

Online platform for faster, broader, and more collaborative experimental psychology

- **SCHEDA**
- **APPROFONDIMENTI**

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A spinout from a renowned university in the UK has successfully launched a new platform for designing and executing behavioural experiments online. Not only does it speed up research but it lifts the quality and ease of teaching. Research and educational organisations (but also industry) are invited to subscribe to the SAAS platform under commercial agreements with technical assistance to build and deploy their own experiments.

Studying complex behaviour shouldn't be complex. Researchers and students in applied and experimental psychology are facing a rapidly changing world. The tools they are currently using, are not keeping up with the pace. Building experiments and questionnaires, collecting subjects, and carrying out experiments are still a rather manual work. Students typically feature as guinea pigs in the experiments, and not as designers or researchers. A spinout from a renowned university in the UK has started removing this bottleneck. They have built a platform for experimental research for users with no coding skills. An intuitive interface lets the experimenter to create behavioural tasks and questionnaires and link the components in the right order. Furthermore, it has built-in tools that measure, follow and track the subjects' events on their computers. There are some tools on the market that aid with one or another part of an experiment, but nothing that holistic. The new platform also integrates with recruitment services tools that allow for targeting specific demographics or simply a wider audience. The user base is currently made up of dozens of universities, and companies have started using it too. An open repository is growing for ready-to-run experiments. The unique advantages that have been highlighted by research users are the speed of experimenting and the removal of physical barriers. Especially during a pandemic, research work has proven not just less affected but even more fruitful than before. From the teaching staff's perspective, the new platform has enabled a proper empowerment of students. Instead of guinea pigs, they are the researchers now. First year student projects have been accepted to scientific conferences' poster sessions. Secondly, doing teaching (and research) in a collaborative manner has exploded. The hosted environment lets multiple users co-work on experiments in a simple and robust manner. The spinout is looking for further research institutions for commercial agreements with technical assistance. Its staff is resourced to offer not just software support but also scientific and technical advice and consultancy services. As well as classic experimental psychology tasks, this platform also offer a research games builder for creating educational games and research shop builder for consumer research.

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