Audience Polling Tools for Purdue Extension

Audience response tools help us gather valuable feedback that benefits the instructor and the learner. This resource will share some reasons we should use audience engagement tools in Extension and provides an overview of popular online tools to gather audience feedback.

Why Audience Engagement in Extension?

There are many reasons to use audience engagement tools in Extension programming. Instant feedback during a presentation is great, but **consider audience engagement as a continuum** that starts before participants arrive at an event. Think beyond simple polling and how an audience engagement platform can be used to teach and develop relationships with participants before, during and after an event.

Points of Audience Engagement		
Before	**During**	**After**
Figure out what your participants know about the topic before they arrive. Adjust your content based on this information and make your presentation more relevant. This is often called a “pre-test.”	**Determine if learners are actually learning.** Use the feedback to quickly adapt the lesson; either change the pace or review a topic already discussed. Additionally, use audience response tools to provide some stimulus variation to break up hour-long presentations.	**Evaluate the event** Send out a survey or poll to gather feedback about the event and/or see if participants learned anything, otherwise known as a “post-test.”



If possible, choose one platform that will fit the entire continuum. Create the “pre-test” to send out with registration confirmation or put it up as participants arrive. This is a chance to become familiar with the platform to make participation much easier and efficient during the event.

Audience Response Tool Considerations

Why are you using it?

- Don't use technology just to be flashy. Raising hands or pencil/paper also work.

Does it have the question type and capacity you need?

- Some platforms only have multiple choice while some have features like "game show" quiz options. Along with that, some systems limit how many questions you can ask or the number of responses you can collect depending on your account type (free vs. paid).

Does the event location have good wifi/cell signal?

- With few exceptions, all of these tools require you and the learners to be "online." If an audience response tool is integral to your presentation, check the connectivity of your presentation venue before you proceed. Also, consider how many people will be connecting to wifi to participate.

What is your backup plan for technology malfunction?

- It's bound to happen!

How easy is it for the learners to join or respond and what device do they need?

- Some platforms are as easy as visiting a site and entering a code while others are slightly more complicated. Additionally, Most all platforms require the ability to text or visit a website meaning learners will need a smartphone, tablet or laptop. If learners don't have the necessary device[1], can they share with a neighbor?

Do you need stats or responses after the event?

- Polling can be used to take attendance and gather valuable feedback about the quality of the presentation. Some systems don't let you download the data unless you upgrade.



Don't be afraid to use audience response tools during online meetings or trainings, as well. Polling and other engagement opportunities are great ways to keep your audience on track.

[1] Pew Research reports that 95% of Americans own a cell phone of some kind, with 77% of those owning a smartphone. But, as with all technology integration, always consider your audience and the objectives. www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/mobile/

What are some platforms to engage with audiences?

A few platforms are listed below. Each includes information about cost, pros/cons, and other details. Just like cars, appliances, and cell phones, there isn't one model that works for everyone. You will have to explore and experiment with each to decide what is best for you and your learners.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">PollEverywhere | polleverywhere.com
"Poll Everywhere transforms one-sided presentations into two-way conversations with the audience. This web-based audience response system lets you embed interactive activities directly into your presentation. The audience responds on the web or via SMS texting on their phones."</td></tr>
<tr><td>Maximum # responses:
40 (free higher ed plan; more if you upgrade)</td><td>Cost:
Free (sign up for higher ed plan); paid plans available and probably worth it if multiple people in your office will use it; as little as $10/mo if billed annually.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Question types available:
23 different choices such as: Multiple choice, Word cloud, Q&A, Clickable Image, Survey, Open-ended, Competitions, Icebreaker, Upvote, Leaderboard, Emotion Scale, Presentation Feedback, Assign Teams, Discussion, Short Answer, Bulletin board & more.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Pros
+ Very versatile with audience size/question type
+ Participants respond by mobile site or SMS
+ Can embed questions into PPT
+ Free higher ed upgrade allows 40 responses</td><td>Cons
- Need to upgrade for more than 40 participants
- Learners must have a cellphone or tablet/laptop to participate
- The user interface can be a bit intimidating for new users
- Have to upgrade to paid plan to get reports</td></tr>
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<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Direct Poll | directpoll.com
"Create and conduct polls in a minute. Use it in your flipped classroom, in your lecture or just to amaze your audience."</td></tr>
<tr><td>Maximum # responses: 500</td><td>Cost: Free</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Question types available:
Multiple choice</td></tr>
<tr><td>Pros
+ Very simple to use and allows up to 500 responses per poll.
+ No account creation necessary
+ Offers immediate results for the poll.</td><td>Cons
- Only offers multiple choice question type
- Since you don't create an account to create a poll you have to keep track of an admin link to access your poll.</td></tr>
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Sli.do | slido.com *"We enable users to crowdsource top questions to drive meaningful conversations, engage participants with live polls and capture valuable event data. We focus on simplicity. Both for meeting planners who can create an event in less than a minute, as well as for participants who can join via any device with a simple code."*	
Maximum # responses: 1000	**Cost:** Free; upgrades available ($75/yr gives you unlimited polls and a few more features)
Question types available: "Crowdsource" questions, Multiple choice, Open text, Word cloud, Rating, Survey (with upgrade). Also has a feature for 'ideas' and an agenda feature.	
Pros + Joining the poll is very easy + Makes managing questions easier with large audiences. + Analytics let you see how many people have responded and active users. + Switcher makes it very easy to switch between polls and presentations reducing awkward fumbling and downtime.	**Cons** - Free plan doesn't allow moderation - allows potentially inappropriate responses. - Really need to upgrade to use it at full potential

