



USING MECHANICAL TURK WITH PSITURK

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Roadmap

- What is psiTurk?
- Setting up psiTurk
- Running psiTurk
- Structure of a psiTurk project
- JavaScript psiTurk commands
- Extracting / dealing with data
- Exercises

WHAT IS PSITURK?

What is psiTurk?



- Wrapper around Mechanical Turk for psychological studies
- Handles database management, web serving, counterbalancing, worker / HIT management
- Allows you to run experiments from your own computer

Why use psiTurk?

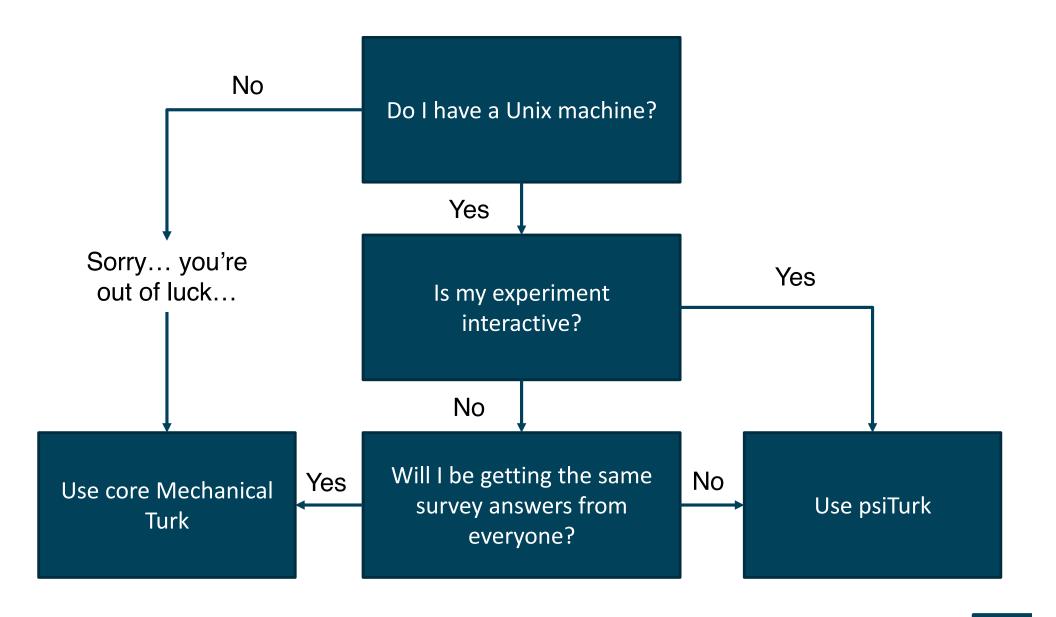
Pros

- Runs locally; don't have to worry about web backend (hosting / database)
- Better worker management (approvals, exclusions, etc.)
- Don't need to build web-based counterbalancing logic
- Easy interface with Mechanical Turk

Cons

- Some JavaScript / HTML knowledge & scripting required
- Only Unix-based (Mac / Linux)
- For local running, can require some configuration with your home / university network (e.g., at MBL)

Should I be using psiTurk?



SETTING UP PSITURK

Setting up psiTurk

- Make sure you have python (v2.x) and pip installed (see https://pip.pypa.io/en/stable/installing/)
 - If on a Mac, install C compiler (e.g., Xcode from AppStore)
- In a terminal, run "pip install psiturk"
- Optional (needed for posting experiments, not tutorial):
 - Get a Mechanical Turk account
 - Get a psiTurk account
- For more details:

http://psiturk.readthedocs.io/en/latest/install.html

Getting a Mechanical Turk account

- Make an Amazon Web Services account @ https://aws.amazon.com/ (NOTE: requires a credit card & phone number)
- Get account keys:
 - Go to the AWS Management Console @ https://console.aws.amazon.com/iam/home?#security_credential
 - Open the Access Keys tab
 - Click the "Create New Access Key" button
 - Open the ".psiturkconfig" file in your home directory (may be hidden, or you may need to create it)
 - Copy those keys into the relevant ".psiturkconfig" fields
- Make Mechanical Turk Requester account
 - Go to https://requester.mturk.com/
 - Click on "Create an Account" and enter the same email you used for AWS
 - Go to https://requester.mturk.com/developer, click "Link your AWS Account" and log in with your AWS credentials
 - Repeat those steps on the Sandbox at https://requestersandbox.mturk.com/
- For more details: http://psiturk.readthedocs.io/en/latest/amt_setup.html

