

THE SOCIAL PROCESS TRACING ENVIRONMENT

Documentation and User Manual

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talkingpoliticsresearch.net

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Building the Main Components of a SPTE Study

In this section, we provide an overview of how to use the Talking Politics Research platform to design and carry out a SPTE study. This section focuses on the platform's capabilities; for specific instructions on programming these features in your study, see the Researcher Dashboard section below.

To see a brief example of a SPTE study built on Talking Politics, below is a link to a video (approximately 2 minutes) of a study from a subject's perspective. (Note that this video is not meant to show you all the capabilities, but rather provide a quick demonstration.)

[SPTE.mp4](#)

The Flow of SPTE Experiments

As a reminder, the typical components of a SPTE design are the following:

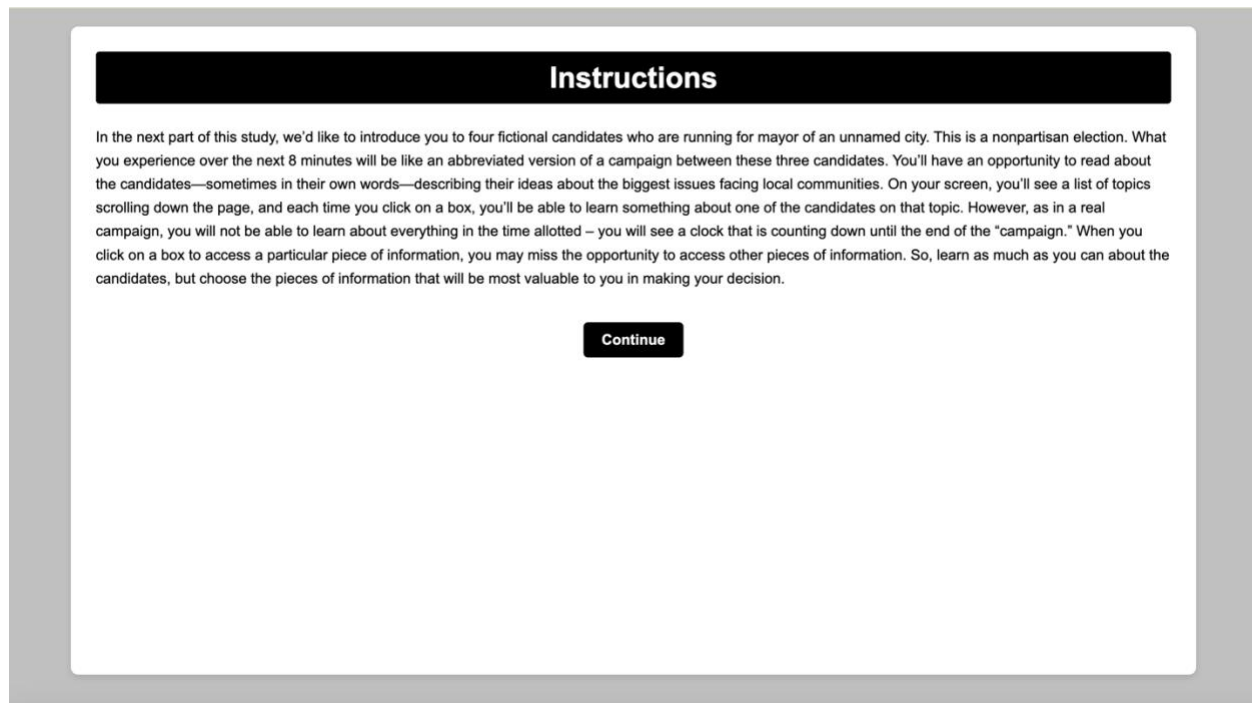
Introduction and Consenting
Pre-Test
Interaction with Information Board
Mid-Test
Discussion Session
Post-Test and Debriefing

In the remainder of this section, we discuss how the Talking Politics platform enables (1) the creation of an information board; (2) the seamless integration of pre-test, mid-test, and post-test questionnaires, and (3) the use of a "Pause" page to control the flow of the study during the discussion session component.

Information Board Instructions Page

The first central component of a SPTE design is a scrolling information board, where subjects learn about candidates (or other alternatives). Prior to beginning this part of the study (see Figure 1), researchers can program an instructions page where subjects read a brief description of the election scenario and/or receive brief instructions on interacting with the information board. (In some cases, researchers may prefer to also explain these instructions to subjects and/or provide a "training" or practice scenario. To do so the latter, researchers can create a second, training scenario on Talking Politics and provide a separate link to it for subjects.

Figure 1: Example Instructions Page



Information Board: Main View

After reading the instructions page, subjects are directed to the Information Board, where subjects can click on individual boxes to learn about candidates (or other alternatives) over the course of a “campaign.” Researchers select the length of the campaign (from 1 to 20 minutes), which is the amount of time subjects interact with the board; the countdown time at the bottom of the information board provides this information to subjects.

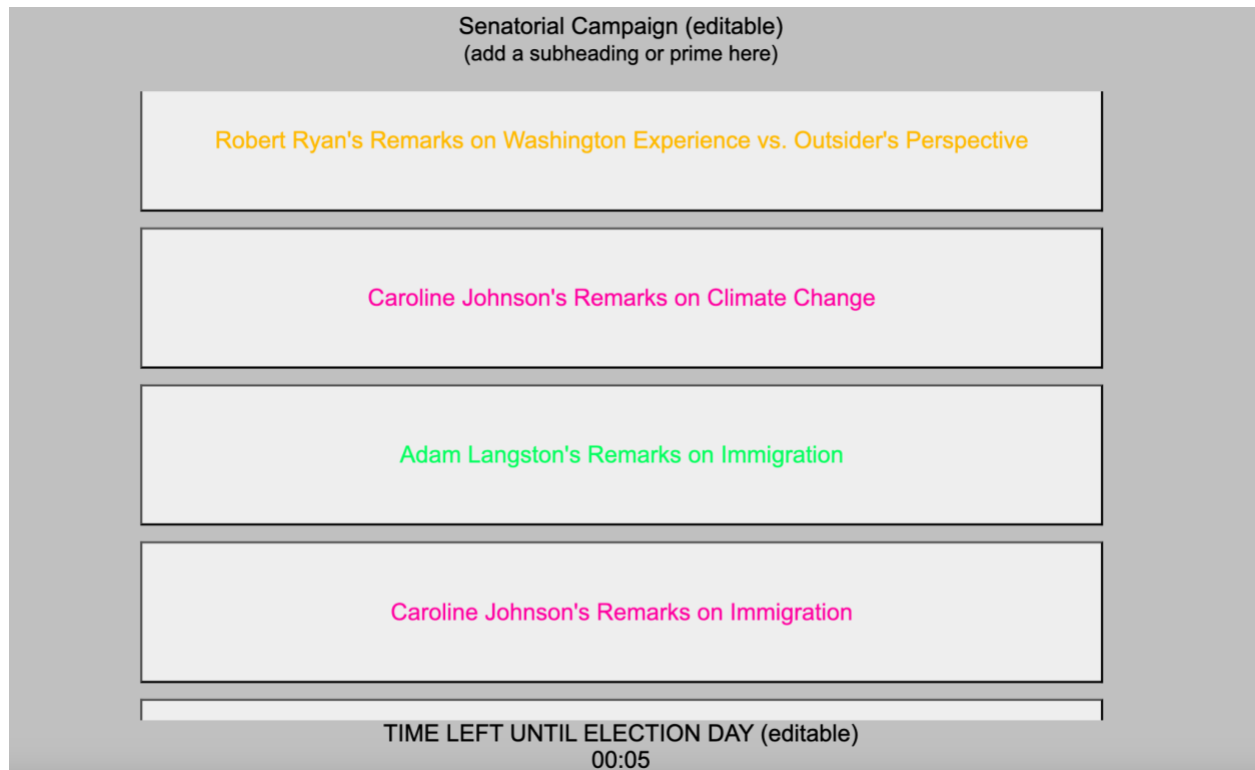
Figure 2 shows a still shot of one such information board, illustrating the features that can be edited by researchers. The board contains a main heading (here “Senatorial Campaign”), a subheading (or you can leave it blank), and a Footer (here “Time Left Until Election Day”). These headings and footers can remind subjects about key features of the scenario and/or provide experimental conditions or primes.

Several other features of the information board are also editable. The text on the scrolling boxes can be any color the researchers choose, and can be either a single color or can be color-coded to correspond to each candidate (or alternative).

Rather than a fixed campaign length, researchers can allow subjects to click a “Vote Now” button, allowing the subject to decide whether to continue interacting with the

board. (If the subject clicks the Vote Now button, the platform records the time and the subject moves onto the next stage of the study.)

Figure 2: Still Shot of Example Information Board



The text on the information board boxes (as well as the detailed information “inside” the boxes—see Information Board: Item View below) is also fully editable, and is done by uploading a spreadsheet file to the platform (best for thinking through you’re your candidate X attribute matrix) or a user-friendly content editor the dashboard. We also provide several sample information board content sets (e.g., candidates, issues positions, and biographical information) that researchers can use verbatim or edit. These are available as a Google Sheet that can be uploaded on through the dashboard. Researchers can also create their own content sets from scratch. Content uploaded through a spreadsheet can be edited later through the dashboard’s content editor.

Researchers can collect and download a variety of metadata regarding each subject’s interaction with the information board, including when the subject looked at each item, how long they looked at each item, and how many total items they viewed.

