**ERGO application form – Ethics form**

**All mandatory fields are marked (M\*). Applications without mandatory fields completed are likely to be rejected by reviewers. Other fields are marked “if applicable”. Help text is provided, where appropriate, in italics after each question.**

### 1. APPLICANT DETAILS

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| 1.1 (M\*) Applicant name: | Ashton Kingon |
| 1.2 Supervisor (if applicable): | David Millard |
| 1.3 Other researchers/collaborators (if applicable): *Name, address, email, telephone* |  |

### 2. STUDY DETAILS

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| **2.1 (M\*) Title of study:** | COMP6217: The Science of Online Social Networks (2017-2018) |
| **2.2 (M\*) Type of study** (*e.g. Undergraduate, Doctorate, Masters, Staff*): |  |
| **2.3 i) (M\*) Proposed start date:** | 25/04/2018 |
| **2.3 ii) (M\*) Proposed end date:** | 30/04/2018 |

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| **2.4 (M\*) What are the aims and objectives of this study?** |
| To interview people within the funeral industry to see if a social networking application designed to unite people and help them through the grieving process is something that would be feasible to implement and test what sort of market demand there is for such an application. |

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| **2.5 (M\*) Background to study** (*a* ***brief*** *rationale for conducting the study*)**:** |
| Digital culture has progressively influenced the ways in which individuals journey through the grieving process, and, as a result, the Web should no longer be considered a supplementary space for rituals that traditionally manifest offline. In a similar vein, the advent of social media, and rise in platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have provided alternative outlets for people to display their grief. It is this emerging memorial culture that is beginning to challenge the conventional societal and cultural constraints that once encompassed the nature of mourning. Moreover, social media has transformed the connection people can have with those who are facing death, as communication with the dying was once restricted by geography, time, and familial connections. However, as society cements itself within the digital realm, the traditional hierarchies that once encompassed the grieving process are beginning to disintegrate, which has enabled a new level of intimacy and methods of saying goodbye.  Existing literature demonstrates that social media is becoming just as imperative a method for displaying grief as the funeral and erection of the memorial and should thus be given equal value. Therefore, we propose to build a social media application that will be both mobile and Web based, designed to unite people in grief, enabling them to continue the story of their loved ones in a specifically tailored and networked community. This application will be designed not only to coincide with advances in technology, but to correlate with the progression of societies relationship with grief, helping people to cope with loss day by day and find comfort by expressing themselves in a virtual community. |

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| **2.6 (M\*) Key research question**(*Specify hypothesis if applicable*): |
| Is there value in having a social media application designed to unite the grieving community that can be advertised through local funeral businesses? |

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| **2.7 (M\*) Study design** (*Give a* ***brief*** *outline of basic study design*)  *Outline what approach is being used, why certain methods have been chosen.* |
| Open ended semi-structured interviews will be used in order to gain an in depth insight into professionals thoughts and feelings on the development of this application. A semi structured interview will allow for easy navigation in the direction desired and the ability to focus questions on the topic areas most important to the research. It is my aim to obtain relevant information from a specifically targeted sample, and the felxible structure of the interview will enable me to make valid comparisons and contrasts during the analysis. There will be a general line of inquiry throughout the intervire that will include a specific set of questions, but these questions can easily be deviated from. The questions will be organised into certain themes, including the feasibility of the idea, issues with marketing, and the ethical and legal considerations. The main advantage of this approach is the flexibility of being able to alter the questions to coincide with the direction of the interview. Likewise, interviews are the most approriate method to allow for sudden changes in topic and will allow respondents to feel more comfortable and relaxed than they perhaps would if the questions were closed and the interview was more structured. The fact I have a personal relationship with the respondent will aid with the interview rapport, as they will be more likely to open up and share their honest opinions. The interview notes will be analysed using thematic analysis in order to extract relevant themes that can be used as market research. |

### 3. SAMPLE AND SETTING

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| **3.1 (M\*) How are participants to be *approached*?** *Give details of what you will do if recruitment is insufficient. If participants will be accessed through a third party (e.g. children accessed via a school) state if you have permission to contact them and* ***upload any letters of agreement to your submission in ERGO***. |
| I have personal relationships with all 4 participants and they have all verbally agreed to be interviewed, if they were to pull out at the last minute I have many back up contacts within the funeral buisness that could easily be contacted and approached for interview if necessary. In order to ensure that the participants are completing the study on a volunatry basis, and because they want to, rather than as a favour to me, they have been asked to sign a consent form, which will explain the details of the study and the fact that they can withdraw at any point before the interviews begin. Equally, a participant information sheet has been provided along with the consent form to inform people what the research is about and if they are interested in putting their point across as industry professionals their insite and opinions would be greatly appreciated. |

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| **3.2 (M\*) Who are the proposed sample and where are they from (e.g. fellow students, club members)?** *List inclusion/exclusion criteria if applicable*. *NB The University does not condone the use of ‘blanket emails’ for contacting potential participants (i.e. fellow staff and/or students).*  *It is usually advised to ensure groups of students/staff have given prior permission to be contacted in this way, or to use of a third party to pass on these requests. This is because there is a potential to take advantage of the access to ‘group emails’ and the relationship with colleagues and subordinates; we therefore generally do not support this method of approach.*  *If this is the only way to access a chosen cohort, a reasonable compromise is to obtain explicit approval from the Faculty Ethics Committee (FEC) and also from a senior member of the Faculty in case of complaint.* |
| Tbe proposed sample are:  3 Funeral Directors  1 Stone Mason  All 4 participants have different businesses in the local area and have been working within the funeral industry between 10 years or longer, as well as having expert knowledge of marketing themselves as businesses. |