Getting a psiTurk account

Make a psiTurk account @ https://psiturk.org/register
 (note: requires lead time to get an invite)

- Get account keys:
 - Log in to the psiTurk account page @ https://psiturk.org/login
 - Select the dropdown menu under your email address (top right side), and select "API keys"
 - Copy those keys into the relevant ".psiturkconfig" fields
- For more details:

http://psiturk.readthedocs.io/en/latest/psiturk_org_setup.html

RUNNING PSITURK

Running psiTurk

 Type 'psiturk' in the terminal once you have entered the cbmm-psiturk-exercise folder

Server status (must be on to run experiments)

```
No. of active HITs

[psiTurk server:off mode:sdbx #HITs:0]$

Sandbox (debugging) vs. live mode
```

Trying out your experiment

Start up the server

> server on

Post a debug link / start in browser

> debug

Try this out (but don't do the experiment just yet)!

Posting your experiment (sandbox)

- Create a HIT
 - Arguments: Number of workers, reward, time limit

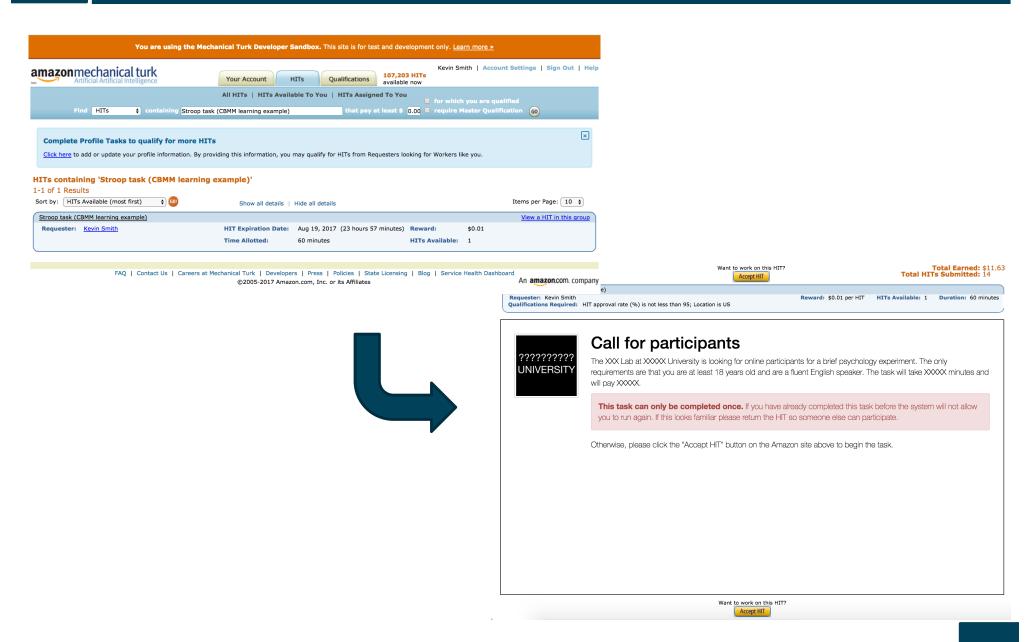
> hit create 5 1.00 1

Show your HITs

> hit list

```
Stroop task (CBMM learning example)
Status: Assignable
HITid: 3IYI9285WSKI3P26ILJH3DBYC5ZCJL
max:5/pending:0/complete:0/remain:5
Created:2017-08-16T18:45:14Z
Expires:2017-08-17T18:45:14Z
```

Appearance on the Sandbox



Live-posting your experiment

First, switch to live mode and (re)start the server:

```
[psiTurk server:off mode:sdbx #HITs:0]$
> mode
> server on

[psiTurk server:on mode:live #HITs:0]$
```

Then any HIT you make will be posted to the live server

> hit create 5 1.00 1

Worker management

- Terminology:
 - Worker ID: a unique identifier for each worker
 - HIT ID: a unique identifier for each HIT
 - Assignment ID: an identifier for one worker doing one HIT (used for approving / bonuses)
- Find the workers who performed your task

```
> worker list --hit <HIT ID>
```

