



Project Implicit: Services

Revised on: July 19, 2008



Contents

[Overview](#)

[Session Tracking](#)

[Managing User Experience](#)

[Increasing Engagement](#)

[Database Communication](#)

[Security and Reliability](#)

[Access Control](#)

[Study Specification](#)

[Dependencies in Studies and Tasks](#)

[Advanced Survey Tool](#)

[Measures of Association](#)

[Development and Testing](#)

[Client-Recruited Samples](#)

[Volunteer Research Pool](#)

[Audience for Project Implicit Services](#)

[Contact](#)



Overview

Project Implicit's services encompass 5 stages of web-based research: *Conceptualization, Development, Hosting, Analysis, and Reporting*. Potential users of these services include *researchers, educators, non-profits, and corporations*. Project Implicit's services rely on infrastructure that was specifically designed to address the needs of online research in the social and behavioral sciences.



Session Tracking

A study is a collection of tasks that is presented to participants. Study participants use web browsers to interact with the site. When participants launch a study, they are assigned a unique session ID for the duration of the study session. Data from each participant is tagged with the session ID and thousands of participants can take part in studies simultaneously.



Managing User Experience

Participant responses are transmitted, in encrypted form, to an application server at a Harvard University data center. The server manages the user experience by presenting both static and dynamic content. Static content includes HTML, images, sounds, PDF, and other file types that reside on the server. Dynamic content is generated on the fly and is controlled by the study specification.



Increasing Engagement

To enhance participant focus, studies are launched inside a large window without browser controls and toolbars. To minimize user misbehavior, participants cannot use browser functionality to navigate backwards in the task sequence or bookmark task links within a study for later access. In an effort to minimize break-off (drop-out) rates, we constantly scrutinize data to improve task design and maximize participant retention.



Database Communication

In addition to managing the user experience, the server also controls data transfer with an Oracle database. Responses from participants, the start time and end time for tasks, information about the client browser, and the client IP address are stored in the database.



Security and Reliability

To ensure security and reliability, rigorous standards are applied to data transfer and data storage procedures. All data from the client browser to the servers are encrypted using the SSL protocol. Every day, data from the active production database are transferred to a data warehouse. Tape backups, stored off site, provide protection against catastrophic failure.



Access Control

Access to the database and server is limited to a handful of key technical personnel. Study owners download their data securely from the warehouse using a password-protected interface in a virtual laboratory. Direct access to production and warehouse databases is restricted to a handful of machines at the University of Virginia.



Study Specification

The tasks within a study are defined in a study XML file. Tasks can be selected from a larger set of tasks and then sequenced in a variety of ways. The study specification allows for both random selection and random sequencing of tasks. In a particular study, participants could be assigned different subsets of tasks and these tasks may be sequenced in varied ways.



Dependencies in Studies and Tasks

The selection and sequence of tasks within a study can be made to depend on participant responses, participant demographics, and even geographical location. Within a task, the presentation and sequencing of task elements can be controlled using dynamic Java server pages and Flash/Javascript.



Advanced Survey Tool

Studies incorporate a variety of tasks and measures. A survey tool, with features that go beyond standard HTML forms, implements selection and randomization rules for both scales and items and also records item response times. Templates can be used to generate scales that have the same item format for a large number of domains.



Measures of Association

A number of association measures using speeded classification are available for inclusion in studies. They include the Implicit Association Test (IAT), Go/No Go Association Test (GNAT), Brief IAT, Affective Misattribution Procedure (AMP), Extrinsic Affective Simon Task (EAST), Single Category IAT (SCIAT), Evaluative Priming (EP), and speeded self report. We have also implemented custom tasks for various clients. For custom tasks, we can ascertain the feasibility of implementation.



Development and Testing

Study development and testing is carried out iteratively and hosted on development servers at the University of Virginia. During development, you will work with individuals with considerable expertise in social science research and web development. A virtual laboratory provides an interface for researchers to create and test studies. After testing has concluded, the study can be moved to the servers at Harvard University.



Client-Recruited Samples

The web is a cost-effective and efficient method to conduct research, especially with hard to reach samples. Typically, clients recruit their samples and provide access to the study via a custom link. A client-provided userid/password can be used to restrict access. The researcher will be able to view completion statistics via a web link and, as noted earlier, download data from the warehouse using the virtual laboratory interface.



Volunteer Research Pool

Project Implicit has a large volunteer research pool comprising of those demonstration site visitors who register. On login, research pool participants are assigned to various studies. This assignment is based on complex selection rules; for example, a given study might be restricted to participants from a particular metro area, based on zip code; another study might be restricted to female republicans. Although the participant pool is not representative of the general population, studies employing random assignment can access otherwise hard to recruit samples.



Audience for Project Implicit Services

Researchers: We have accumulated considerable experience in implementing numerous research studies on the web. In several instances, we provided inputs that improved research quality.

Educators: Many teachers use the demonstration site (at no charge) to provide a learning experience for their students. We can develop custom procedures tailored to your course content to further strengthen the learning experience and provide summary reports for class discussion.



Audience for Project Implicit Services

Non-Profits: We can design custom web sites, integrate IATs and surveys into your existing site, in a way that is aligned with your mission.

Corporations: We provide a compelling face to face demonstration of the pervasive role of unconscious mental processes in everyday behavior. We can develop segments drawn from organizational situations that elicit unintended biases. In addition to face to face workshops, we develop web-based courses tailored to the needs of your organization.



Contact

To find out how Project Implicit could meet your needs, please e-mail us at services@projectimplicit.net. We can set-up a phone conversation to learn about your requirements in detail and, subject to your approval, draft a formal proposal for your consideration.