And the Survey Says...?

Developing and Delivering Questionnaires in Class Climate

A key part of your evaluation process is the evaluation forms you create to capture information. This article covers the forms infrastructure, security, and editing options available in Class Climate.

Questionnaires on Class Climate Server

Class Climate uses recognized open-source server components. The database uses MySQL (MS-SQL available). The web server uses Apache (or IIS). Class Climate also runs on the Microsoft Windows platform to take advantage of integrated document capture and scanner control components.

Class Climate is a web-based solution. There are several ways to host it:
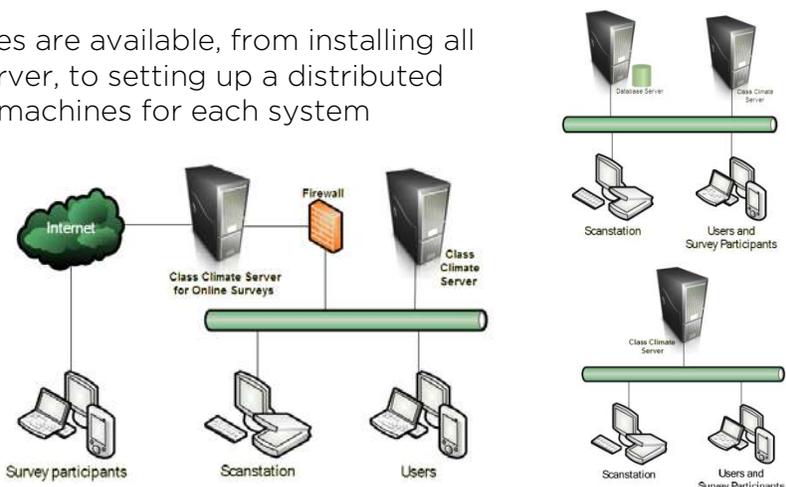- On our cloud servers
- On our dedicated, managed servers
- On your web server(s)

Our Professional Services team is ready to help you get set up on any of these options (see the Product Training, Implementation, and Professional Services brochure for a complete list of the services we can provide). If you choose to host your own server, they can help you integrate the Class Climate server into an existing IT landscape in just a few hours. After you determine access rights, each authorized user can then work with Class Climate independent of his or her local operating system.

The PDF questionnaires and reports generated by Class Climate are compliant to PDF/A-1 and are therefore suitable for document archiving.

The user interface, especially the online survey pages, complies with industry standard accessibility requirements and also supports screen readers.

Five different installation types are available, from installing all components onto a single server, to setting up a distributed environment with dedicated machines for each system component. All Class Climate components can run in service mode; only the scan station must be installed on a work station to allow scanning questionnaires.

Data Security

From the very beginning Class Climate has focused on implementing data security guidelines while taking individual university regulations into consideration.

NOTE: Some security settings can be protected so that only certain roles can make changes in Class Climate. Work with our implementation team to configure these options to conform with the data protection rules of your institution.

Access to the Class Climate server is controlled by a filter admitting only those who

belong to the network (for example limiting the user group to those with valid IP addresses within the organization).

In addition to this technical gateway restricting access, each user has a user name/password combination. Communication with the Class Climate server takes place using a high-quality encrypted connection, protecting student privacy. Advanced security features like Captchas protect Class Climate against automated attacks.

What about how students respond?

Scantron provides a variety of ways to deliver surveys so that students feel their feedback is confidential. Regardless of the delivery method you choose, response data is stored in the central database, protected by Class Climate's security settings as described above.

Paper surveys

The best method to deliver paper surveys is for instructors to receive an envelope with instructions, a cover sheet (if you choose that method) and questionnaires.

Instructors hand out the paper questionnaires in class and give the envelope and the cover sheet with instructions to a student. That student—*not the instructor*—collects the completed questionnaires, counts them, and seals them in the envelope.[1] The student then takes the envelope to the mail office or to the evaluation center.

Students see this procedure as preserving confidentiality, as possible abuse is prevented (sorting out questionnaires with low scores, trying to identify handwriting of students, etc.).

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[1] You can purchase envelopes from Scantron that are pre-configured with a window to show the form header for easy visual reference.

