USER MANUAL

PHP Poll

Everything you need to create polls, collect votes and embed them on any website with the PHP poll script that needs no database. 42 step-by-step guides.

NetArt Media · 3 November 2026
Online version: https://www.netartmedia.net/manuals/php-poll/

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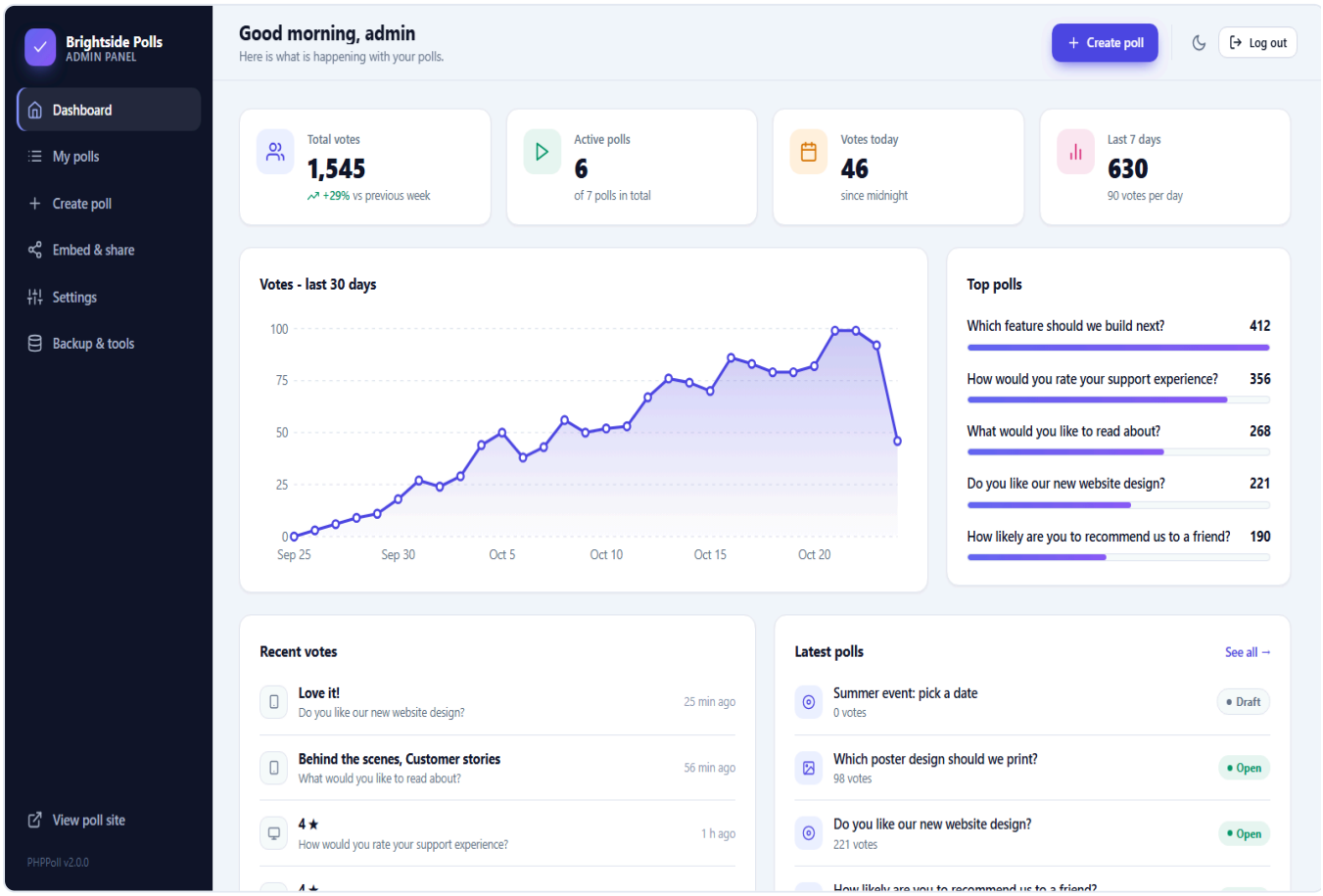
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GETTING STARTED

What is PHPPoll? Overview of the PHP poll script

PHPPoll is a PHP poll script with no database. Learn what it does: five poll types, live charts, statistics, embeds for any website and a modern admin panel.

