

# ***A Token Gesture - NFT Research Study***

## **Participant Information Sheet**

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide if you wish to participate, it is important for you to read this leaflet so you understand why the study is being carried out and what it will involve.

Reading this leaflet, discussing it with others or asking any questions you might have will help you decide whether or not you would like to take part.

### **What is the purpose of this study?**

This research study is part of the DeCaDE research project at the Institute for Design Informatics, University of Edinburgh. In this project, we are designing and experimenting with decentralised economies in the creative industries. In this specific study, we aim:

- To offer an opportunity for public engagement with Non-Fungible Tokens – more commonly known as NFTs.
- To facilitate and study how members of the public are able to be setup and onboarded with a ‘wallet’, which holds cryptocurrency and is a necessity of any interactions with NFTs or other blockchain-based systems.
- To understand how audiences experience and value ‘minting’ their own NFT, and the novel forms of ‘ownership’ this can (or cannot) offer.

We are doing this by means of a public exhibition – *A Token Gesture* – via the City Screens at the InSpace Gallery, where participants will be able to create a unique artwork, and be guided to minting an NFT.

### **Why do we want to talk to you?**

We’re interested in talking to members of the general public, over 16 years of age, who wish to learn more about NFTs and decentralised technologies. Participation in this research is open to anyone who is able to engage with *A Token Gesture* at InSpace (<https://inspace.ed.ac.uk/>), running from March 7<sup>th</sup> to April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

We anticipate as many as 100 people or more may create an artwork, and produce an NFT. In addition, we will survey or interview a selection of these participants. We want to hear a wide range of views and experiences – from those who are experienced with these technologies, to those for whom this was their first interaction.

## What will you be asked to do?

There are three main activities to take part in this research. Please read this section carefully, to understand what we are asking you to do and how the technologies we are using will work. You do not require any prior knowledge or experience of cryptocurrencies or NFTs to take part in this research. **If you have any concerns or questions about the activities below, a member of the research team will be available to talk to you via the contact details at the end of this form.**

### 1) *Creating an Artwork*

First, participants will be invited to create a unique digital artwork by interacting with a street facing camera via a station and screen in the InSpace Gallery window which will function from 4pm to 4am each day, on March 7<sup>th</sup> until April 3<sup>rd</sup>. This camera will not record any images or video: it will only record a colour placed in front of it. When a colour is detected, the camera will feed this into a digital artwork, to create a unique image. You will be able to play with different colours, and create as many images as you wish. Once you are happy with the image created, you will be able to register this image, and contribute it to the exhibition by providing an email address. This is the only interaction which must take place in-person.

### 2) *Claiming your NFT*

Once you provide an email address we will send you instructions about how to claim your NFT. An NFT is a unique digital token. Since an NFT is 'non-fungible' – it cannot be duplicated or replaced – they are one of a kind. Each token, will be linked, uniquely to the artwork that has been generated. Therefore, whoever possesses this digital token, can claim to own or be associated with the artwork it references. **Although the artwork itself can be easily copied, the token that represents it cannot.** In this way, NFTs are being used to represent, exchange and manage rights associated with digital assets. In our research, we want to explore and understand individuals' experiences of creating and 'owning' such tokens.

NFTs rely upon distributed ledger technologies – the same technologies underpinning cryptocurrencies such as *Bitcoin* and *Ethereum*. A distributed ledger ensures that many people share a transparent record or ledger of every token created, where they are stored, and when they are exchanged. It provides a secure, trusted, record of ownership.

Therefore, **to create and possess an NFT, requires you to set up a cryptocurrency *wallet*.** A wallet is a digital application which allows users to store and exchange digital assets or tokens. Each wallet is also unique – and has its own address, like a bank account number. This address – which is public – allows others to send tokens to your wallet. However, when you set up your wallet, you will create a unique password and 'seed – phrase' that will be required to access and recover your wallet if you forget your password. **It is vital that you keep these private.**

In this project, we will guide participants through setting up a wallet with '[Kukai](#)' to deliver an NFT to you. We will provide you further specific instructions on exactly how to create and manage your wallet via email, and via our website.

Here are the most important things you must know and remember about a cryptocurrency wallet:

- **All transactions a wallet makes are public and transparent.** Anyone in the world could examine the ledger and see which wallet makes a transaction. However, they will not be able to know who owns that wallet.
- **You should not link any personal data** – such as your real name or email address – to a wallet, unless you wish to make all of your transactions with this wallet public.
- You are responsible for looking after your wallet and remembering your password and seed phrase. Unlike other internet services, **there is no other record of these details, and you**

**cannot recover your password via email.** The research team will have no record of who owns which wallet, and we will not be able to help you recover a wallet if you have forgotten your password and seed phrase.

