

FOR IRB USE ONLY:

Protocol Number: IRB-_____ Chair Approval: _____ Date: _____

Received: _____

**Rowan University
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN RESEARCH REVIEW APPLICATION**

INSTRUCTIONS: Check all appropriate boxes, answer all questions completely, include attachments, and obtain appropriate signatures. After completing the application, please submit an **original and two (2) copies of the original to the Research Office, Bole Hall and send an electronic version of the completed original IRB application to hartman@rowan.edu. NOTE: Applications must be typed. Incomplete and handwritten applications will be returned.** Be sure to make a copy for your files.

Approved For Use by Rowan IRB: 5/2013

Revised: 05/23/2013

Step 1: Determine if the proposed research is subject to IRB review.

All research involving human participants conducted by Rowan University faculty and staff is subject to IRB review. Some, but not all, student-conducted studies that involve human participants are considered research and are subject to IRB review. Consult the “Frequently Asked Questions” on the IRB website and your faculty advisor regarding student research. Some research may be eligible for exemption from IRB review. However, it should be submitted to the IRB Committee to determine whether an exemption applies. If you think your research is eligible for exemption, please fill out the application and attach a cover letter explaining why you think your research should be exempted. More details on what is considered research and types of exemptions can be found in Appendix A. You may also consult the “Frequently Asked Questions” on the IRB website, and the Human Subjects Research Classroom Exercise statement and guide available on the Rowan University IRB webpage.

Step 2: If the proposed research is subject to IRB review, complete the identifying information below.

Include and document the Principal Investigator(s), Faculty Advisor and Co-Investigator(s).

*(Note: Investigators and Co-Investigators are personnel who have a role and participate in the planning, implementation and/or reporting functions of a research study. Investigators are responsible for the overall management of the research study, but co-investigators can be other researchers at other worksites/performance sites, such as but not limited to a researcher at a multi-site location or an investigator that is instrumental to and/or providing input on either the planning, implementation or reporting function of the research. **Please note** that a co-investigator is different than assistants or volunteers. Assistants and volunteers are best categorized as someone who does not contribute in any way to the planning, implementation and reporting of the research protocol. For example, volunteers and assistants may hand out consent forms, but those assistants/volunteers have not contributed to the planning of the research, the analysis and determinations of the participants interaction/information collected and will not provide input to and get involved with the reporting function of the research. Please consult your faculty advisor, contact the IRB Chair, or contact the Research Office at (856) 256-5150.)*

Project Title: Baby We Were Born to Tweet: Bruce Springsteen Fans and Twitter	
Date: 6/20/2013	Faculty Sponsor (if student)*: [REDACTED]
Investigator / PI: William I Wolff	Department: [REDACTED]
Investigator / PI Home Department: Writing Arts	Location: [REDACTED]
<u>Mailing Address (for PI):</u>	E-mail: [REDACTED]
Street: 43 Waterton Dr	Telephone #: [REDACTED]
City & State: Bear, DE	
Zip Code: 19701	Co-Investigators (If applicable):
Email: wolffw@rowan.edu	1) [REDACTED]
Telephone #: 856-873-4671	2) [REDACTED]

* - If a doctoral student, please provide faculty sponsor above and obtain doctoral signature in Certifications section of IRB Application

Is research externally funded? Yes | No

If YES, please provide sponsor's name: [REDACTED]

If research is associated with a subaward, please include prime sponsor's name:

[REDACTED]

Step 3: Determine if your research study requires a full IRB review

The Rowan University IRB handles reviews on an expedited basis (meaning that the protocol is examined by one IRB reviewer and the chair) with the exception of those that put the participant at greater than "minimal risk" (see below).

(Note: "Minimal risk" means that the risks of harm anticipated in the proposed research are not greater, considering probability and magnitude, than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. The concept of risk goes beyond physical risk and includes risks to the participant's dignity and self-respect as well as psychological, emotional, or behavioral risk.)

Please indicate the level of risk participants will face in your research study:

Greater than minimal risk **OR** Not greater than minimal risk

Please check one of the following:

(Note: The information below is voluntary. Researchers may identify a category below, but the IRB will provide the final determination related to whether or not the research protocol is full, expedited or exempted.)