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| **3.3 (M\*) Describe the relationship between researcher and sample** (*Describe any relationship e.g. teacher, friend, boss, clinician, etc.*) |
| The relationship between mysef and the participants are Ex Colleagues and personal friends, despite the existing relationship all participants are interested in the proposed app and are willing to take part volunatarily and will sign a consent form to support this. |

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| **3.4 (M\*) Describe how you will ensure that fully informed consent is being given:** (*include how long participants have to decide whether to take part*) |
| All interviewees have agreed to complete an informed consent form before any interviews begin or any notes are taken. The consent form will outline the nature and purpose of my project and provide the contact details of my supervisor. This is to ensure they know exactly what my research is about, what they are participating in and confirm that they are happy for their information to be used. The consent form will emphasise that all participants will remain anonymous and any information they provide is strictly confidential. The consent forms will clearly state that respondents have the right to terminate the interview at any time and if they are unwilling to continue their data will be struck form my analysis. However, it will also be stated that once their data has been written into the project it will be too late for them to withdraw. |

### 4. RESEARCH PROCEDURES, INTERVENTIONS AND MEASUREMENTS

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| **4.1 (M\*) Give a brief account of the procedure as experienced by the participant**  *(Make clear who does what, how many times and in what order. Make clear the role of all assistants and collaborators. Make clear total demands made on participants, including time and travel).* ***Upload any copies of questionnaires and interview schedules to your submission in ERGO****.* |
| The interviews will be conducted at the premises of the individual in question to make them feel as comfortable as possible. Due to my personal relationships with the respondents I will conduct all of the interviews by myself. The interviews will not be recorded but notes will be taken throughout. |

### 5. STUDY MANAGEMENT

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| **5.1 (M\*) State any potential for psychological or physical discomfort and/or distress?** |
| As these are informal semi structured interviews that will be conducted with personal friends regarding matters of their expertise and on the buisness rather than the personal side it is unlikely that any of the participants will be subjected to any psychological or physical discomfort. However, it will be stated on the consent form that they can stop the interview at any point and withdraw their information should they wish. Moreover, I will not be asking any personal information about their own expiriences with clients, which could potentially cause discomfort and they will not be disclosing any personal information about any of their current families. The data will be analysed by myself using thematic analysis in order to extract relevant themes and tailor my blog to fit in with these. |

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| **5.2 (M\*) Explain how you intend to alleviate any psychological or physical discomfort and/or distress that may arise? (if applicable)** |
| Although unlikely, should any of the participants become distressed throughout the interview I will pause and give them the choice of whether or not they want to proceed. |

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| **5.3 Explain how you will care for any participants in ‘special groups’** *(i.e. those in a dependent relationship, vulnerable or lacking in mental capacity)***(if applicable)?** |
| Not Applicatble |

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| **5.4 Please give details of any payments or incentives being used to recruit participants (if applicable)?** |
| Not Applicable |

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| **5.5 i) How will participant anonymity and/or data anonymity be maintained (if applicable)?**  *Two definitions of anonymity exist:*  *i)* Unlinked anonymity ***-*** *Complete anonymity can only be promised if questionnaires or other requests for information are not targeted to, or received from, individuals using their name or address or any other identifiable characteristics. For example if questionnaires are sent out with no possible identifiers when returned, or if they are picked up by respondents in a public place, then anonymity can be claimed. Research methods using interviews cannot usually claim anonymity – unless using telephone interviews when participants dial in.*  *ii)* Linked anonymity ***-*** *Using this method, complete anonymity cannot be promised because participants can be identified; their data may be coded so that participants are not identified by researchers, but the information provided to participants should indicate that they could be linked to their data.* |
| All participants will remain anonymous throughout the research, or if it is completely necessary for someone to be referred to individually they will be provided with a pseudonym and I will recur any names that may be mentioned within the interviews. All personal information will be destroyed following the analysis and any personal information that may be revealed by participants will remain strictly confidential and will be struck from the analysis. |

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| **5.5 ii) How will participant confidentiality be maintained (if applicable)?**  *Confidentiality is defined as the non-disclosure of research information except to another authorised person. Confidential information can be shared with those who are already party to it, and may also be disclosed where the person providing the information provides explicit consent.* |
| In order to protect confidentiality, people will be addressed solely by their psedonym and the names of their businesses will not be disclosed and there are no plans to collect any other information that would be deemed confidential. Any identifying characteristics or traceable information will be disguised or removed from my account, this will include any names participants may reveal as to not jeopardise the anonymity of other people. |

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| **5.6 (M\*) How will personal data and study results be stored securely during and after the study?** *Researchers should be aware of, and compliant with, the Data Protection policy of the University. You must be able to demonstrate this in respect of handling, storage and retention of data.* |
| In order to comply with the Data Protection Act, I will follow guidelines set out by the University of Southampton in their statement of ethical practices and ensure no personal data including names or locations will be documented. Participants will be made aware that all data will remain with be and be stored in a safe and secure place, on my password protected laptop, and will be deleted once written into the project. This will include all written notes and any identifiable information about the individuals specific company. |

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| **5.7 (M\*) Who will have access to these data?** |
| Only myself and my two other team members will have access to the interview material, and my supervisor if it is requested. |

**N.B. – Before you upload this document to your ERGO submission remember to:**

1. Complete ALL mandatory sections in this form

2. Upload any letters of agreement referred to in question 3.1 to your ERGO submission

3. Upload any interview schedules and copies of questionnaires referred to in question 4.1