Information Board: Item View

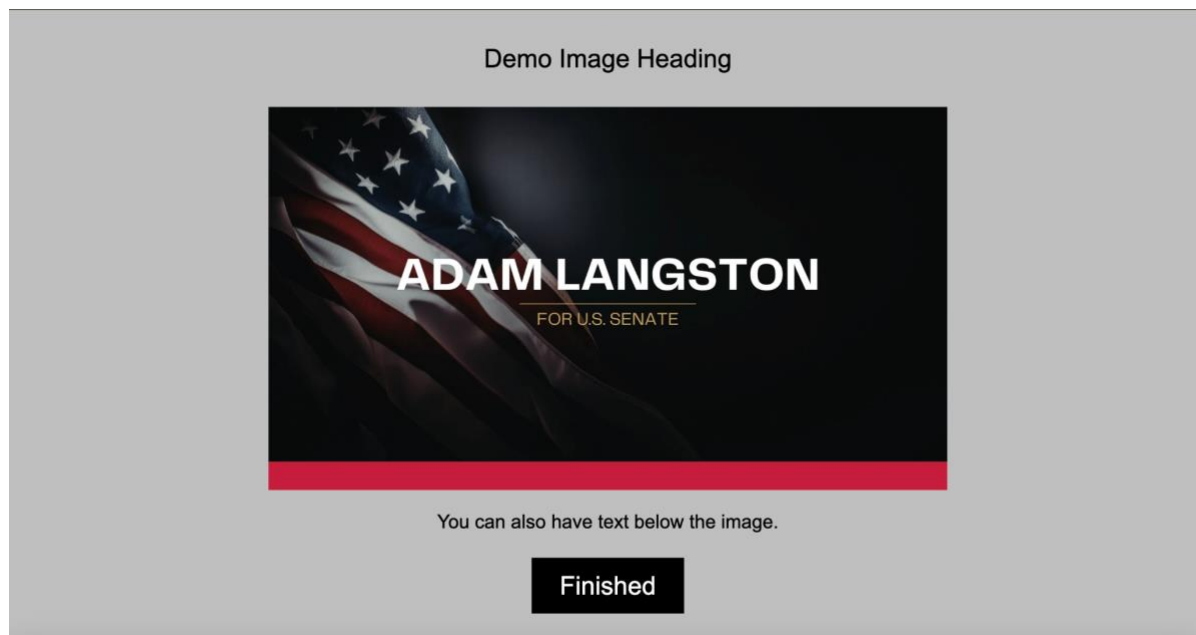
When subjects click on an item on the information board, a pop-up “Item View” appears on the screen (see Figure 3 for an example), providing the subject with information that corresponds to the label on the information board box they clicked on. That item remains on the screen until the subject selects “Finished,” after which they are returned to the information board (which will have continued scrolling behind the scenes in the interim).

While the default item type is a plain text item, the platform supports the use of images and videos as item content. Please note that with video, many browsers will not let videos automatically play. The respondent will have to click the play button. The platform keeps track of when the user clicks play and how long they watched the video it as part of one of the datasets you can download (See Downloading Data and Codebook below).

Figure 3: Image of an Individual Information Item (Text)



Figure 4: Image of an Individual Information Item (Image)



Survey Pages

As a reminder, in the typical SPTE study, there are three opportunities to ask questions to subjects: prior to the interaction with the information board (“pre-test”), after the information board but prior to the discussion session (“mid-test”) and after the discussion session (“post-test”). The Talking Politics platform allows researchers to program these surveys directly on the platform (see Edit a Survey or Tool).

Talking Politics allows you to integrate surveys for all three sections of the study. For researchers who don’t need to pose questions at all three of these stages, each stage can be enabled or disabled. Our survey editor makes it easy for researchers to add questions to a survey, with multiple question types to select from. Important for the SPTE is a name generator question type, which is a special question type on the survey editing page. We also allow researchers to add page breaks and do simple branching questions. In the typical SPTE, the researcher might begin with a set of demographic questions and gather other background information about the survey participants.

Figure 5a: Example Pre-Test Survey Questions

Thank you again for participating in the study. To start, we would like to ask you some questions about yourself. Remember, your responses to the questions are confidential, and will never be presented with identifying information or characteristics.

Q1

What is your gender identity?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Decline to Indicate

Q2

What is your racial or ethnic background? (Select all the apply)

- ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
- ☐ Asian or Pacific Islander
- ☐ Black/African American
- ☐ Hispanic/Latino
- ☐ White/Caucasian
- ☐ Mixed Race/Other
- ☐ Decline to indicate

Back **Next**

Figure 5b: Example Pre-Test Survey Questions

Q4

Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a...?

- ☐ Democrat
- ☐ Republican
- ☒ Independent
- ☐ Decline to Indicate

Back **Next**

Figure 5c: Example Pre-Test Survey Questions

For each of the following individuals, please name, to the best of your ability, the public office or position held by each person:

Q9

Hakeem Jeffries

Q10

Amy Coney Barrett

For the mid-test, a researcher may want to ask participants to cast a vote or rank candidates. They may also want to gauge the confidence of the participant. Talking Politics survey editor comes with several commonly used question types that can be used after the interaction with the information board, but prior to the discussion session. For example, subjects might be asked to choose their most preferred candidate, provide open-ended answers about things they learned, or answer closed-ended “quiz” questions about what they learned. Figure 6 provides an example of a page of typical mid-test questions where subjects ranked the candidates and then rated their confidence on a 0-10 scale.

Figure 6: Example Page of Mid-Test Survey Questions

Q1

Rank the candidates:

Item	Rank (1 = highest)
Candidate 1	2
Candidate 2	3
Candidate 3	1

Q2

On a scale from 0 to 10 with 10 meaning very confident and 0 meaning not at all confident, how confident are you in your ranking above?

4

No at all Confident Very Confident

Back Next

For the post-test, available question types allow researchers to measure subjects' perceptions of the group discussion (e.g., the discussion's positive or hostile tone). Second, we provide a "name generator"-style question that allows subjects to evaluate their peers in the group discussion (e.g., in terms of perceived agreement or expertise for example). Third, researchers can include questions that mirror the mid-test questions (e.g., candidate choice) allowing for a pre/post design with which the impacts of the group discussion can be gauged. We also provide an option for researchers to create a debriefing page at the end of the study. Figure 7a provides an example of a name generator question and Figure 7b show how the names are piped to future network batter questions.

Figure 7a: Example Name Generator Question

Thinking now about the individuals in your group, please write the names of your group members at the top of the three columns below. We would like to ask you several questions about each of them.

If you had only three members in your discussion group, please leave the third column blank. If you were in a group of five persons, please select the first three members of your group who come to mind.

Group Member 1	Group Member 2	Group Member 3
Maria	Adam	Sam

Back **Next**

Figure 7b: Names Piped to Radio Questions

How knowledgeable would you say each person below is about the candidates?

Maria	Adam	Sam
☒ Very knowledgeable ☐ Somewhat knowledgeable ☐ Not at all knowledgeable	☐ Very knowledgeable ☒ Somewhat knowledgeable ☐ Not at all knowledgeable	☒ Very knowledgeable ☐ Somewhat knowledgeable ☐ Not at all knowledgeable

Back **Next**

Transitioning from Information Board to Discussion

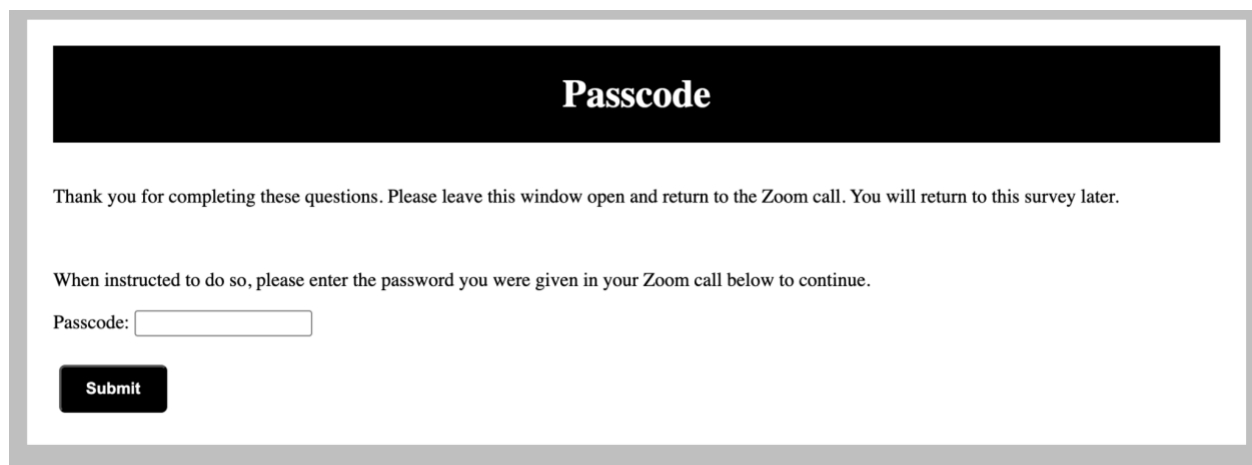
The Talking Politics platform allows for data collection involving the pre-test, information board, mid-test, and post-test. However, Talking Politics does not provide a platform for hosting the

discussion sessions themselves; the discussion sessions can be held in person, on a Zoom (or other videoconferencing call), or other solutions created by researchers. In some cases, researchers may also plan to observe or record these discussion sessions.

To integrate these components with the data collection on Talking Politics, any strategy that allows the researcher to match a subject ID on Talking Politics to an ID matched to discussion groups should suffice. For example, one could ask subjects to use a pseudonym as a Zoom screen name, have subjects enter that same pseudonym at some point in the survey, and use those screen names to create discussion groups and assign subjects to those groups.

However, one important feature on Talking Politics helps control the study flow as studies transition from the information board component to the discussion session: the Pause page. A pause page that requires a simple passcode is a useful tool to help run SPTs. Subjects have different pacing during surveys, but in most cases, researchers will want all discussion sessions to begin at the same time. The Pause page stops subjects after the mid-test and informs them of what will happen next in the study, while giving others time to catch up. Most importantly, it prevents subjects from continuing to the post-test before completing the discussion session. On the other hand, it simplifies the process for both researchers and subjects by allowing subjects to return to the same URL after completing the discussion session, even if they accidentally closed their browser. A researcher can enable a Pause page and set their own passcode on the Dashboard. Figure 8 illustrates an example of the Pause page.

Figure 8: Illustration of Pause Page

The image shows a web interface for a 'Pause Page'. At the top, there is a black rectangular banner with the word 'Passcode' in white, bold, sans-serif font. Below this banner, the text reads: 'Thank you for completing these questions. Please leave this window open and return to the Zoom call. You will return to this survey later.' Further down, it says: 'When instructed to do so, please enter the password you were given in your Zoom call below to continue.' Below this text is a label 'Passcode:' followed by a white rectangular input field with a thin black border. At the bottom left of the form area is a black rectangular button with the word 'Submit' in white, bold, sans-serif font. The entire form is enclosed in a light gray border.

Participant Side Technical Notes

Session and Browser Cookies

This site uses session and browser cookies to link participants with their data, some help with site navigation on the researcher side, and others help with some of the functionality of the

surveys and information board. These are strictly necessary for the site to function. Since they are necessary, they are compliant with GDPR and other website/browser cookie regulations.

