

## Protocol research assistant at the Department of Cognitive Psychology

### Getting Started

1. Get the key of your room at the helpdesk at -1.
2. Get in, turn on the busy-light, and the lights in the room. Put outside the advertisement.
3. Start the experimenter computer. Check if the sounds on the computers are on and if they have an appropriate loudness.
4. Check SONA-SYSTEMS ([vu.sona-systems](http://vu.sona-systems)) to see when people signed themselves up for experiments.
5. Check EMS ([ems.psy.vu.nl](http://ems.psy.vu.nl)) for the up-to-date experiment file. Here, all the running experiments can be found, with the all the necessary information (nr of participants to run, E-prime file names, and additional study information).
6. Before the first participant comes in, do a round of flyering.
7. Because of some recent experience of people stealing stuff from the rooms, it is important to always lock the door when you leave!

### Running a participant

*Participants can either sign up for experiments through sona-systems, or just walk by*

1. In case of a walk-by participant choose an experiment that is of a suitable duration for the participant. Ask if the participant wants to be paid in credits or money. *Note: participants are required to be students at the VU. In doubt ask their student's card.*
2. First, check if the subject is already in the EMS database. If not, add him/her.
3. Let him/ her sign an informed consent if it is not included in the experiment.
4. If the subject wants to participate for money, let him/ her fill in the 'kwiteringslijst'. You can find it on (F://gezamenlijk) or the lab wiki.
5. Open the experiment (the \*.ebs file). Click Compile and then Run. (also check which number the file needs to get, and fill in any additional information when asked for; such as age, sex, and handedness of the participant. When needed to fill in personal information like last name; ask for permission of the participant).

6. If you have to run something with opensesame, start the program first and then look up the right experiment.
7. Session number is always 1
8. When you want to terminate press control-alt-shift in e-Prime, in opensesame you have to press Esc.
9. Explain the experiment to the participant. Always first take a look at the experiments yourself, to be able to explain them correctly. Also tell them to read the instructions before they begin.
10. If necessary, give them a Score Form and pen.
11. Wish good luck (if needed, remind them of the 'rules': no internet access and serious participation).
12. During the experiment you can check whether the participant is complying, and seriously participating in the experiment on the monitor in the other part of the room, by switching to the camera that is in the corresponding cabine.
13. Only open the doors, or let the participant open the door, in between blocks.
14. When the participant is finished check whether E-prime has made a \*.txt and a \*.edat file (For experiments from Martijn, there is usually no .txt file!)
15. In case of a runtime error, evaluate what could have been the reason, if you can't think of one, e-mail the researcher whose experiment has crashed, and explain what happened. Pay the participant for the time he has participated (not the whole duration of the experiment).
16. If you have to restart the experiment, do this with the same information (subject number etc.)
17. Provide the subjects with a debriefing when they finish the experiment.
18. In case of a problem: ask Yarik from the Helpdesk

### Experiments with Headphones

Plug them in the front of the computer (because of the time-frame). Plug the speaker out (if a speaker is present), and then the headphone in. Check the volume. Ask the experimenter for the right settings.

## **Pay the participant**

*Money:* Participants earn 8€/hour. Pay them for the duration of the experiment (for an experiment of 20 minutes, they'll get 3.00) (see the scheme in the lab). If a participant has ran several studies, just add up the amounts of the separate studies without counting (mandatory!) breaks between experiments.

Don't pay them before they completed the declaration form (on which the BSN number and signature are the most important!)

*Credits:* They'll earn 60 credits an hour (1 per minute).

When they signed up using a timeslot, you just grant them the credits by going to the corresponding timeslot in VU Sona Systems (also see the VU Sona Systems part below), else you can sign them up by hand:

1. Log in at [vu.sona-systems.com](http://vu.sona-systems.com) as Cogpsyproefleider
2. My Studies
3. Choose the right study, and click on Timeslots
4. Add a/multiple Timeslots
5. Fill in the date and time
6. Add this Timeslot
7. My Studies (again)
8. Click on the correct experiment
9. View/Administer Timeslots
10. Modify
11. Sign up either by last name or student number (the latter is preferred, because some names are very common)

Go to the timeslot again, and choose the number of credits you want to grant, and click grant credit.

Many experiments are not in Sona Systems. You can either create the experiment yourself in Sona, or use a similar available study when you have no time to create a new study. (Chris Olivers for example has ran about 20 attentional blink studies that are almost identical to the participant.)

## **VU Sona Systems**

Website: [vu.sona-systems.com](http://vu.sona-systems.com)

You can get the login data by asking pretty much anyone from the lab, e.g. the research assistant or Artem.

In general, keep Sona updated, else you get loads of e-mails of participants that want to participate in inactive studies. Add timeslots a week in advance.

Ask researchers for a short description of their experiment, to put in Sona.

## **Finances**

The subject money is provided by Nancy Teunissen.

1. You need to get a declaration form at the secretary of Cognitive Psychology.
2. Get the form signed by Jan Theeuwes/ Mieke Donk/ Chris Olivers and yourself. Fill in the amount you need (You should always be able to pay 200€ per week).
3. Bring the form to the administrative department of the financial administration (Nancy Theunissen, room 2f-69)
4. Usually, you now make an appointment with Nancy by sending her a short mail. This is a standard e-mail (available on the wiki) on which you have to fill in the right information. Also be in time with this, because he does not work every day as well.
5. Go to Nancy's office, which is in 2F-71 (four stairs up)
6. Sign the declaration form, to get a deposit. Make sure you have enough money to pay the subjects. I would say 100 euro's a day would be a good start.

## **No experiments running?**

E-mail the entire Cogpsy department (cogpsy\_medewerkers.fpp@vu.nl), and in no-time there will be new studies available!

## **Synctoy = BothSyncAllSub**

When there are new experiments added it is necessary to run the Synctoy before running a participant. The Synctoy is at the desktop of Cogpsyproefleider on the experimental computers, if you don't see it, you're probably logged on as Guest. (Shortcut to BothSyncAllSub: you have to fill in the password Aandacht!)

Usually, I ran Synctoy during the day (the researchers really like seeing new data coming in for their experiments). At the least you need to run Synctoy at the beginning and at the end of the day. It takes about 20 minutes, so do it on time!

This program synchronizes the F:\\ and D:\\ disks, and it works two ways. You'll get all the new files from upstairs, and at the same time the experimental data will be made available to the people upstairs.

### **Administration & Practical Info**

1. Keep track of the hours you make.
2. You can get the kwiteringslijsten, declaratieformulieren, desktop accessories etc. in the room of Barbara or online from the wiki.
3. Keep track of your incoming and outgoing money (the sum on the participant declaration forms is sufficient).
4. To recruit new/ more participants you regularly have to spread flyers throughout the VU buildings, at sites where a lot of people pass by. Examples of flyers are on F:\\Gezamenlijk\\Cogpsyproefleider.
5. You need to make reservations for the room you will be working in (K2F-71). This can be done through your Webmail, in Public Folders\\Agendas Labs. If the room is already occupied by somebody else on the days you would like to work, contact that person to see if you can arrange something.

I think these are the most important points. If you have any questions, you can mail me or Artem (or any of the other researchers).

Good luck!