PHPPoll is a complete online poll system written in PHP. You upload it to your web hosting, log in to the admin panel and start creating polls. Visitors vote on your own website, and you watch the results arrive in live charts. **No database is needed** – every poll and vote is stored in simple, readable XML files on your server.



The PHPPoll admin dashboard shows votes, trends and your top polls at a glance.

What can you do with PHPPoll?

- **Create five kinds of polls:** single choice, multiple choice, image choice, star rating and NPS (Net Promoter Score). See Poll types: which one should you use?.
- **Show results as charts:** bars, columns, donut or pie, with percentages and vote counts. See Chart types for poll results.
- **Understand your audience:** votes over time, device split, the websites where a poll is embedded, comments and "Other" answers. See Poll statistics and individual votes.
- **Put polls anywhere:** embed with one line of JavaScript, an iframe or a PHP include, or use the ready-made poll website. See Share and embed polls.

- **Protect your results:** limit votes by cookie or IP address, add a captcha, schedule polls and cap the number of votes. See Prevent duplicate votes and spam.
- **Stay in control:** export votes to CSV, back up everything with one click and translate the interface into any language.

Who is PHPPoll for?

PHPPoll is a good fit for bloggers, news and community websites, online shops collecting customer feedback, schools, clubs, agencies building sites for clients, and anyone who wants polls and surveys on their own site without paying a monthly subscription to a hosted service.

How the script is organized

Part	What it does
Front-end	The public poll website and the voting forms your visitors see. See The standalone poll website.
Admin panel	Where you create polls, read results and change settings, at `/admin/`. See Admin panel login and account.
Embed tools	Code and links that place a poll on any page. See Share and embed polls.
`data/` folder	Your settings, polls and votes as XML files.

The script uses plain PHP functions instead of a large framework, so people with basic PHP knowledge can read and customize it. See Customize the poll script.

Where to go next

1. Check the system requirements of your hosting.
2. Follow the installation guide.
3. Build your first poll and embed it on a page.

GETTING STARTED

System requirements

What you need to run PHPPoll: PHP 7.3 or newer with SimpleXML and mbstring, writable folders and any shared hosting. No MySQL or database required.

PHPPoll is designed to run on almost any web hosting. It does not use MySQL or any other database, so there is nothing to create or configure on the server besides uploading the files.

Server requirements

Requirement	Details
PHP	Version **7.3 or newer**. PHP 8.x is fully supported.
PHP extensions	`SimpleXML` and `mbstring`. Both are enabled on nearly all hosts.
Writable folders	PHP must be able to write to `data/` (settings, polls, votes) and `uploads/` (images).
Web server	Apache, nginx or IIS. Apache gets extra features: protection of the `data/` folder through `.htaccess` and optional pretty poll links.
Email (optional)	The PHP `mail()` function, only needed for vote notifications. See Email notifications for new votes.

Browser requirements

Visitors and administrators can use any current version of Chrome, Edge, Firefox, Safari or a mobile browser. Voting also works without JavaScript, only the animations and instant results need it.

Check your server inside the admin panel

After installation open **Settings** → **System**. This page checks the PHP version, the required extensions, the writable folders and the mail function, and marks every item *OK* or *Problem*. See Settings.

If a folder shows a problem, set its permissions to `755` (or `775`) in your file manager or FTP program and make sure it belongs to the same user as your web server.

Performance and size

XML storage is fast and reliable for the polls of typical websites, including thousands of votes per poll, and simultaneous votes are protected by file locking. For polls expecting hundreds of thousands of votes, plan for a database-based solution instead.

Next: How to install the PHP poll script.

