Dear ma’am or sir,

We are conducting a study into the use of different audio and tactile display strategies for non-visual rendering of maps of interior spaces, for example public buildings and shopping malls. The intent of the study is to develop new technology that will enable greater independence for individuals who are blind or vision impaired.

If you agree to participate, this study will involve a single, approximately 3 hour visit to the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired at 397 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, VA.

We will first describe the study to you in some detail and give you the opportunity to provide your consent for participation. Participants will then use an Android tablet computer to explore maps of interior spaces, both with and without the benefit of tactile feedback. Participants will be asked to perform two activities using the system. The first is a Survey Knowledge Game that assesses the impact of tactile feedback on user success in finding objects on a map. The second is a Judgment of Direction task that assesses the impact of tactile feedback on acquiring useful knowledge about real-world spaces. All study activities will be administered by a Professional with the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired.

We are looking for participants over the age of 12 with a diagnosis of blindness, and with only light perception only in both eyes or total blindness. Those participants under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Participants must be able to use their index fingers to explore the tablet computer touch screen, be able to feel tactile feedback generated by the system; and be able to hear audio cues generated by the system. We also require that participants do not have prior familiarity with the interior layout of the Library Resource Center at the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired.

If you are interested, please reply to this email, or contact Peggy Fields at (804) 371-3140, Monday through Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Compensation will be $20 and reimbursement of transportation costs to and from the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired.

Peggy Fields

Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired

397 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, Virginia