Full Review Needed

Exemption Review Needed

Expedited Review Needed

Expedited Review with Exemption Number 2 (See Appendix B)

Step 4: Complete the following information:

PROTOCOL DESCRIPTION:

1. THE HUMAN SUBJECTS INVOLVED IN THIS RESEARCH:

a) Who are the subjects?

Please provide brief description of subjects or category of subjects, such as but not limited to School Administrators, Public School Teachers, High School Students, etc. Please provide as much information to identify the different types/categories of subjects that may be included and participating in the study – target subject population(s)/sample(s).

The subjects are fans of Bruce Springsteen and his music.

b) Do your subjects include any of the following:

Yes | No Pregnant Women or Human Fetuses or Neonates?

Yes | No Children and Minors ages seven through seventeen?

Note: I have left these unchecked for a few reasons. First, as part of the netnographic portion of the study, which will require engagement with Springsteen fans through the use of communicating via Twitter, it will be unknown if the other person is a pregnant woman or a minors (though all possible precautions will be taking to ensure that minors are not included). Second, for the survey and interview portion of the study, children and minors will be excluded. Third, “pregnant women” are not targeted and their pregnancy is not the focus of the research. However, it may be that a Bruce Springsteen fan that is a woman and just happens to be pregnant responds to the survey and I interview her without evening knowing that she is pregnant. Human fetuses and neonates are not involved in the study.

Yes | No Infants or Children younger than seven years of age?

Yes | No Cognitively Impaired Persons?

Yes | No Inmates/Prisoners?

Yes | No Elderly/Aged Persons?

Yes | No Non-English Speaking Persons?

NOTE: *These subjects, by virtue of their age or status, may not be competent or free to give their own consent and may be particularly vulnerable to coercion and undue influence. Investigators must incorporate additional safeguards into the research plan and document fully the informed consent of these individuals and/or that of their legal representatives. If excluding minors, please explain how.*

How many subjects will be involved in the project? There are an unknown number of Springsteen fans tweeting about Springsteen and his music. My goal is to conduct between up to 20 interviews.

b) Specify your plans for including women and minorities, if appropriate.

No plans to target these groups specifically.

c) List all inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Minors 17 and under will be excluded from the interviews.

d) Are your subjects students?

Yes | No If YES, name the institution(s) in which they are enrolled:

Students are not a targeted group. However, it may be that I interview a Bruce Springsteen fan that just happens to be a student.

e) **Are there prospective subjects who, if selected for this project, would be especially vulnerable to risk because of the procedures you will be using?**

Yes | No If YES, describe the process you will use to screen such subjects:

2. **RECRUITMENT:**

a) **Specify how you will gain access to, recruit, and select your subjects.**

Describe how you will incorporate the use of volunteers or individuals/titles of a group of volunteers that will perform steps – handing out consent forms – in the research methodology.

***Note:** These volunteers do not / may not qualify as key personnel or co-investigators, but will perform a minor aspect of the research.*

Please specify and describe: There is an open community of people tweeting publicly about Springsteen. Any engagement with them will be done via Twitter. I will use Twitter to recruit participants for the online survey. In the survey there is a question asking if they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview. I will also ask Springsteen fans directly on Twitter if they would be willing to participate in the survey.

b) **Are you advertising or posting a notice for subjects and/or volunteers?**

Yes | No If YES, submit a copy of the advertisement or notice.

I will be posting about the survey on Twitter. I have also created a web page associated with the study at: <http://springsteen.williamwolff.org>. I will be linking to this from my Twitter bio.

c) **Will the subjects be recruited from your place of employment/assignment?**

Yes | No

d) **Will the subjects be under your direct supervision? ex: Manager, Supervisor or Instructor?**

Yes | No If YES, explain how this research relates to your job role and provide any other information pertinent to your relationship with the subjects (e.g., how will you ensure against the possibility of coercion?):

3. **COST/PAYMENT:**

a) **Are you paying your subjects?**

Yes | No If YES, indicate the amount of payment and describe if (and how) you will prorate the payments to subjects who withdraw before they complete their participation:

b) **Will participation in the study involve any cost to the subject?**

Yes | No If YES, indicate the anticipated costs to the subject.

