

8.4 What if a Participant Can't Connect?

OpenClinica Participate is designed to be easy-to-use and reliable for study participants. However, it is dependent on a few things like email, text messaging, and Internet access working correctly. Sometimes your participants may run into glitches. Here's a brief guide to help them.

"I never received the message!"

Activation and notification messages are sent as emails and/or text messages. Depending on the method, here are a few things that could correct problems or help the participant work around any issues.

Text Message:

- Confirm the participant's phone number is correct and that s/he is able to receive text messages at that number.
- Make sure the phone number is in the list of supported countries (available in the dropdown box on the connect participant page).
- Confirm there is a cellular signal.
- If you think you fixed the problem but the previously sent text message does not arrive, resend the activation message by [reconnecting the participant](#). However, make sure to wait a few minutes first, since doing this will make the links in prior messages invalid (because doing so resets the activation code).
- If all of the above are correct but it still doesn't work, try connecting the participant via email or by using a different phone number.

Email:

- Confirm the participant's email is correct.
- Confirm that the participant's device/computer is connected to the Internet (i.e., able to receive emails).
- Have the participant check his/her Spam/Trash folder. Also, ask if emails from unknown senders are likely to be blocked (such as by a corporate firewall). If this is the case, have the participant contact the network administrator or try a different email address.
- If you think you fixed the problem but the previously sent email does not arrive, you can resend the activation email by [reconnecting the participant](#). However, make sure to wait a few minutes first, since doing this will make the links in prior emails invalid (because it resets the activation code).
- If all of the above are okay but it still doesn't work, ask if s/he has another email address and try connecting via that.
- As a last resort, you can reconnect the participant using your own email or phone number as the contact info. Then provide the participant with the URL (e.g. [https://\[YOURSTUDY\].mystudy.me/#/login](https://[YOURSTUDY].mystudy.me/#/login)) and the activation code directly. Make sure this is allowable within your study's data validation and privacy guidelines, and is noted as a process deviation. Change the contact info back to the participant's so you do not receive future messages.

"I got a message but the link doesn't work!"

After receiving the activation message or a notification/reminder, the participant should be able to click on the link and access the participant dashboard. If there is a problem with this, try to find out more about what is happening:

- *"Clicking on the link in the text gives me a warning message."* Some phones will pop up a warning message when clicking on a link within a text message. The participant should simply tap 'OK' or 'Continue' and the dashboard should load normally.
- *"I get a 'Page not found' or 'Cannot connect' error."* This usually means there is no connection to the internet. Participate requires an active internet connection to work. To confirm the connection is working, try loading another website (Google, Yahoo, CNN, etc.); if it does not load, the participant needs to fix the internet connection or try another device that is connected to the internet. In some cases, the network that the device is connected to may block unknown websites (especially if on a corporate network). If this is suspected, contact the network administrator to get the mystudy.me domain added to the whitelist, or try from another network.
- *"The link doesn't take me anywhere."* Participate requires the use of a smartphone, tablet, or computer with a modern web browser. Non-smartphones will not work, nor will very old browsers. Try a different device.
- In rare cases, the participant may see a 'Loading' page that never loads anything. We're working on fixing this as soon as we can. In the meantime, have the participant try accessing the system from another browser or device.

"I got to the application but I can't do anything?"

The Participate dashboard displays the study name at the top, a notification/welcome message, and a set of activities (aka forms) to complete with big green "Let's go" buttons next to each. If the participant does not see these on the dashboard, it could be one of a few problems:

- If instead of the dashboard, the following message displays: "You have no forms to complete right now," then the participant's forms are up-to-date. S/he can come back a later time to complete any forms that have been scheduled. The study can be designed to automatically send a reminder message to inform participants of upcoming events or forms that are due.
- *"The page is messed up/broken."* The participant's device must be a smartphone, tablet, or computer with a modern web browser, and Javascript and cookies should be enabled. Non-smartphones will not work, nor will very old browsers. We recommend recent (released in the past 1-2 years) versions of Firefox, Chrome, and Safari.

If you cannot resolve the problem or for further help troubleshooting, please contact [OpenClinica support](#).

Approved for publication by Ben Baumann. Signed on 2015-10-29 1:07PM

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