

**Augusta State University Student Technology Fee Proposal Form**

Please complete the following information for projects to be submitted to the Student Technology Fee Committee.

Title of project: **The Experiment Management System (EMS)**

Requestor's name and email: **Dr. Quentin Davis, jqdavis@aug.edu**

Department/Organization: **Psychology Department**

Date: **10-19-07**

Estimated Project Cost: **\$950.00**

Brief summary of the project:

**In accordance with the developing Arts & Sciences undergraduate research initiative, part of the Psychology Department's vision is to involve more undergraduate students in research. We hope to adopt a professional web-accessible interface that organizes scheduling and management for university research projects. Currently our departmental research is managed via a 'pen and paper' method that allows no permanent record of scheduled appointments, participant demographics, or participation.**

**Psychology faculty, graduate students and undergraduates design and implement research that is presented and published in the professional community. Many of the participants in this research come from lower level psychology courses such as PSYC 1101, 2101, 2103, and 2150. The courses easily serve over 1,000 students per semester from departments across the three University colleges. Many of these courses require experience in research or psychological assessment. Our current facilities require that students come to the department to sign-up for a participation appointment, and then return to the department to participate in research or assessment. Participation is then hand recorded by the experimenter and submitted to the student Subject Pool Assistant (SPA). Currently the SPA hand enters each record of participation into a database that must be generated anew each semester. At the midpoint and end of each semester we generate and format a separate cumulative report for each of the faculty members' classes. This system is inadequate for the large volume of students and researchers lending itself to lost paperwork, forgotten appointments, missed communication of cancellations, errors in the database, and extremely inefficient use of student and faculty time.**

**The Experiment Management System (EMS), a professional product of Sona-Systems, Ltd., was made to replace the traditional 'pen and paper' method of research organization used by most universities. The system includes a custom designed on-line research study database for our university, all software upgrades, the ability to perform online surveying, and service and technical support for the year of purchase. The database itself allows for: students to sign up for participation or cancel online from home, automated communication between participants and researchers, demographic screening, online surveying, and 'anytime' formatted reports of student participation for faculty.**

**This system will allow for more efficient management of student and faculty time, and allow us to serve students by offering more consistent immediate communication and access from home. Because so many ASU students commute from long distances, this increases our ability to serve students in more rural areas of the CSRA and will provide opportunity for them to benefit from research experience without physically coming to campus.**

**Because of the flexibility and custom design of the system we would have the option to support online surveys from researchers across campus, in other departments that showed interest in utilizing the system. Funding for the EMS would significantly improve our ability to a) provide more timely and better quality service to ASU student participants and b) increase hands-on academic experiences by undergraduates as both developing researchers and subjects of study.**

Estimated cost for years 2 and 3:  
**\$995.00 for each year.**

Will this project become a recurring expense?

**Yes**

If the answer is yes, what are the plans for funding recurring expenses?

**We would again look to student technology fees since this system directly affects a large population of students across campus each semester. In addition we would look into grants for technology supporting technology for undergraduate and/or graduate research.**

Could a portion of this project be funded and still be viable? If the answer is yes, please explain and prioritize :

**No**

Please estimate the approximate number of students that will benefit either directly or indirectly from this project.

**Over approximately 1,000 students per semester.**

How does this project support academic/instructional activities?

**As stated above, many psychology faculty require that students in *lower level* psychology course gain several experiences in research. This requirement is used to familiarize students with the scientific method and directly experience concepts of research methods including the importance of scientific inquiry, ethical responsibility of researchers, variables in an experiment, and potential benefits of research to the larger nonacademic community. Direct participation in research is the option most frequently taken by students. (Other options typically include attending lectures or reading research articles.)**

**In addition, both *undergraduate psychology majors and graduate students* are required to gain experience in ethical research conduct, experimental design and data analysis.**

If the submitting organization is an academic or administrative department, is this project included in the unit plan?

