



tecmark | 635
User Guide

An Introduction to Brainwriting

635 Brainwriting is a creative brainstorming technique aimed at making the idea generation process more efficient and effective. Developed by Bernd Rohrbach who originally published it in a German sales magazine, in 1968.

In its traditional format, a brainwriting session consists of 6 participants, with one acting as the session leader. After reviewing the project brief, all participants are required to write down 3 ideas on a worksheet within 5 minutes (6 people, 3 ideas, 5 mins = 635). After the first round is over, participants would then pass their worksheet round to the next person. Round two would then start with each person having 3 ideas to review and use as inspiration, before coming up with a further 3 ideas of their own.

This process then continues for the 6 allocated rounds meaning each participant would have generated 18 ideas, resulting in 108 ideas in total for the session

The technique is applied in various sectors but mainly in business, marketing, design, and writing. We use the process extensively internally at Tecmark for delivering our content marketing campaign ideas.

Why we built Tecmark 635

We used to do brainwriting the traditional way. 6 people in a room armed with pens, paper and post it notes.

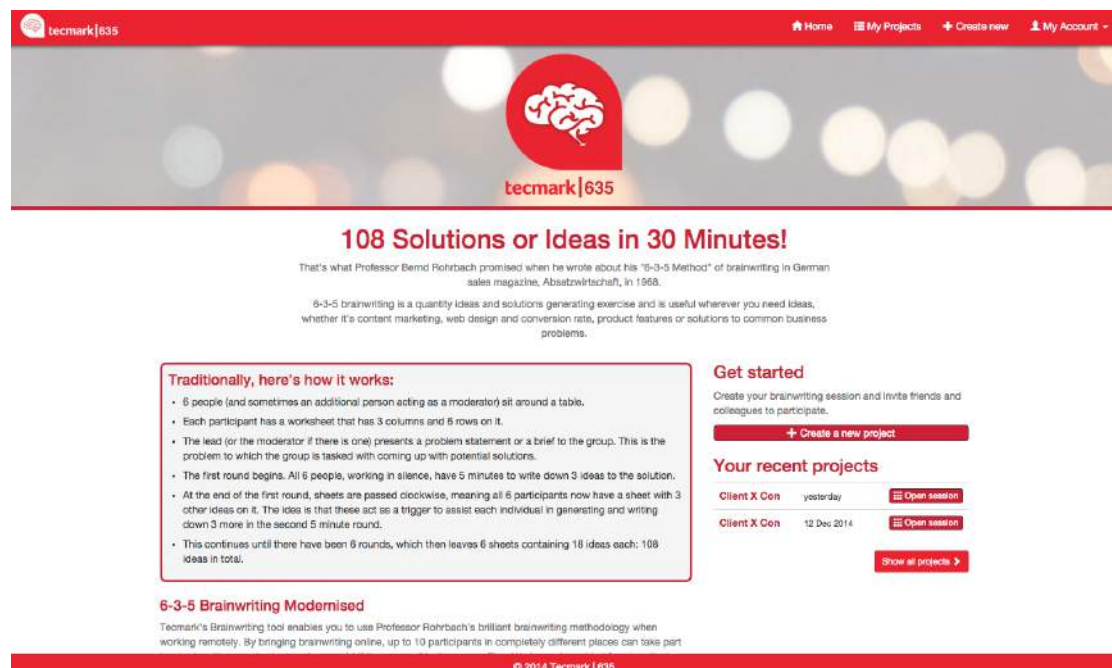
This worked, but wasn't without its pitfalls. Most notably:

1. Everybody had to be in the same room
2. Somebody had to compile the results at the end (and decipher the handwriting!)
3. Records of ideas were in paper format so got lost

The decision to take it online was therefore an obvious one as it addresses all of these problems. Participants can be anywhere with an Internet connection and a device (it works on mobiles and tablets too), the results are stored in the system and can be downloaded into Excel and handwriting is no longer an issue!

How to use Tecmark 635

Once you have created an account, each time you log in you will find yourself on the home screen. This contains a basic overview of brainwriting as an idea generation process, as well as navigational options such as the ability to see your projects, and details of your account.



The screenshot shows the home screen of the Tecmark 635 application. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, My Projects, Create new, and My Account. Below this is a large banner with a brain icon and the text "108 Solutions or Ideas in 30 Minutes!". Underneath the banner, there is a section titled "Traditionally, here's how it works:" followed by a list of steps. To the right, there is a "Get started" section with a "Create a new project" button and a "Your recent projects" section with a table of projects.

108 Solutions or Ideas in 30 Minutes!

That's what Professor Bernd Rohrbach promised when he wrote about his "6-3-5 Method" of brainwriting in German sales magazine, Absatzwirtschaft, in 1968.