Mobile/online surveys

When you conduct mobile/online surveys, obviously instructors do not receive cover sheets or questionnaires. Instead, you have several options to invite participants:

- **PSWD cards**
  Instructors receive a list of transaction authorization codes (called PSWDs), each of which gives authorization to complete a given questionnaire in a survey. If you have chosen to use a single-password system, they receive a single PSWD.

  Instructors can print a sheet with rows of PSWDs in business card format, and then distribute the cards in class. A PSWD card contains all the relevant information, such as course title, access URL and code. This prevents possible confusion when a student has a number of PSWD cards. Students find this "fishbowl approach" especially trust-building, as it makes it impossible to discover the identity of participants in the survey.

- **Email**
  If email addresses for class members are available, then you can send PSWDs to students via batch mailing. Also, you can set up and send timers for invitations, reminders, and survey closure with report submission in advance. The system is then able to run scheduled events automatically.

- **Mobile Devices**
  All Class Climate's online surveys are already "smart"; that is, they can identify what device is being used to access them and adjust the display automatically. PSWD cards (described above) can include a QR code that students can snap to go directly to their protected survey, or they can click the invitation link in their device's email reader.

- **LMS Links**
  If you are using an LMS, you can work with Scantron to configure a widget to connect Class Climate to the LMS interface. When students log in, they will immediately see a list of links to evaluations they need to complete. As they complete each evaluation, that link disappears from the list.

NOTE: As some surveys can be quite long, Class Climate enables respondents to save their responses, so they can continue the questionnaire later.

Hybrid Surveys

Hybrid surveys enable you to let students determine which type of response they prefer. There are different methods to distribute hybrid invitations:

- **Send an invitation to participate in the survey via e-mail.**
  This invitation includes a link to the online evaluation and an attached PDF questionnaire. The student can either click the link and complete the evaluation or print the PDF and fill out the form. Then the student can return the form to the instructor or to some other identified location, such as the department office.
- **Distribute paper questionnaires in class to students.**
  The questionnaire must include the URL and a PSWD (or a QR code for mobile participants) for the online evaluation.

If a student already participated in the online evaluation but still returns the paper form, the paper response is automatically excluded from survey results. If the student returned the paper form and it has been scanned, then tries to complete the online evaluation, the online response is automatically excluded from results.

Questionnaire Editing Options

Creating and editing questionnaires is simple and easy. Use the Question Library to include pre-defined, commonly used questions, or create specific questions for each evaluation. Group questions by topic and include design elements to brand questionnaires to your institution's look and feel. Class Climate provides two key ways to create and edit questionnaires. Either option helps you create attractive, usable forms for online and mobile, print, or hybrid delivery methods.

VividForms Editor (included)

The VividForms Editor provides a browser-based environment for creating questionnaires and enables you to put together a complete questionnaire within minutes. You simply decide the question types and their content—Class Climate generates the layout automatically.

Evaluation coordinators can use the VividForms Editor to create templates that lecturers can supplement with individual questions at a later date. A web browser enables access to the VividForms Editor and allows lecturers to expand the template by adding questions or, depending on the setting, creating completely new questionnaires.

Vivid Forms Designer (available as an add-on module)

Need a more complex design tool? Visually create complex forms using this drag-and-drop design tool. Includes predefined templates for multiple columns, free-form layout for both portrait and landscape orientation, graphical items (such as lines and images), and other advanced design options. See our [VividForms Design brochure](#) for details.

How can Scantron help?

Scantron is a long-time leader in assessment solutions and services. We've served the education market from kindergarten to professional career development for more than 40 years. Our course evaluation solution, Class Climate, provides the best in course and instructor evaluations, and delivers broad-based survey functionality as well.

Class Climate provides world-class support for course evaluations. It's built-in structure mimic department and course structure for most institutions—and can be customized to fit as necessary. Libraries make it easy to design and re-use questions year-over-year for longitudinal tracking. Core questionnaires that allow for instructor customization ensure that the needs of both administration *and* individual faculty or departments are met. Automated reminders and connectors to many common learning management systems make it easy to increase and track responses. Quality dashboards provide immediate, at-a-glance quality tracking and comparison.

