

**Project Title: Online Child Safety Engineers**

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**Student Investigator(s): Sarah Chun**, University of Waterloo (sarah.chun@uwaterloo.ca)

This letter explains what the study is about, what participation involves, possible risks and benefits, and your rights as a research participant. You may print/save a copy for your records. If you do not understand something in the letter, please ask one of the investigators before consenting to participate.

**What is the study about?**

Protecting children from online harms at scale is an important and challenging problem, especially for organizations that operate at scale. The goal of this study is to better understand the challenges that professionals working at technology organizations face in their efforts to mitigate child sexual abuse material (CSAM) and the solutions that show promise. Building an industry-wide understanding of the state of the field from the perspective of the people working in it will help align efforts to protect children. We hope that it will also encourage more research into topic areas that are helpful to the Trust and Safety field.

Our goal is to build a cross-organizational understanding of how the challenge of illegal child sexual abuse material (CSAM) are being addressed, solutions tried, and the barriers faced by the people trying to address them. We are interested in industry-wide approaches, views, and challenges, not necessarily what your current organization is doing. So please feel free to speak about past experiences or of experiences of others you may have heard of (without direct reference).

**What does participation involve?**

Participation in the study consists of an interview with Sarah Chun either remotely or in person. The interview should be approximately 50-60 minutes. It consists of questions about experiences working in the field, what in your opinion is working well, less well, challenges, and experiences with cross-organization sharing of information and tools. If helpful, we can provide a copy of the questions in advance.

The interview will be conducted over a phone call or an online platform, Zoom or Teams. Both Zoom and Teams have implemented technical, administrative, and physical safeguards to protect the information provided via the Services from loss, misuse, and unauthorized access, disclosure, alteration, or destruction. However, no Internet transmission is ever fully secure or error free. If you are physically close to the University of Waterloo, you may also request that the interview be conducted in person.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by advising the researcher. If you wish to withdraw your study data after participating, please contact the researchers. You can request your data be removed from the study up until *December 2025* as it is not possible to withdraw your data once papers and publications have been submitted to publishers.

**How will I be quoted?**

All quotes will be anonymized and not associated with you or your organization. We will be using a mix of direct quotations and summaries of what was said. If we are taking notes, we will not be able to accurately record direct quotes. In these cases, we will either summarize what was said without quotes or write a quote that is clearly labeled as having been modified by the researchers.

**How will the interview be recorded?**

With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. You may also request that we not audio record, and we will instead take notes.

**Costs and benefits of participation**

There may be no direct personal benefits to participating. Given the topic of mitigation of child sexual abuse material, there is some risk of feeling uncomfortable, or experiencing emotional distress, but these should be temporary. You can stop participation or take a break at any time.

**Data storage**

Participation is confidential. We will assign your interview a participant identification number that is not associated with your identity, and use it for internal documents. If you consent to audio recording, the recordings will be kept on a laptop in an encrypted directory. Recordings will be retained only long enough to transcribe them and then they will be deleted. We will be using offline transcription software that complies with GDPR. Transcriptions will also be reviewed and any names or facts we consider potentially identifying will be removed. Anonymized transcriptions and notes may be stored on the University's OneDrive. Transcribed data and notes will be retained for a minimum of 1 year.

**Questions?**

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Board (REB #47845). If you have questions for the Board, contact the Office of Research Ethics, toll-free at 1-833-643-2379 (Canada and USA), 1-519-888-4440, or [reb@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:reb@uwaterloo.ca).

For all other questions or if you would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me by email at [sarah.chun@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:sarah.chun@uwaterloo.ca). You can also contact my supervisor, Professor Kami Vaniea email ([kami.vaniea@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:kami.vaniea@uwaterloo.ca)).

I hope that the results of my study will be of benefit to those organizations directly involved in the study, other organizations not directly involved in the study, as well as to the broader research community. After the study is completed, a research project paper will be shared on the TULiPS Lab website (<https://uwaterloo.ca/technology-usability-lab-privacy-security/>).

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Yours Sincerely,

***Sarah Chun***