When a Participant Accidentally Closes a Browser

If a participant accidentally closes the browser, they should reopen their browser (do not switch browsers) and navigate to the Study URL that the researcher provided them at the beginning of the study. The study keeps track of which stage the participant is in (e.g., pre-survey, information board, post-survey) and will direct them to the beginning of that stage of the study. If the subject had previously answered questions, the questions will be saved and they will be able to quickly advanced to their next set of items. Some browsers, when in private browsing mode, may delete cookies, in which case the participant may have to start from the very beginning. (Often this will disallow the subject from continuing in the study, so researchers should provide instructions to anticipate and avoid this happening.)

Information Board “Safety” Features

The information board has several features into protect the integrity of the research process and data collection. For example, if a participant refreshes their browser in the middle of a session on the information board, they will see the same set of boxes and time on the countdown timer. If they navigate to another browser tab, the scrolling boxes and timer should stop, which forces participants to stay on this site. It will also only let them complete the information board one time.

Researcher Dashboard

In this section, we provide more specific and technical details on creating a SPTE study on Talking Politics. To begin creating a study, a researcher must have a login. Once logged into an account, the Researcher Dashboard serves as the main page from which a study is created.

A researcher will begin by clicking the “New Project” button. All the researcher needs to do to start a project is to give it a name. Once the initial project is created, researchers will have access to a number of items to design and configure their study. These include (but are not limited to) changing colors on the information board, adding surveys, adding images to the items, and downloading the datafiles after you run your study. We discuss each of these features individually below.

Dashboard Main Screen

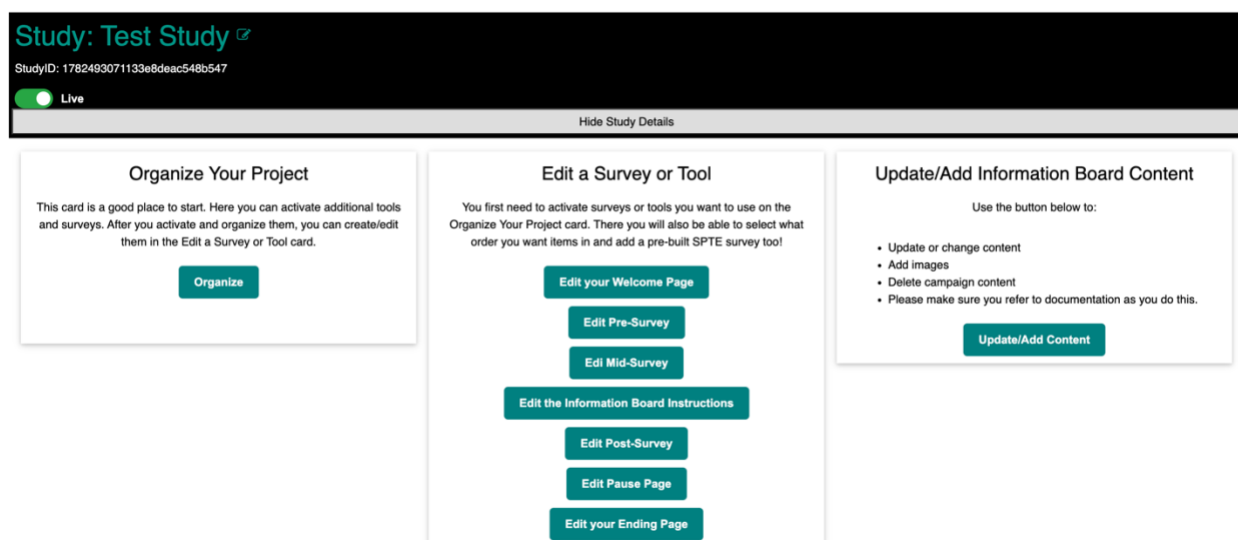
Figure 9: Dashboard Page View illustrates the dashboard view for a single SPTE study. Each “card” on the dashboard allows researchers to customize a single component of the study.

At the top left corner of the dashboard, you can find your study's name and ID. You can edit the name of your study by clicking the pencil icon next to your study name. The study name is only for the researchers to identify their studies on the dashboard. Below the study name is your unique studyID. This is the key identifier used by this platform for your study. It will appear in the URL that you give your participants and you will also find this studyID in the data you download. If you combine datasets across studies, your studyID will let you know which study a subject completed.

Below the studyID is a toggle button that makes your study "Live" for people to take or "Inactive" when you are developing the study or finished using it. When inactive, anyone who tries to navigate to your study will get a generic message: "This study is not open for respondents at this time. If you have questions about the status of this study, please reach out to your research contact."

Towards the bottom of the Dashboard, there is a button that allows you to add more studies. Finally, if you want to create experimental manipulations, there is a button at the bottom that allows you to link studies (see Project Linker (Experimental Manipulations) below). We now turn to discussing each of the features that can be changed using the various buttons on the Dashboard page:

Figure 9: Dashboard Page View



Campaign Overview

Length of Campaign 1:00
Number of Candidates: 3
Number of Attributes: 14

[Change the Length of Campaign](#)

Headings and Footers

Heading: Main heading
Subheading: nothing here
Footer: Time
Vote Now Button: Enabled
Vote Now Time: 0:30

[Change Headings on the DPTE](#)

[Update Vote Now Button](#)

Weights

First Half of Campaign

- Issues: 100%
- Candidate Traits: 0%
- Political Party: 0%
- Horse race: 0%

Second Half of Campaign

- Issues: 100%
- Candidate Traits: 0%
- Political Party: 0%
- Horse race: 0%

Note: If you don't have one of the attribute categories, set it to 0.

[Change Campaign Weights](#)

Information Board Colors

- Candidate 1 (Color: #ff0000)
- Candidate 2 (Color: #0400ff)
- Candidate 3 (Color: #00ff04)

[Change Colors](#)

Edit Popups

Use the button below to:

- Add a popup that everyone is exposed to.
- You can set specific time or select that each person is exposed to this at a random time.

[Add a Popup](#)

Download Data

Here you can download survey or DPTE summary data. If you are merging data with a Qualtrics survey, download this file and then merge on participantid.

[Compute Info Search Variables](#)

[Download CSV File](#)

Click on the button below to download a log file of the boxes your participants clicked on during their DPTE experience.

[Download Info Board Participant Interaction Log](#)

Click on the button below to download a copy of the labeled boxes that were available for each participant during the DPTE. Since the labeled boxes are randomized, this will be different for each participant.

[Download Information Board Content Log](#)

[Download Codebook](#)

URL for your Study

<http://dev.talkingpoliticsresearch.net/SPTE/index.php?study=1782493071133e8deac548b547>

[Copy URL](#)

The SPTE is designed so that a participant can only complete it once. After stage (each item you activated on the Organize card is a stage) is complete, the program will automatically forward participants to the correct stage. If you are trying to test your survey, you will need to clear our the survey session if you want to start at the beginning again. Use the button below to clear your SPTE session.

[Clear SPTE Sessions](#)

Delete this Study

Click on the button below to delete the entire project or only the data you collected. You will have to confirm the deletion on the next page. It's usually a good idea to delete the data right before you project goes live.

[Delete All Content with this Project](#)

[Only Delete the Data](#)

Creation Date

Last Updated On: 2026-06-26 16:57:51

This campaign is set to be deleted on 2026-12-26

Study : Add a New Project Below

You have space for another project. Click the button below to get started on a new project.

[New Project](#)

Linked Projects

Linking projects permits you to have experimental manipulations. You can manipulate:

- Survey questions or other text inside surveys
- DTPE campaign content.
- DPTE headings, color, or time.
- If you created the content inside a project above, it can be turned into an experimental condition.

How it works:

- Create a project for each experimental manipulation
- Click on the button below and follow the instructions to create a group of linked projects.
- The platform generates a url for the grouped studies.
- The url for the grouped studies will randomly assign respondents to studies in the designated group.

To create a group of linked projects, click the button below.

Link Projects

Organizing Your Study

This page allows the researchers to enable or disable the key data collection elements of the study. For a standard SPTE study, all boxes should be selected except for the Qualtrics box. Researchers who wish to conduct a traditional one-stage DPTE study can select just the pre-test, information board, and post-test. Other variations on the SPTE design might lead researchers to exclude one of the other questionnaires (which can be done by unchecking boxes), or to reorder the components, which can be done by dragging the box to the desired position. (see Figure 10)

For more complex surveys, researchers can link the study to Qualtrics by checking the Qualtrics box. (See the Using Qualtrics with Talking Politics Research)

Once you check a box (e.g., the Pre-Test) and click on “Save Order” change, it will then appear on your Dashboard in the card for Edit a Survey or Tool. By default, all components are checked and active in your study except for Qualtrics.

Figure 10: Organizing Your Study Page

Organize Your Project

Use the form below to select options for your project and reorder them. Click Save when done.

Project Options

☒  Pre-Test: Customizable survey for questions subjects answer prior to interacting with information board.

☒  Information Board Instructions: Customizable instructions/scenario shown to participants just before they enter the information board.

☒  Information Board: Customizable Dynamic Process Tracing Environment where you can simulate a campaign.

☒  Mid-Test: Customizable survey for questions subjects answer after interacting with information board but prior to discussion sessions.

☒  Pause/Passcode Page: Customizable page where subjects are instructed to wait after completing mid-test.

☒  Post-Test: Customizable survey for questions subjects answer after discussion sessions.

☐  Qualtrics: Enabling this option will send the survey participant to your Qualtrics survey at the time of your choosing. (See User Guide for complete instructions.)

Save Order

Edit a Survey or Tool

As a reminder, the Dashboard will have a button under the “Edit a Survey or Tool” card for each survey/tool then researcher enabled under “Organize Your Project.” By default, your study will also have a “Welcome” page and an “Ending” page, at the beginning and end of your study, respectively.

Text Pages

Welcome, Instructions, and Ending Pages: For these pages, the researcher can provide a title and body text to provide information to the subjects.

Pause Page: In addition to providing information to subjects, researchers can set a password that allows subjects to continue. This is typically provided to subjects in study sessions following the discussion component of the study. We recommend a short password that is easy for participants to enter.

Surveys

When enabled, there will be a button to edit at Pre-Test, Mid-Test, and Post-Test on the dashboard. The researcher can click on the button corresponding to the survey they wish to edit (see Figure 12 for one example a survey editing page.)

Once inside the survey editor, click on Add a Question to Page 1 (see Figure 11). The question editor open at the bottom of the page to construct the question and add the question to the page. To add pages to a survey, click Add New Page After This. Researchers can reorder questions and move questions between pages by clicking on the three horizontal lines in the upper left of each question and dragging and dropping the question to the desired location (see Figure 12) To delete a question, click on the trashcan next to the question's name. To delete a page, click on the Delete Page button on the top right of the survey page. After researchers construct questions, they can be edited later by clicking on the pencil icon next to the survey name. This will open the survey editor for that question.