**Yes**

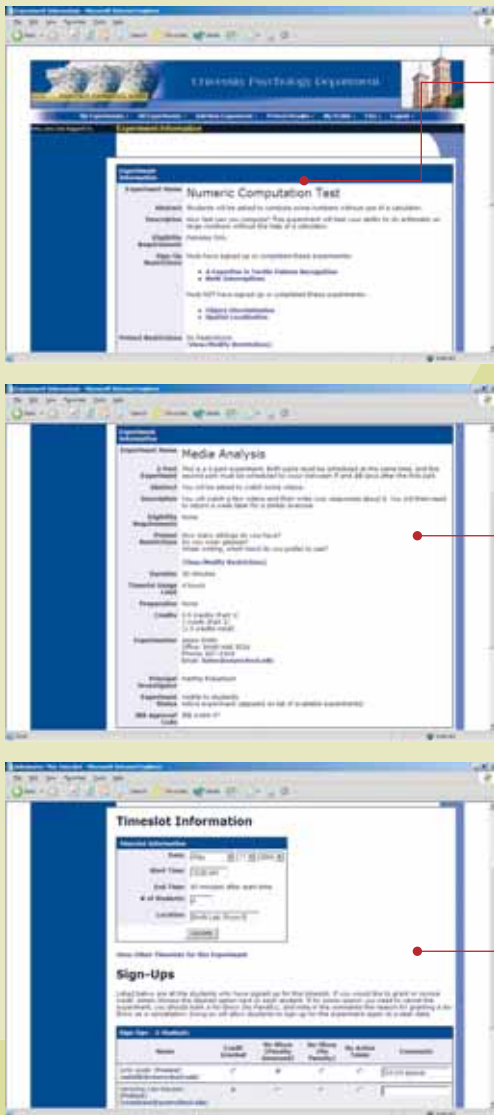
To attach supporting documentation, click the Submit button. Use your email attachment feature to add the files before sending the email. Submit form via email to this year's chair (Bill Nelson, Reese Library, 706-737-1745)

**Reset Submit**

If the submit button does not invoke your email package, print the form and submit to Bill Nelson in Reese Library

## web-based experiment scheduling and management

The Experiment Management System provides universities with an easy-to-use, web-accessible interface to handle all the scheduling and management of human subject pool studies. Students can sign up online, researchers can set up their studies online, and administrators can ensure students have completed all their requirements. The simple, easy-to-use interface is accessible with any web browser, 24 hours a day. Say good-bye to bulletin boards, crowded hallways, and sign-up sheets!



### Researcher Features

- Researchers can easily enter in all information about their studies, including any special requirements, and prerequisite or disqualifying studies. They can also set up two-part studies where the sessions must be scheduled a specified number of days apart.
- If online pretesting is enabled, study participation can also be restricted based on a student's pretest responses. Study participation may also be restricted based on the courses a student is enrolled in.
- Researchers may set up online survey studies to easily collect data and run their studies in the system. The online survey feature is built into the software.
- Researchers credit students (or indicate they did not appear) after the study, with a simple click of a button. The system will automatically assign penalty credits for students who fail to appear, if necessary.
- Researchers can choose to be notified by email whenever a student signs up for their study, or cancels an appointment.
- A Principal Investigator can also be specified for each study. The Principal Investigator has a fully-functional oversight role for the study.

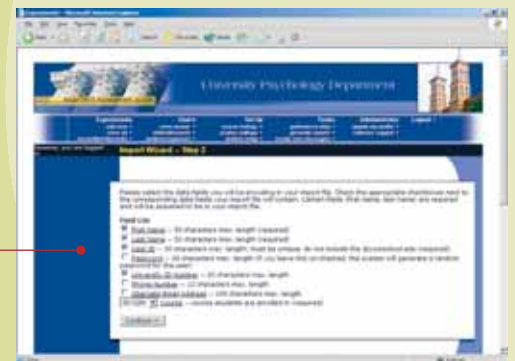
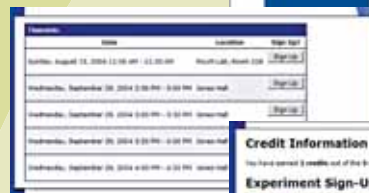
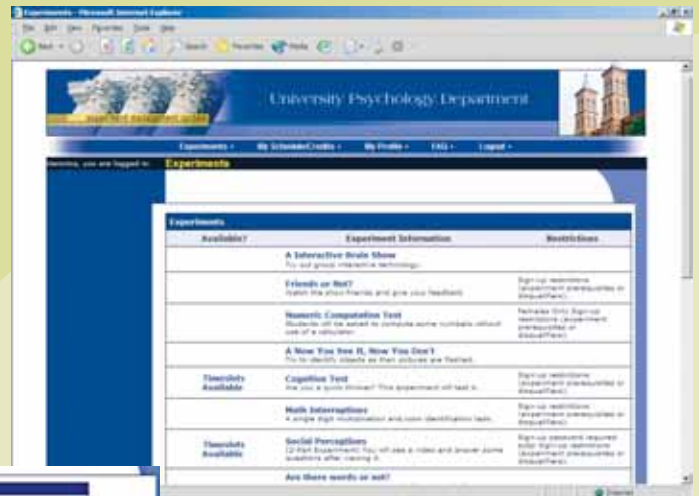
"In all my 25 years of running studies, I have never had 100% of those who signed up for my study actually show up – until we started using Sona Systems software."

