

3. MENTIMETER

Mentimeter is a free, online, fun and interactive presentation tool that allows presenters to quickly (and accurately) gather audience responses. It can be used to collect a wide variety of data in an anonymous way. For example, presenters can use it to assess their audience's general level of knowledge in any specific topic using multiple choice quizzes or open questions, to allow audience members to ask open questions during a session, or to reflect on audience members' opinions about specific content covered, to name but a few. Best of all, it allows the audience members to keep their responses confidential. It does require a reliable internet connection, and for each audience member to have access to a phone or computer to record each of their votes on the website.

www.mentimeter.com

We've included instructions below, and there's also a case study example in the toolkit which uses real data from the Europlanet community to demonstrate how to successfully apply this technique.

WHAT DO I NEED?

- A (free!) account on the Mentimeter website
- List of questions you want to ask - these are usually best as multiple choice options, though it is possible to ask short-response answers also
- Audience access to online devices (tablets, smart phones, computers etc.)
- Reliable internet access - for both the presenter and the audience to use
- (optional) A way to display the Mentimeter website to your audience - e.g. projection of your computer display



LET'S GET STARTED

There is plenty of support and information on the Mentimeter website, so we're only going to go through the basics here...

Step 1: Make sure the internet is working reliably on your computer.

Step 2: Sign into your Mentimeter account (free to register).

Step 3: Create your questions within the Mentimeter site – you can choose from many different question types including multiple choice or short-response, and you can also include images in your questions if you want.

Step 4: During your presentation, use the Mentimeter website to select the question you want to use.

Once your audience has connected to the site using a special access key, they can provide their responses to your questions using their own phones/tablets/computers. The software will automatically count up the responses, providing you with instant feedback. You can also choose to display the results to your audience.

WARNING!! As with any computer-based technique, it's definitely worth checking the bandwidth and reliability of the internet connection at your event location well in advance. You should also confirm whether your participants will have access to smartphones, tablets or computers in order to complete the Mentimeter quizzes.

For example, for smaller audiences can you take along a few spare devices in order to ensure everyone can participate (otherwise those who don't have a smartphone may feel left out)? We strongly recommend having a backup option ready!

OK, WHAT DO I DO WITH MY DATA NOW?

One of the great things about Mentimeter is that it automatically does all the analysis for you, so there's very little you need to do with it afterwards.

In the case of an ongoing series of activities (for example, a weekly astronomy club), you could ask different questions each week, or even the same questions at the start and end of the series to see if individuals' responses have changed. If you ask each person to enter an 'identifier code' at the start (see the section in *pre-post quizzes* for more detail on this), then within your Mentimeter account you can track their progress and see their results over time to each of the questions asked.

GOT IT! HOW CAN I TAKE THIS FURTHER?

Mentimeter is a great tool for helping ensure your content is relevant to the audience, at the right level, and that they understand important concepts before you move on. When used thoughtfully it can help you assess and react in real time to your audience's needs, making sure they get the most out of the session. For example, if the responses to a question you pose suggest that a lot of the audience don't fully understand something you just talked about, you could add in some further explanation and discussion of that content. If however that knowledge seems fairly well understood, then you can move on more quickly to new content.

SIMILAR ALTERNATIVES

Plickers (www.plickers.com) - A free mobile app that allows presenters to run a multiple-choice vote and quickly (and accurately) count the audience responses using pre-printed voting cards, without relying on extensive technology.

Poll Everywhere (www.polleverywhere.com) - Live interactive audience participation during presentations

Twitter Clicker Alternative - Amalgamate responses in one place to a given question via social media using a dedicated hashtag, thereby giving your audience a free-response place to provide feedback or guess at a right answer.

With thanks to the University of Central Florida for the 'Twitter Clicker Alternative' tool.