Figure 11: Blank Survey

Edit Pre-Test Survey Questions

The screenshot displays the 'Edit Pre-Test Survey Questions' interface. At the top, a status bar indicates 'Total Questions: 0'. Below this, a vertical sidebar on the left is labeled 'Page 1'. The main content area is a large dashed box containing the text: 'No questions yet. Click "Add Question" below to get started!'. At the bottom of the interface, there are two buttons: a teal button labeled '+ Add Question to Page 1' and a black button labeled '+ Add New Page After This'.

Figure 12: Example Survey Page

Page 1 Delete Page

instructions1  

Type: Html | Order: 1

Question:
<h3>Thank you again for participating in the study. To start, we would like to ask you some questions about yourself. Remember, your responses to the questions are confidential, and will never be presented with identifying information or characteristics. </h3>

Q2  

Type: Radio | Order: 2

Question:
What is your gender identity?

- Female
- Male
- Other

Options: • Decline to Indicate

Figure 13: Edit a Survey Question

Total Questions: 0

+ Add Question to Page 1

Add New Page After This

Add Question to Page 1

Question Name / ID * (letters, numbers, underscores only) Question Type *
Select Type

Question Text:

☐ Required Question

Show this question only if: (optional – leave blank to always show)

Always show Select answer...

Add Question Cancel

When the survey editor opens for a question, the researcher should start by giving the question a unique name. The platform will confirm the name is unique. This name will be appended with pre, mid, or post (corresponding to the survey you are editing) in the codebook and variable names in the data you download after completing your study.

The next step is to select the question type. We currently support following question types:

- **Short Text:** Free form text entry for short answers. This is good for one to a few word responses. For this question type all the researcher needs to do is write the question.
- **Long Text** — Free-form text entry for longer text responses. This is good for when the respondent needs to write sentences and paragraphs. For this question type all the researcher needs to do is write the question.
- **Radio Buttons** — Participant selects one answer from a list. When this option is selected, a dropdown box will appear where the researcher can select the number of response options for their question. Once the number of responses is selected, boxes will appear for the researcher to enter the response options for the question. Radio buttons allow for up to 10 response options.
- **Checkboxes** — Participant can select multiple answers. When this option is selected, a dropdown box will appear where the researcher can select the number of response options for their question. Once the number of responses is selected, boxes will appear for the researcher to enter the response options for the question. Checkboxes allow for up to 10 response options.
- **Slider** — Participant drags a slider to choose a number. When this question type is selected, the researcher will need to provide the minimum and maximum number and the left and right anchor text (e.g. Agree/Disagree) for the slider. The researcher will also be able to see a preview of their slider.
- **Ranking** — Participant assigns a unique rank to each response option. The platform will block a participant from ranking two items at the same value. When this question type is selected, a dropdown will appear where the researcher can select the number of response options to be ranked. There must be two items at a minimum to rank and the platform can support as many as 10 response options to rank. Just like with radio and checkboxes, the survey editor will adjust the number of boxes for response options based on how many the researcher designates.
- **Name Generator** — This is a special question type. It collects up to 3 group member names. The researcher writes the question, which gives them the ability to tailor the question to their needs. For survey takers, the question will provide three spaces to type group member names. These names are then piped to any piped radio or piped checkbox questions for that part of the survey. Note: names from a pre-test will not carry over to a mid or post-test.
- **Piped Radio / Piped Checkbox** — These are similar to the Radio and Checkbox questions above, except the question will be asked three times, once for each name from the name generator (see Figure X for an example). These questions must come after the Name Generator question and can have up to 10 response options.
- **HTML Block** — HTML Block is for adding text to your study. For example, it can be used to add instructions or it could be used to add generic question text at the top of a page followed by a radio question with examples and response options that go with main questions at the top. Some HTML formatting is permitted, such as <h1>, <p>, and <div>.

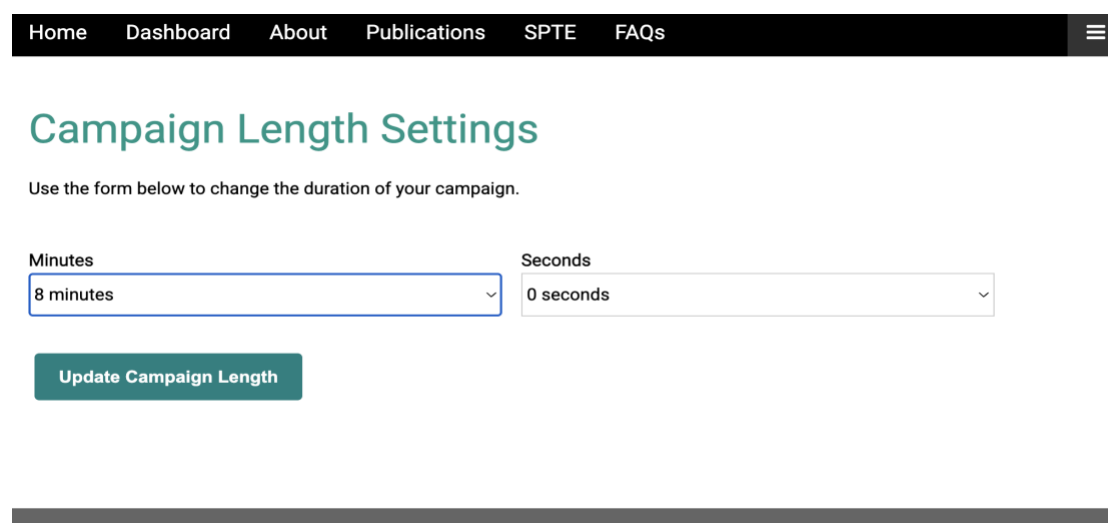
For each question there are several additional options at the bottom of the question editor. To make a question required, check the required box. By default, questions are set to always show, but this dropdown becomes important for creating branching questions.

To construct a branching question, start by constructing the main question others will branch from. Then add a new page. On the new page, write the set of questions the main branching question will send them to. At the bottom of the survey editor under “Show this question only if:” select the main branching question. Then the box next to it will populate the response options from the main branching question. Select the response option that should send them to this question.

Campaign Overview

The Campaign Overview card provides three key pieces of information about the campaign scenario captured by the information board: the length of the campaign, the number of candidates, and the number of attributes per candidate. The length of the campaign can be edited by clicking on the “Change the Length of the Campaign” button. The default campaign length is eight minutes, but researchers can select any length from 1 to 20 minutes in 30-second increments (see Figure 14). The other two items are detected directly from the Campaign Content and can only be edited by editing the content.

Figure 14: Changing the Length of the Campaign



The screenshot shows a web interface for setting campaign length. At the top is a dark navigation bar with links: Home, Dashboard, About, Publications, SPTE, FAQs, and a hamburger menu icon. Below this is a section titled "Campaign Length Settings" in green. A subtitle reads: "Use the form below to change the duration of your campaign." The form contains two dropdown menus: "Minutes" (set to "8 minutes") and "Seconds" (set to "0 seconds"). Below these is a green button labeled "Update Campaign Length". A thick grey horizontal bar is at the bottom of the form area.

Home Dashboard About Publications SPTE FAQs

Campaign Length Settings

Use the form below to change the duration of your campaign.

Minutes 8 minutes

Seconds 0 seconds

Update Campaign Length

Headings on the Information Board

Researchers can edit several pieces of text that appear on the information board: the header (and an optional sub-header), and a footer. These pieces of text are useful for reminding subjects about key information from the Instructions page, such as the office being sought by candidates (e.g. “Candidates for Mayor”, “Republican Presidential Primary Candidates”).

The header appears at the very top of the page. The sub-header appears below the heading, just above the scrolling boxes. The footer is at the bottom between the scrolling boxes and the timer. Researchers can choose to leave any of these blank.

When you have finished updating the headings, click “Submit Changes” and return to the Dashboard. Your changes will be reflected on the Dashboard headings card.

Figure 15: Page for Editing Headers and Footers

Update DPTE Headings

Heading:

Mayoral Election

Subheading:

optional

Footer:

Time Until Election Day

Submit Changes

Vote Now Button

Researchers will find an option to add a “Vote Now” button on the Dashboard. When this feature is enabled, an option will appear for you to set the number of minutes and seconds into the campaign until a “Vote Now” button appears for subjects. When a subject clicks on the vote now button, they proceed to the next stage of the study and cease interacting with the information board. The platform records the time when the vote now button was clicked and is included in the log file (see below under Downloading Data and Codebook).

Figure 16: Page to Edit Vote Now Button

Vote Now Button Settings (inactive)

Voting Now Button

The vote now button can be used so that participants don't have to wait until the campaign ends to move on. When you enable the vote now button, the button will appear next to the timer at the time you designate below. Anytime after the button appears, they will be able to click on it to proceed, rather than waiting.

- Start by selecting "Enable" to activate the "Vote Now" button on the DPTE.
- You will now have options for minutes and seconds below.
- Adjust the number of minutes and seconds that a participant must wait before the button appears.
- Your campaign is currently 2 minutes 30 seconds long, so the button must appear no later than 2 minutes 25 seconds in. (If you change the campaign length later, revisit this page.)

Enable ▾

Minutes

0 minutes ▾

Seconds

00 seconds ▾

Update Voting Settings

Weights

Researchers may wish to make some pieces of campaign information more/less salient to subjects during the campaign. This is accomplished using weights in concert with the Attributes associated with pieces of campaign information. (See the Update/Add Campaign Content section below for more details on attributes.) By default, all categories of campaign information are weighted equally, but researcher can assign different weights by category. For example, a researcher could increase the prevalence of "Issues" items to 40% and correspondingly drop the prevalence of "Horserace" items to 10%, making the former four times more prevalent than the latter. (The default is to weight all categories equally, at 25%).

In addition, in some research designs, researchers may wish to change the prevalence of item types at different points in the campaign. This can be accomplished by using different weights in the "First Half" and "Second Half." (See Figure 15 for an illustration.)

A few technical notes on weights:

- How the weighing process works:
 - Imagine the following weights:
 - Weight 1: 10%
 - Weight 2: 20%
 - Weight 3: 60%
 - Weight 4: 10%
 - Imagine the weights are lined up on a number line with 1-10 corresponding to Weight 1, 11-30 corresponding to weight 2, 31-90 corresponding to Weight 3,

and 91-100 corresponding to Weight 4. The range on the number line is now 1-100.

