Cloud-based Participant Pool Management Software

An effective system for improving and increasing research productivity.

www.sona-systems.com
Who uses Sona Systems?

**Student Participants**
To gain research experience and complete course requirements.

**Instructors**
To track their students’ research experience.

**Faculty Researchers**
To effectively administer and manage research.

**Student Researchers**
To conduct research, manage participants, and analyze data.

**Research Coordinators**
To improve department-wide productivity and compliance.

**Common Challenges**

Administering, collecting, and analyzing participant research and earned credits effectively.

Prescreening participants to ensure they are qualified or haven’t already participated in a similar study.

Encouraging students or other outside parties to sign up and participate in studies.

Organizing mass amounts of research meta data in a centralized location.

Scheduling studies and managing them with relative ease and simplicity.

Meeting the ethics compliance standards.

Sona Systems is the leader in participant pool management software, serving over 900 universities in more than 25 countries and 6 continents. Our customers are large and small institutions, including all of the top 50 universities in the U.S.

**Spend Less Time Managing People and More Time Doing Research**
People at today’s universities across the world are challenged with the inability to administer research, manage participant information, and automate research activity accurately and effectively. Sona Systems understands this challenge and is here to help.

Sona Systems’ cloud-based participant pool management solution is the leading-edge platform for helping people administer full-scale research, provide quality user-experience, and access participation information or study schedules anywhere in the world, from an array of web accessible devices.

**Paperless, Cloud-Based Research Administration**
The days of bulletin boards and sign up sheets are over. Sona Systems’ sophisticated participant pool management solution eliminates the need for traditional paper methods by virtually integrating every function of the research administration process online.

From the participant sign up process and prescreening, to the automating of email communications and real-time research reporting, Sona Systems provides a solid foundation for enhancing student engagement. Put an end to shuffling papers, and get your research moving in the right direction quickly and efficiently.
Catalyze university research with specially designed software

Schools that switch to our software from a paper-based system typically see overall participation rates increase by 25-50% and no-show rates drop to below 5%.

Simplified Research Administration
Our innovative software is designed to promote a seamless user-experience, allowing researchers to schedule studies and begin recruiting people to participate in studies quickly and effectively. Sona Systems provides maximum flexibility, allowing researchers to:

- Set up studies with special requirements or prerequisites (Fig. 2)
- Restrict eligibility for studies based on a participant’s course enrollment
- Manage credit or monetary compensation for participating in research
- Opt-in to receiving notifications whenever participants sign up or cancel
- Link to other cloud-based, third-party applications such as Qualtrics or SurveyMonkey

![Fig. 1](image1.png) The easy-to-use administrator home screen and interface.

![Fig. 2](image2.png) Studies can be set up with various restrictions or requirements.

Secure Cloud Access for Everyone—No IT Required
Users of the system are able to log into their account with a unique URL given to them during setup. All users need to do is type this URL into their web browser, log in, and be directed to their personal Sona Systems user page. All information is safely secured (read Ethical Compliance With All Major Regulations on page 6) and managed by certified IT professionals. Sona Systems improves accessibility, allowing users to:

- Track progress of research and participation remotely from the cloud and stay continually updated
- Easily access their account online through a custom-created URL

Administrators
Researchers
Instructors
Participants

Cloud-accessible from any device with unique URL

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Web, Mobile, and Tablet Accessible for Off-Campus Participation
Sona Systems provides free, specially developed apps for Apple and Android devices. We’ve designed these apps for participants on the go, so no matter where they’re at, they’ll have direct Sona Systems access. All participants need to do is download our app onto their favorite device, and open the app. Users can then view, participate in, or monitor their research activity with ease. Participants also have the option of utilizing the web feature on their device if they decide not to use our app. Sona Systems extends research functionality to mobile devices, enabling participants to:

- Instantly engage in research activity and view ongoing studies as they become available
- View research schedules, sign up for research, and track personal progress remotely
- Participate in studies, manage profiles, and view their credits