6-3-5 brainwriting is a quantity ideas and solutions generating exercise and is useful wherever you need ideas, whether it's content marketing, web design and conversion rate, product features or solutions to common business problems.

Traditionally, here's how it works:

- 6 people (and sometimes an additional person acting as a moderator) sit around a table.
- Each participant has a worksheet that has 3 columns and 5 rows on it.
- The lead (or the moderator if there is one) presents a problem statement or a brief to the group. This is the problem to which the group is tasked with coming up with potential solutions.
- The first round begins. All 6 people, working in silence, have 5 minutes to write down 3 ideas to the solution.
- At the end of the first round, sheets are passed clockwise, meaning all 6 participants now have a sheet with 3 other ideas on it. The idea is that these act as a trigger to assist each individual in generating and writing down 3 more in the second 5 minute round.
- This continues until there have been 6 rounds, which then leaves 6 sheets containing 18 ideas each: 108 ideas in total.

Get started

Create your brainwriting session and invite friends and colleagues to participate.

[+ Create a new project](#)

Your recent projects

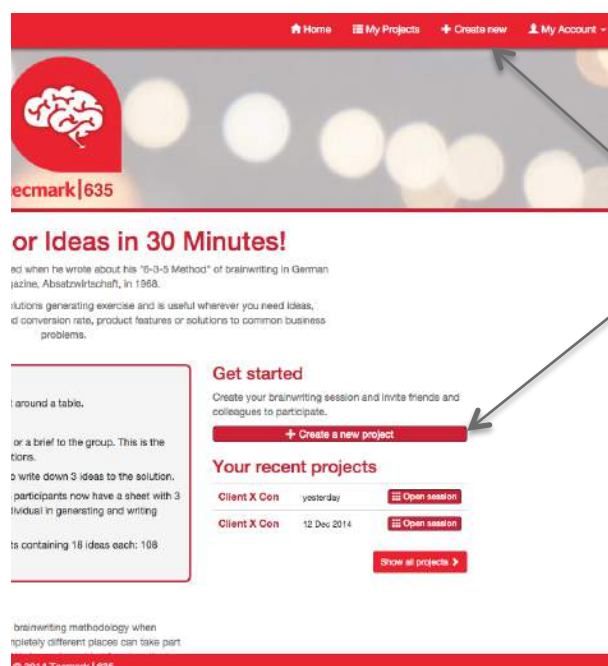
Client X Con	yesterday	Open session
Client X Con	12 Dec 2014	Open session

[Show all projects >](#)

6-3-5 Brainwriting Modernised

Tecmark's Brainwriting tool enables you to use Professor Rohrbach's brilliant brainwriting methodology when working remotely. By bringing brainwriting online, up to 10 participants in completely different places can take part

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This is a close-up screenshot of the home screen, focusing on the "Get started" and "Your recent projects" sections. A large arrow points from the text on the right towards the "Create a new project" button.

Get started

Create your brainwriting session and invite friends and colleagues to participate.

[+ Create a new project](#)

Your recent projects

Client X Con	yesterday	Open session
Client X Con	12 Dec 2014	Open session

[Show all projects >](#)

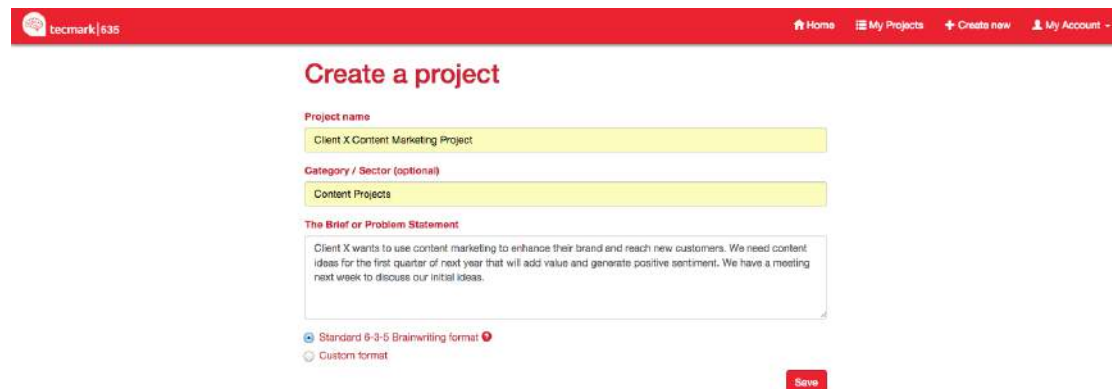
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To use the tool for idea generation, you need to start by creating a new project.