- A random number is picked between 1 and 100 (the range) and matched up with its corresponding weights on the number line. This weight is then used to pick a random piece of content within that weighting group. For example, if random number is 17, then Weight 2 is selected. Now, there is a random draw of all items associated with Weight 2 to pick the specific candidate and attribute combination.
- It does not matter if there are the same number of candidates and attributes assigned to weights because the random draw happens at the weight group level (e.g., within Weight 1, Weight 2, Weight 3, or Weight 4) not at the candidate or attribute level. This also means that Candidate 1 could be assigned to weight 1 and Candidate 2 could be assigned to weight 2. This would allow you to control how much information is seen about each of the candidates.
- Within a weighting group, if one candidate has more attributes associated with it than another candidate, then that candidate will have more information items available during the campaign. For simplicity, imagine there is only one weighting group (weight 1 is set to 100% and weights 2-4 are set to 0%). If weight 1 has 4 attributes for Candidate A and 6 attributes for Candidate B (10 total attributes for weight 1), then in this scenario Candidate A would be selected 40% of the time in the random draw and candidate B selected 60% of the time within this weighting group. Thus, 40% of the scrolling boxes would be from Candidate A and 60% for Candidate B.

Figure 17: Page for Editing Weights

Update Campaign Weights

The DTPE randomly selects content. The DTPE allows you to weight the presence of information, so that some types of information are more likely to be present during the campaign than others. If you prefer to not weight the presence of campaign content, please enter 100 for weight 1 and 0 for weights 2-4. The make sure all campaign content is assigned to weight 1 (You can edit this by visiting the Update/Add Information Board Content card on the Dashboard.). You can also have different weights for the first and second half of the campaign. If you do not use one of the weighting groups, then set it to 0 so it is not selected. Weights must be set for both the first and second half of the campaign and the weights must add up to 100%.

First Half of the Campaign

Weight 1:

Weight 2:

Weight 3:

Weight 4:

Total Weight: 100% (Must equal 100%)

Second Half of the Campaign

Weight 1:

Weight 2:

Weight 3:

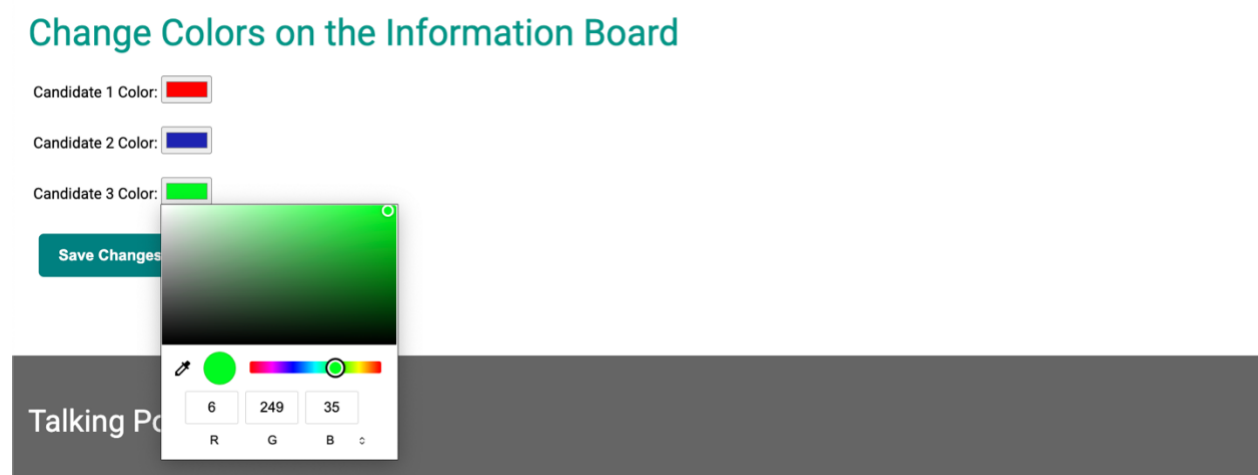
Weight 4:

Total Weight: 100% (Must equal 100%)

Information Board Colors

On the information board, the text on the boxes defaults to black. However, you can edit the text color (using the “Change Colors” button) so that each candidate is associated with a specific color. When researchers set up the information board, you will give each candidate a number; these numbers are used to identify candidates on this page. For each candidate, a researcher can select any color and shade by clicking a box and selecting a color for that candidate. After clicking “Save changes,” you should see the updated colors reflected on the Dashboard. Figure 18 illustrates an example of this function.

Figure 18: Page for Editing Colors



Downloading Data and Codebook

Talking Politics allows the researcher to download several datasets based on the study. Before downloading data, the researcher should start by setting the study to inactive status.

On the card for Download Data, there are several important buttons. The Information Board Participant Interaction Log is a .csv file of every action that subjects performed while interacting with the information board. For example, when a subject clicks on a box on the scrolling board, a record is added to this file, along with a time stamp in milliseconds. The same occurs when a subject closes an item page, when a popup appears on the screen, when a subject closes a popup, when a subject clicks play or pause on a video, rewinds a video, fast-forwards a video, or when a subject clicks on the Vote Now button. Each of these actions is recorded along with a timestamp and any associated data, such as the candidate and attribute number.

The Download CSV file is the main survey file. This initially only contains the survey responses, but if the researcher clicks the “Compute Info Search Variables” button, it will also pull data from the Event Log, compile and add information search variables (e.g. depth of search, comparability of search, transitions) to the survey file. There will also be a column call box_history. This will contain a json string that includes each box the subject clicked on, and which boxes were possible for the subject to click on at that moment (the “choice set”). A sample json string might take the structure of

```
{"box_history":{  
  "1":[26],  
  "3":[26,25],  
  "99":[26,25,7,25,35,24,28,36,28,34,33,21,12,32,5,21,22,4,7,36,5,13,19,35,32,8,20,5]  
}}
```

In this example, the variable is called box_history. The first box to appear on the screen is numbered 1, which this subject clicked on. While box 1 was on the screen, there was one other box, which corresponds to item 26 in your campaign content. If you look up item 26 in your campaign content, you can see exactly which item it was. This subject also click on the third box to enter the screen. There were two other boxes visible on the screen, which corresponds to item 26 and 25 in your campaign content. The 99 is code that tells me this subject did not click on any additional boxes and lists all the boxes and associated item number that were visible on the screen after the subject closed the third box. Json strings can be read into a variety of statistical programs, such as R and Stata.

Finally, the Dashboard can generate a codebook based on the survey created by the researcher. The codebook includes the question wording, the response options, and the corresponding numeric values and response options.

Figure 19: Download Data Card

Download Data

Here you can download survey or DPTE summary data. If you are merging data with a Qualtrics survey, download this file and then merge on participantid.

 Compute Info Search Variables

Download CSV File

Click on the button below to download an log file of the boxes your participants clicked on during their DPTE experience.

Download Info Board Participant Interaction Log

Click on the button below to download a copy of the labeled boxes that were available for each participant during the DPTE. Since the labeled boxes are randomized, this will be different for each participant.

Download Information Board Content Log

Download Codebook

Update/Add Campaign Content

To add or update content for your campaign, you will click on the Update/Add Campaign Content Button. Prior to uploading or entering content manually, you are strongly encourage to map out your candidates and attributes. A sample Google Sheet is available to assist with this process. Once on the Add/Update Content Page, you will see an overview of the content for your campaign. If you haven't entered any content, then the content section will be blank and indicate that you haven't entered any content yet (see Figure 20). There are two way to add content to your project. Content can be added as a mass CSV import or content can be added individually on the site. Each of these methods is discussed below.

Figure 20: Blank Campaign Content Editor

Campaign Content: Test Project

The screenshot shows the 'Campaign Content: Test Project' editor. At the top, a light blue banner displays 'Content Status' with a red dot and the message 'No content has been uploaded for this campaign yet.' Below this, a 'Group by:' section contains two buttons: 'Candidate' (selected) and 'Attribute Number'. To the right are two buttons: '+ Add Content' and 'Mass Import with CSV'. The main area is a large light gray rectangle with the text 'No content rows yet.' and a single 'Add a Row' button centered below it. At the bottom left is a 'Return to Dashboard' button.

Method 1: CSV File Upload

The CSV file upload is a good method to use if you have a working CSV file of content that you want to upload. As stated above, it is recommended that you map out your campaign content, thinking about the matrix of candidates and attributes. When clicking on Mass Import with CSV (see Figure 20), a new window opens (see Figure 21). Keep in mind that every time you upload a CSV, it erases any existing campaign content and then inserts the new campaign content. If you have existing campaign content that you want to keep, you should not do a mass upload with a CSV file and use the built-in content editor (described below).

The CSV upload is set to work with Google Sheets. The page provides two sample campaign content files from our own research on early voting (see citations on the Talking Politics Research website). Each one is a Google Sheet that was published as a CSV file. If you would like to use one of these, open and paste the link in the box for Link to Import Data (CSV URL) box. Then click on upload CSV. Your CSV will then be processed and you will be alerted to possible errors. When you return to the main content editor, your campaign content should be there. You can now edit this uploaded content in the content editor and preview it. You can also add additional content using the content editor.

If you would like to create your own campaign content, we provide a sample Google Sheet Template that you can copy and use as a template, along with instructions for publishing your Google Sheet so you can upload it.

Figure 21: Upload Content Via CSV File

Upload Campaign CSV

Project: Test Project

Content Status • No content has been uploaded for this campaign yet.

⚠ Uploading a CSV replaces all existing content for this study, including any rows added or edited manually. This cannot be undone. If you have made manual edits you want to keep, do not re-upload.

Link to Import Data (CSV URL):

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/...>

Using Google Docs

Sample Data (copy and paste into the box above):

- Example 1 from Early Voting:
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vQARCte451gYGwXdpNuaRD19H9m3ZqI6I7YbNyUiPxxwh0VE1JL0Lh4JbVWw5rz7zUerxkaPc6zN9/pub?gid=0&single=true&output=csv>
- Example 2 from Early Voting Project:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vRYKNoMpYZW5-PsvC7E4z8po6LZ1KW_hW4I1pPPoKxFo2JVzP3Dj05lbmYEKXkoDt7siibGb8mMTPAN/pub?gid=0&single=true&output=csv
- [Sample Google Sheet Template](#)

CSV Formatting Requirements:

Candidates: Each candidate is assigned a number (e.g. Bill Clinton=1, Donald Trump=2). Candidate numbers must be unique and numbered consecutively starting at 1.

Attributes: Each attribute is assigned a number, unique per candidate. For each candidate, attribute numbers must be numbered consecutively starting at 1.