**Robert Kunzendorf, Ph.D.**  
 Department of Psychology  
 University of Massachusetts Lowell

Customer comments

## Student Features

- Students can track their progress, including credit status and studies they have signed up for, at any time.
- Students may create their own accounts (if enabled) and login after the administrator approves them for login.
- Students are notified by email with a reminder of their upcoming appointments and also when they receive credit for a study they participated in.
- Students may sign up or cancel their appointment to participate in a study up until an administrator- or researcher-defined deadline before the study is scheduled to occur.
- The system automatically prevents students from signing up for a study for which they do not qualify, due to participation restrictions or other reasons.



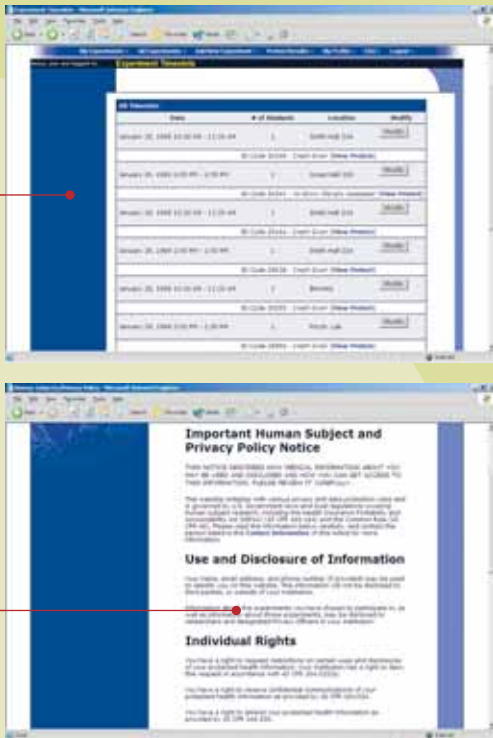
“Sona Systems provides an online experiment management system that is user-friendly and compliant with human subjects' regulations. What really sets Sona Systems apart, though, is their interest in constantly improving the system and incorporating customer feedback into upgrades.”

**Kristine Jacquin, Ph.D.**  
Department of Psychology  
Mississippi State University

**Customer comments**

## Administrator Features

- Administrators have full oversight over all studies.
- Administrators can choose to approve studies before they are made visible to students, and may also limit the number of experimental hours available to a specific study, researcher, or PI.
- Administrators can grant special non-study credit to students (e.g. students who write a paper as a research participation alternative). Instructors can also be given this ability.
- Administrators can email a group of students based on a set of criteria (e.g. all students who have not completed their requirements) with a reminder email.
- Administrators can set up a list of rooms/labs, and allow researchers to schedule their studies by looking at available times for each location. The system automatically prevents double-booking of rooms.
- All data can be exported or archival or analysis purposes.
- User accounts may also be imported using the batch-import feature, which makes it easy to import data from your school's student information system (SIS).



## IRB Compliance

- Compliant with all major research regulations and guidelines worldwide, including the U.S. Common Rule, U.S. HIPAA, U.S. FERPA, Canadian Tri-Council Policy, Canadian PIPEDA, European Union Data Protection Directive, and OECD rules. The system also follows APA ethical guidelines governing research.
- Support for electronic acknowledgment of human subject rights and regulations, by both participants and researchers.
- Legally-required "Business Associate" contract provisions are included in all our service agreements.
- HIPAA training guides are included in our documentation.
- The system can be configured to automatically assign numeric ID codes to all students, to protect their privacy.
- The system can be configured to require an IRB approval code and expiration date before a study may be posted. The study is automatically deactivated on the expiration date, and no further research may be conducted until the study is renewed by the IRB.
- Our datacenter is secured and staffed by professionals, and our software runs on special security-hardened servers.

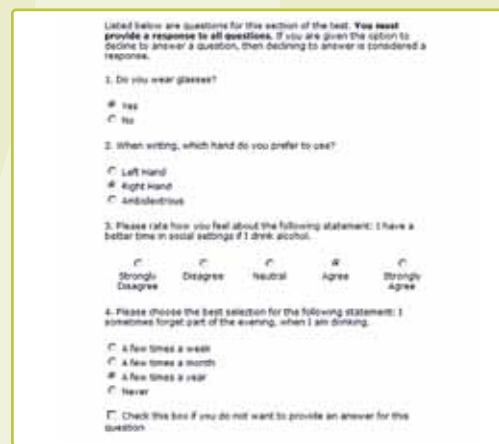
Contact us to try a free 30-day demo!

