potential reward of the research
- that participation is voluntarily
- that participants are free to withdraw their participation during the study without penalty
- participants have rights to privacy and confidentiality (and these rights will be honoured)
- participants should be given the opportunity to view the recording after it is completed

Under the Methods and Procedures section of the Protocol and in the Informed consent forms the investigator should describe the **collection, use** and **disclosure** of the recordings by:

- Clearly specifying the purposes and uses of the videotapes
- Directly relating the purposes and uses of the videotapes in fulfilling the objectives of the project
- Describing what video-data will be accessed, how the video-data will be collected, who will do the collecting, who will see the recordings, where it will be used, how access will be implemented and controlled, plans for publication, how long records will be kept and possibly plans for destruction when the study is completed.

- Providing the measures used to avoid the inclusion of non-participants on the videotapes
If the investigator wants permission for the recording to be viewed by anyone other than the research staff, explicit consent for any public use of the recordings must be obtained.

During the project participants are free to withdraw their consent and decline to be interviewed or recorded at any time, and need not to offer any reason for doing so.

It is the obligation of researchers to ensure that participants are fully aware that withdrawal from the study is always an option. Researchers must be sensitive at all times to the needs and changing level of comfort of participants to have data collected on them.

If a participant withdraws consent, the participant can also request the withdrawal of their data (TCPS 2: 3.1.c.), However, the physical practicalities of the project may prevent the actual withdrawal of the participant partway through, for example, if the project involves only a single intervention. (TCPS2: application article 3.1 b).

The consent form should set out any circumstances that do not allow withdrawal of data once collected. Where the terms of the research do not allow for withdrawal of their data, the identity of the participants shall be protected at all times during the project and after its completion. This can be done by un-identifying pictures from video or only present transcriptions.

In some research projects, the withdrawal of data may not be feasible. Participants shall also be informed that it is difficult, if not impossible, to withdraw results once they have been published or otherwise disseminated. (TCPS2: application article 3.1 c). Participants should be made explicitly aware, on an individual basis, the possibility of their data not being able to be withdrawn.

If there is an expectation to store video-data in a way that will enable others to use the videotapes, or if the videotapes are expected to be used in additional research projects or for educational purposes that are not directly related to the objective of the study under which they were initially created, this must be clearly stated in the protocol and in the informed consent. Participants in the initial study need to know about these uses. The researcher will have to state the safeguards that will be in place to assure the safety of stored video-data and the procedures he or she will follow to protect the confidentiality of the participants when other researchers request access to the video-data. Video-data cannot be considered secondary data as long as the tapes contain identifiable information.

A major difficulty is that video data, once collected, might be used in multiple ways. As video records travel further from the research project in which they were collected, the types of users and uses of the video may expand in unpredictable ways. New users may have less and less knowledge about the conditions under which the video was originally collected, which creates substantial potential for inappropriate selection, use, and interpretation. It is therefore a matter of ethical concern to include within the video itself adequate documentation about the video, including information about research participants, so that future users of the video will be

adequately informed about the nature of the video they are analyzing and how it was collected. (Guidelines for Video Research in Education. Recommendation from an expert panel, DRDC University of Chicago, 2007).

Research involving children requires parental or custodial consent as well as a documented assent of the child if she/he is old enough to understand. The authorizing parent must be fully informed about the research procedures and the anticipated effects of those procedures.

These guidelines were prepared with information from the following sources:

Guidelines for Video Research in Education, Data research and Development Center, University of Chicago, 2007.

Videotaping and Filming Guidelines, University of Tennessee.

University of Ontario Institute of Technology research ethics policy

University of Alberta Guidelines on Collection, Use and Disclosure of Photographs, Video/Audio Tapes

University of Manitoba-Office of Fair Practices and Legal Affairs- Photographs and Videos Guidelines.

University of Toronto, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board. Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in participant Observation.

Tri-council policy statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2).