Google Q&A | slides.google.com *Presenters can start a live Q&A session with an audience during a presentation with Google Slides. You can present questions at any time, and people can ask questions from any device.*	
Maximum # responses: Unknown, but the more you have the harder it will be to respond/track.	**Cost:** Free feature of Google Slides
Question types available: Open-ended	
Pros + Easily receive feedback from audience. + Others can "upvote" comments so you see what's popular + Can be accessed on phone, tablet, laptop, desktop	**Cons** - Must use Google Slides - Only allows open-ended questions and response

Jamboard | jamboard.google.com "Unleash your team's creativity with Jamboard. Sketch your ideas whiteboard-style while benefiting from the access and connectivity of an interactive canvas. Drop images, add notes, and pull assets directly from the web while collaborating with team members from anywhere."	
Maximum # responses: 16 (number of participants at one time on one Jamboard)	**Cost:** Free (for the website version; you can buy a physical Jamboard for ~$5,000) https://gsuite.google.com/products/jamboard/
Pros + Allows for higher level thinking and interaction; beyond true/false or multiple choice + Can draw pictures or add sticky notes	**Cons** - Allows for potentially inappropriate responses - Somewhat difficult to manipulate on smartphones

Mentimeter | mentimeter.com *Mentimeter is an easy-to-use presentation software used by more than 25 million people. With Mentimeter you can create fun and interactive presentations. We help you make your events, presentations, lectures, and workshops innovative and memorable.*	
Maximum # responses: Unlimited	**Cost:** Free; educational upgrades available for as little as $7/mo www.mentimeter.com/plans/education
Question types available Multiple choice, Image Choice, Word Cloud, Scales, Open-Ended, 100 Points, 2 by 2 Matrix, Who will win?, Q&A, Quick Form. Visit mentimeter.com/app/templates	
Pros + Offers "presenter pace" or "audience pace" + Tons of templates and ideas for how to use it + Easy to join polls	**Cons** - Free plan limits to **two questions** per presentation and 5 quizzes per presentation.

Other Platforms With Potential

Crowdpurr.com

If you're an HQ Trivia fan, this platform offers the opportunity to create a customized "CPQ Trivia" game. Might be a great way to engage with new audiences!

Glisser.com

This platform has easy integration and unlimited responses. Very similar to others mentioned above but the unlimited responses makes it valuable.

Umu.com

Create "microlearning" sessions that include pre-tests, content, and post-tests/evaluations.

Conclusion

Audience response tools can be just as valuable for participants in Extension programs as they can be for the Extension professional. Use audience response tools as a continuum to connect with your participants before, during and after. During the presentation is the most common time to use these tools to take polls to gather feedback from participants or to take your content to the next level with collaboration between participants. Select the tool that works best for your situation and practice with it before you use it. And, once you find a tool that does *or doesn't* work, share it with your colleagues!

Additional Resources

Purdue Extension Ed Tech Blog
puext.in/edtech

Formative vs summative assessment
cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/basics/formative-summative.html

Instant Feedback From Your Audience
www.presentation-guru.com/how-to-get-instant-feedback-from-your-audience/