Class Climate provides the greatest possible degree of automation for comprehensive course evaluation. The potential value of this solution to you can be seen in these critical areas:

- **Digital document capture**
  "Scanning, not typing" means a drastic cost reduction in capturing data while minimizing errors. Within a few hours you can accurately analyze tens of thousands of survey questionnaires.
- **Instant feedback for optimum self-reflection**
  Instant feedback means a new quality in evaluation for instructors. They can reflect on the feedback and make changes while they are still involved in the on-going course. Norm reference values and comparative profile lines motivate instructors to optimize their teaching.
- **Batch processing by support with organization- and metadata**
  To systematically categorize hundreds or thousands of surveys, Class Climate imports existing data from course catalogs and faculty registers. The support provided by this metadata framework enables you to create reports, set up norm reference value data and make comparisons across subsets (programs of studies, departments, instructors, courses, etc.).

- **Organizational overview and central process control**
  Class Climate provides a kind of "process control center" for the central evaluation coordinator. This perspective can give university executive officers, as well as department heads valuable insights. Optional QM views provide a high degree of openness. "Learning from the best" is supported, as is the identification of quality weaknesses.
- **Empowerment**
  Class Climate provides both decentral, instructor-oriented surveys using active survey accounts as well as central evaluations. Both procedures can be combined, yielding interesting possibilities such as giving university service organizations their own survey accounts (e.g. cafeteria, administration, library). And Class Climate can resolve the issue of ensuring relevance of centrally conducted course evaluations to a particular discipline. Faculty members are systematically involved and instructors with active accounts using the VividForms questionnaire designer can evaluate any aspect of the courses they are interested in—internet access is all it takes.

Class Climate provides specific advantages for everyone in the organization involved in evaluation:

- **Students** can expect that their judgments are analyzed and forwarded to their instructors quickly. Class Climate also takes security issues for students seriously. Class Climate promotes the dialog between teacher and student.
- **Instructors** spend a minimum amount of time and receive optimum feedback for self-reflection. Class Climate enables them to supplement the survey with their own individual questions. They receive reports that enable them to compare themselves with other reference groups.
- **University executive officers** establish an efficient service infrastructure and emphasize the service aspect of the central evaluation. University executives can also show that they take the needs, and anxieties, that often accompany an evaluation seriously.
- **The Computer Center** appreciates the web-based approach, which means that a client installation is not needed. As a result, the university-wide roll-out is smooth and trouble-free. Security and data protection aspects are high priorities for Class Climate. In addition, we offer hosting services for institutions who prefer to leave the IT work to us.
- **Third parties**: Student organizations, the administration, thesis students, research project members, PhD students, library, cafeteria—Class Climate is a web service that can be used anywhere in the organization where survey data needs to be gathered. Departments of social science especially appreciate this sophisticated mechanism for survey data capturing.

Class Climate users have been involved in its development from the very beginning. The requirements originated in practice and were decisive in developing the features that Class Climate now provides. Users of the system provide feedback on features, requests, and ideas for improvement are discussed intensively and have led to the

development of standard software for course evaluation. This can also be seen in the detailed product documentation, training materials and coherent support concept.

Scantron's Professional Services team is here to help!

- **Professional development** enables you and your staff to navigate the software and interpret the results more effectively. Scantron Corporation has a fully staffed corporate development department through which we offer an array of product training and staff development classes and seminars for Class Climate. The team is dedicated to building capacity for change within organizations and institutions through a series of training and consulting activities.
- Get your first evaluation or survey project up and running faster with Scantron **Implementation Services**. We provide dedicated experts with extensive experience in course evaluation management to help you implement your system and begin processing your surveys quickly and efficiently for a more rapid return on investment. The Scantron implementation team works with you to create a manageable schedule customized to ensure your success in the evaluation process. Depending on your needs, consultations can be performed onsite or via the phone or web.
- Scantron offers a wide array of **Professional Services** to customize, enhance, and support your Class Climate capabilities. Save yourself time by letting Scantron do the work for you. We listen to your needs and then work with you to create the applications you require.

Scantron's world-class **Print Services** are available to print your custom forms and fulfill your large-volume needs with mailing and data processing services.

Whatever the evaluation or survey assistance you need, Scantron has the products, tools, services, and expertise to help you ensure that you have the right program for your students. Our web-based software, combined with our length and breadth of experience, help you get the most out of your evaluations and results. Contact us today and see how Scantron can meet you where you are and help you get to where you want to be.

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