Creating a New Project

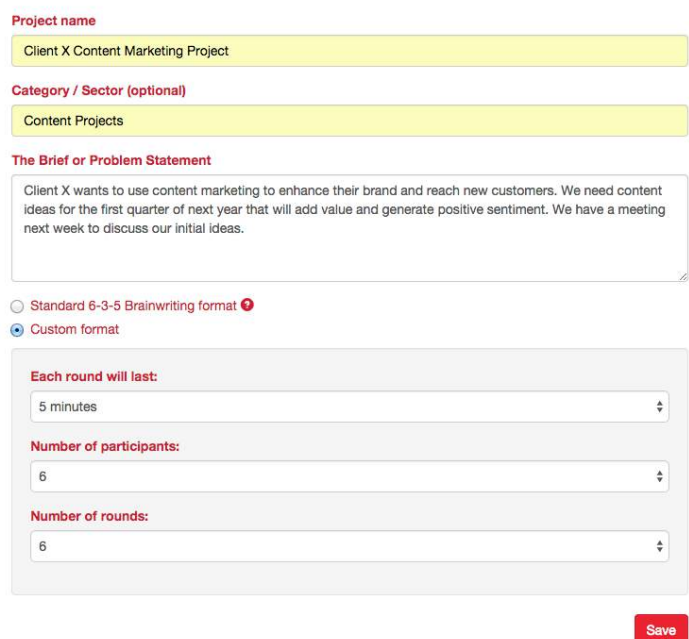
The basic information associated with a project is:

- The project name: This can be as descriptive as you like. It will be used for storage of the output for future reference, and also be seen by the participants of the session in their invitation to join.
- The category or sector, which is an optional field but can be useful for providing information to the session members.
- And the brief, the most important element, where you will describe, in as much detail as possible, what the session is about, and what you are hoping to achieve through it. Here you should give as much detail as possible to ensure you get the most valuable output.



On this page you can also customise the format of the session if you wish. A standard brainwriting session is 6 people, and 6 rounds of 5 minutes, however you have the flexibility on each of these variables.

Create a project

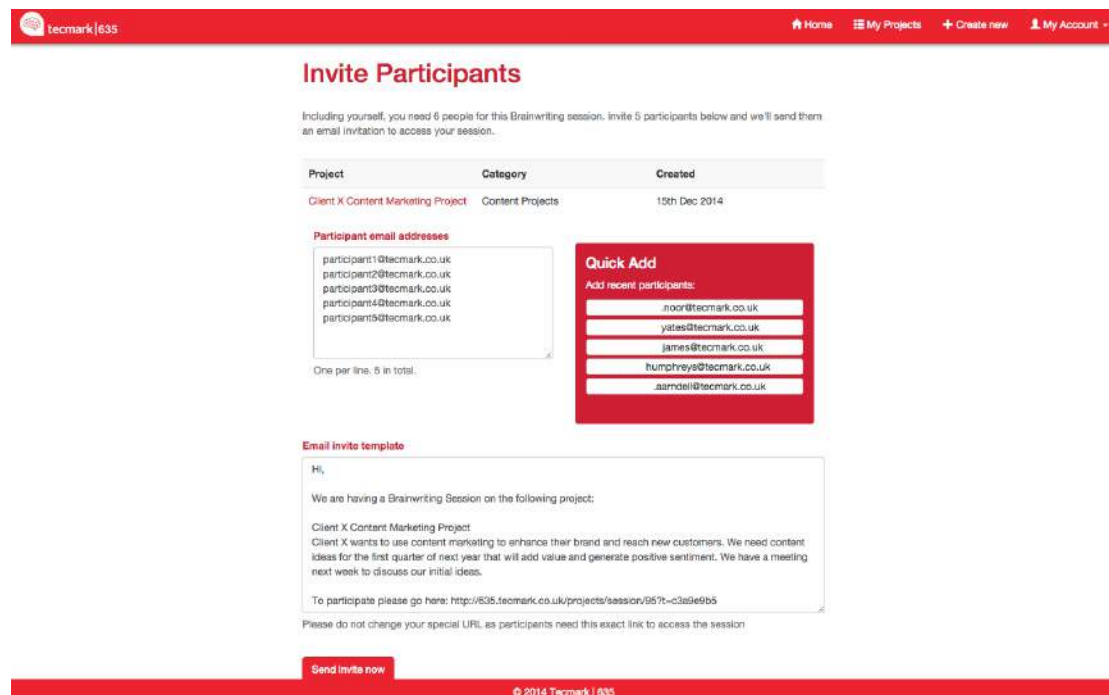


Once you are happy with your brief, you need to save it. You will then get a further chance to review, before you move on to the next step of inviting participants.

Inviting Participants

At the invitation stage, you need to add the email addresses of the people you want to involve in your brainwriting session. If they have participated in one of your sessions before, their email address will appear to the right of the box, but if it is the first time you will need to type it in.

You need to add the right amount of participants based on the amount you selected in the settings section, minus one for yourself.