GETTING STARTED

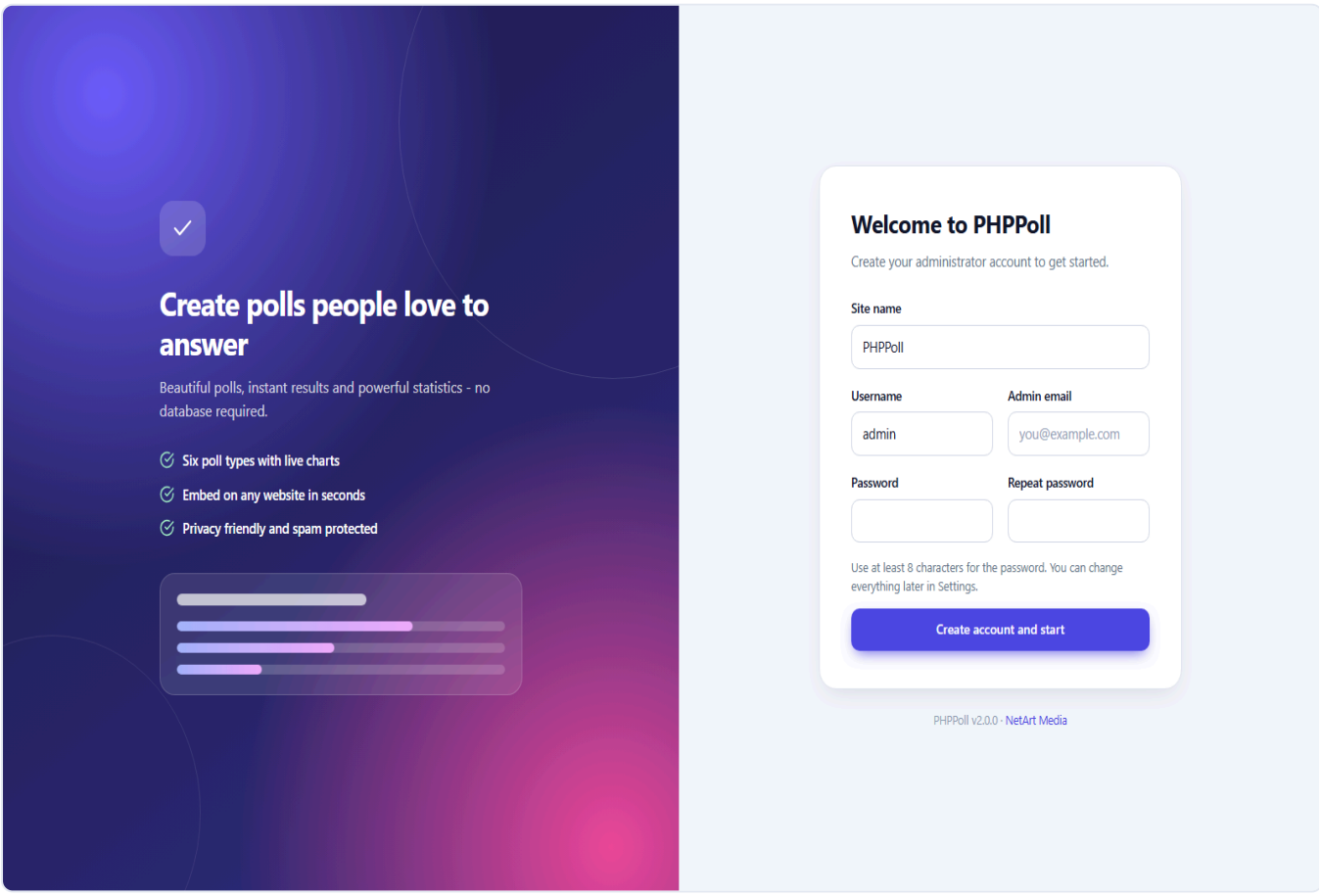
How to install the PHP poll script

Step-by-step PHPPoll installation: upload the folder, set permissions, run the first-start wizard and create your administrator account. No database needed.

Installing PHPPoll takes about five minutes. You only upload files and create an administrator account – there is no database, installer script or configuration file to edit.

Installation steps

1. **Upload the files.** Copy the whole `PHPPoll` folder to your hosting with FTP or your hosting file manager, for example to `https://www.example.com/poll/`.
2. **Check folder permissions.** The folders `data/` and `uploads/` must be writable by PHP (permissions `755` or `775`).
3. **Open the admin panel.** Visit `https://www.example.com/poll/admin/` in your browser.
4. **Create your account.** On the first visit the welcome screen asks for a site name, username, optional admin email and password. Click **Create account and start**.
5. **Create a poll.** You are taken to the dashboard, where templates help you build your first poll. See Create your first poll.



