

USER GUIDE

Delphi variations

Delphi ecosystem — user guides

English

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DELPHI VARIATIONS

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Delphi variations

A study's **variation** decides how responses are collected and how movement is tracked over time. It sits alongside the orientation (N/S/R/E/D/D+) chosen in planning, and it sets the collection key and the lead indicator the analysis uses. The names are proper names and the same in every language:

Argument Delphi, Classic Delphi, Real-Time Delphi, Barometer Delphi. The value stored in the

contract is a different thing from the display name (the value for Classic Delphi is still `Classical`).

Variation	Collection	Lead indicator	What it is · when to use
Argument Delphi	round	CDI	Dialectical, multi-voice: required rationale + dialogue over rounds; aims at dissensus — maps tensions and reasoning; 7×3 epistemic coding in analysis. The ecosystem's signature when <i>reasoning</i> matters more than a number.
Classic Delphi	round	CCI	The same process and phases as Argument Delphi; aims at reasoned consensus and measures it with consensus indicators. The safest general foresight setup.
Real-Time Delphi	window	RCI	One round of responding and dialogue, open at the same time from the start: panelists see the group state and revise anytime; no comparison between rounds. Fast, asynchronous.
Barometer Delphi	wave	BCI	The same theses rated again from one wave to the next — trend and opinion-shift monitoring; a thesis may be retired between waves. For longitudinal studies.

The variation is an editable contract block; if absent, the default is Argument / round / CDI (backward compatible). Common to all four: Round 0 (orientation) belongs to every one, and dialogue exists in every one — the variations differ in where in the round the dialogue sits, not in whether it exists.

Templates for different purposes

Ready-to-run **templates** pair a variation with a panel and starter theses, so you can instantiate a complete study in one step — from the new-study wizard (which pre-fills every step) or by importing the package. Each is a contract-conformant starting point you then edit.

Template	Base variation	Purpose
Classic foresight Delphi	Classical	General foresight baseline (probability/desirability + rationale).
Argument Delphi	Argument	Dialectical, polyphonic process with 7×3 epistemic coding.
Barometer	Barometer	Longitudinal trend monitoring across waves.
Participatory civic Delphi	Classical (observer / E)	Participatory foresight (e.g. local development); Asianosaisuus × expertise.
Real-Time Delphi	Real-Time	Fast, asynchronous continuous window.
Corporate strategy Delphi	Argument (hybrid)	Argumentative rounds + a consensus final round; org groups × competence.
Full-AI perspective panel	Argument (Route B)	End-to-end AI-panelist run (Hautamäki perspectives) — for full-process testing and human-validated AI-analysis development.

Next: choose orientation and questions in Planning, and design the matrix in Panel design.

Real-Time Delphi — how to run one

Real-Time Delphi is the variation with **one round that is open from the start** — for answering and for dialogue at the same time. A panellist waits for nothing: they see the theses and the panel's discussion immediately, answer at their own pace, and can come back and change their position for as long as the study is open.

In the contract the variation is `Real-Time`, the collection key is `window` and the lead indicator is **RCI**. The three travel together: the collection key says the collection period is a window rather than a round, and the indicator says what the analysis reads.

When to choose RTD

RTD suits a study where **time is short and participants are scattered**. It is asynchronous: each person takes part when they can, and nobody waits for a round to close. It also suits a fast-moving phenomenon, where the gap between two rounds would already have dated the question.

RTD **does not fix the aim**. It can aim at consensus or at dissensus — the aim is resolved per thesis, not by the variation. This differs from Classic and Argument Delphi, where the aim is a property of the whole study. In practice: if you want the panel to seek common ground on *this* thesis but map disagreement on *that* one, RTD gives you that without splitting the study in two.

What RTD does not replace: if you want to **see how the panel moved** — that someone changed position after reading others' reasoning — you need two rounds. Movement is the difference between two measurements, and a single measurement has no difference to compute. That is the price of RTD, and it is worth knowing before the variation is chosen rather than after.

What the software does for you

The single-round nature is not a rule you have to remember to follow — it is built in:

- **The wizard does not ask for a number of rounds.** The round count is not a question but a property of the variation, and in RTD it is one. (Before 5 September 2026 the wizard asked every variation, defaulting to 2 — a choice that does not exist.)
- **The server refuses a second round.** `POST /rounds` answers `409 single_round_mode`. You cannot drift into a multi-round setting by accident.

- **All phases are open.** Response, dialogue and revision are all open at once in RTD. That is why the phase bar carries no round number: it says open round, not "Round 1".
- **The movement panel says outright that movement is not computed.** It is not an empty box but an explicit message — in a single-round study there is no between-round movement.

Planning

Planning follows the same route as in any other variation: orientation, phenomenon, panel, question architecture.

Round 0 belongs to RTD too. It is the orientation and key-informant stage, and it is the only numbered step before that one round. Round 0 material is intake — it is not panel data and does not travel into the analysis as responses.

Keep the number of theses moderate. Because everything is open at once, the panellist sees the whole workload at first glance. In a multi-round setting the work is spread across rounds; here it is not.

Require reasoning. The value of RTD comes from panellists reading each other's reasoning and responding to it within the same window. Without reasoning what remains is a survey with a comment box.

While the study runs

With no round comparison, you follow three things:

1. **The build-up of participation.** Who has answered, who has started, who has not opened the link. In a single window this is the only measure of progress.
2. **The density of dialogue.** Is discussion emerging, or are people only answering? In RTD the discussion is what separates it from a survey, so its absence is a finding rather than silence.
3. **The panel's pulse per thesis.** Where views sit close together and where they spread. This is read from one measurement, not from the difference between two.

The facilitator's role is lighter than in a multi-round Delphi: no rounds are opened or closed, no theses are rewritten between rounds. What remains is what matters most in RTD — **keeping the discussion alive**. If dialogue fades, you address it with a message to the panel, not with a new round.

Closing

The study ends when the facilitator ends it. The window does not close by itself and the round does not "fill up". Closing is therefore a real decision, and it is worth telling the panel in advance — otherwise a participant does not know whether there is still time to come back.

The discussion of a closed study remains readable.

What an RTD study does not have

These belong to multi-round variations and are not worth looking for in an RTD study:

- round comparison and movement analysis
- a pause between rounds
- a notification that a new round has opened
- a round number in the phase bar
- **retiring a thesis** — that belongs to Barometer Delphi only, and the server forbids it elsewhere

If you find yourself needing one of these, the variation is the wrong one. That is not a fault but a choice, and it can be made differently in the next study.