The screenshot shows the 'Invite Participants' page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Home', 'My Projects', 'Create new', and 'My Account'. The main heading is 'Invite Participants'. Below this, a note states: 'Including yourself, you need 6 people for this Brainwriting session. Invite 5 participants below and we'll send them an email invitation to access your session.'

A table shows the current session details:

Project	Category	Created
Client X Content Marketing Project	Content Projects	15th Dec 2014

Below the table, there are two input areas:

- Participant email addresses:** A text area containing five placeholder email addresses: participant1@tecmark.co.uk, participant2@tecmark.co.uk, participant3@tecmark.co.uk, participant4@tecmark.co.uk, and participant5@tecmark.co.uk. A note below says 'One per line, 5 in total.'
- Quick Add:** A red box titled 'Quick Add' with the sub-heading 'Add recent participants:'. It contains five input fields with the following email addresses: zroon@tecmark.co.uk, yates@tecmark.co.uk, james@tecmark.co.uk, humphreys@tecmark.co.uk, and aamdel@tecmark.co.uk.

At the bottom, there is an 'Email invite template' section with a text area containing the following text:

Hi,

We are having a Brainwriting Session on the following project:

Client X Content Marketing Project
 Client X wants to use content marketing to enhance their brand and reach new customers. We need content ideas for the first quarter of next year that will add value and generate positive sentiment. We have a meeting next week to discuss our initial ideas.

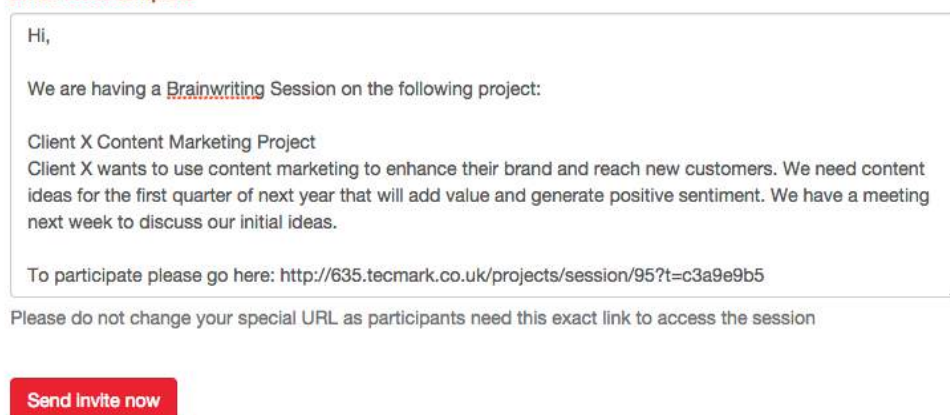
To participate please go here: <http://635.tecmark.co.uk/projects/session/95?t=c3a9e9b5>

Please do not change your special URL as participants need this exact link to access the session

At the bottom of the page, there is a 'Send invite now' button and a footer with '© 2014 Tecmark | 635'.

You can review and amend the invitation email they will receive, and once you are happy with it, send the invitation.

Email invite template



The screenshot shows the 'Email invite template' editing interface. It features a large text area with the following content:

Hi,

We are having a Brainwriting Session on the following project:

Client X Content Marketing Project
 Client X wants to use content marketing to enhance their brand and reach new customers. We need content ideas for the first quarter of next year that will add value and generate positive sentiment. We have a meeting next week to discuss our initial ideas.

To participate please go here: <http://635.tecmark.co.uk/projects/session/95?t=c3a9e9b5>