- Wallets cannot be deleted. However, if you cannot access them – they are effectively lost.
- You may create and manage multiple wallets, with multiple services, should you wish.

If you wish, you can also learn more about cryptocurrency wallets via this guide:

<https://creatoreconomy.so/p/curious-beginner-guide-to-crypto-wallets>

In this project, we do not anticipate any particular risks to you in creating and managing a wallet. The most likely risk is that you may lose access to your wallet and hence the NFT related to the artwork you helped to create. Occasionally, unknown tokens may be sent to a wallet as a form of invitation, advertising or spam. Though unlikely, if this happens, we recommend you treat these with caution. It is also important for you to be aware that if you make any other future transactions with your wallet, these will also be visible (though your personal identity will not).

### *3) Using your NFT and Interacting with Artwork*

Once you have created your wallet, you will be able to – anonymously – claim the NFT related to your piece of art. We will give you clear instructions how to do this, via email and via our website.

Through ownership of this NFT, you will be able to prove that you created your piece, and you will gain particular rights regarding how this is displayed (or not) during the exhibition.

During the course of the exhibition, you may also be able to use your NFT to interact with the work and the exhibition. For example, you may be able to use your NFT to control how and when the piece of art appears in the exhibition. You will also be able to remove it from the exhibition.

These interactions, and all transactions in this project, are governed by code called a ‘token contract’. This sets the rules about how NFTs can be used. If you wish, you can inspect this code via our [project website](#). The exhibition will end after April 3<sup>rd</sup>, and it will not be possible to mint any new NFTs. At this point, the admin keys to the token contract will be assigned to an unknown address, ensuring no further changes can be made to the contract.

Importantly, unlike other NFTs, **your NFT will be non-transferable.** This means it cannot be moved from one wallet to another, and it cannot be sold via an online marketplace. For this reason, **we do not anticipate your NFT to have any financial value.**

An NFT cannot be deleted, however, if you are unable to access your wallet, you will lose access to your NFT and it will be irretrievable.

### *4) Taking part in an interview, survey or further research event*

The purpose of our research is to understand individuals’ experiences and attitudes towards NFTs, and this new way to manage the ownership of digital assets and artworks.

On this basis, we will invite some participants who have claimed an NFT to tell us about their experiences. We may invite you to take part in a short interview, or complete an online survey. We will ask you about your experiences of the exhibition, and your views around owning and having rights over digital assets and artwork via NFTs. Interviews will be conducted remotely, via video-conferencing software, and last between 40 minutes, to 1 hour.

## **Risks to Taking Part**

Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary. The risks to you taking part in this study are very low.

*1) Losing access to your wallet*

The primary risk is that participants become unable to access a wallet they have created – and any tokens held within them. This could lead to disappointment and an inability to participate in the study as intended. We will give you clear instructions on how to avoid this.

*2) In-person interactions and Covid-19*

There is an extremely low risk of being exposed to Covid-19 in this study. Interacting with *A Token Gesture* will take place entirely outside, and be hands free. You will interact only via a camera, or your own device. Interviews will be conducted remotely, via video-conferencing software. Any further in-person events related to the research will be entirely voluntary, include alternative options for online participation, and take place in strict accordance with University and Scottish Government guidelines at the time.

*3) Secondary risks of other Cryptocurrency products*

This study is not intended to promote or encourage interactions with any other particular cryptocurrency or NFTs. No prior understanding or engagement with these technologies is required to participate in this research. However, it is important for you to know that most popular cryptocurrencies and NFTs are a form of speculative asset – meaning their value is very unpredictable. There are also many examples of fraud and misrepresentation, and there is very limited regulation of cryptocurrency services and assets. For all these reasons, we would encourage anyone considering investing in any other crypto-asset to think and research very carefully before making any investments and only to invest money that you can afford to lose. **You do not need to invest any money to create a cryptocurrency wallet, or to take part in this research project.**

You may also be aware from popular reporting that blockchains can be harmful to the environment since they require large amounts of computer power. To mitigate this, we have developed this project using the [Tezos](#) blockchain which is considerably less energy intensive due to its reliance on a 'proof-of-stake' algorithm and costs significantly less to send new transactions.

### **Withdrawing from the Study**

You can pause, or withdraw from the study at any time, without giving any reason.

You can create an artwork, without creating an NFT or providing an email address. In this case, your artwork will not be stored, or presented in the exhibition.

You can create an artwork, and an NFT, without interacting any further with the exhibition. You may also choose not to participate in any survey or interview.

During any interview or survey, if you don't want to talk about or participate in something just say, and we will always respect your wishes.