4. **INFORMED CONSENT:**

a) **Does your protocol involve the use of an informed or alternate consent form?**

Informed Consent Form

Alternate Consent Form

Informed Consent *and* Alternate Consent Form

Consent Form or Alternate Form *is not* being used

If using an Informed or Alternate Consent form, then please enclose a copy of the form. Informed consent must be obtained from the subjects and/or, in the case of minors under the age of 18, the parent or legal guardian. See Appendix B & C for instructions on informed consent. All requirements **must** be met.

If your project will not include an informed or alternate consent form, explain how consent will be obtained.

Please explain, if applicable: A note about informed consent and netnography. Due to the infeasibility of gaining consent from every single individual in an online public community of unknown size, such as the Springsteen community I will be studying on Twitter, scholars have developed alternatives for obtaining consent based on US federal regulations while ensuring research ethics and transparency. Kozinets (2012) has argued: “as a netnographer interacts *normally* in the online community or culture, that is, as she interacts as other members do on the site but also takes fieldnotes of her experiences, there is no need to gain informed consent for those interactions” (p. 151). Kozinets is discussing publically available spaces, like Twitter, where members of the community have an expectation of the public nature of their conversations. Later, he argues that in spaces like chat rooms and virtual worlds, where there is a direct, synchronous conversation taking place with the researcher, and with it some expectation of privacy, informed consent would be required. As would all online surveys.

In place of informed consent for netnography in public spaces like Twitter, Kozinets suggests using a separate web page linked from the primary researchers profile that “disclose[s] the research purposes of [the] netnography” (p. 147). He has “found dedicated research web pages to be a very helpful way to identify [himself] to online community members, inform community members about [his] research, contribute to the community by sharing information that might be of interest to them, and ask for interview participants” (p. 148). To inform Springsteen community members of the goals of the netnography, I will be creating such a web page (<http://springsteen.williamwolff.org>). It will include the goals of the study, my history as a Springsteen fan, links to my prior scholarship on Springsteen, a link to the online survey, and a space to ask questions about the study itself.

NOTE: *If the only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document and the research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects, you may use an alternative procedure for consent. (See Appendix B and C for more information)*

b) Will the research be conducted at a site other than Rowan institution?

Yes | No

If YES, list the institutions and provide letters from appropriate institutional official(s) with the authority to approve research at their institution (e.g. school principal, school superintendent, director of institution, IRB):

The netnography will be conducted online via the Twitter API. As stated in the Twitter “Developer Rules of the Road”: “Twitter maintains an open platform. . . .” “You may use the Twitter API and Twitter Content in connection with the products or services you provide (your “**Service**”) to search, display, analyze, retrieve, view, and submit information to or on Twitter” (<https://dev.twitter.com/terms/api-terms>). The survey will be conducted using Qualtrics. The interviews will be conducted via email, Skype, or GoogleHangout.

5. THE RESEARCH PROCEDURES:

a) Describe in non-scientific language exactly what you will be doing to, or with, your subjects.

Include in your description:

- The goal/s of the research
- The procedures to be followed
- The role of the Co-Investigator(s) / Co-Principal Investigator(s)

Please describe:

Goals of the Research

The goals of this study are three-fold: First, to learn more about the Springsteen fan community on Twitter. Second, to learn specifically about why Springsteen fans tweet the way they do. Third, to come to a better understanding of why people are Springsteen fans. They will be met using a combination of research methods: netnography (Kozinets, 2010), case study, active interviewing (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003; Holstein & Gubrium, 2003), and an online survey.

Background

The study of fan cultures has a rich interdisciplinary scholarly history (Jenkins, 1992, 2006, 2007; Hills, 2002; Gray et. al., 2007). The fan communities studied have ranged from *Star Trek* to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* to *World of Warcraft* players. Much scholarship has been written about Springsteen fans (Cavicchi, 1998; Hills, 2002; Randall, 2011) and, recently, interdisciplinary work has appeared considering his cultural legacy (Carman, 2000; Harde & Streight, 2010; Sawyers, 2004; Smith, 2002). In his ethnography of Springsteen concertgoers during the 1992 – 1993 World Tour, Cavicchi (1998) has described the complex and intimate relationship that fans have with Springsteen the human being, with Springsteen's music, and with one-another. Fandom, according to Cavicchi, is a community-driven activity with an expansive "social category, referring to a mode of participation with a long history in various cultural categories . . ." (p. 4). These categories include "writing and reading fanzines, participating in computer lists, attending concerts, [and] sharing Bruce stories . . ." (p. 194). The latest cultural space for fans of all media is Twitter. In *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture*, Jenkins (2006) wrote about the convergence of fan activities new media writing spaces. Recently, he argued that scholars of new media communities seem "to be traversing the same terrain fan studies traveled decades ago in response to the perceived passivity of mass media consumers" (p. 358).