Attribute Types: 1=Issues, 2=Traits, 3=Party, 4=Horserace.

Pages: Page numbers must be unique across the whole sheet and numbered consecutively starting at 1. If you have 2 candidates and 10 attributes each, you should have page numbers 1–20.

Publishing your Google Sheet: File → Share → Publish to Web → Comma Separated Values (.csv). Copy the URL to use above.

Upload CSV

Google Sheet Template for Campaign Data

To create your own campaign content, start by opening the provided Google Sheet template. Go to file→Make a Copy. Once you have your own copy you can start editing. Do not change the headings on the top row or add columns. You can have as many rows as you like.

Each column corresponds to a different component of the information used to generate the information board and map the data for your study.

- Candidate
 - Each candidate gets their own number. The first candidate must be numbered 1 and then ordered consecutively. For example, if you have three candidates, you would number your candidates 1, 2, and 3.
- Attribute
 - For each candidate, you will have information that describes them. It might be biographical information (e.g., educational background and political experience) or an issue position (e.g., Candidate X's Position on Abortion. Each attribute gets its own number. The attribute must be numbered consistently across

candidates. For example, if Candidate A's Position on Abortion is number 1, then Candidate B's Position on Abortion must also be 1 and the same for Candidates C and so forth. If Candidate C's Political Experience is Numbered 17, the Candidate A and B should also be number 17 for this attribute. Attribute numbering must start with 1 numbered consecutively.

- Weight Group
 - Weighting groups types are used to make some pieces of information more likely to appear during the campaign the others (see Weighting above). In the classical *How Voters Decide* (Law and Redlawsk, 2006), there were four categories of attributes: candidate background, party information, issue positions, and horserace. If you want to follow this method, you will classify each attribute into one of these four groups using the weight types 1-4. In Figure 23, the weight type shows 1 for this candidate/attribute. You can also deviate from this weighting scheme. If you only have three categories of information, then you would only use weight types 1-3. If you want everything weighted equally, assign all attributes to weight type 1. Keep in mind that for each weight type you will need to assign its actual weight. If you only use type 1, but not types 2-4, make sure that weight 1 is set to 100 for both the first half and the second half of the campaign (see Figure 17 for weight assignments).
- itemnumber
 - The item number is the unique number identifier for a piece of information. For each piece of information (each row), you must assign it a unique number, starting with the number 1 and numbering consecutively. If you have 3 candidates and 4 attributes, then you should have 12 rows and thus use the numbers 1-12. This will help you later if you are analyzing search data, if you want to examine individual pieces of information.
- label
 - Label provides the short description that appears on the item boxes that scroll down the information board. This is what subjects will initially see and then click on a box to learn more. There is a 40 character limit. However, since characters are different sizes, researchers are encouraged to test their labels to make sure they fit the box as expected.
- content
 - This is the information that is revealed if a participant clicks on one of the scrolling boxes. For example, if the label is "Candidate A's Position on Abortion," then the content would actually describe (provide the details of) Candidate A's position on abortion (see Figure 3 for an example). Images and video are also supported for content. Images are added on the main Dashboard (see below under Editing Campaign Content and Adding Images). Videos must be hosted off site via Vimeo. This is more efficient and your video should run smoother. You will upload your video to Vimeo and then paste your code into the content section of your Google Sheet. A sample video code might look like:

- `<div style="padding:56.25% 0 0 0;position:relative;"><iframe src="https://player.vimeo.com/video/#####?badge=0&autoplay=0&player_id=0&app_id=58479" frameborder="0" allow="autoplay; fullscreen; picture-in-picture; clipboard-write; encrypted-media; web-share" referrerpolicy="strict-origin-when-cross-origin" style="position:absolute;top:0;left:0;width:100%;height:100%;" title="SampleVideo"></iframe></div><script src="https://player.vimeo.com/api/player.js"></script>`
- Please keep in mind that most browsers block auto play with videos. Those browsers that do permit autoplay often block sound until the user unmutes the sound. However, the information board does log when a user click play, pause, fast forwards or rewinds, so you can verify they actually watched the video.

Using the Built-In Campaign Content Editor

We also provide a built-in content editor to add or edit content for your campaign. The content editor is also where you can add images. To add content to your campaign, click on the Add Row button. This will open a new window (see Figure 22). On the Add Content Row screen, start by assigning the candidate and attribute number, following the conventions in the bullet points above. The researcher will then assign the weight type associated with this piece of content (see the bullet point for Weight Groups above). The dashboard will automatically populate the item number. Then, add the label (the short text that appears on the scrolling boxes) and the content (the detailed information where the participant can learn more). Just like with the csv upload, Vimeo videos can be used here by pasting the Vimeo iframe code into the content box.

To add an image, click on the button to choose the image file you want to upload. JPG, PNG, or GIF are supported filetypes. Once uploaded, the image will be converted to WebP format (ideal for displaying images on websites) and will be saved in three different sizes to fit screens of different sizes.

Figure 22: Adding Content via Built-In Content Editor

[Home](#) [Dashboard](#) [About](#) [Publications](#) [SPTE](#) [FAQs](#)

Add Content Row

[← Back to Content List: Test Project](#)

Note: Candidate, Attribute, Weight Type, and Item Number are structural fields used in data analysis. Changing these on existing rows will affect how participant responses are interpreted. Please use caution when a study is live.

- Candidates: Each candidate is assigned a number (e.g. Bill Clinton=1, Donald Trump=2). Candidate numbers must be unique and numbered consecutively starting at 1.
- Attributes: Each attribute is assigned a number, unique per candidate. For each candidate, attribute numbers must be numbered consecutively starting at 1.
- Attribute Types: You can have up to 4 weight categories. For example, 1=Issues, 2=Traits, 3=Party, 4=Horse race.
- Item Number: Item numbers must be unique and numbered consecutively starting at 1. If you have 2 candidates and 10 attributes each, you should have item numbers 1–20.

Candidate *

Structural — changing affects analysis.

Attribute Number *

Structural — changing affects analysis.

Weight Type *

Structural — changing affects analysis.

Weight 1 (Type 1) ▼

Item Number *

Structural — changing affects analysis. Pre-filled with the next available item number.

1

Label

Short display name, max 40 characters.
This appears on the scrolling boxes and as a heading at the top detailed popup.

Content

Plain text, Vimeo embed code, or HTML.
This is the detailed information that participants see after clicking on a box.
If uploading an image this becomes the caption below it. Max 1,000 characters.

0 / 1000 characters

Image

Optional. JPG, PNG, or GIF — max 2MB. Images are automatically converted to WebP and resized to three sizes (400, 800, 1600px) for fast loading on all devices. Uploading a new image replaces any existing one.

Choose File

No file chosen

Add Row

Cancel

The Content Overview Screen

Once content has been added to the platform, it will appear on the main content editing screen with one piece of campaign information per row (See Figure 23). On this screen, researchers have the option to organize content by candidate or by attribute.

Figure 23: Content Overview Screen

Group by:

Candidate

Attribute Number

+ Add Content

Mass Import with CSV

Candidate 112 rows

Attribute	Weight	Item Number	Label	Type	Actions
A1	W3	1	Adam Langston's Remarks on Working with the Republican Party	Text	View Edit Delete
A2	W2	4	Adam Langston's Remarks on Washington Experience vs. Outsider's Perspective	Text	View Edit Delete
A3	W1	7	Adam Langston's Issue Priorities	Text	View Edit Delete
A4	W3	10	Adam Langston's Remarks on Working with Nancy Pelosi	Text	View Edit Delete
A5	W2	13	Adam Langston's General Biographical Information	Text	View Edit Delete
A6	W3	16	Adam Langston's History in the Democratic Party	Text	View Edit Delete
A7	W2	19	Adam Langston's Political Accomplishments	Text	View Edit Delete
A8	W1	22	Adam Langston's Remarks on Climate Change	Text	View Edit Delete
A9	W1	25	Adam Langston's Remarks on Health Care	Text	View Edit Delete
A10	W1	28	Adam Langston's Remarks on Taxation and Economic Policy	Text	View Edit Delete
A11	W1	31	Adam Langston's Remarks on Education	Text	View Edit Delete
A12	W1	34	Adam Langston's Remarks on Immigration	Text	View Edit Delete

Candidate 212 rows

Attribute	Weight	Item Number	Label	Type	Actions
A1	W3	2	Caroline Johnson's Remarks on Working with the Republican Party	Text	View Edit Delete
A2	W2	5	Caroline Johnson's Remarks on Washington Experience vs. Outsider's Perspective	Text	View Edit Delete

The Content Overview screen makes it easy to see an overview of the campaign content, including the weight type (1-4), the item number associated with the piece of information, the label that will appear on the scrolling boxes, and the type of content (text, image, or video). When the content is organized by candidate, then the attributes will be listed in each row. When the content is grouped by attribute, then the candidate will be listed in the row. In addition there are three buttons at the end of each row to help the researcher manage the content:

- View: When the researcher clicks view a small preview of the label and content will be displayed on the screen.
- Edit: Clicking the edit button permits the researcher to edit previously saved content.
- Delete: Clicking this button will let the research delete that content item.

Editing Popups

While the information that each subject is exposed to varies on the information board, it is possible to force a subject to view information through popups. Normally, a subject learns during the campaign by clicking on a box. This means they choose which information to view and which to ignore. The popup forces everyone to be exposed to information. Like other items on the information board, the researcher sets a heading and the main text of the popup. There are two options for when the popup appears. First, the researcher can set it so the information board picks a random time for each subject to see the popup. You do have to provide the duration for your popup to make sure the subject has sufficient time to read it. If the duration is 30 seconds, the board will make sure the popup shows up at least 30 seconds before the end of the campaign. You can also set a specific time for your popup to appear for everyone. For example, you may set your popup to appear at the 1:30 mark for everyone. You can have more

than one popup and mix and match popups with a random time and set time. The board will seed the random popups between the set-time popups to ensure there is no overlap.

Popup Technical Notes:

1. If you are using a Vote Now button and a popup, you should consider the implications for your study when a popup is set to appear after a subject clicks the Vote Now button, or make sure the popup appears before the Vote Now button.
2. Popups will appear and take over the screen, even if a user has clicked on a box to learn about campaign information. In this instance, they must first close the popup and then they will return to the item being viewed, which can then be closed normally. When computing the average time spent reading campaign information, the platform will subtract the popup time out of the time spent reading the campaign information for that item.