The first-start wizard creates your administrator account.

Account rules

- The username must be 3–40 characters: letters, numbers and `. _ - @`.
- The password must have at least 8 characters.
- The admin email is optional but needed for vote notifications.

Complete the first-start wizard right after uploading the script. Until the account exists, anyone who opens `/admin/` could create it.

After the installation

- Open **Settings** to set your site name, logo, language and time zone. See Settings.
- On nginx or IIS, block web access to the `data/` folder. See Security and privacy.
- If links or embed codes show a wrong address, set the *Script URL* in **Settings** → **Public site**.

Installation problems

If the wizard says settings could not be saved, the `data/` folder is not writable. See Troubleshooting for fixes.

GETTING STARTED

Create your first poll

Quick start guide: create a poll from a template, preview it live, publish it and embed it on your website with PHPPoll. Follow the steps and be online in minutes.

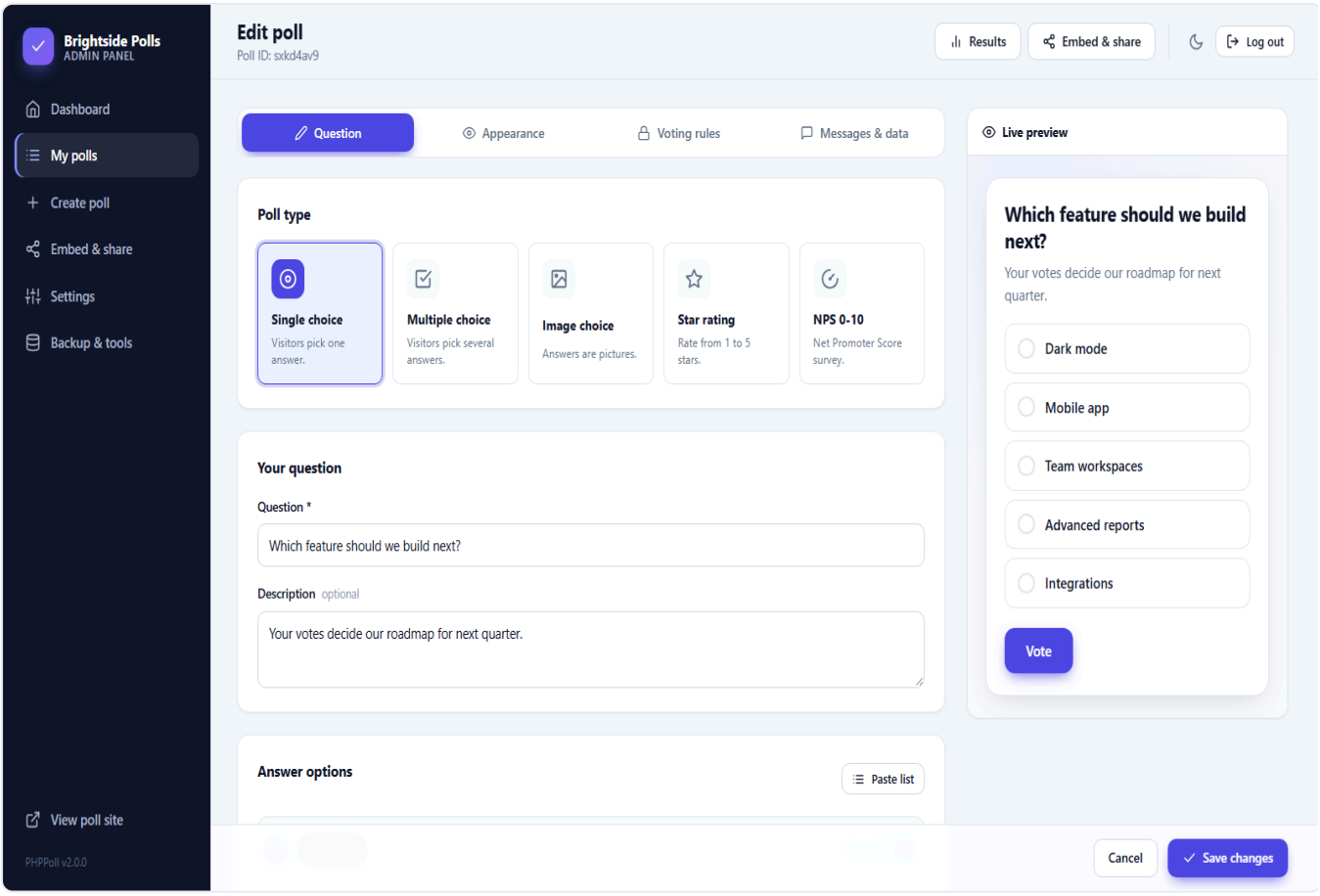
This quick start shows the shortest path from an empty installation to a live poll on your website.

