



## Audience Response System

### Purpose

An audience response system enables the instant display of feedback from a group, either anonymously or with responses associated with identified individuals.

### Description

Audience Response Systems, or voting systems, are familiar to many students through the TV series 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire'. Members of the audience are provided with handsets which communicate with a central receiver attached to a computer.

Typically the handsets have four or six buttons, labelled A to D or F, which correspond to the answers to a question posed by the lecturer. More sophisticated handsets allow for text answers. At the end of each 'vote' the responses are summarised automatically and, if a data projector is attached to the computer, can be displayed for the audience to see.

Often the system is used anonymously; names are not associated with handsets. However, if required a register of students can be set up so that answers are recorded against names so that an individual's progress can be monitored. Voting systems are supplied with software so that banks of questions can be created and reused as necessary, usually in the form of slides. The more flexible systems also work directly with PowerPoint so that lecturers can build on any existing skills they have with this presentation tool.



## Ways of using this tool

Voting systems are relatively expensive and so it is often not possible to use them in large lecture halls with perhaps a hundred or more students present. There is also the logistical exercise of distributing handsets and more importantly, collecting them in again. With smaller groups of up to about 50, a voting system can:

- Receive instant feedback about how a topic has been understood by a group, driving future sessions.
- Gauge opinions of a group, especially about sensitive issues when individuals may not want to be identified with a particular viewpoint.
- Provide a more accurate measure of the consensus of a group than can be achieved by a show of hands.
- Generate discussion within an audience followed by a vote.
- Provide an energising and stimulating activity at points in an otherwise non-interactive teaching session.

## Learn More

OUCS has an audience response system that it uses for some teaching sessions and which it can demonstrate to interested parties. The system used by OUCS is called ActiVote and is supplied by Promethean. Promethean make available a number of resources for use with the voting system, although these are targeted mainly at Primary and Secondary education. There are a number of other audience response systems available.

## Access

Information about ActiVote is available at:

[www.prometheanworld.com/uk](http://www.prometheanworld.com/uk)

Most audience response systems are available for both Windows and Mac platforms. Other suppliers include:

TurningPoint

[www.turningpointuniversities.co.uk](http://www.turningpointuniversities.co.uk)

Quizdom

[www.qwizdom.co.uk](http://www.qwizdom.co.uk)

This document is part of a larger set aimed at introducing the reader to a wide range of technologies. Please visit this web page for more information:

<http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ltg/>

*Your primary support for IT issues comes from your department or college. If you would like advice on using audience response systems in learning and teaching at Oxford please contact OUCS.*