How to Use Digitell Polls: Speakers
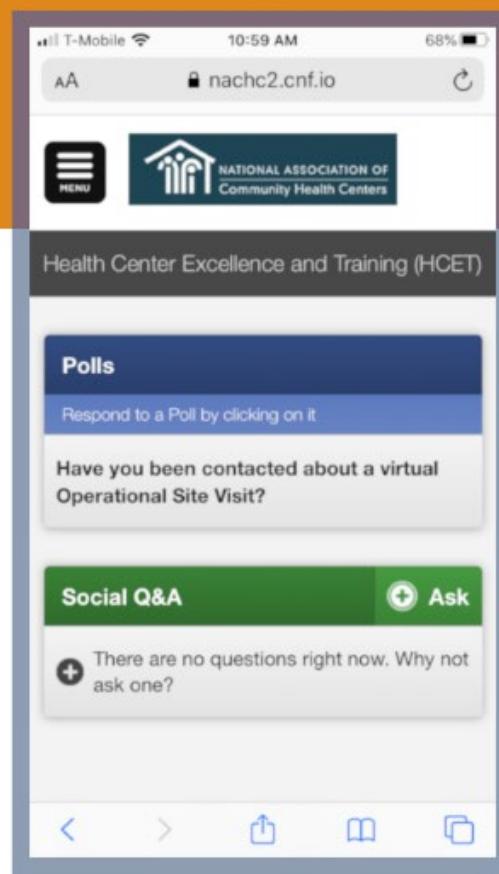
How to Utilize Polls Effectively in Digitell: For Speakers

Polling is the most significant means to be interactive in the Digitell player. However, creating effective polling questions requires some foresight and clarity about the purpose of the polls. Here are some tips to ensure that you both create effective polls and then deliver them in the live session.

Understanding the Purpose of Polls

Adding a poll does not guarantee an increase in participant interaction. Here are a few ways to make your polls more successful:

1. **Avoid asking questions that are too simplistic**. If there's a good possibility that the audience will all answer correctly, the question is too weak to be effective.
2. **Ask questions about facts sparingly**. The suggestion of being tested rubs participants the wrong way. It's better to focus on judgments rather than knowledge of facts.
3. **Use multiple choice questions as "pulse-taking" only if you want to use this as a springboard.** Questions about "how many of you do X" should lead to further discussion about best practices or obstacles or problem-solving. If you give the impression of simply polling for polling's sake, then the polls lack a clear purpose. This is not a universal rule—obviously you can use these questions as ice-breakers as well. But be clear about *why you are asking the question in relation to your presentation's objectives*.
4. **Employ short answer questions as a means for participants to brainstorm.** One of the most effective ways polls have been employed in our trainings is to solicit ideas from the audience—have them create and share objectives, goals, strategies, and solutions, then you can pick out certain ideas for further discussion.

Understanding the Limitations of Polls

You should be aware of the four types of polls offered by Conf.io:

- Multiple choice / Multiple response
- Short answer
- Numerical Average
- Brainstorming (in beta, so not recommended)

Conferences i/o polls have certain limitations you should be aware of::

1. Conf.io does not allow for "ranking" or use of a Likert scale.
2. Overly wordy questions are not very effective, as it takes too long for participants to respond. There are also character limits for questions and answers, **so authors need to be succinct**.
3. There is no way to have an "other" multiple choice response that allows for short answers**. If you want to explore the "Other" responses, ask participants to use the Chat or Social Q&A.**
4. If you select the box indicating the question has a correct answer, the correct response will be highlighted in the participant's view (giving folks the answer). **Simply reinforce the correct answer in your discussion.**

5. The display of the results can be tricky for short answers with "Word Cloud" as the display. We have seen exactly *one group* follow directions to answer only in one word, which is necessary for the Word Cloud to make sense. If you choose Word Cloud, **ensure that participants can respond in one-word answers** (which is tricky in itself) **then prepare to provide explicit instructions on how they should answer**.