Figure 24: Page for Editing Popups

Add, Delete, or Update a Popup for Your Campaign

[Return to Dashboard](#)

A Few Tips:

- Start refers to the number of minutes and seconds left in the campaign then the popup fires.
- Please keep in mind that your campaign is 2:30 long. This means that the highest value for a start time is 2:30.
- Please pay attention to warnings indicating overlapping times.
- If you select random, a random time will be selected when a participant first lands in the DPTE. This means that each individual will have a different, randomized time that the popup appears.
- If you have a mixture of popups where you set the time and some are randomized, the DPTE will check your set times and work the randomized in around those.

Del	Heading	Text	When does the popup appear?	Time Parameters
		Content	☒ Random	Start: <i>Randomized</i>
	+ New: Heading		☐ I want to set the time parameters	Duration: :

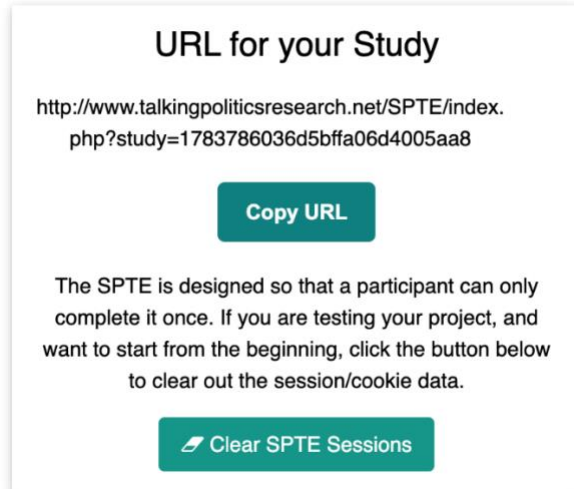
[Apply All Changes](#)

URL for Your Study

Each study has a unique URL. You can find this on the card URL for Your Study on the researcher dashboard, which includes a button to easily copy the study URL. This is the URL that you will give to participants or use with a Qualtrics Pre-Survey (see the Qualtrics section below).

The platform uses server session and browser cookies to keep track of which part of the study the participant is in and direct them to that part of the study. This means that once a participant is finished, they will be directed to the final page of your study. When a researcher is testing their project, they may wish to clear the session and cookie data. A button is provided to make this easy and quick for the researchers (see Figure 25).

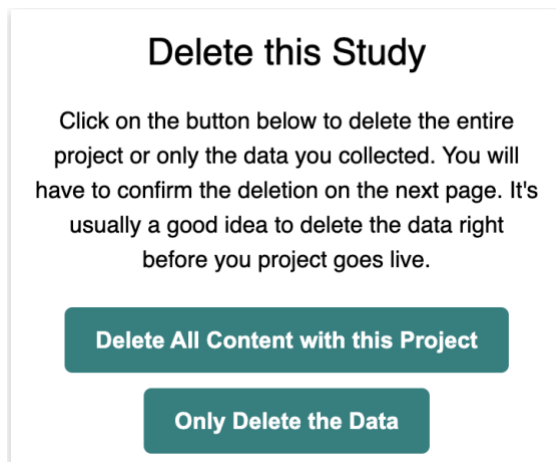
Figure 25: Study URL Card



Delete This Study

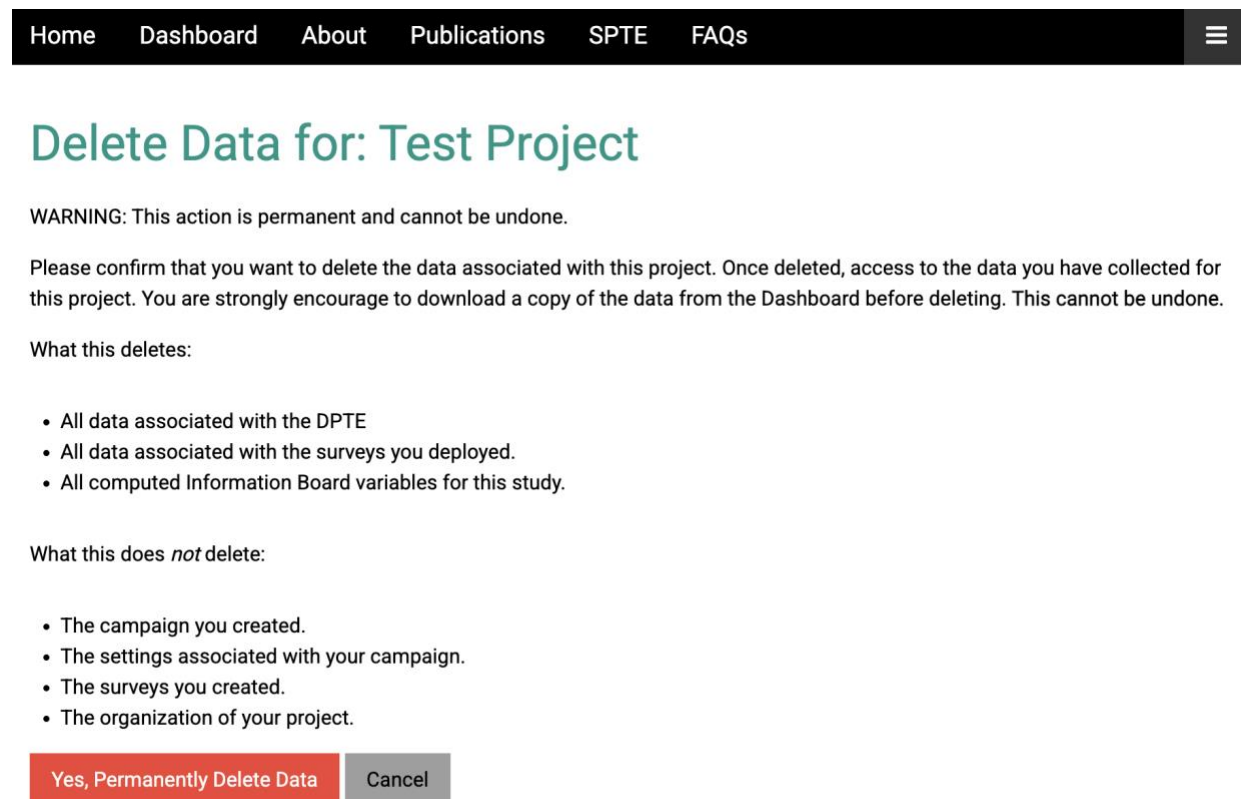
Under Delete This Study there are two options. The first is to only delete the data and the second is to delete the entire study. Prior to performing either of these, the researcher should download a copy of all their data.

Figure 26: Deleting Your Data or Study



Deleting the data clears out any survey data or data associated with the information board. It does not delete the information board content, information board settings, surveys or other elements of the study's setup. When a researcher clicks on "Only Delete the Data" they will be required to confirm on the next page that they want to delete the data (see **Error! Reference source not found.**).

Figure 27: Page for Deleting Data



Home Dashboard About Publications SPTE FAQs

Delete Data for: Test Project

WARNING: This action is permanent and cannot be undone.

Please confirm that you want to delete the data associated with this project. Once deleted, access to the data you have collected for this project. You are strongly encourage to download a copy of the data from the Dashboard before deleting. This cannot be undone.

What this deletes:

- All data associated with the DPTE
- All data associated with the surveys you deployed.
- All computed Information Board variables for this study.

What this does *not* delete:

- The campaign you created.
- The settings associated with your campaign.
- The surveys you created.
- The organization of your project.

Yes, Permanently Delete Data Cancel

Clicking on Delete All Content with this Project will delete the entire study. This includes the campaign content, surveys, information board settings (e.g. colors, time, weights) and your project order. It also deletes all data the researcher collected associated with this study. Prior to deleting a study, researchers will have to confirm they want to delete it, just like when deleting the data.

Project Linker (Experimental Manipulations)

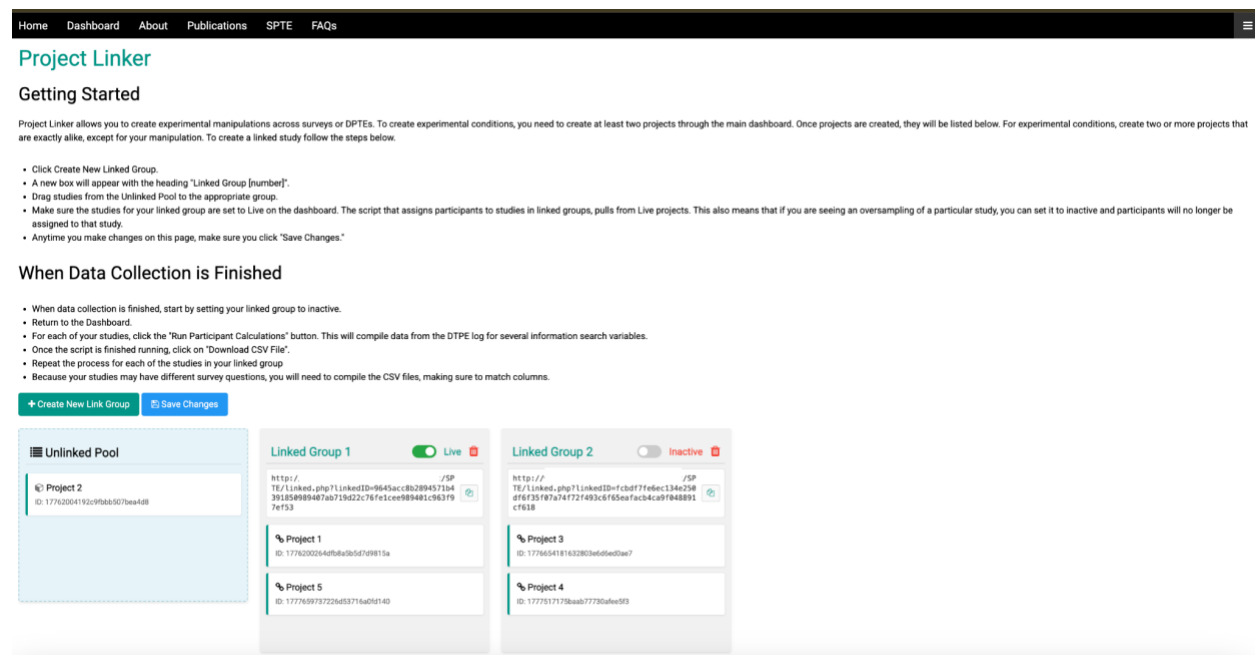
Linking projects is an easy way to add experimental manipulations to your study. These manipulations can be text built into the flow of a survey, campaign content inside the information board, a prime on the main page, or the length of the campaign. If you can edit it inside a project on the dashboard, you can turn it into an experimental manipulation. The project linker provides a single link for your study that randomizes which study a subject is assigned to. This creates random assignment to your experimental manipulation(s).

