Previously in TechMatters...we explored Swipe, a simple online presentation tool that allows users to collaboratively design, add interactive elements, and share presentation slides—in real-time or asynchronously—with an audience regardless of physical location. In this installment, we’ll investigate sli.do (https://www.sli.do/), a similar tool but different in some respects, that can be used to encourage audience engagement and participation in your presentations.

Unlike Swipe, sli.do (also spelled Slido in some of their materials) is not a tool that you can use to create a presentation slide deck. Rather, it is a tool that you can use as a companion to your preferred presentation technology such as Microsoft’s PowerPoint, Apple’s KeyNote, or Prezi. Currently, it has two primary functions: it allows audience members to submit questions (anonymously or not) via their mobile device or laptop without interrupting the flow of the presentation or feeling self-conscious, and it facilitates live polling allowing for real time feedback from the audience.

Getting Started
In order to use sli.do, you need to create an account; this requires only a valid email address and a password. Alternatively, you can sign-up using your existing Google or EventBrite account. Intended for use at large conference events, sli.do offers a range of paid service levels but the “Basic” level is free, allows for up to 1000 participants and 3 polls per “event” and so should be more than sufficient for most presentation or classroom uses. That being said, accounts at this level do not allow for question moderation (aka the ability to reject certain questions before they become live to the audience) or the option to require a password for someone to access the event. If you need these features, consider the “Edu” plan, which is available for $19.90/month or $99/year.

Creating an Event
In order to use sli.do during a presentation, you must first create an "event" and then provide an event name (e.g., LOEX Test), a start and end date, and a city/location; alternatively, you can import an event from EventBrite (a popular online event organizing site). You will then be prompted to choose an event code (e.g., #LOEXTest—be sure to use something more descriptive than the random, numeric event code auto-generated by sli.do) which you will eventually share with your audience to allow them to join the event on their device.

Taking Questions
One of the primary purposes of the sli.do application is to encourage audience members to ask questions during your presentation without disrupting the flow, while also reducing the hesitation that some might feel speaking up in a public forum. In order to do so, presenters must instruct audience members to go to the slido.com web site on their devices and then enter the event code that was created during event setup. This will take users to a page (see Figure 1) where they will be prompted to “Ask the speaker” a question. The questioner types in his/her question and then asks it by hitting the “Send” button; the questioner has the option to provide a name, or they can choose to stay “anonymous.” As questions are asked, they will appear on each & every user’s screen, and others can vote them up if they have the same question. As the presenter, you can view all of the questions received from within the admin interface.

Polling the Audience
Like Swipe, sli.do allows you to conduct live polling of your audience during your presentation. Remember: with a Basic account, you are limited to three polls per event.
Polls are created from within the admin dashboard, by selecting the “Polls” option from the menu and pressing the “Create” button. You will then be prompted to enter your question and select its type. The options are multiple choice; open text (open question); and rating (stars).

When you are ready to conduct your poll, you simply choose the “Activate” option from within the admin dashboard. Once you do so, the poll question will appear to your audience members under the “Polls” tab on the event page and they will be able to select and submit their response. If you opted to see results when you activated the poll, the results will begin to appear in real-time on your screen (see Figure 2) and also the audience’s screen. If you switch to the “Present view” tab, you will find a nicely formatted results slide that you can customize the look and feel of and show “Fullscreen” if you wish to share the results on the projector screen with your audience.

Monitoring Twitter Activity

In addition to its core question submission and polling features, sli.do also offers presenters the ability to allow the audience to use their personal device to tweet directly from the sli.do event page. To enable this option, go to the “Features” menu, check the “Twitter” feature, and enter the hashtag for your event (alternatively, go to “Event settings” menu and then go to “Integration” to turn “Twitter” on).

Once this is selected by the admin, a “Social” option will become an available selection for attendees on their menu, which will open a new screen (see Figure 3). The Tweet field will be prepopulated with your event hashtag (e.g., #LOEXTest), and users will see a character countdown as they type. Upon hitting the “Send” button, users are prompted to connect with their Twitter account in order to post the tweet. On the same screen, they will see all of the incoming event tweets in real time.

Just as with questions and polls, the presenter is able to view the incoming audience tweets from within the administrator interface. Again, moderation of tweets is only available to those with a paid sli.do account. For users of the free version, all tweets are automatically live and visible.

Live Slides

Although not currently possible outside of a private beta, sli.do is developing a live screen sharing functionality similar to Swipe that will allow presenters to stream PowerPoint, PDF, video files or Prezi presentations to audience members’ devices in real-time. Currently, sli.do users can request access to the private beta, although the likelihood of being selected as a participant is unclear.

According to information on the sli.do blog, (http://blog.sli.do/introducing-live-slides-the-simplest-way-to-share-presentations-in-real-time/), presenters must download and install an application on their computer.
(Windows only) in order to stream presentations. Potentially one of the most useful features of this new application from the audience member perspective is the ability to bookmark slides during the presentation. At the conclusion of the event, each participant will receive an email containing all of their bookmarked slides for future reference.

Conclusion

Adding interactivity to a presentation, whether in the classroom or at a conference, is a tried and true method for engaging your audience and holding their attention. Welcoming audience questions, inviting feedback, and gauging opinions are all effective methods of achieving these goals. Fortunately, sli.do is an easy-to-use, freely available, online tool that makes adding each of these types of interactive elements to presentations a straightforward and simple process.

Third Graffiti Wall:
What's Your Favorite Spot in the Library?
September 2015

Because our building is tricky to navigate, with limited signage, this wall served dual purposes. The wall would be a study of where students gravitated with no navigational help. Because the building is so large there is no spot that could be called an obviously favorite among students. This wall was also done purposefully at the beginning of the semester. Since it included photos of many areas of the library, it would serve as an advertisement of the different library spaces to new students.

The survey garnered 104 dot answers and 9 write-in answers. The Music section, located on the mezzanine, was the surprising winner. While Music is a large program on campus, students I talked to later who preferred the music area were not music students. What are students finding there that they are not finding in other parts of the library? The Music mezzanine offers easy access to the rest of the library, but is removed from the noisiest and busiest areas. This information can also be used as justification to invest more in this space, such as new furniture and carpeting.

A fourth wall, October 2014’s “What Is Your Favorite Website?” is not discussed here as its results, while interesting, were not actionable.

Applications of Survey Results: Effects on Library Orientation and more

As with any survey, you want to turn the answers into actions. The results of the graffiti walls assisted in understanding library wayfinding, revision of floor maps, bro-

Figure 3: Send and monitor Tweets in sli.do

Figure 3: September 2015 Wall results