6. The List display generally works best. However, the list is cumulative, with new lines appearing with each new answer. You have the option to allow for one response from each, or multiple responses. **Consider limiting short answer responses to one answer, as this will be easier to interpret and discuss**.

7. Some of the display options for short answer are not trustworthy. "Thought Bubbles," for example, have not appeared in the embedded PPT (though they appear in the moderator's view). Stick with List as your display option (unless you are willing to spend effort on a Word Cloud).

8. **Polls take more much more time in a virtual session than a live raising of hands. Plan for a poll to take a minimum of 02:30 just to obtain results. Short answers will eat up time, and your discussion will eat up even more. Be realistic about how many polls you can fit into a presentation.**

Creating Your Polls

While you create the polls, NACHC staff will create the polls in the *conferences i/o* platform. The best way to open the polls is using an "active content" slide that is embedded in your PowerPoint. When you open that slide in the live session, the polling responses will appear 'real-time' within the slidedeck. Participants will answer the polls, and the answers populate on the slide. This allows you to see the results directly. Otherwise a moderator will have to feed you the responses, which can be disruptive (though not impossible).

Here are some suggestions on ways to simplify this process:

1. Send your polls to NACHC staff is **to create a "dummy" slide that shows the polling question**, the choices (if applicable), and an indication of how you want the results to display. Here is an example:
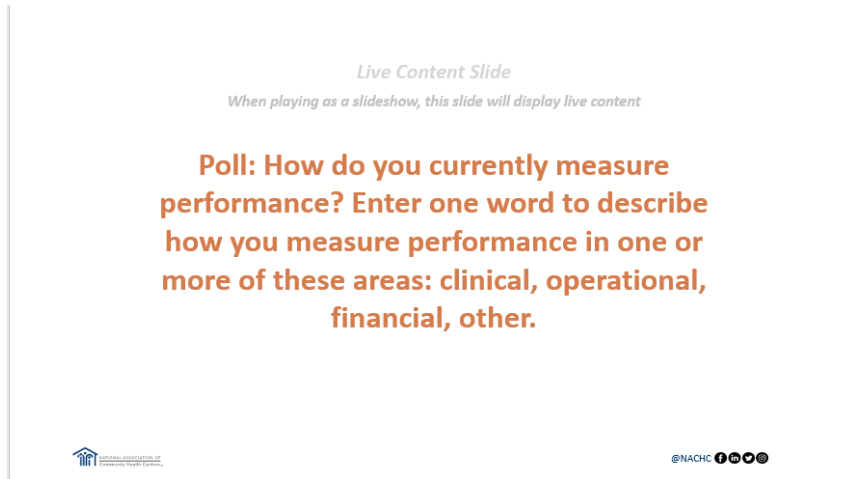
2. **Put the dummy slide in the place where it will appear in your final slide deck**. This will serve as a placeholder for NACHC staff to indicate where to place the actual embedded content slide, which looks like this:

Live Content Slide
When playing as a slideshow, this slide will display live content

Poll: How do you currently measure performance? Enter one word to describe how you measure performance in one or more of these areas: clinical, operational, financial, other.

NACHC staff will send you back your PowerPoint deck with the polling slides embedded.

3. **Download the *conferences i/o* add-on to your computer.** The polls will not open unless you have the add-on *on the computer you will use for the session*. There is a download for both Windows and Mac.
   Windows: https://help.conferences.io/support/solutions/articles/5000714066-getting-started-downloading-and-installing
   Mac iOS: https://help.conferences.io/support/solutions/articles/5000693430-installing-and-upgrading-the-conferences-i-o-mac-app

Delivering the Polls

The opening of the polls in the live session generally works smoothly. However, the way that the session is set up technologically requires you to adjust your delivery:

1. **Test your polls when you are in the tech check.** Always open your poll and see if the content is active. In general, if a poll doesn't open, the PowerPoint add-on is not on your computer. If polls are working on the moderator's computer, but not yours, the moderator can open the PowerPoint and give you control of her computer screen. This has been an effective way to handle this issue.
2. **Provide a brief explanation of how the polls work** (where they are located in the Digitell player). Ideally, the session moderator will do this at the beginning of a session.
3. Do not expect answers to appear immediately (see comment above). There is significant lag time between opening a poll and seeing results. **Prepare to use that time constructively** by answering questions or reflecting on ideas just presented.
4. If polls are not appearing to participants, suggest two things:
   a. **Refresh their player**
   b. **Request support**