Step 1: Start from a template

On a fresh installation the dashboard shows template cards: **Yes / No**, **Multiple choice**, **Star rating**, **Net Promoter Score**, **Image poll** and **Blank poll**. Click one to open the poll editor with ready-made questions and options. You can also click **Create poll** at any time.

Step 2: Edit the question and options

1. Pick the **poll type** (single choice, multiple choice, image, rating or NPS).
2. Type your **question** and an optional description.
3. Enter the **answer options**. Use **Add option** for more lines or **Paste list** to paste many options at once.



The editor shows a live preview of the poll while you type.

Step 3: Choose a look

Open the **Appearance** tab to choose a light, dark or automatic theme, your accent color, corner roundness and the chart style for the results. See Poll appearance settings.

Step 4: Set the rules

The **Voting rules** tab controls the status, schedule, vote limits and who can see the results. The defaults are safe: one vote per visitor, results shown after voting. See Voting rules.

Step 5: Save and publish

Click **Create poll**. The poll is *Active* straight away and the editor shows its ID, for example `k4x9p2ab`.

Step 6: Put the poll on your site

Click **Embed & share** on the poll. Copy the direct link, or copy the JavaScript snippet and paste it into any page. Details: Share and embed polls.

Use the **Duplicate** action in the polls list to reuse a finished poll as a starting point. Copies are saved as drafts. See Manage your polls.

Step 7: Watch the results

Open **My polls** → **Results** to see charts and statistics as the votes come in. See The results page.

GETTING STARTED

Upgrade from PHPPoll 1.x

Move from PHPPoll 1.x to 2.0: import your old polls and votes with the built-in import tool, and learn what is converted and what you need to set up again.

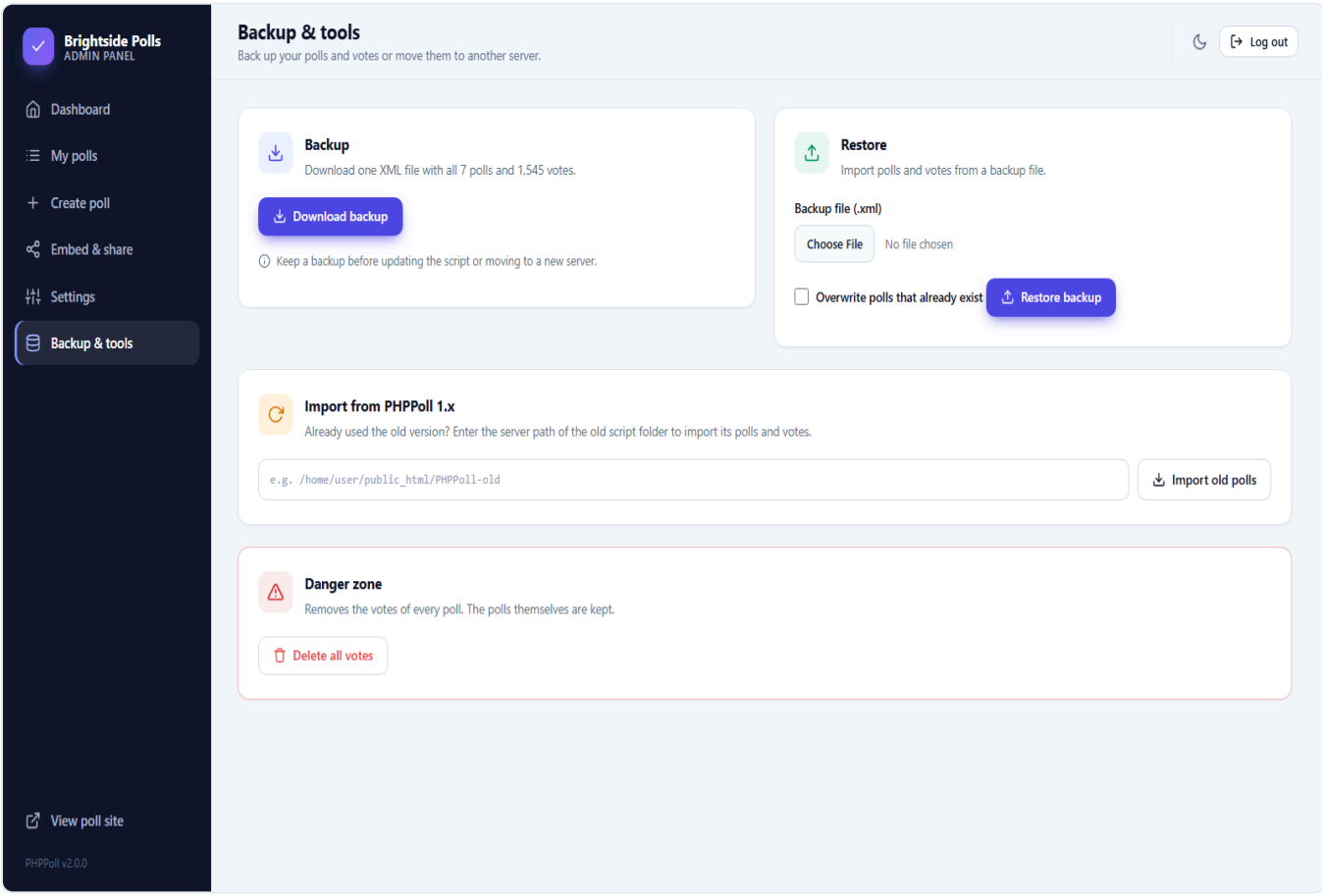
PHPPoll 2.0 is a new, redesigned version of the script. Your polls and votes from PHPPoll 1.x can be imported automatically, so you do not lose any data.

