



THE ENGAGING NEWS PROJECT

Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life at the University of Texas at Austin

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NEW WAYS OF PRESENTING NUMERICAL DATA

Slider and Multiple-Choice Polls Increase Learning, Time on Site

RESEARCH SUMMARY

- A recent study from the Engaging News Project housed at the Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life at the University of Texas at Austin shows that presenting numerical data using interactive tools increases time on site and helps people learn.
- Data were gathered from 456 participants in an online study. Participants were given factual information in one of three different formats: (1) slider polls where participants guessed the right answer and then were given the correct information, (2) multiple-choice questions where participants guessed the right answer and then were given the correct information, or (3) information presented without an interactive feature. A fourth group of participants were given no information at all.
- People spent the most time with the slider polls (see Fast Facts section below). Study participants spent more time with the slider tools than with the multiple-choice questions and more time with the multiple-choice questions than with the information presented without an interactive feature.
- Study participants also learned more from the interactive slider poll and the multiple-choice questions than from sentences containing the information (see Fast Facts section below).
- Based on the encouraging results from the online study, The Engaging News Project partnered with a local news outlet to test the interactive tools live on a news site.
- Including slider and multiple-choice polls on a page increased time on the site compared to multiple-choice polls alone.

GRAPHICS

Multiple-Choice Poll

What percentage of the estimated 2012 federal budget will be spent on Social Security?

10%

20%

30%

40%

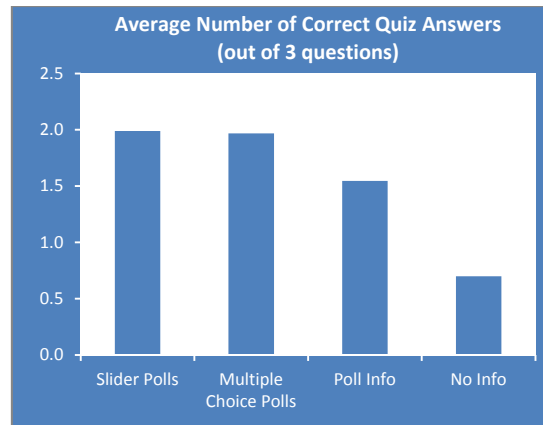
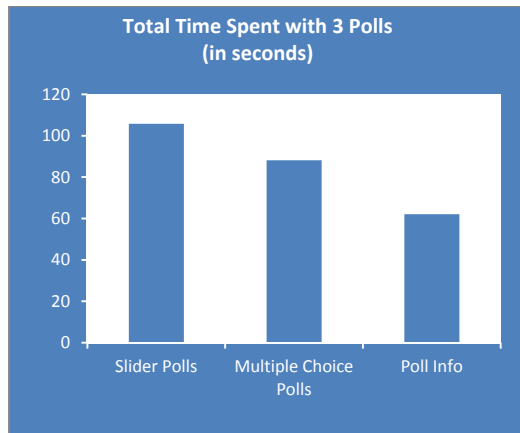
Slider Poll

What percentage of the estimated 2012 federal budget will be spent on Social Security?

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FAST FACTS

- People spent, on average, one minute with three pieces of information presented without an interactive feature. When presented using slider polls, people spent just over a minute and a half with the information.
- At the end of the study, participants took part in a quiz designed to see what they learned. Those who didn't receive any information answered an average of 0.7 out of three quiz questions correctly. Those who saw the information *without* an interactive feature answered 1.5 questions correctly. Those seeing an interactive feature, whether the slider or multiple-choice polls, answered 2.0 out of the 3 questions correctly.



QUOTATIONS FROM PROJECT STAFF

Natalie Stroud, Director of the Engaging News Project:

- “News organizations should consider using slider polls on their sites. They have both business and democratic benefits.”
- “We are working on creating an interface that will allow news organizations to easily incorporate these interactive tools on their sites.”

Joshua Scacco, Research Associate, the Engaging News Project:

- “Given innovative options, people engage with substantive news information longer than information that lacks interactive features. They stay on a site longer and learn more as well, net gains for news outlets and democracy.”

FOR MORE DETAILS

Download the full report at <http://engagingnewsproject.org/online-polls-and-quizzes/>

PROJECT BACKGROUND

These findings are part of the **Engaging News Project**. The Engaging News Project has a single aim: to provide research-based techniques for engaging online audiences in commercially-viable and democratically-beneficial ways. To sign up for our newsletter, visit www.engagingnewsproject.org.