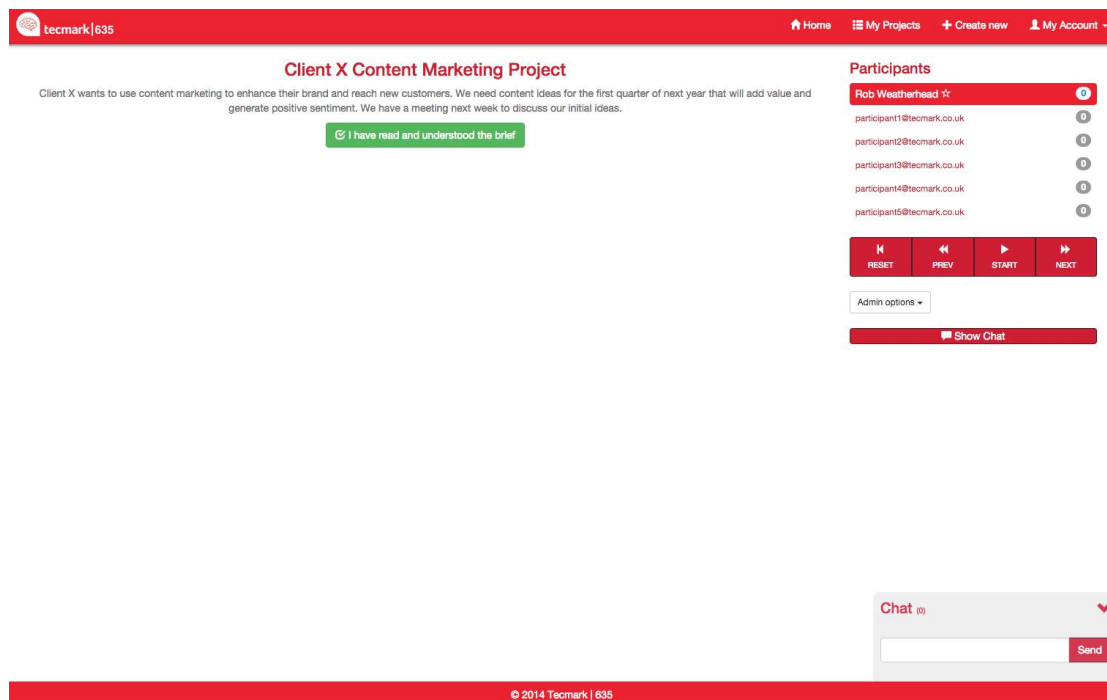
Below the text area, there is a note: 'Please do not change your special URL as participants need this exact link to access the session'. At the bottom, there is a red 'Send invite now' button.

Now your invitations are sent, it is time to start the session.

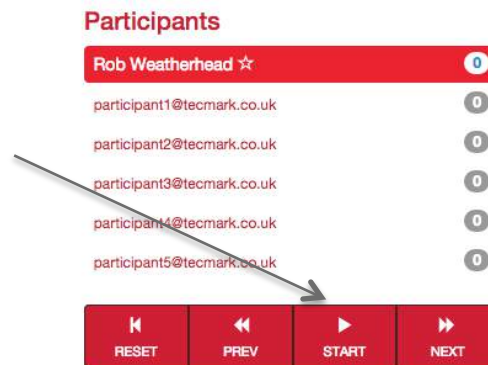
Starting the Session

You will now enter the main brainwriting screen, where you see the participants down the right hand side, and a number of controls. Every participant, including the leader, must confirm they have read and understood the brief for the session to start.

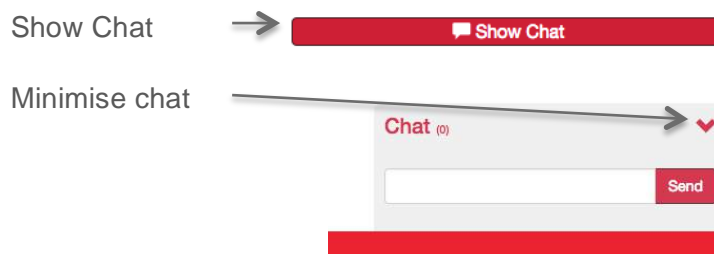
The participants will be marked in red with a tick next to their name once they have read and accepted the brief.



Once all participants have read and accepted the brief, the leader must click the start button for the session to begin.



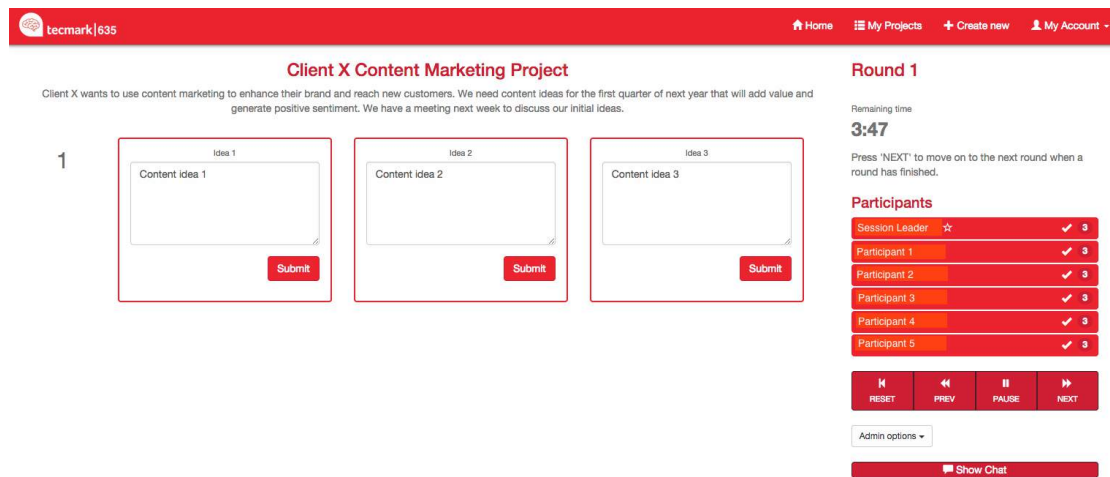
There is a chat functionality that can be used during the session. The chat window can be hidden and unhidden using the buttons.