NOTE: you need to be in 'live' mode to review live HITs

Approving (paying) workers

By individual

```
> worker approve < Assignment ID>
```

For everyone in a HIT

```
> worker approve --hit <HIT ID>
```

Providing a bonus

```
> worker bonus --amount <$$$> <Assignment ID>
```

Getting your data

Download it from the database

> download_datafiles

- Makes the following files:
 - trialdata.csv: structured trial data
 - questiondata.csv: unstructured event data
 - eventdata.csv: captures users' browser events (resizing windows, bringing others to front, etc.)

Final useful function

See the money you have in your MTurk account

> amt_balance

Note: only works in live mode (shows \$10k in sandbox)

STRUCTURE OF A PSITURK PROJECT

Structure of a psiTurk project

- config.txt configuration for:
 - Experiment metadata for MTurk website
 - Restrictions on workers (location / browser)
 - Number of conditions / counterbalancing
 - Information on server / database
- templates stores HTML files for experiment
- static stores other files (JavaScript, images, css, etc.)
- Other (advanced):
 - participants.db
 - config.py
 - server.log

Configuration file

```
config.txt ~
[HIT Configuration]
title = Stroop task (CBMM learning example)
description = Judge the color of a series of words.
amt keywords = Perception, Psychology
lifetime = 24
us only = true
approve_requirement = 95
contact_email_on_error = youremail@gmail.com
ad group = Default psiTurk Stroop Example
psiturk keywords = stroop, learning
organization_name = CBMM Summer School
browser_exclude_rule = MSIE, mobile, tablet
[Database Parameters]
database_url = sqlite:///participants.db
table name = cbmmdemo
[Server Parameters]
host = localhost
port = 22362
cutoff_time = 30
logfile = server.log
loglevel = 2
debug = true
login_username = examplename
login_pw = examplepassword
threads = auto
secret_key = 'this is my secret key which is hard to quess,
i should change this'
#certfile = <path_to.crt>
#keyfile = <path_to.key>
[Task Parameters]
experiment code version = 1.0
num\ conds = 1
num_counters = 1
[Shell Parameters]
launch_in_sandbox_mode = true
# If you are not using the psiturk ad server, set
`use_psiturk_ad_server` to `false` and point `ad_location`
to your proxy server <host> and <port>. Format the
ad location like this:
    https://<host>:<port>/ad
use psiturk ad server = true
ad_location = false
```

Title, description, contact info & exclusion criteria

Database info (no need to change by default, except table name)

Server info (only need to change host to "0.0.0.0" by default)

Condition / counterbalance info

Linking info (no need to change by default)

Important HTML files

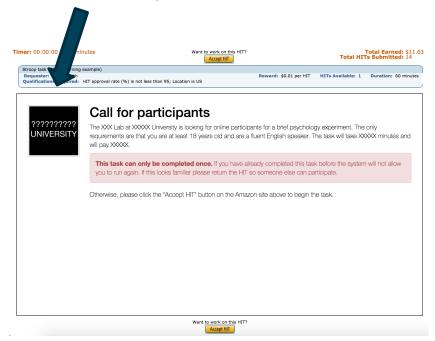
- ad.html: The first thing Workers will see when they click on your experiment in Mechanical Turk (not seen in debug)
- consent.html: The consent agreement this is determined by your IRB
- instructions/*: Individual pages for text / images to introduce the experiment
- exp.html / stage.html: The pages that contains the HTML your code will work on and loads the JavaScript (including psiTurk)
- postquestionnaire.html: Instructions after the experiment for getting feedback (ratings, forms, etc.)

