I think the introduction to the proposal needs to make clear that the goal is to understand how to best exploit different online platforms for implementing behaviour economics experiments. There are two critical questions here: 1) how can these platforms be adapted to classic lab or field experiments; 2) what can we learn about the types of individuals who are likely to participate in these online experiments.

Make the point that online experiments have attractive causal inference features:

The interesting thing about online experiments is that because the

treatment is randomly assigned, one can often make a strong causal

inference from differences in responses to different treatments

without the need to control for a large number of confounding

variables. Clearly, that is an advantage when one is limited in the

number of questions that each individual answers.

We might think about the conventional lab or the conventional field experiment as a benchmark for designing powerful experiments in which random assignment is carefully controlled. This is something that CESS does and these can serve as the benchmark for understanding/evaluating online experiments –

First discuss the online platforms for conducting such experiments – GCS, crowd sourced subjects, opt-in online panel samples,

We think that one area of real potential for social scientific work is using GCS for survey experiments. Google consumer surveys (GCS) are a new method of quickly and inexpensively fielding survey questions to a sample of people on the Internet (in a targeted country). The innovative feature of this method (that makes it affordable: \$100.00 for 1000 respondents to a single question) is the use of a ``survey wall'' in which internet users who seek to consume premium content are asked to answer one (or under some conditions two) survey questions before they can access the premium content. Initial evaluations of the method have been positive (it was famously used to predict the outcome of the 2012 U.S. presidential election more accurately than most traditional polling organizations). However, important questions about the usefulness of this method (both in general and as it is implemented by Google) remain unanswered.

We have done an initial evaluation in the U.S. – here is what we found:

In our paper we explicate the details of this methodology and evaluate its usefulness for scholars of behavioral studies. Specifically, we (1) use survey experiments to evaluate the consequences of the survey wall for non-response and partial participation, (2) directly estimate the amount of measurement error in the ``implied demographics'' that Google uses in both reporting results and in building and weighting their sample, (3) access the consequences of this measurement error for the quality of the sample and the accuracy of estimated relationships that use them, (4) and compare results from this method (for a barrage of questions central to political behavior) to directly comparable benchmarks from other survey methods.

GCS have reached a point that social scientists want to see the critical assessment of GCS -- understanding exactly how it works and how useful it is as a tool for answering the important questions in the disciplines. In particular we will explore the following three questions with the study: (1) the usefulness of GCS at a platform for survey experiments, (2) how to best deal with DK responses in GCS, and (3) the implications of the ability of respondents to switch to another question once they have seen your question.

Then discuss briefly our intention to implement similar behavioural economics experiments on alternative online platforms for comparison purposes – again experimental design issues – compare results of these experiments; and understand the nature of respondents – how for example do they compare with GCS?

Then discuss the three types of experiments that we would focus on – these are the ones developed by Aki in his draft