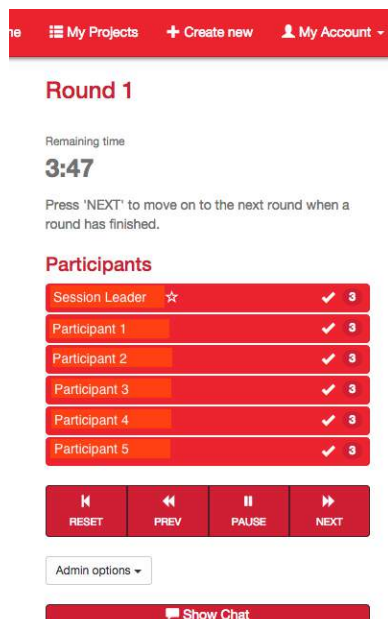
Running the Session

In round one, everyone is presented with the brief again, and has to come up with their first 3 ideas. At the start of each round we allow 15 seconds to reread the brief, or review previous ideas. After that the round time starts to count down.

You must submit an idea once you have settled on it, but can still go back and edit them whilst the clock is ticking. Once you are happy with all three ideas, submit them and wait for the other participants to do the same.

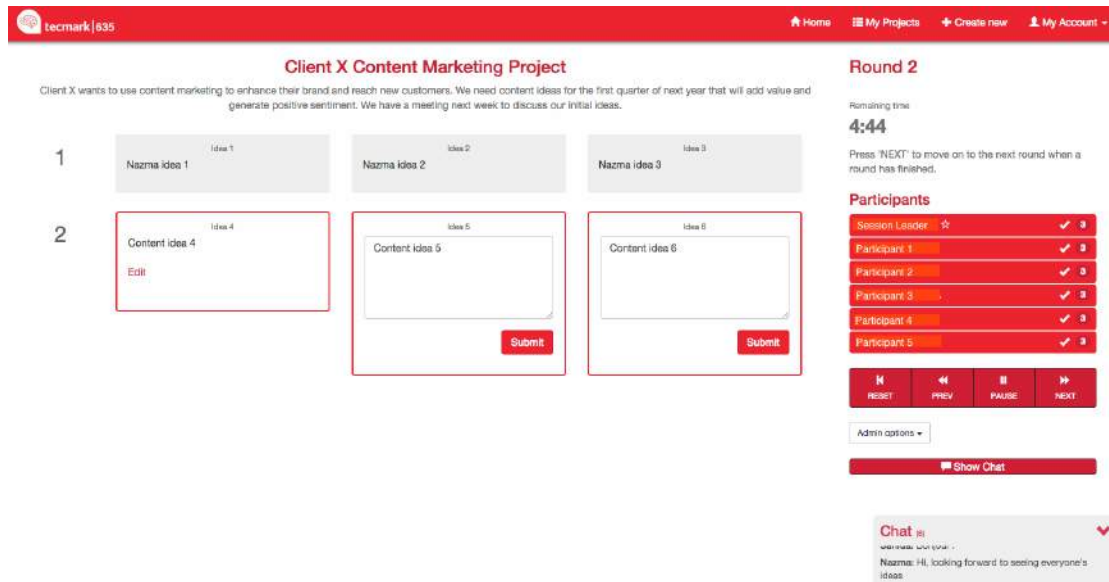


The session leader can see who has submitted ideas and how many, enabling them to run the session.



Here we can see everyone has submitted 3 ideas, but we still have over 3 minutes remaining on the time. As the leader I can choose to move on to the next round rather than wait for the full round time to end.

In round two, you are presented by the brief again, alongside another participants first three ideas. The purpose of this is to give you further inspiration. You then have another 5 minute period to come up with another 3 ideas.



Client X Content Marketing Project

Client X wants to use content marketing to enhance their brand and reach new customers. We need content ideas for the first quarter of next year that will add value and generate positive sentiment. We have a meeting next week to discuss our initial ideas.

Round 2

Remaining time: **4:44**

Press "NEXT" to move on to the next round when a round has finished.