Using Twitter's open application programming interface (API) search capabilities, scholars from diverse fields have been using mixed methods approaches to studying individuals and communities on Twitter. For example, Gerbaudo (2012) has studied how activists engage Twitter (and other social media) to organize and create a new kind of protest culture. Zappavigna (2011) has studied a "corpus of 45,000 tweets collected in the 24 hours after the announcement of Barak Obama's victory" to learn how language is being used to help build community. With the rise of studies in online spaces so, too, have research methodologies evolved to consider the complexities of issues relating to engagement with online communities, public / private information, and permissions to cite work (Kozinets, 2012; Markham & Baym, 2009; McKee & Porter, 2009). The name of this new methodology, netnography, can be defined as Kozinets (2010) places in the subheading of his book of that title: "doing ethnographic research online." The Association of Internet Researchers has created a document, "Ethical Decision-Making and Internet Research" and associated wiki, helps guide a researcher through the complexity of context-specific choices that researchers must make when conducting research in online spaces (see <http://ethics.aoir.org/>). This research will be conducted using the AoIR documents as a guide.

Procedures

Using an online survey, online ethnographic (netnographic), case study, and active interviewing methods, as well as grounded theory analysis, the study will involve 4 overlapping phases:

- 1) A netnographic study of Springsteen fans on Twitter.
- 2) Conduct an online 7-question survey of Springsteen fans.
- 3) Conduct follow-up interviews with fans using active interviewing methodologies.
- 4) Use grounded theory to analyze interview transcripts.

Parts 1 and 2 will continue until one month after the end of the Wrecking Ball tour (most likely by December, 2013). Parts 3 and 4 will continue until the end of 2014.

- b) Will you be carrying out procedures or asking questions that might disturb your subjects emotionally or produce stress or anxiety?**

Yes | No If YES, describe your plans and criteria for counseling such subjects:

c) Are you using a questionnaire, survey, and/or an interview as part of your procedure?

Yes | No If YES, submit a copy of the questionnaire(s) and/or interview questions.

I have included the online survey. Active interviewing discourages the use of specific interview questions. Rather, researchers should have an idea of the general theme(s) they wish to cover and are open to ideas from the participants (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003; Holstein & Gubrium, 2003). Netnography, like ethnography, does not involve specific interviews. Rather, it involves participation and engagement with a specific online community—in this case, publically on Twitter.

d) Are you using focus group discussions as a part of your procedure?

Yes | No If YES, submit a copy of the focus group guide.

e) Does your study involve deception of your subjects?

Yes | No

If YES, describe the deception, justify its need, and describe the procedure you will use to debrief your subjects. Submit a copy of the debriefing statement, which should include a statement of your willingness to allow subjects to withdraw from your study after debriefing and to remove from your files all records of their involvement:

f) Will this study involve the use of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens?

Yes | No

If YES, include authorization to access the data if not publicly available from an official with authority to provide such permission.

All data used is publically available via the Twitter API. As stated in the Twitter “Developer Rules of the Road”: “Twitter maintains an open platform. . . .” “You may use the Twitter API and Twitter Content in connection with the products or services you provide (your “**Service**”) to search, display, analyze, retrieve, view, and submit information to or on Twitter” (<https://dev.twitter.com/terms/api-terms>).

6. DATA STORAGE/DISPOSITION:

a) Will participants’ names be kept:

Confidential Anonymous Neither

(See Appendix B (Informed Consent) for definitions of these terms)

b) If participants’ names are to remain confidential how will confidentiality be maintained?