To create a linked project, you first need to create at least two projects on the main Dashboard. Once created, these projects will show up under the Unlinked Pool on the Project Linker page. Start by clicking the Create New Linked Group button. A new box will appear with the title Linked Group #. Drag the projects you want subjects randomly assigned to from the Unlinked Pool box to the Linked Group box. In the image below, under Linked Group 1, subjects would

randomly be assigned to Project 1 or Project 5 (the same name of the projects on the main Dashboard). Once projects are in the correct linked group, click Save changes.

Below the toggle button is a URL for your Linked Project. This is the URL you will want to use when distributing your study, rather than the URL on the Dashboard. When you are ready for your study to go live, toggle the switch to live and click Save Changes. You will also need to make sure the individual projects are set to live on the main Dashboard page. You do have the option to toggle a project off/set to inactive at any time. When a subject starts a study from your linked group, it selects from linked projects that are active. In the image below, if Project 5 was set to inactive and Project 1 set to live, all subjects would be routed to Project 1. This could potentially be useful if you are trying to achieve a benchmark of N subjects in a group.

Figure 28: Project Linker Page



Using Qualtrics with Talking Politics Research

While this site provides a number of survey question options, researchers may wish to use Qualtrics for more complex surveys. Instructions are below for using Qualtrics as a pre-survey or a post-survey. When your study is complete, you will be able to match participantid from this site with the participantid in Qualtrics. Like everything, you should test this and make sure it works for you as anticipated.

Qualtrics Pre-Survey

- Create your survey in Qualtrics.

- Create a hidden variable called "participantid" that gets passed via URL to this site.
- To construct the URL to send participants to the site, copy your study URL.
- At the end of your study URL add &participantid=[feed Qualtrics participantid here]
 - Example:
[http://www.talkingpoliticsresearch.net/SPTE/index.php?study=123456789abcdefghijklmnop987654321&participantid=\[Qualtrics participant ID here\]](http://www.talkingpoliticsresearch.net/SPTE/index.php?study=123456789abcdefghijklmnop987654321&participantid=[Qualtrics participant ID here])
- If you don't create a pre-survey in Qualtrics the program will assign a participantid to send back to Qualtrics (see Qualtrics Post Survey)

Qualtrics Post Survey

- In the survey flow tab of your Qualtrics survey, select "Add New Element" and then "Embedded Data".
- Add a field for "participantid." Do not set a value.
- Move this block to the top of your survey flow. This allows Qualtrics to capture the participantid value for your participant as they enter Qualtrics.
- Publish your survey
- Copy your Qualtrics survey link.
- In the Dashboard, under Organize, check Qualtrics and move it to in your project order to where you want your participant directed to your Qualtrics survey and save your selections.
- Under Add a Survey or Tool, select use Qualtrics.
- Paste the link to your Qualtrics survey and save.
- This site will append each participant's id to your Qualtrics survey.

Permitted HTML and CSS

Content you enter in the any of the content or survey editors — information-board items, popups, and other participant-facing material — may include a limited set of HTML tags and inline styles. For security and consistency, anything outside this list is automatically removed when your content is saved. Your content will not be rejected; disallowed tags and attributes are simply stripped out silently, so it is worth previewing your content after saving to confirm it displays as intended.

Permitted HTML tags

Tag	Purpose	Allowed attributes
<p>	Paragraph	(none)
<h1> <h2> <h3>	Headings	(none)
 	Bold text	(none)
 <i>	Italic text	(none)

Tag	Purpose	Allowed attributes
	Inline text grouping	(none)
 	Line break	(none)
<hr>	Horizontal rule	(none)
	Bulleted and numbered lists	(none)
<div>	Block container	style, class
	Image (uploaded through the content editor only)	src, srcset, sizes, class, style, alt, loading
<iframe>	Embedded Vimeo video only	src, style, width, height, frameborder, referrerpolicy, title, allow, allowfullscreen

Any tag not listed above (for example, tables, forms, scripts, or buttons) will be removed.

Permitted inline styles

The style attribute is accepted only on <div>, , and <iframe> tags, and only the following CSS properties are kept:

CSS property	Use for
width	Setting the width of images, videos, or divs (e.g., width: 400px or width: 100%)
height	Setting the height of images, videos, or divs
text-align	Aligning text left, center, or right
float	Wrapping text around an image (float: left or float: right)

All other CSS properties (colors, fonts, margins, positioning, etc.) are removed. Fonts and colors are controlled by the platform's standard participant styling so that all studies render consistently.

Images

- Always insert images through the content editor's image uploader. Uploaded images are automatically converted to web-optimized formats and served from TPR's content delivery network.
- Images linked from outside sources (other websites, personal servers, etc.) are not permitted — the src will be removed and the image will not display.

Video

- Only Vimeo embeds are supported, and only player URLs of the form `https://player.vimeo.com/video/...`. Embeds from YouTube or other providers will be removed.
- Vimeo's "Do Not Track" setting is added to every embed automatically, so participants are not tracked with cookies by Vimeo while completing your study.

What is not supported

- Hyperlinks: linked text will remain visible, but the link itself will not be clickable. Keeping participants inside the study environment is intentional — outbound links can break session timing and data collection.
- Scripts, forms, buttons, and interactive elements: all `<script>`, `<form>`, `<input>`, and similar tags are removed. Interactive elements such as surveys and vote buttons are configured through the study builder, not through content HTML.
- Tables: HTML tables are not currently supported in content items.
- Custom fonts and colors: font and color styling is stripped to keep the participant experience consistent.

Tips

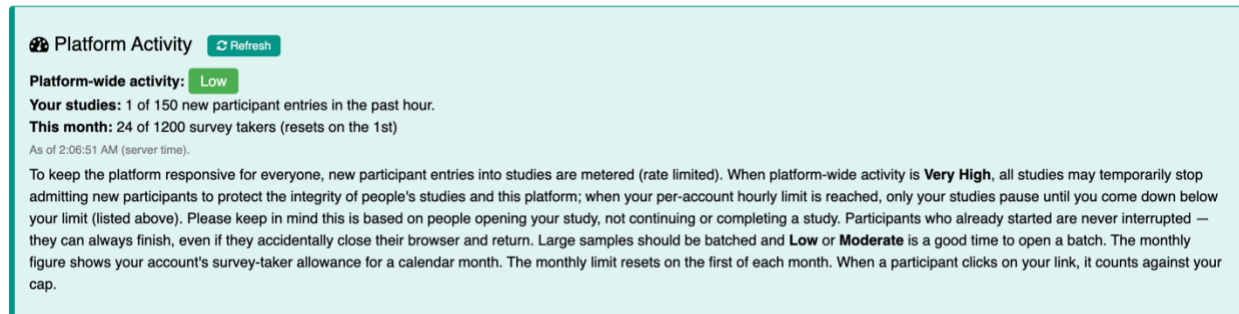
- Preview after saving. Because disallowed markup is removed silently, make sure to preview your study to verify your item looks the way you expect.
- Paste as plain text. Content pasted from Word or Google Docs often carries hidden formatting that will be stripped, sometimes with surprising results. Paste as plain text and apply formatting in the editor.
- Use percentages for image widths where possible (e.g., `style="width: 100%"`) so content displays well on different screen sizes.

Launching Studies

Prior to launching a study, you should thoroughly test your study. As you test your study flows in the correct order and the survey questions appear and record responses as anticipated (and match your codebook). Make sure the information board behaves as expected, including (but not limited to) making sure the countdown timer is correct, the colors are correct and any other components of the information board behave as expected. Also, check that your passcode works and if not check the dashboard to make sure you have the correct passcode for this specific study. *As with any study, researchers should conduct a small pilot study prior to launch.*

When you are ready to launch a study start by deleting any existing or test data (optional, but recommended). Then, make sure your study is set to "Active". Copy your Study URL from the dashboard and distribute to study participants.

Figure 29: Platform Activity Monitor



We are providing this service for free and so we ask for your help protecting the integrity of studies and our servers. To aid in this, we have put a few reasonable but protective rate-limits in place.

- Each researcher is limited to 150 survey entrants (across all studies on their dashboard) in a one-hour period. If a survey reaches its 150 maximum, subsequent subjects will receive a message that the study is temporarily full and to check back in a few minutes. If you plan to recruit over 150 participants, you will need to recruit them in batches of 150.
- There is also a platform maximum (see Figure 29). You will find a meter on the dashboard that tells you how full the platform is. Low and moderate are good times to launch a study. During high and very high usage periods, you are encouraged to wait and you may be rate limited.
- The one-hour period is from the time a person tries to enter the study. If, for example, a potential study participant tries to enter the study at 10:00am but between 9:00am and 10:00 am there were already 150 entrants to your study, the survey participant would receive the message that the study is temporarily full and to return in a few minutes. If 3 of the 150 entrants were from 9:00 to 9:05, then at 10:05 you would technically have 3 open spaces for someone to take a survey, but would likely want to wait until more space is available.
- If you are batching studies, you should check your data after each batch to make sure it looks as planned. This is your opportunity to adjust. This will also let you see how many people are completing your study, compared to enrollments.
- For right now, there is a limit of 1000 survey takers per month.
- When a survey-taker clicks on your link, it counts against your hourly and monthly cap.

Profile Page

The profile page can be located through the right-side navigation menu. It will only show when a researcher is logged in. On the profile page, a researcher has the option of adding personal information, such as their name in institutional affiliation. The profile page will also permit a researcher to change their email address and password.

Finally, if a researcher wants to delete their account, they can do so on their profile page. The deletes everything, their studies, survey, information board setting, and data for all studies. Nothing will be left and this is not reversible.

Figure 30: Researcher Profile Page

Profile Information

First Name:	Not set	
Last Name:	Not set	
Title:	Not set	
Position:	Not set	
Institution:	Not set	
Email (login):	yourEmail@university.edu	

This is both your contact address and your login. It must be a .edu institutional address. Changing it sends a verification link to the new address -- nothing changes until you click it.

Change Password

Current Password:

New Password:

Confirm New Password:

Minimum 12 characters. Avoid passwords you've used elsewhere.

Change Password

Delete Account

This permanently deletes your account and ALL of your studies -- every campaign, survey, uploaded image, setting, and every row of participant data you have collected. Download any data you need before proceeding. This cannot be undone.

If any of your studies are currently Live, you must set them to Inactive on the dashboard first.

Delete My Account