5. If participants are not using the polls (but instead are using chat or Social Q&A), then **reinforce how to use the polls**. You will not be able to see the chat or Social Q&A, and those answers will not show up in the polling results at the end of the session. We have found that participants need to be reminded of how to answer the polling questions. This can also be done by the moderator.
6. If polls do not work (even when manually opened), **ask participants to use the Chat or Social Q&A features**. This is generally enough information for you to proceed. Your moderator will provide you with a summary of the results.

Polling Checklist	

Additional Resources

"Cascading" Polls

Promising Practice: During one of our recent virtual training events, a speaker utilized polling to replace an activity she typically did in an in-person training. The results were so positive that she intends to utilize this approach going forward, regardless of training modality (in-person or virtual).

This is how it worked:

> 1. The speaker reviewed the core content utilizing PPT slides. In this case, she was speaking to setting organizational goals – starting very big picture and then walking participants through the steps to implement.
>
> 2. Upon completion of the overview, she got the participants engaged through using an open-ended polling questions.
>
> 3. The first question started off with the big picture concept, asking participants to indicate an organizational goal at their own health center – specifically around "access" (utilizing an open-ended polling response).
>
>> a. The speaker commented on responses as they came in, noted which may or may not be an organizational goal and/or how to improve upon specific responses.
>>
>> b. Once responses were complete (or slowed in the rate they were coming in), the speaker selected one organizational goal from the participant responses to utilize as a sample to move forward with. In this case, "Increase Access for pediatric patients in our service area" was selected as the sample to continue to move the exercise forward.
>
> 4. The next polling question walked the participants through the next step of the process, moving the organizational goal to an operational goal, and utilizing an open-ended polling question.
>
>> a. She repeated the process of commenting on responses as they came in, providing feedback and recommendations, and then selecting one response from the list to use as the example to move into the next step of the process; "Hours of operation to include weekend hours".
>
> 5. This cascading process continued through 3 more steps, ending with potential barriers to the process.

> This process kept the participants engaged by putting the process the speaker outlined in the beginning of the event into practice with a real scenario from a health center, utilizing the feedback the participants provided. Even if the participant's specific example was not selected as the one to move the exercise forward, they were receiving live feedback on their specific responses as the speaker talked through the poll responses when they came in.
>
> NOTE: This process utilized 5 cascading steps and 5 polling questions. This was a very intentional use of polls to let participants practice implementing the content they learned in the session. It was also time consuming – in this instance, the time was well spent with deliberate questions and resulting conversation used as a learning experience. As you are developing your education session, keep the timing in mind as you plan for use of polls; either as stand-alone questions or as a cascading exercise as the one above.

Sample Slides for Cascading Exercise Using Polls:

Slide 1: Set the stage with the first question. Provide feedback on responses provided.

Slide 2: Select one response from the first polling question to ask the second polling question. Provide feedback on responses provided.

Slide 3: Select one response from the second Polling question to ask the next question about. Provide feedback on response provided.

Slide 4: Select response from the third polling Question to as the fourth polling question. Provide feedback on responses.

Slide 5: Select response from the fourth polling Question to ask this final question about. Provide to responses provided.

Slide 6: Final step: Recap and summarize the full activity to wrap it up. Respond to any feedback remaining Q&A.

Note: There was a Conf.io live content slide with the actual polling question for participants to respond to after each one of the slides above. The speaker reviewed her slide (above) and then advanced to the live polling question for participants to respond to and she could provide feedback. After selecting one response to move the activity forward with – the moderator typed the selected response in the chat box so that it was a visual reminder of what they would be responding to in the next question. Then the speaker moved forward to the next slide with the next step, explained it, and moved forward to the next live content slide for participants to respond to.