Please describe: Survey respondents’ real names and/or Twitter usernames will be converted to pseudonyms. Real names, Twitter usernames, and/or other identifiers (such as email addresses) will be stored in a separate secure location on the cloud storage space, Spideroak. Participants will be given the option of having their real name, Twitter username, both, or a pseudonym used for scholarly publication. They will have the right to change their mind at any time prior to scholarly publication.

c) What kinds of data will you use?

Check all that apply:

Paper (Hard copy)

Digital (Computerized) data

Audio/video recordings

- Lab specimens
- Other (please specify):

Describe how you will keep your data secure while conducting the research:

All data will be stored on a password protected area my home computer and backed up using the cloud storage space, Spideroak (<http://spideroak.com>).

d) Describe how you will ultimately secure, store, and dispose of your data (notes, drafts, lists of subjects, photographic records, tapes, computer disks, flash drives, etc.) **after you have completed your research** (e.g. shredding, burning) Please note that all research records must be maintained for **at least five (5) years after the completion of the research**, including consent forms, flyers, etc. **If you do not plan to destroy research data, please provide a justification for maintaining the data for an indefinite period of time and how you will ensure confidentiality:**

Please describe:

All data will be stored on a password protected area my home computer and backed up using the cloud storage space, Spideroak (<http://spideroak.com>). Survey data will be deleted from my home computer and Spideroak cloud storage. Those who wish to have their interviews preserved offline, will have them preserved offline. Those who wish to have them preserved in an online space, will have them preserved online. Those who wish to have their interviews discarded will have the interviews deleted from my home computer and Spideroak backup. Prior to their interviews, participants will have the option to choose if they want their material preserved, if they want it preserved anonymously, or if they want it deleted. Participants will also have the option of donating their interview to the Bruce Springsteen Collection archive at Monmouth University, West Long Branch, NJ. They will have the ability to change their decision at any time.

7. RISK/BENEFIT:

In three or four sentences, summarize the risk/benefit ratio of the proposed research, with regard to the human subjects, the risks to them, and the potential benefits to knowledge or society:

There is very little risk for participants. The information being discussed is not sensitive in nature, though it is possible that some people may become emotional in their discussion of Springsteen. The benefits are a greater understanding of what it means to be a fan, how and why people decide to compose as they do in public microblogging spaces, and the increasing role of social media in our lives.

8. COLLABORATION:

Does this research project involve the IRB approval of one or more participating institutions or organizations other than that of Rowan?

Yes | No If YES, list the institutions and submit copies of the related IRB approval notices.

Please list institutions:

Note: I will be asking respondents if they would like their 1500-character essay answer and/or their follow-up interview archived in the Bruce Springsteen Special Collection. The Special Collection “serves the research and informational needs of music fans, scholars, authors and others with a serious interest in Bruce Springsteen’s life and career.” The Special Collection will not have access to any transcripts or survey responses where permission has not been granted. The Special Collection will never know the names of those who wish to be kept anonymous. The Special Collection will alter the attribution association immediately or delete the file(s) permanently upon request from me if a participant changes their mind at any time. The collection is currently housed at Monmouth University. After composing the questions, I made contact with Bob Crane, Executive Director of The Special Collection to see if he would be open to archiving the answers and interviews when permission is given. He enthusiastically agreed and has provided a letter of support (attached). Neither Mr. Crane, nor anyone associated with The Special Collection or Monmouth University gave participated in the

creation of the questions, nor will they be involved in the data analysis. The goal is to create archival documents that future Springsteen scholars might be able to use.

9. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (OPTIONAL) (Attach a separate sheet if needed)

All related points in the Internet Research Guidelines have been addressed in the protocol and informed consent documents.

The survey will be available in multiple languages. Respondents will be able to select the language from a pulldown menu. I will use Google Translate to translate the survey into the other languages.

CERTIFICATIONS:

Rowan University maintains a Federal-wide Assurance (FWA) with the Office of Human Research Protection (OHRP), U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. This Assurance includes a requirement for all research staff working with human participants to receive training in ethical guidelines and regulations. "Research staff" is defined as persons who have direct and substantive involvement in proposing, performing, reviewing, or reporting research and includes students fulfilling these roles as well as their faculty advisors. Once training is complete with an overall score of 80 percent or higher, Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) certificates will generated automatically on-line to the Research Office.

