Mechanical Turk How To Guide

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This guide walks through how to conduct a survey on Mechanical Turk. It shows how to set up the HIT (task to be completed by workers), how to create a random code at the end of your Qualtrics survey, and how to approve workers during data collection.

Setting up and Publishing a HIT:

1. Go to https://www.mturk.com/mturk/welcome and sign into your “Requester” account in the upper right hand corner. (If you are working on an independent project funded through a grant, you will need to set up your own account. If you are working on a project for Prof. Settle, ask her for the log in information you need.)

2. After signing in, click on the “Create” tab and then “New Project”
3. Click on “Survey Link” on the left side of the screen. Then click the orange “Create Project” button on the bottom right corner of the screen.

4. Now, enter properties for the project. Moving from the top of the screen to the bottom, you will need to enter a project name (appears only to you, not to the workers), title (appears to workers; try to select something that describes the task in a few words), description (kind of redundant, but describe the project briefly), and any keywords workers could search by (i.e. survey, video, etc.). It’s all pretty self explanatory on the website too.
5. Scrolling down, start setting up your HIT. Set the reward per assignment at how much you want each worker to get paid for doing your survey.

Next, for the number of assignments per HIT, select how many respondents (workers) you want to complete your survey.

The time allotted per assignment should only matter if your survey needs to be completed quickly. Otherwise you can set it at whatever you want. For the “HIT expires in” section, select how long you want to be collecting data for. Usually two weeks is plenty of time.

Finally, think about how quickly you will be able to approve workers. Generally, you will set up an authentication code for workers to type in at the end of the survey to make sure that they took it all the way through. You’ll then have to look at the code they type and match it with the code they were assigned to in order to approve them. There will be instructions for that at the end of this guide, but for now, think about how busy you are during data collection time to figure out how long it will take you to approve workers.

6. Click on “Advanced” in the bottom right corner. Then “Worker Requirements,” then select “Customize Worker Requirements…” and create the settings shown in the screenshot. Remove the Masters Qualification. Set the location to United States only if that is relevant for the content of your survey.
7. Save and advance to “Design Layout”

8. You’ll see a template with instructions. Customize the text to reflect the instructions for your survey. Paste your Qualtrics link into the “Survey link” box and leave everything else the same.

9. Save and advance to Preview. You’ll see what your HIT will look like to workers. You will see the properties you set displayed above the instructions. It will say that there are
zero HITS available on the preview, but when you launch the batch, it will show the correct amount you set.

10. Click “Finish” and then “Publish Batch”

11. Check out the preview and make sure everything looks correct. You’ll now see that it shows 1 HIT available because that is what workers will see. Click “Next” and you will see the following screen to review:

12. Click “Publish HITS” and you are collecting data!
Adding a Validation Code in Qualtrics

1. Click on “Edit Survey,” then “Survey Flow.” Click on “Add Below” on the last block and select “Web Service.”

Enter this URL: http://reporting.qualtrics.com/projects/randomNumGen.php

Then, click “add parameter to send to web service…” fill in the rest of the fields just as in the screen shot below:

2. Click on “Save Flow” and return to the Edit Survey screen. Create a new block at the end of the survey with a Descriptive Text with a statement like this: “Please make note of the following 7-digit code. You will input it through Mechanical Turk to indicate your completion of the study. Then click the button on the bottom of the page to submit your answers. You will not receive credit unless you click this button.”

Then, type WM and select “Piped Text…” then “Embedded Data Field.” Type “random” and click “insert.”
Approving Workers

1. Log into MTURK as a requestor

2. Click on the “Manage” tab. You’ll be brought to a page with all of your batches listed. On the batch you’re working on, click on “Results”
You will see a page like the one below where you can see the HIT ID, worker ID, and most importantly the Survey Code. The Survey Code should be the random code the workers saw at the end of the Qualtrics survey. To make sure they entered the right code, you need to look at the data.

3. Log into Qualtrics and download the .csv file for the project you’re working on. On the .csv, you will see a column titled “random” where you can see the random number respondents were presented with at the end of the survey.
4. Now you need to match the random numbers on the .csv to the Survey Codes on the MTURK page to make sure that workers entered the right codes. Depending on how many responses you’re working with at a time, you might want to use Command F (Mac) or Control F (PC) to search for the codes in the .csv.

5. Once you've matched the codes up, you need to approve the workers who entered accurate codes. To approve someone, just check the box next to his/her worker ID on the left side of the screen and click approve. To reject someone (if s/he entered a code that did not appear in the Qualtrics file), check the box next to his/her name and click “Reject.”