Participants

- Session Leader: ✓ 3
- Participant 1: ✓ 3
- Participant 2: ✓ 3
- Participant 3: ✓ 3
- Participant 4: ✓ 3
- Participant 5: ✓ 3

Buttons: RESET, PREV, PAUSE, NEXT

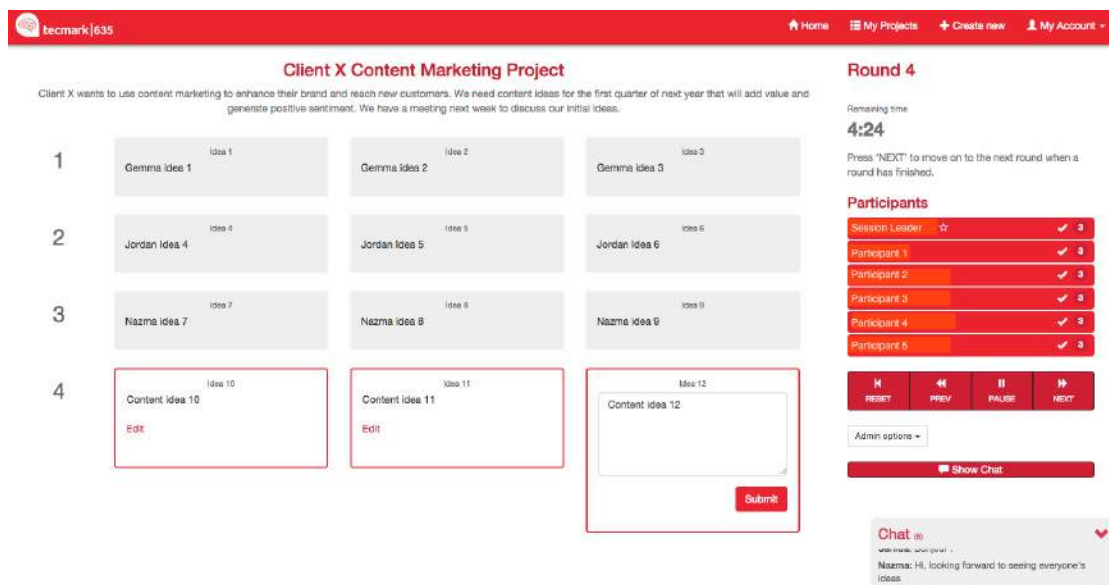
Admin options: Show Chat

Chat

Nazma: Hi, looking forward to seeing everyone's ideas

In each subsequent round you are then presented with a different participants first round ideas, and another participants second round ideas and so on, adding further inspiration to the creative process.

This then continues for the allotted amount of rounds.



Client X Content Marketing Project

Client X wants to use content marketing to enhance their brand and reach new customers. We need content ideas for the first quarter of next year that will add value and generate positive sentiment. We have a meeting next week to discuss our initial ideas.

Round 4

Remaining time: **4:24**

Press "NEXT" to move on to the next round when a round has finished.

Participants

- Session Leader: ✓ 3
- Participant 1: ✓ 3
- Participant 2: ✓ 3
- Participant 3: ✓ 3
- Participant 4: ✓ 3
- Participant 5: ✓ 3

Buttons: RESET, PREV, PAUSE, NEXT

Admin options: Show Chat

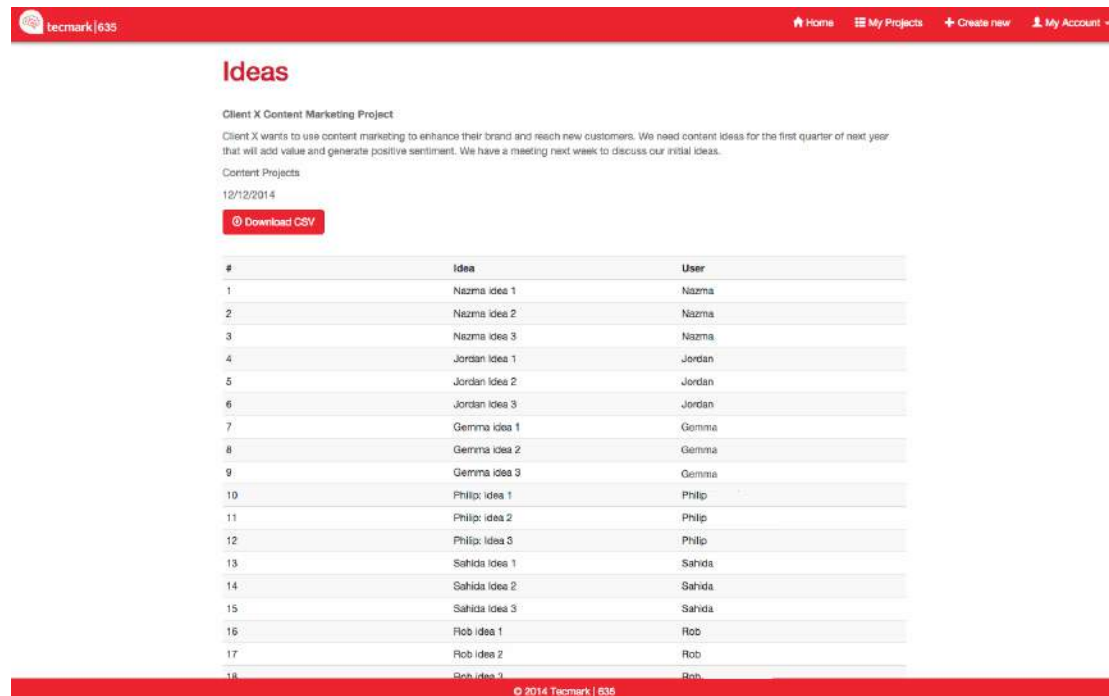
Chat

Nazma: Hi, looking forward to seeing everyone's ideas

In the final round, as the leader, once you choose 'next' or 'end' the session finishes for all participants.

