



GLOBAL WATER FUTURES

Using live polling to support an interactive workshop

Based on positive feedback after the Knowledge Mobilization workshop during the 1st Annual Global Water Futures Science Meeting, and a high level of interest in using live polling to support other workshops and project meetings, we have assembled this guide to assist you in setting up your own live polling session.

How live polling works

Using simple, user-friendly smartphone and tablet technology, you can create a fun, interactive session that allows conference, workshop or meeting attendees participate in the discussion, contribute data for a research project, or give evaluation feedback.

No signing in or creating an account is necessary, a text-in number or webpage visit and confirmation allows participants to register easily and quickly to play along.

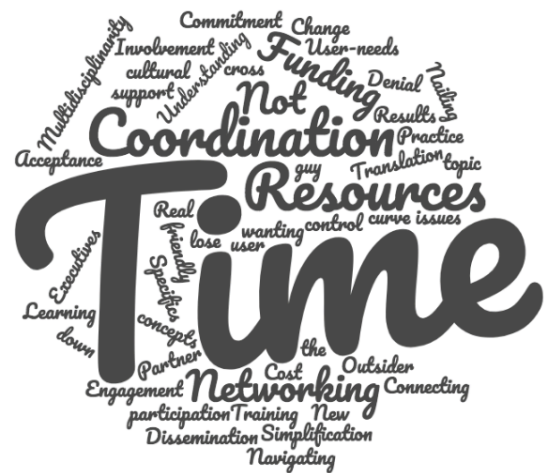
Once a live polling session is set up, active, and participants registered, questions can be asked in multiple formats (word cloud, multiple choice, open-ended, etc.). Results based on text or online responses aggregate on the overhead screen, providing a live feed of the data coming in from the audience.

How to set up live polling for your own use

After some research on live-polling technology options, Poll Everywhere is the currently most user-friendly platform available. If you plan to use Poll Everywhere with an audience of more than 25 individuals, you will need to purchase a monthly subscription.

<https://www.polleverywhere.com>

Poll Everywhere is very easy to learn and use, but you will have to spend some time playing with its functionality. If you have a student or young professional who can assist, they are likely able to optimize its effectiveness for you. After getting familiar with the platform, here are a few basics that we learned that might be helpful



Creating/Editing a poll:

Create and edit your poll in the website viewer. After you have created the poll and the questions within it, you will switch to using Powerpoint to deliver the poll, and a smartphone or tablet to participate in the poll.

Helpful hints:

- To edit a question's content and settings, click "Edit" or the title of the question.
- When editing a question, you can change the text but not the question format.
- To edit the way a question forms as a visual on the slides (font, colours, graphical form, etc.), use the paintbrush icon in the upper right corner of the poll question page.
- You cannot change the question format after you have created the question. You will have to create a new question and delete the old one.
- Some question formats are compatible only with online use and not text messaging, which means your participants will have visit the Poll Everywhere website link on your slide to answer the question. To find out which formats are compatible with online use only, create a question and the "How people can respond" menu will list the available question response types.

Exporting the poll to a slidedeck for presenting:

Before you can go live with an audience, you must set up your web browser account and be able to connect with the Powerpoint program. Download the computer app from the webpage for Mac or PC to embed polls in your slides. Log in to your account through the app.

Helpful hints:

- On a Mac, you can select the slides you want in the app and then click "Insert activities," which will export them to a new .ppt document.
- On a PC, you have to go to the webpage "Polls" home, select all polls you want to export, and then click "Download"> "Slides" which will download them to a new .ppt document.
- Powerpoint slides that are copy/pasted from one Powerpoint slideshow to another will work fine; the web browser account and the Powerpoint deck 'speak' to each other and will stay connected as long as the poll is active.
- Slides that are duplicated in a presentation will show answers from the first polled slide on the repeated poll slide.

Before the day of the presentation:

It's always a good idea to be prepared when using new technology for the first time. Walk through the slidedeck to ensure that the poll appears the way you intended. Gather some students or friends and test the audience participation by having them register to participate and actually answer the polling questions.

Helpful hints:

- If you've tested the poll and want to clear responses before going live with an audience, go to Polls > [question you want to clear] and click the fifth icon in the upper right corner that looks like a file folder.

Day of the presentation:

If you are presenting the live polling in a venue that you are not familiar with, it is a good idea to get there early to download the app you'll need for the local computer and slideshow to connect with your web browser account. You may need some extra time to get administrative access on the local computer, or to troubleshoot tech issues.

Helpful hints

- Ensure you have an internet connection so you can log into the Poll Everywhere website and download the app.
- Make sure the local computer doesn't need any administrative authority to download the app. If it does, you'll need to seek that authority out for permission.
- Download the Poll Everywhere app by logging in to your account on the Poll Everywhere website. Along the left side of the screen under "Polls" there will be a **Download the app** heading. Click on PowerPoint and then download according to the instructions. It will automatically ask for your login when you open your PowerPoint presentation on a PC and will show a login page when you click the icon on a Mac.
- Ensure that you have cellular reception in the venue; this will be critical for the audience to participate via text.
- Clarify with the audience that they will only need to join the polling by texting into the given number once, not before every question is asked.
- If you've set a countdown timer for each question posed, it will run and then lock the presentation to further answers. Pause the timer by clicking the pause button on the slide if you want to give the audience more time to respond. If the timer runs out and you want to reset it, go back to the previous slide and then return to the previously locked slide. Be careful, this seems finicky and could lock the poll from responses.
- As part of your introduction to the live polling, it's a good idea to ask a test question— something fun and easy to answer that gives the audience a chance to get registered to participate and ensure the responses are being received to the slide.

NOTE: Don't forget to cancel your monthly subscription after use, otherwise you'll incur charges on a monthly basis!

For further assistance please contact Stephanie Merrill, Knowledge Mobilization Specialist, University of Saskatchewan: stephanie.merrill@usask.ca; 306-966-5807

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