Some Background

The ways in which active polling tools, such as Turning Technologies® ‘clickers’, or dialup polls such as Votapedia®, can be used in learning and teaching are well established. QuickPoll is a tool that makes use of the internet capable devices that an increasing proportion of our students and staff carry with them daily to class – iPhones or other smart phones, laptops or netbook computers.

QuickPoll is exceptionally simple for staff and students to set up and use. It can be used in classes of all sizes, in spaces where UniWireless or 3G communication is available. A guide to setting up UniWireless is available at http://www.its.unimelb.edu.au/support/networks/wireless/uniwireless.

The objective of the QuickPoll project was to develop a simple tool that enabled staff to obtain and use class responses to questions as part of their teaching - and to engage their students in that process.

The question choices might be presented in a PowerPoint slide or a prepared handout in a lecture or class, or spontaneously as part of an active discussion in class because qp.unimelb itself does not require any question text. The question might be used to gauge students’ background or opinion on a topic that is about to be developed, or in a short test or reflection on a topic just completed in class.

Data submitted to any QuickPoll is anonymous. The poll is a statistical picture of the class response. You can use it to guide your further discussion in class. Using the document camera to display your phone screen or using the classroom computer and projector, you might share the result with the class so they can see their own choice as part of the class response.

For many purposes, 100% coverage of the class is not essential. Asking students to discuss their responses and submit a vote each on a shared phone can be a useful technique to encourage discussion in class. It is probably useful to remind students that using UniWireless incurs no charge to them. If the 3G network is used, depending on the user’s data plan, the amount of 3G data per poll is a few kb, costing probably ~0.01 cents per poll.

How do I set up my own qp.unimelb account?

1. Use the browser on your phone or any computer to go to http://qp.unimelb.edu.au
2. Login using your normal university staff email username (‘yourusername’) and password
3. Click the admin tab on the opening screen and then click ‘Start a new poll’
4. Your account is now active to receive poll input – you are set up to go!
On later occasions, go to http://qp.unimelb.edu.au/admin and login in the usual way. The system will take you to your personal poll site. Bookmark your URL to save time later.

How do students in my class send poll data to my account?

1. Students use the browser on their phone or computer to go to http://qp.unimelb.edu.au/yourusername
   As the system increases in use a number of staff may have open polls, so the screen is identified with ‘yourusername’

2. Selecting one of the choices A to E and clicking ‘Record your choice’ sends students’ choices to your currently open poll. They receive confirmation that their choice has been recorded and can then ‘return to the poll’ to contribute further to this poll if it is still open, or to the next poll.

3. Encourage students in your class to bookmark your URL to save time in subsequent classes.

What can I see as students respond to my qp.unimelb poll?

1. Click the ‘update’ button on your screen to see your accumulating poll data as a histogram of choices.

2. To close this poll and begin a new one, click ‘Start a new poll’; this saves the data from the current poll, tags it with a time/date stamp, and then clears the histogram display data ready for the next poll.
3. Data from previous polls can be reviewed using the ‘Past polls’ tab. That data can be deleted if it is no longer of interest, or it can be annotated in the comment field to identify it for later reference.