Advanced Online Prescreening
One of the key features Sona Systems provides is the prescreen function, enabling administrators to set up customized questionnaires to ensure only qualified participants can view and sign up for studies (Fig. 3). The prescreen may include various measures, batteries, and inventories, and can even compute sum or mean scores for across a set of measures. Researchers can then restrict participation in their studies to only those with specific attitudes, biases, or conditions, based on prescreen responses. The system will hide or display studies for eligible participants based on these restrictions. Sona Systems offers advanced online prescreening to:

- Eliminate selection bias as participants are unaware of prescreen restrictions on a study
- Establish whether there are sufficient qualified participants in the pool to make data collection worthwhile
- Set up specialized studies with specific qualifications and conditions for sign up
- Understand participants through easy access to participant prescreen data before and after the study (Fig. 4)
Credit Management
Sona Systems allows researchers to assign and set up credits efficiently (Fig. 5). Researchers can view a list of people who sign up for their study and are able to administer (or not administer) credit based on participation. The system also allows administrators to establish the number of credits needed for a participant to successfully complete their course study. Administrators and instructors can evenly go as far as granting special non-study credit to students who complete an alternative assignment, such as a research paper or advanced project. Managing credits allows users to:

- Have full control over credit allocation—assigning or indicating who did not attend (Fig. 6)
- Run participant reports and easily make assessment of participation performance
- Give non-study credits for participants who complete research alternatives
- See a list of students enrolled in their course and their credits

Advanced Reporting
The software generates an extensive array of reports (Fig. 7), allowing the administrator to monitor overall system usage, such as open timeslots or number of credits granted. Administrators can also produce specialized reports, including no-show rates, prescreen completion rates, and usage of the pool by researchers. All data may be downloaded at any time in CSV format so it can be imported into another program (like Excel) for further analysis. Sona Systems offers the power of reporting, so research coordinators can:

- Monitor the performance of their participant pools, and make informed decisions
- Monitor overall pool utilization, to ensure there are sufficient research opportunities available
- Export data in CSV format to be further analyzed or visualized


![Fig. 5 View specific timeslots, grant and revoke credits.](image1)

![Fig. 6 View timeslots across all of a researcher’s studies, and manage credits.](image2)

![Fig. 7 Pull basic or detailed reports about pool usage, including how many credits each participant earned for their course.](image3)
“The rates of incompletes in the semester after we started using [Sona Systems’] Experiment Management System dropped to under 5% as compared to incomplete rates of around 20% using pencil-and-paper sign ups. In addition, research participation easily doubled as compared to students who chose alternative forms of research credit. As a research pool coordinator, I like the fact that all the features mentioned make my job so much easier and free up time for me to do what I want...research. The instructors in the department like the system because they do not have to rely on me to receive information about their students credit.”

- Martin Bink, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, University of North Texas

Survey Tool
For universities looking to conduct online survey research, Sona Systems offers a basic built-in survey tool to help researchers collect data without the need for any third-party tools. Integrated directly into the system, and designed to be simple and effective, this tool allows researchers to build their surveys quickly and effectively.

Integrated with 3rd Party Applications
We make it easy to integrate specialized research applications such as Qualtrics, SurveyMonkey, SurveyGizmo, and Inquisit with Sona Systems to help researchers further manage eligibility and track participation and performance. When a user completes a study on one of these third-party platforms, Sona Systems recognizes this, and rewards the participant with credit. Users will still be able to conduct survey research on these other platforms without experiencing any integration interference whatsoever. By offering an open and flexible system, researchers and administrators are able to:

- Spend less time tracking sign ups across multiple research platforms
- Improve research process workflow and centralize participant activity
- Easily track participation and eligibility across multiple surveys

Ethical Compliance With All Major Regulations
Sona Systems participant pool management data is safe and secure, guarded 24/7 at our datacenter facility. The system is in compliance with all major research regulations and guidelines worldwide. Sona Systems takes extra steps to protect universities across the globe by providing universities with:

- Full access control to ensure data privacy, so that researchers can only see sign ups for their own studies, and participants can never see information about other participants
- Enforcement of ethics approvals and expiration dates, to ensure studies cannot recruit participants past their approval date
- Easy reporting of participation history for archival purposes
- Electronic acknowledgments of human subject rights and privacy policy
- “Business Associate” contract provisions in our service agreement for universities needing to comply with HIPAA and HITECH
- Automatically assigned numeric ID codes to help protect student privacy
- SSL-encrypted connection between users and the system for added security
- An option for all site data to reside outside the US, in our facility in Canada, in jurisdictions where data hosting in the US is prohibited
- No-show handling options that are in compliance with OHRP guidelines
- For customers located in the EU, full compliance with EU data privacy guidelines, including certification under the EU-US Safe Harbor Framework
Uncompromised Processing Power, Backups, and Security
Sona Systems combines its vast capabilities with powerful data processing, storage and security to give global customers dedicated performance and reliability. We provide these added features to ensure users are able to access the system and conduct research without losing valuable information. The software is cloud-hosted and can be staged on our datacenters in the Washington, D.C.-metro area or can be set up in our Canadian datacenter if your data cannot legally be stored in the U.S. Sona Systems enhances the research experience, by offering:

- State-of-the-art server farm that processes more than 6 million transactions per day
- Daily and archived data backups stored in distant offsite facilities in case of unforeseen events or outages
- Servers located in secure datacenters with security guards on-site 24/7, and biometric hand-scan checkpoints at all entrances
- Datacenter facilities with multiple redundant internet feeds, and power backup provided by batteries and diesel generators

Since 2002, we’ve had more than 19 million study sign ups and continue to see this number grow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Studies Managed</th>
<th>Total Users Registered</th>
<th>Total Sign Ups Processed</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>275,003</td>
<td>7,235,837</td>
<td>21,233,375</td>
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Dedicated Customer Support
A team of certified IT professionals and staff who work a mix of U.S., E.U., and Hong Kong hours are readily available to answer questions and provide you with information to help you improve your experience with Sona Systems. We also provide complete access to our online support site, where documentation and other useful materials may be found. As a user, the benefits of combining Sona Systems research software capabilities with dedicated support are:

- The comfort and assurance that you’re in the hands of a reliable support team available to help you and your colleagues maintain a positive research experience
- The attention of a proactive team of software developers who listen to customers and innovate based on the challenges researchers face
- Quick and responsive, international email and telephone support

“Imagine nearly 8,000 student sessions, hundreds of experiments, dozens of researchers, and you sitting in the middle of a sea of paper, complaints, missed sessions, confused students, frustrated experimenters and educators, and many millions of dollars in research grants on the line for a department with a #1 nationally ranked program. Now imagine, in the span of 1 quarter, removing almost all paper and providing 24/7 access, increasing participation, greatly reducing staff time and errors, providing real-time feed-back and reporting to all concerned parties, and sailing through Human Subject approval with a turn-key system. Furthermore, imagine no server management costs, and no technical staff time needed beyond walking staff through initial setup, and you have our experience with Sona Systems.”

- Jon Hauser, Department of Psychology, University of Washington

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About Sona Systems
Sona Systems’ cloud-based participant pool management solution is the leading-edge platform for helping more than 1,000 customers in more than 25 countries administer full-scale research, provide quality user-experience, and access participation information or study schedules anywhere in the world, from an array of web accessible devices. We take great pleasure in offering a complete service at an affordable price, along with dedicated customer support.

Why Sona Systems?
• We have a 99.5% renewal rate because our only focus is university research software
• We’re trusted by the top 50 universities in the U.S. for our software capabilities
• We’re cloud-based, enabling people to access our system 24/7
• We’ve been around since 2002 and continue to experience superior growth
• We’ve made the system affordable for almost any university at any level of enrollment

Try a free demo today!
Try a free 30-day demo and experience the power of doing research with Sona Systems.

For more information about our software or to try a free 30-day demonstration to find out how Sona Systems can help you achieve your research goals, please contact us at:

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