Your ideas

You are then presented with a full list of all the ideas alongside the round they were submitted in, and who came up with them. A standard session of 6 people and 6 rounds will produce 108 ideas.



Ideas

Client X Content Marketing Project

Client X wants to use content marketing to enhance their brand and reach new customers. We need content ideas for the first quarter of next year that will add value and generate positive sentiment. We have a meeting next week to discuss our initial ideas.

Content Projects

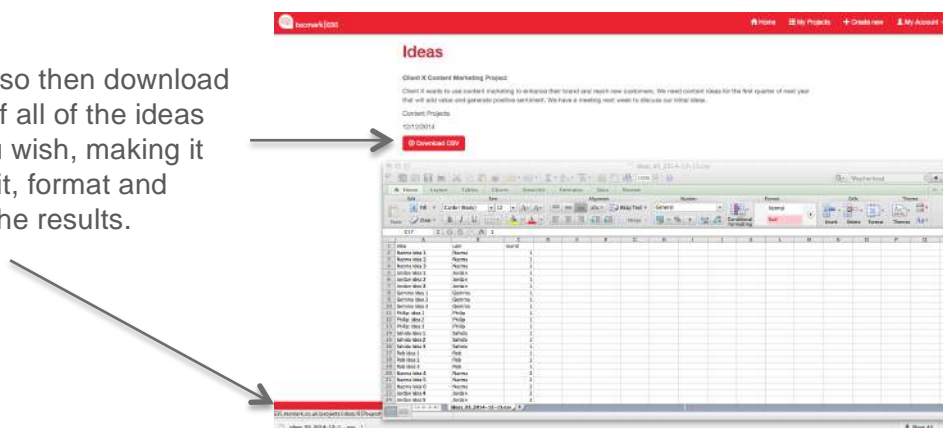
12/12/2014

[Download CSV](#)

#	Idea	User
1	Nazma idea 1	Nazma
2	Nazma idea 2	Nazma
3	Nazma idea 3	Nazma
4	Jordan idea 1	Jordan
5	Jordan idea 2	Jordan
6	Jordan idea 3	Jordan
7	Gemma idea 1	Gemma
8	Gemma idea 2	Gemma
9	Gemma idea 3	Gemma
10	Philip idea 1	Philip
11	Philip idea 2	Philip
12	Philip idea 3	Philip
13	Sahida idea 1	Sahida
14	Sahida idea 2	Sahida
15	Sahida idea 3	Sahida
16	Rob idea 1	Rob
17	Rob idea 2	Rob
18	Rob idea 3	Rob

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You can also then download a csv file of all of the ideas should you wish, making it easy to edit, format and distribute the results.



Ideas

Client X Content Marketing Project

Client X wants to use content marketing to enhance their brand and reach new customers. We need content ideas for the first quarter of next year that will add value and generate positive sentiment. We have a meeting next week to discuss our initial ideas.

Content Projects

12/12/2014

[Download CSV](#)

Excel spreadsheet showing the downloaded CSV data with columns for #, Idea, and User.

And that's it, 108 ideas or solutions to a problem, in just 30 minutes, all conducted online. We hope you enjoy using our tool and please get in touch if you have any questions or suggestions as to how it can be improved.

Things to consider when running a brainwriting session

- A traditional session involves 6 people and 6 rounds at 5 minutes per round. We have added the ability to amend this to anywhere from 2-10 people, 2-10 rounds and 15seconds to 10 minutes for the round length.
- Each individual will produce 3 ideas per round, so the number of ideas you will get will be a simple formula of $3 \times (\text{number of rounds}) \times (\text{number of participants})$.
- The 6 people don't have to all be marketers. We include people from all departments as this gives you a better range of ideas and angles of approach to the brief
- You can arrange a session for any point in the future. If doing so we find it useful to include the date and time in the invitation email. The link will remain active, the user will just need to keep the email to refer to at the prearranged session time.
- We generally ask the participants to spend some time reviewing the website of the client we are generating ideas for before accepting the brief. This helps them understand the business, their industry and their product before coming up with ideas.

Have you got any questions or feedback?

We would love to here from you and what you think of our tool. You can contact the team on 635@tecmark.co.uk or ring into the office on 0161 266 4450.