Storing and Using Hidden Values

A Hidden Value action allows you to capture/store data in your survey that your survey respondents are not able to see, but can be used for gathering data, storing browser information, and even pre-populating questions later in the survey.

When would I use a Hidden Value?
There are an infinite number of uses for hidden values. You could use it to do any of the following and more!

- Record the time spent on the survey page
- Assign a random number to each respondent
- Store value of question answered previously in the survey
- Store URL Variables
- Capture respondents' geo data (country, IP address, latitude, longitude, etc.)
- Store a panel company ID from the URL
- When you want to pre-populate a question later in the survey
- When you'd like to use them to trigger whether or not pages/questions are hidden

Set up a Hidden Value

Locations for Hidden Values will vary. If you are using Hidden Values to capture URL variables, you will want to add these to the first page of the survey. For any other situation, the page the Hidden Value is placed on will depend on the need. Hidden Values can be placed on any page except the Thank You Page.

1. Click **Add New Action** on the page where you would like to add the Hidden Value. This is available on all pages except the Thank You Page.

2. Select **Hidden Value** from the list.

3. Customize your **Hidden Value**.

   Enter a title for your Hidden Value - A good title is important, especially if you plan on including several Hidden Values in your survey. For example, if you plan on capturing respondents' first name, calling it "First Name" will be helpful later when you need to use it for pre-population or reporting purposes.
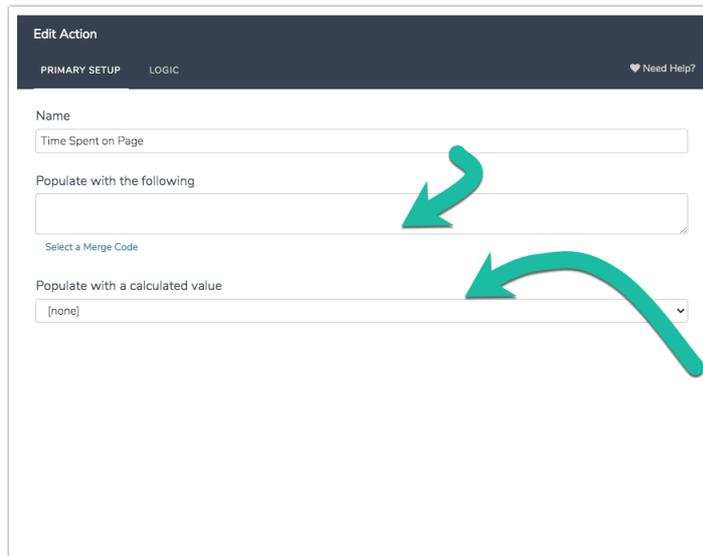
   Most often you will use the field that reads **Populate with the following.** In this field you can enter the data you wish to be captured and displayed in reports and exports. Use the Select a Merge Code tool to insert specific merge codes.

   For example, let's say you want to capture the email address of your email campaign respondents. You can use the Select a Merge Code tool to select Email Address from the Email

Invite Fields.

If you prefer to use one of our calculated values, **time spent on survey or page** or **a randomly generated number**, select these instead from the **Populate with a calculated value** dropdown.

See below to learn more about how these calculated values work.

4. Click **Save Action.**

Calculated Value Options

We have several calculated value options that you can select as well:

- **Time Spent on Survey (in seconds) -** Place this on the second-to-last page of your survey (prior to the Thank You page) to capture the time that your respondents spent on the survey. If you place this advanced value on an earlier page, it will provide you the amount of time that your respondent spent on the survey up to that point. *The time spent on the survey is captured when the page is submitted.*
- **Time Spent on Page (in seconds)** - Place this value on any page to capture the time it takes for your respondents to submit the page. Use this to evaluate whether a particular page of your survey is too long. *The time spent on the page is captured when the page is submitted.*
- **A randomly generated number** - This option will generate a random number within the range that you specify. *This number is truly random.* This means that the same number may be assigned more than once and, at the same time, it is possible that another number in that range is never assigned. If you are looking for a unique number check out the survey counter merge code.

What can a Hidden Value capture?

A Hidden Value can record just about anything, including question answers. Hidden Values are also particularly valuable for storing information that is populated into a survey via the Login/Password Action and third-party integrations like Salesforce.

The below merge codes are also available within hidden value actions:

Email Invite Data	Advanced	Account	System	Calculated Values
Email Address	Session ID	Email Address	Current Time EST	Time Spent on Survey
First Name	Survey Title	Organization Name	Current Date EST	Time Spent on Page
Last Name	Basic Page Count	Street	Respondent IP Address	A Randomly Generated Number
Organization Name	Total Pages	Suite	Respondent Browser	
Department	Total Questions	City	Respondent Country	
Home Phone	Edit Link	Region	Respondent City	
Fax Number	Close Date	Postal Code	Respondent Region	
Work Phone	Question's Pipe Value	Country	Respondent Postal Code	
Street	Page's Pipe Value	Public Phone Number		
Suite	URL Variable			
City				
Region				
Country				

Email Invite Data	Advanced	Account	System	Calculated Values
Postal Code Job Title				
Website				
Custom Fields (1-10)				

Reporting and Exporting Hidden Values

Hidden Values are available in:

- Individual Responses
- Standard Reports
- Legacy Summary Reports
- CSV/ Excel Exports

Individual Responses

Hidden Values that you capture in your survey will display within each Individual Response. As you can see below, the Hidden Values for *Time Spent on Page* will appear wherever they are on the page with the amount of time captured as the value listed.

Reports

Standard Report

Hidden Values can be manually added to a Standard Report. To do so, select the **Bulk Edit Elements** option from the upper-right section of your report. Scroll to the dropdown menu that allows you to **Add another report element** and select **URL and Hidden Values**. Select your Hidden Value via the **Add question** option, click **Add to Report** and **Done**.

Hidden Values can also be added via the Insert Tool by selecting the **URL and Hidden Values** option.

Legacy Summary Reports

Hidden Values are also available in Summary Reports. To do so go to **Results > Reports > Create Report > Legacy Summary Report**. Select the option to **Include Open Text** and click **Create Report**.

If you're looking for which Hidden Value response aligns with specific respondents in bulk, we recommend looking into the CSV export.

CSV/Excel Exports

The CSV/Excel export contains all of the raw data of your survey, which also includes your hidden values by default. The following picture will show you an example of various hidden values that have been captured.

uid	Time Spent on Page	Time Spent on Survey	A Randomly Generated Number
	9		
	5	16	
123456	2	14	33196
1230987	4	18	20550

Limitation

It is important to note that hidden values are stored only once. If survey respondents back up and change answers such that the value that is stored should change the hidden value will not update. Never fear, though; we have a script for this! Check out our document on Updating Hidden Values if Answers Are Changed.

Related Articles