Technology Checklist

Make sure that your school or district's technology set-up is ready to support survey-taking!

✓ **Make sure your systems requirements are up-to-date.**

Panorama surveys are designed to be taken on a variety of devices, including desktop computers, laptops, smartphones, tablets and netbooks. Surveys can be taken on any device with an internet connection and a modern web browser with the latest version installed (Internet Explorer, Chrome, Firefox, Safari, Opera). There is no need to install special requirements like Flash, Java or installed software.

✓ **Ensure each school has a plan for providing computer access to students.**

Consider whether classrooms have sufficient technology for students to take surveys in their classes. Alternatively, schedule time in the computer lab (or library) for each class, or arrange for a mobile computer cart to bring extra technology into classrooms.

✓ **Whitelist Panorama in your district's email filter and test that you are receiving emails correctly.**

Throughout the survey program, district users will receive a number of email messages from Panorama, including invitations to take the surveys, information about administering the surveys, and instructions for accessing reports.

To ensure that email messages arrive in staff members' inboxes and are not caught in your district's email filters, please whitelist the following domain names in your district's email system:

- panoramaed.com
- email.panoramaed.com
- panoramaeducation.com
- email.panoramaeducation.com

If your email system can only whitelist senders by IP address, please contact support@panoramaed.com for a list of IP addresses to whitelist.

✓ **Whitelist Panorama in your district's Internet security systems, including web filtering systems, firewall applications, and throttling software.**

To ensure users are able to access the online survey web site, please whitelist the following domain names in your district's firewall, web filtering software, and any other systems that your district uses to control access to the Internet:

- panoramaed.com
- surveys.panoramaed.com
- panoramaeducation.com

Your project may include a district-specific URL; please check with your district survey coordinator for additional details.

Recently, we've seen three particular types of software interfering with survey programs at the district level. They include malware protection systems, "throttling systems," and HTTPS blocking systems. We encourage you to review those with your district's information technology staff and make sure Panorama is whitelisted appropriately. See more information about these systems in Appendix A.

Appendix A: Different Blocking Systems

Malware protection systems

Some districts use special security software to protect school computers from malicious content on the Internet, like malware and viruses. In some cases, these systems will suddenly block access to the Panorama survey web site as well. These systems are designed to look for unusual computer activity and block access to the Internet when unusual things happen. The problem is that a first-time survey program will often look like something unusual to one of these software systems. For example, 500 students logging on to the survey at exactly 8:00 am may be flagged as suspicious activity by an overzealous security system.

Unfortunately, the inner workings of these security systems are opaque, and there isn't a good way to run a live test in a way that yields reliable results. Instead, we encourage you to meet with your district's information technology (IT) director and inquire about whether your district uses security software like this. If so, your IT director should be able to whitelist Panorama's website.

Web "throttling" systems

Some districts use "throttling" systems that prevent any single web site from using more than a certain percentage of the district's bandwidth at any given moment. Throttling software is a valuable tool for many districts, especially those with slow or limited Internet access: districts don't want a small group of people on a single web site like YouTube to hog the Internet connection and slow things down for everybody.

In some cases, however, throttling software can prevent students and staff from accessing the survey web site. For example, if all 2,000 students at a high school try to take their surveys at the beginning of first period, it would not be surprising for 90-100% of all Internet activity at the school to be people using the Panorama survey website. Some throttling software will see that happening and prevent students from using the website.

If your district uses throttling software, we encourage your district to whitelist the domains listed in the pre-administration technology checklist.

Email "throttling" systems:

Some districts have had problems when they have attempted to send emails containing survey or reporting links to their staff or students in one batch. Email systems can "rate limit" these email campaigns so that only a small number of emails can arrive in inboxes in a given time period. This rate limiting can delay survey administration or reporting access.

To avoid this problem, whitelist Panorama's domain names, and plan ahead so that emails are sent well ahead of the survey window.

If you're using Microsoft Office 365 with on-premise email servers, one solution that we've seen work in other districts is to set up a connector between Office 365 and your email servers, with rate limiting disabled for the Panorama email domains and IP addresses.

HTTPS blocking systems:

A small number of districts block access to websites that use HTTPS/SSL, a technology that ensures the security of information being transferred over the Internet. Even though this technology is a best practice for websites handling confidential information (for example all banks use HTTPS/SSL to ensure security), HTTPS/SSL technology is blocked in some districts because it can be used to circumvent many content filtering tools.

Please make sure that your district's network is not blocking access to HTTPS/SSL.