Before you start

1. Install PHPPoll 2.0 in a **new folder** next to the old version. Do not overwrite the old files. See How to install the PHP poll script.
2. Keep the old `PHPPoll` folder on the same server – the importer reads it from disk.
3. Note the server path of the old folder, for example `/home/user/public_html/PHPPoll-old`.

Import the old data

1. Log in to the new admin panel and open **Backup & tools**.
2. In the card **Import from PHPPoll 1.x** enter the server path of the old folder.
3. Click **Import old polls**. A message tells you how many polls and votes were imported.



The Backup & tools page contains the import from PHPPoll 1.x.

What is converted

In PHPPoll 1.x	In PHPPoll 2.0
Poll name and description	Question and description of a *single choice* poll
Possible answers (one per line)	Answer options
Votes	Votes, matched to the options by answer text, with the original vote date
Poll ID	The same ID, converted to lowercase
"Only one vote per IP"	Vote limit by cookie and IP address
"Show results after voting"	Results visibility: after voting (or only admin when it was off)
Captcha images	The math captcha
Non-anonymous polls	Name and email required

Visitor IP addresses are stored only as anonymous hashes in version 2.0. The administrator account and other settings are not imported – you created a new account during installation.

Update your links

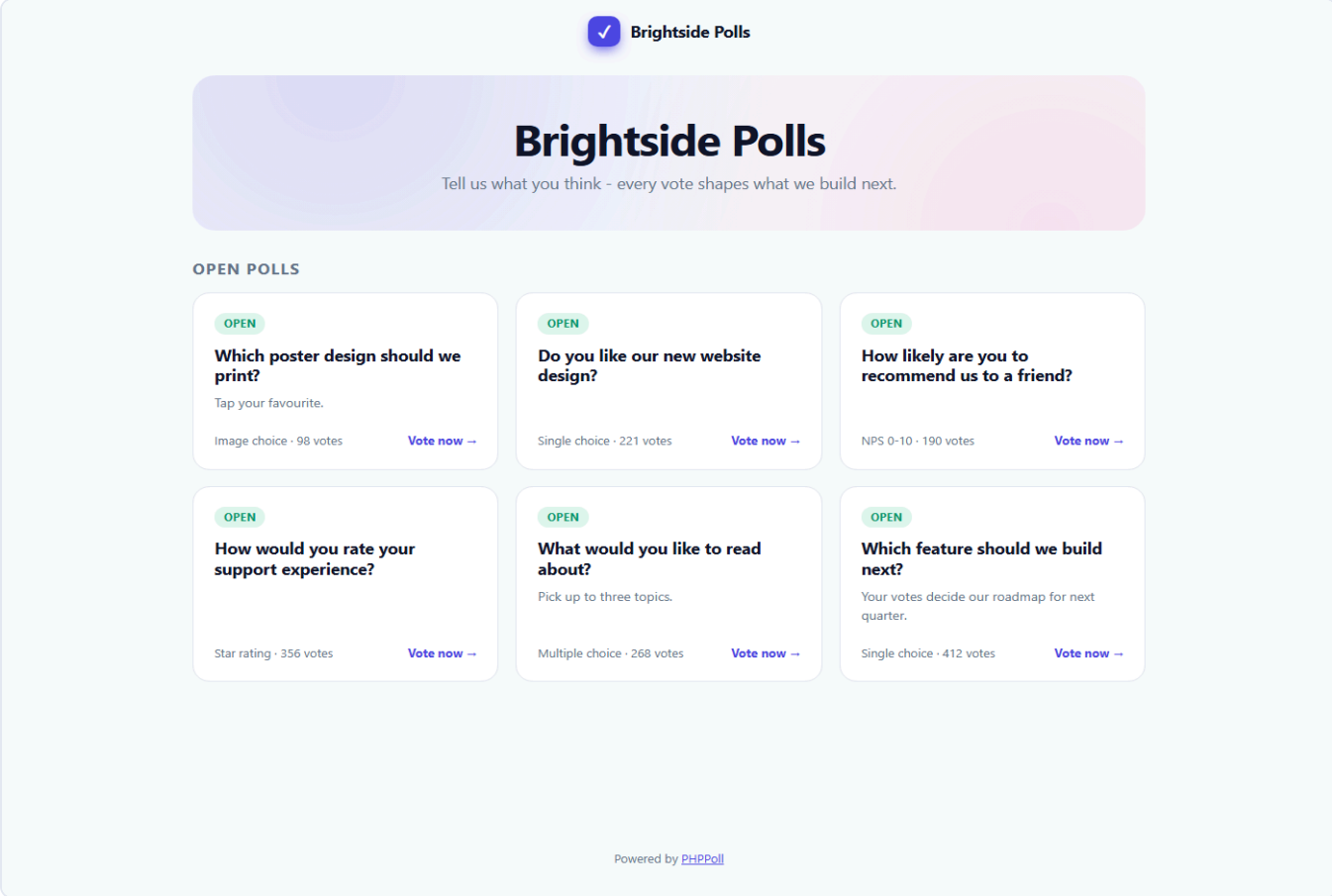
Old links such as `poll-name-ID.html` do not exist in 2.0. Use the new links from **Embed & share** or the pretty links described in Settings, and replace old embed codes on your pages with the new ones: Share and embed polls.

FRONT-END (VISITORS)

The standalone poll website

PHPPoll includes a ready poll website that lists your open and past polls with your logo, tagline and share buttons. Learn how to configure it and get pretty links.

Besides embedding polls into other pages, PHPPoll comes with a complete public website. Open `https://www.example.com/poll/` (the folder where you installed the script) and your visitors see a clean page with all your polls.



The standalone poll website shows open polls and past polls as cards.