If you wish to withdraw your participation entirely, it is important to note that the artwork itself, your wallet and NFT cannot be deleted. However, you will be able to:

- Remove your artwork from being shown in the exhibition or any future show.
- Delete and forget any record of your seed phrase and password, meaning your wallet is inaccessible and hence permanently lost.
- Ensuring there are no other records connecting you to your wallet or the artwork (e.g. via a social media post)

- If you provided an email address, or took part in any survey or interview, informing the research team, who will remove any research data about your participation. However, you should not tell us your wallet address when you do this – we have no control over this data.

### **Will you be compensated for doing this?**

Participants who take part in the exhibition will have the opportunity to create a unique artwork, and claim ownership of an NFT, at no cost. Please note, we do not anticipate any financial benefits to ownership of this NFT.

Participants who take part in an additional survey will be entered into a prize draw with the opportunity to win a shopping voucher worth £50.

Participants who take part in an interview, lasting up to one hour, will receive a £20 shopping voucher, as a token of thanks.

### **Confidentiality and data**

Any information gathered will be treated confidentially. We would like to record audio of interviews in order to produce a transcript of the conversation. Surveys will be conducted and recorded through JISC Online Surveys (<https://www.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/>).

We will anonymously record data about interactions with the exhibition itself, including when artworks are created, the colours presented to generate new artworks, and the use of NFTs to interact with the exhibition.

We will also collect anonymous usage statistics of the project website.

As above, all transactions via wallets with the blockchain are anonymous – they do not require or collect any personal data – however they are permanently recorded. We will use this data to determine how many NFTs are claimed and further interactions with the system.

**Crucially, we will never connect personally identifiable data, such as an email address to your wallet address.**

In summary, your information will be stored in a secure way, and you can have access to it if you wish. You can also get in touch with us at any time and ask for your data to be deleted – with the exception of anonymous data recorded on the blockchain. Unless you state otherwise and we have your express consent for this, you will not be named in any public presentation of the research. Your participation in an interview or survey will be entirely pseudonymous – we will use pseudonyms to refer to you in any publication, and your identity will not be revealed at any point. ‘Your data’ refers only to the consent form, and the data gathered as part of the study, specifically, email addresses, interview recordings, and survey responses. We have a number of ways in which your data might be used and stored. Specifically:

Data that includes your personally identifiable information might be:

- On a secure encrypted hard drive for the duration of the research project, and for a maximum of three years.
- On a secure University of Edinburgh data management portal for the duration of the research project, and up to two years
- Used in developing and publishing the findings of the research, only if we have your express consent for this.

Pseudonymised data from which your personally identifiable information has been removed (for example survey results, or an interview transcript), might be:

- Used and quoted by the University of Edinburgh in developing and publishing the findings of the research
- Stored on a secure University of Edinburgh data management portal indefinitely, subject to review every 3 years.

### **Use of results**

The information gathered as a result of this study will be used to support the wider DeCADE project <https://decade.ac.uk/>. It will also inform further studies we undertake on these topics, especially where we aim to provide users with cryptocurrency wallets, tokens and assets.

The final results of this project will be read by academic audiences, such as in academic journals and conferences. In addition, we expect the exhibition itself to provide a platform for critical and informed discussion of NFTs across the University of Edinburgh, and the creative and tech sectors in Edinburgh.

### **Will you be able to change your mind about taking part?**

Yes, you can withdraw at any point. If you feel that you no longer wish to take part at any time just say so and we will stop, and destroy all identifiable records of your participation.

You may also contact us after the study and ask us to withdraw your data from the study if it has not yet been pseudonymised.

However, as explained above, it is not possible to remove information recorded in a public blockchain. A record of any transactions undertaken by your wallet will persist. However, we will not at any point associate personally identifiable information with your wallet address and this will be entirely anonymous.

### **Who are we?**

This study is part of the DeCADE project <https://decade.ac.uk/>, a research centre and collaboration between the University of Edinburgh and University of Surrey, funded by UKRI (<https://www.ukri.org/>) to study how decentralised platforms enabled by emerging data-centric technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Distributed Ledgers and Blockchain transform our future economy – and the way we work, interact and create value.

This study is led by Dr. Chris Elsdon (Chancellor's Fellow in Service Design) and Dr. Evan Morgan (Research Software Engineer) based in the Institute for Design Informatics (<https://www.designinformatics.org/>), part of Edinburgh College of Art.

### **What happens next?**

If you are interested in taking part, please read carefully and sign the consent form when it is provided to you, and return this via email to Dr. Chris Elsdon [chris.elsden@ed.ac.uk].

If you have any other questions about the research, or require help to understand any details of this form please contact Chris.

If you have any concerns about the research, and would like to talk to someone outside the research team, you may contact Prof. Melissa Terras [M.Terras@ed.ac.uk].

Thank you for reading this information.