## Special Feature

# Online Pretesting

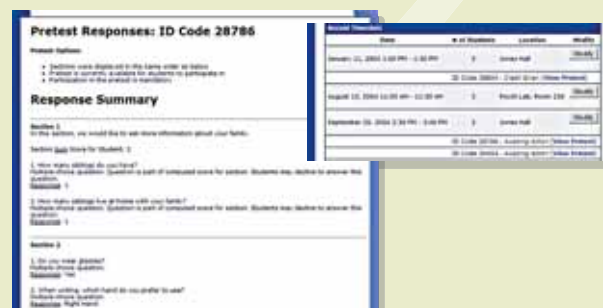
How many times has a study been delayed or even canceled after the students participating really weren't suitable subjects? With the online pretesting feature, students are screened by pretest and the system automatically enforces and ensures only qualified students can view and sign up for studies with participation restrictions. If a study requires that participants are male, wear glasses, and have at least a 3.2 on a likert scale measuring their attitude towards eating disorders, the system can enforce it.

Administrators can set up an online pretest, which students must complete before they use the system. This pretest can ask basic questions (e.g. "Do you wear glasses?") and more complex questions, including questions with likert and unidimensional scales. It also supports scores across a set of questions (useful when running a depression battery), and reverse scales.



Researchers may restrict participation in their study to students who meet certain requirements based on their responses to the system-wide pretest. Even better, students are unaware of this restriction – the system will simply not display a study to a student if they do not qualify for it. Restrictions can even be based on mean scores across a set of unidimensional scales (to account for outlier responses).

Researchers may also view the entire set of pretest responses for a student, after the student has signed up for their study.



## System Features

- Entirely web-based. Only a standard web browser is needed to use the software.
- Schools may choose to run the software on their own servers, or Sona Systems can run the software at its datacenter in Washington, DC. Sona Systems currently handles over 600,000 transactions per day for its customers at its datacenter.
- The system is easily configured by the administrator to ensure it operates using the guidelines of your university's research program.
- If enabled, instructors may login and easily produce a report of all the students in their courses and their credit completion status. They may also view what studies are available, so they can integrate that information into their lectures as part of the educational experience.

PSY101-C				
Course Report				
Name	Student ID #	Overall Credits Earned	Overall Credits Required	Credits Earned for Course
BROWN, WILL <wb@yourschool.edu>	276700008	0	3	0
GAFFIN, KRISTEN <kag@yourschool.edu>	026000015	0	3	0
ALLEN, MEHMET <mehmet@yourschool.edu>	999000075	0	3	0
COOPER, AMBER <am@yourschool.edu>	172700007	2	3	0
WONG, EUN-JIN <erj@yourschool.edu>	223700008	0	3	0
WONG, DANIEL <daw@yourschool.edu>	110700008	0	3	0
LOMBARDI, MARIA <marial@yourschool.edu>	158800015	0	3	0
CHERRY, HARRY <harry@yourschool.edu>	334800008	3	3	0
COOPER, STEPHEN <sc@yourschool.edu>	217200008	0	3	0
BROWN, AARON <abrown@yourschool.edu>	068700008	0	3	0

## About Sona Systems

Sona Systems was founded by software industry veteran Justin Fidler, to provide web-based software solutions for human subject pool management. The Experiment Management System was first released in 1997, and since then, a number of universities in the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Australia have used it daily for management of their research participation pool.

Sona Systems has its main offices in Tallinn, Estonia, in the European Union. Sona Systems was founded by an American, and the entire staff is fluent in English. Sona Systems runs its computer datacenter in Washington, DC to ensure the fastest access for its customers.

## More Information

For more information or to try a free demonstration of the software, please contact us:

Phone: **1-800-775-3772** (North America)  
**+372 56 619 349** (Outside North America)

E-mail: **sales@sona-systems.com**

Website: **http://www.sona-systems.com**

Mail: Sona Systems, Ltd.  
Uus 17-7  
10111 Tallinn  
ESTONIA

“Our faculty and students have found the system both easy to use and extremely convenient. It has replaced an antiquated paper-based signup system, eliminated 'lost' paper signups, improved student security, and has dramatically improved the speed for getting credit to students after their participation. Our students are also more likely to participate in research studies than defer to alternatives (for example, writing reports on published research).”

**John Dencoff**

Department of Psychology  
University of New Mexico

**Customer comments**