To begin CITI training, go to <https://www.citiprogram.org/>. Click on "New User" to create an account and choose Rowan as your affiliation. On the second page, enter your Banner ID and place it in the space that says "Employee ID" to ensure accurate tracking. Once you are logged into the system, register for Human Subjects Research Training module in your area of expertise.

Note that if you have a current NIH certificate in Human Subjects training you may use it instead of the CITI training until it expires (after 3 years). At this time, the Research Office is not accepting an NIH training certificate that has a completion date after January 1, 2013, *unless* the researcher is not a Rowan University faculty, staff, student or other affiliate. All Rowan University faculty, staff, students or affiliates of Rowan University are expected to obtain a Human Subjects training certificate from the CITI training program.

Note also that if your research is externally funded, there may be additional training requirements of which the Research Office will inform you.

Researcher:

I certify that I am familiar with the ethical guidelines and regulations regarding the protection of human participants from research risks and will adhere to the policies and procedures of the Rowan University Institutional Review Board. I will ensure that all research staff working on the proposed project, who will have direct and substantive involvement in proposing, performing, reviewing, or reporting this research (including students fulfilling these roles), will complete IRB approved training. I will not initiate this research project until I receive written approval from the IRB. I agree to obtain informed consent of participants in this project if required by the IRB; to report to the IRB any unanticipated effects on participants which become apparent during the course or as a result of experimentation and the actions taken as a result; to cooperate with the IRB in the continuing review of this project; to obtain prior approval from the IRB before amending or altering the scope of the project or implementing changes in the approved consent form; and to maintain documentation of consent forms and progress reports for a minimum of three years after completion of the final report or longer if required by the sponsor or the institution. I further certify that I have completed training regarding human participant research ethics within the last three years as indicated below my signature.

Signature of Researcher: _____ Date: _____

Faculty Advisor (if Researcher is a student): I certify that I am familiar with the ethical guidelines and regulations regarding the protection of human participants from research risks. I further certify that I have completed training regarding human participant research ethics within the last three years as indicated below my signature (attach copy of your "Completion Certificate for Human Participant Protections Education for Research Teams" from the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative).

Signature of Faculty Advisor: _____ Date: _____

Doctoral Advisor (if Researcher is a doctoral student): Is this research to fulfill your doctoral requirement in the College of Education? Yes | No

If YES, please have the College of Education doctoral advisor sign the application:

Signature of Doctoral Advisor: _____ Date: _____

Step 5: Complete the checklist below.

INVESTIGATOR CHECKLIST

DIRECTIONS: *(Use NA if "not applicable")*

- Yes | NA Application typed or computer-generated, not hand written
- Yes | NA Identifying information complete
- Yes | NA Principal Investigator's signature on application
- Yes | NA Names of all investigators specified
- Yes | NA Summary in non-technical terms
- Yes | NA Risks and benefits specified
- Yes | NA Informed Consent form appended
- Yes | NA All instruments appended (e.g. questionnaires, standardized tests, interview schedules)
- Yes | NA Advertisement for recruitment of participants appended, if relevant
See <http://springsteen.williamwolff.org>
- Yes | NA Approval letter(s) from ALL relevant off-campus site(s) (e.g. school principal, other IRB's) appended
- Yes | NA If applicant is a STUDENT, advisor signature included
- Yes | NA Indicated that application needs "full review," "expedited review," or "expedited review with exemption."
- Yes | NA "Certifications" form for PI and Co-investigator/s completed and signed

Step 6: Submit an original and two copies to the Research Office, Bole Hall. Please send one (1) electronic copy of the completed original copy to Harriet Hartman at hartman@rowan.edu. If you have technical questions about your IRB application, you may send an e-mail to hartman@rowan.edu. If you have administrative questions, you may send an e-mail to heiser@rowan.edu or call 856-256-5150.

(Note: Appendices below are for informational purposes only. Appendices do not need to be part of the completed and signed application that is forwarded to the IRB and subsequently reviewed by the IRB. However, all attachments such as surveys, advertisements, etc. described above need to be included with the completed application forwarded for IRB review.)