ad.html

```
<div id="container-not-an-ad" class="media">
    <div class="media-left pull-left" href="#">
               <img id="adlogo" src="{{ server_location }}/static/images/university.png" alt="Lab Logo" />
   <div class="media-body">
                   {% if assignmentid == "ASSIGNMENT ID NOT AVAILABLE" %}
                       <h1>Call for participants</h1>
                           The XXX Lab at XXXXX University is looking for online participants
                           for a brief psychology experiment. The only requirements
                           are that you are at least 18 years old and are a fluent English
                           speaker. The task will take XXXXX minutes and will pay XXXXX.
                       <div class="alert alert-danger">
                           <strong>This task can only be completed once.
                           If you have already completed this task before the system will not
                           allow you to run again. If this looks familiar please return the
                           HIT so someone else can participate.
                           above to begin the task.
                   {% else %}
                       <h1>Thank you for accepting this HIT!</h1>
                          By clicking the following URL link, you will be taken to the experiment,
                           including complete instructions and an informed consent agreement.
                       <script type="text/javascript">
                              popup = window.open('{{ server_location }}/consent?hitId={{ hitid }}&assignmentId=
                       <div class="alert alert-warning">
                          <b>Warning</b>: Please disable pop-up blockers before continuing.
```

Edit this part

Change university.png in static/images for this picture



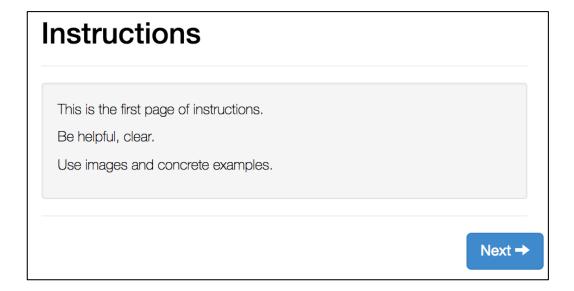
consent.html

```
<title>Psychology Experiment - Informed Consent Form</title>
<link rel="stylesheet" href="/static/css/bootstrap.min.css" type="text/css" />
<link rel="stylesheet" href="/static/css/style.css" type="text/css" />
<script type="text/javascript">
   function onexit() {
<div id="container-consent">
   <div id="consent">
      <div class="legal well">
          You have been invited to take part in a research study named BLAH BLAH
                                                                                                      Edit this part
          please decline the HIT. This requester doesn't know what they are doing.
          <button type="button" class="btn btn-default btn-sm" onClick="window.print();">
          <span class="glyphicon glyphicon-print"></span> Print a copy of this
      <h4>Do you understand and consent to these terms?</h4>
          <button type="button" class="btn btn-primary btn-lg" onClick="window.location='/exp?hitId={{ hi</pre>
               
      
          <button type="button" class="btn btn-danger btn-lg" onClick="onexit()">
          <span class="glyphicon glyphicon-ban-circle"></span> No thanks, I do not want to do this HIT
                                               We need your consent to proceed
                                                  You have been invited to take part in a research study named BLAH BLAH
                                                  Put your consent form here. If you are a worker and are viewing this please decline the HIT. This requester doesn't know
                                                  what they are doing.
                                                    Print a copy of this
                                                Do you understand and consent to these terms?
                                                                                                  O No thanks, I do not want to do this HIT
                                                                 ✓ I agree
```

Instructions

```
<div id="container-instructions">
   <h1>Instructions</h1>
   <div class="instructions well">
          This is the first page of instructions.
          Be helpful, clear.
          Use images and concrete examples.
       <script type="text/javascript">
   </div>
   <hr />
   <div class="instructionsnav">
       <div class="row">
           <div class="col-xs-2">
          <div class="col-xs-8">
           <div class="col-xs-2">
              <button type="button" id="next" value="next" class="btn btn-pr</pre>
              Next <span class="glyphicon glyphicon-arrow-right"></span>
```

Edit this part



Plus in Javascript (task.js file), set the pages to use:

```
var instructionPages = [ // add as a list as many pages as you like
    "instructions/instruct-1.html",
    "instructions/instruct-2.html",
    "instructions/instruct-3.html",
    "instructions/instruct-ready.html"
};
```

postquestionnaire.html

```
<h1>Task Complete</h1>
You are finished! Thank you for your contributions to science. You will be eligible for full payment.
<div class="instructions well">
       <form id="postquiz" action="debrief" method="post">
              <div class="row question">
                    <div class="col-md-4">
                                 coption value="10">10 - Very engaging</prior>
coption value="10">10 - Very engaging</prior>
coption value="0">5</pri>
coption value="0">5</pri>
coption value="0">7</pri>
coption</pr>
coption
                                   <option value="5" SELECTED>5 - Moderately</option>
                                 <option value="1">1</option>
<option value="0">0 - Not engaged</option>
              <div class="row question">
                         On a scale of 1-10 (where 10 is the most difficult), please rate how <b>DIFFICULT</b>
                                 coption value="10">
coption value="10">
coption value="10">
coption value="0">
coption value="0"
                                   <option value="5" SELECTED>5 - Moderately difficult/option>
                                  <option value="0">0 - Not difficult at all
```

Change these questions / options as needed – any 'select' or 'textarea' element will have its responses recorded as unstructured data if you use the default Questionnaire code

end of a question	Task Complete				
<hr/>					
<pre><div class="instructionsnav"></div></pre>	You are finished! Thank you for your contributions to science. You will be eligible for full payment once you answer the following questions.				
<pre><div class="row"></div></pre>	On a scale of 1-10 (where 10 is the most engaged), please rate how ENGAGING you found the learning task: 5 - Moderately				
<pre><div class="col-xs-3"></div></pre>	On a scale of 1-10 (where 10 is the most difficult), please rate how DIFFICULT you found the learning task: 5 - Moderately difficult \$				

JAVASCRIPT PSITURK COMMANDS

Flow of Stroop task.js

- 1. Set up psiTurk and load data / stimuli (lines 8-73)
- 2. Run instructions then continue to the main experiment (lines 238-243)
- 3. Build a StroopExperiment object (lines 75-172) that:
 - Loads the 'stage.html'
 - Runs through each of the stimuli on that stage and waits for keypress
 - Records data
- 4. Calls the Questionnaire, then finish the experiment (lines 179-230)

Important psiTurk.js functions

- Setup / shut-down:
 - psiTurk = new PsiTurk(…) (line 8)
 - psiTurk.preloadPages() (lines 14-24)
 - psiTurk.completeHIT() (line 223)
- Instructions:
 - psiTurk.doInstructions(...) (lines 238-243)
- Saving data:
 - psiTurk.recordUnstructuredData(key, value) (line 77)
 - psiTurk.recordTrialData(data) (lines 128-135)
 - psiTurk.saveData(...) (line 220)

psiTurk.js: Setup

- Setting up / shutting down:
 - Initialize psiTurk (lines 7-8)

```
7  // Initalize psiturk object
8  var psiTurk = new PsiTurk(uniqueId, adServerLoc, mode);
```

Preload pages that you will be using (lines 14-24)

End and return to Mechanical Turk (line 223)

```
psiTurk.completeHIT();
```

psiTurk.js: Instructions

- Displaying instructions:
 - Tell psiTurk which pages to use (lines 26-31)

```
var instructionPages = [ // add as a list as many pages as you like
    "instructions/instruct-1.html",
    "instructions/instruct-2.html",
    "instructions/instruct-3.html",
    "instructions/instruct-ready.html"
];
```

Run the instructions, then start the expt. (lines 238-43)

psiTurk.js: Saving data

- Saving data:
 - Recording unstructured data (line 77)

```
psiTurk.recordUnstructuredData("mode", mode);

A B C

1 A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO difficulty 10
2 A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO engagement 0
3 A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO mode sandbox
```

Recording trial data (lines 128-135):

A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO 8 1.5031E+12 {"rt": 784, "hit": true, "color": "blue", "relation": "congruent", "phase": "TEST", "word": "BLUE", "response": "blue"}

Saving data to the database (lines 220-226):

```
psiTurk.saveData({
    success: function(){
        psiTurk.computeBonus('compute_bonus', function() {
            psiTurk.completeHIT(); // when finished saving
        });
    },
    error: prompt_resubmit});
```

Extra variables set by default

- uniqueld: The AssignmentID
- condition: The condition randomly assigned (maximum set in config.txt; zero-indexed)
- counterbalance: As above for counterbalancing
- adServerLoc: Passed to psiTurk object so it knows how to return to Mechanical Turk
- mode: String that is either "live", "sandbox", or "debug" depending on how the experiment is accessed

EXTRACTING / DEALING WITH DATA

Extracting your data

trialdata.csv (use parse_trialdata.py for nicer version)

```
1 | A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO | 0 | 1.5031E+12 | ("phase": "INSTRUCTIONS", "templates": ["instructions/instruct-1.html", "instructions/instruct-2.html", "instructions/instruct-3.html", "instructions/ins
2 | A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO | 1 | 1.5031E+12 {"phase": "INSTRUCTIONS", "indexOf": 0, "viewTime": 1181, "action": "NextPage", "template": "instructions/instruct-1.html"}
     A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO 2 1.5031E+12 {"phase": "INSTRUCTIONS", "indexOf": 1, "viewTime": 545, "action": "NextPage", "template": "instructions/instruct-2.html"}
     A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO 3 1.5031E+12 {"phase": "INSTRUCTIONS", "indexOf": 2, "viewTime": 448, "action": "NextPage", "template": "instructions/instruct-3.html"}
    A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO 4 1.5031E+12 {"phase": "INSTRUCTIONS", "indexOf": 3, "viewTime": 719, "action": "FinishInstructions", "template": "instructions/instruct-readv.html"}
 6 A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO 5 1.5031E+12 {"rt": 1358, "hit": true, "color": "green", "relation": "incongruent", "phase": "TEST", "word": "BLUE", "response": "green"
7 | A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO | 6 | 1.5031E+12 | {"rt": 1118, "hit": true, "color": "green", "relation": "congruent", "phase": "TEST", "word": "GREEN", "response": "green"}
8 A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO 7 1.5031E+12 {"rt": 855, "hit": true, "color": "blue", "relation": "incongruent", "phase": "TEST", "word": "RED", "response": "blue"}
9 A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO 8 1.5031E+12 {"rt": 784, "hit": true, "color": "blue", "relation": "congruent", "phase": "TEST", "word": "BLUE", "response": "blue"}
10 A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO 9 1.5031E+12 ("rt": 783, "hit": true, "color": "green", "relation": "unrelated", "phase": "TEST", "word": "MONKEY", "response": "green"}
11 A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO 10 1.5031E+12 {"rt": 696, "hit": true, "color": "red", "relation": "unrelated", "phase": "TEST", "word": "SHIP", "response": "red"}
12 A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO 11 1.5031E+12 {"rt": 774, "hit": true, "color": "red", "relation": "incongruent", "phase": "TEST", "word": "GREEN", "response": "red")
13 A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO 12 1.5031E+12 {"rt": 744, "hit": true, "color": "red", "relation": "congruent", "phase": "TEST", "word": "RED", "response": "red"}
14 A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO 13 1.5031E+12 {"rt": 886, "hit": true, "color": "blue", "relation": "unrelated", "phase": "TEST", "word": "ZAMBONI", "response": "blue"}
15 A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO 14 1.5031E+12 {"phase": "postquestionnaire", "status": "begin"}
16 A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO 15 1.5031E+12 {"phase": "postquestionnaire", "status": "submit"}
```

questiondata.csv

	A	В	С
1	A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO	difficulty	10
2	A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO	engagement	0
3	A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO	mode	sandbox

eventdata.csv

	Α	В	С	D	E
1	A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO	initialized	0		1.5031E+12
2	A1NF0ETG2CJCYZ:3Y5140Z9DY08PNPYVAPO0VQMA73PIO	window_resize	0	[1280, 850]	1.5031E+12

Tips for making psiTurk experiments

- Build project around psiTurk structure (consider jsPsych)
- Use psiTurk debug to iron out issues
- Test on multiple browsers
- Use the sandbox to ensure MTurk integration
- After all that, go live and get data fast!

EXERCISE

Exercise

You should be able to make the following changes to the sample code so that you can see the effects of the experiment in debug mode

- 1. Run through the experiment once in debug mode
- 2. Edit the ad & consent forms to display fake info & the CBMM logo
- 3. Make some quick, fake instructions. Use at most two instruction pages (hint: pay attention to task.js line 26)
- 4. There are two stimulus sets (task.js; lines 48-70). Edit the configuration and task.js (~line 81) to randomly choose one of these two sets. For extra credit, record the participant's condition as unstructured data
- 5. Download the data and analyze it. What was the average reaction time of people for the incongruent condition?
- 6. Extra credit: add a free-form feedback response to the post-questionnaire

PLEASE PROVIDE FEEDBACK!

scripts.mit.edu/~k2smith/teaching/cbmm_survey.html