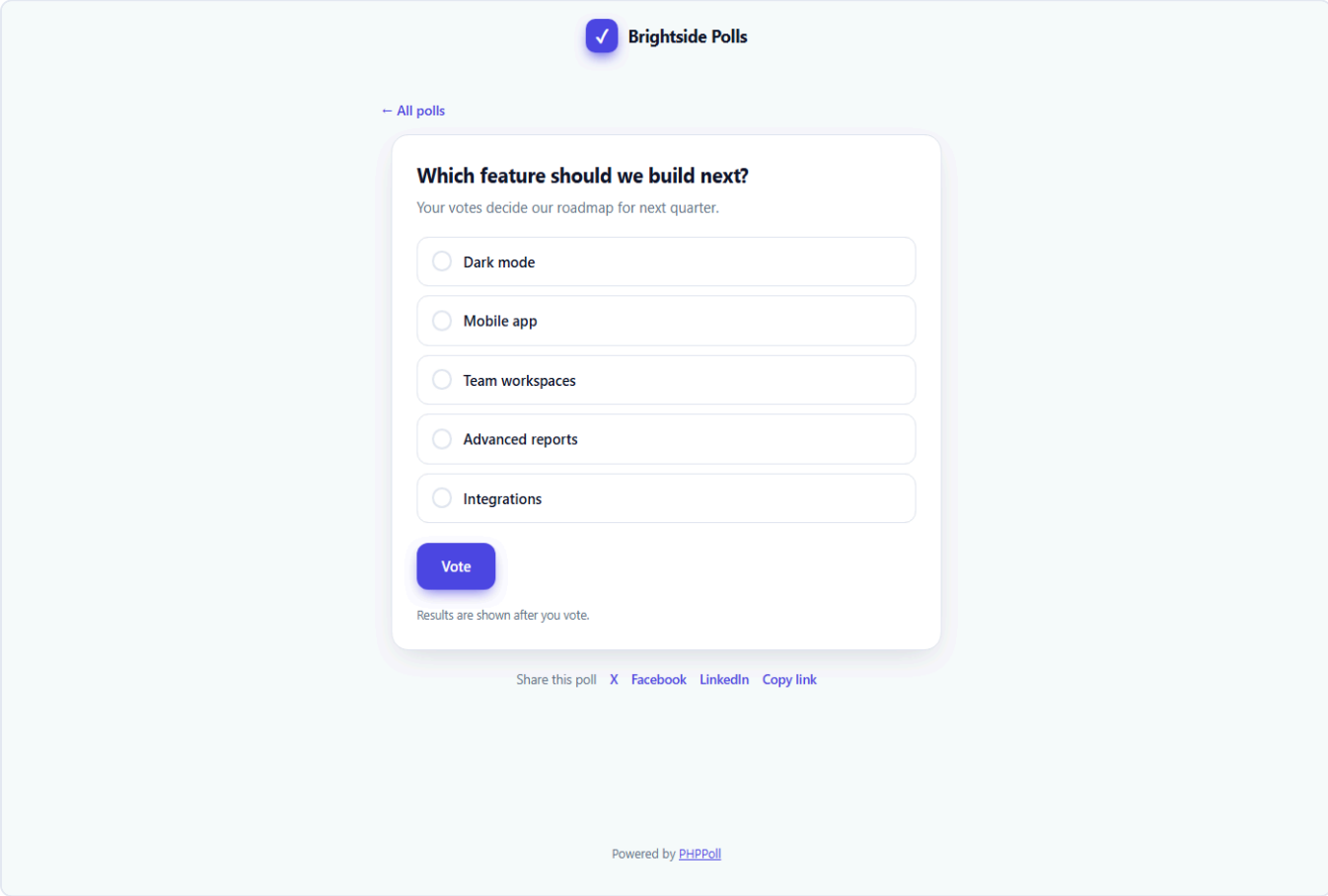
What the poll website shows

- A header with your **logo** or site name and a **tagline**.
- **Open polls** as cards with title, description, poll type, number of votes and a *Vote now* link.
- **Past polls** (closed, ended or full) so visitors can still read their results.
- A footer with your own text and, optionally, the "Powered by PHPPoll" credit.

Draft polls and scheduled polls are never listed. Only you, when logged in to the admin panel, can open a draft by its link.

A single poll page

Every poll also has its own page at `index.php?p=POLL_ID`. It contains the voting form, the results, a link back to all polls and buttons to share the poll on X, Facebook, LinkedIn or copy the link. The page title and social preview use the poll question, which is good for search engines and social networks.



A single poll page with voting form and share links.

Settings for the poll website

Open **Settings** in the admin panel:

- **General:** site name, tagline, logo, footer text and the "Powered by" credit.
- **Public site → Show the list of polls:** switch it off if you only want to use direct links or embeds. The home page then shows a short message.
- **Public site → Pretty poll links:** turns links into `/poll/abc123`. This needs Apache with `mod_rewrite` and the included `.htaccess` file.

See Settings for all options.

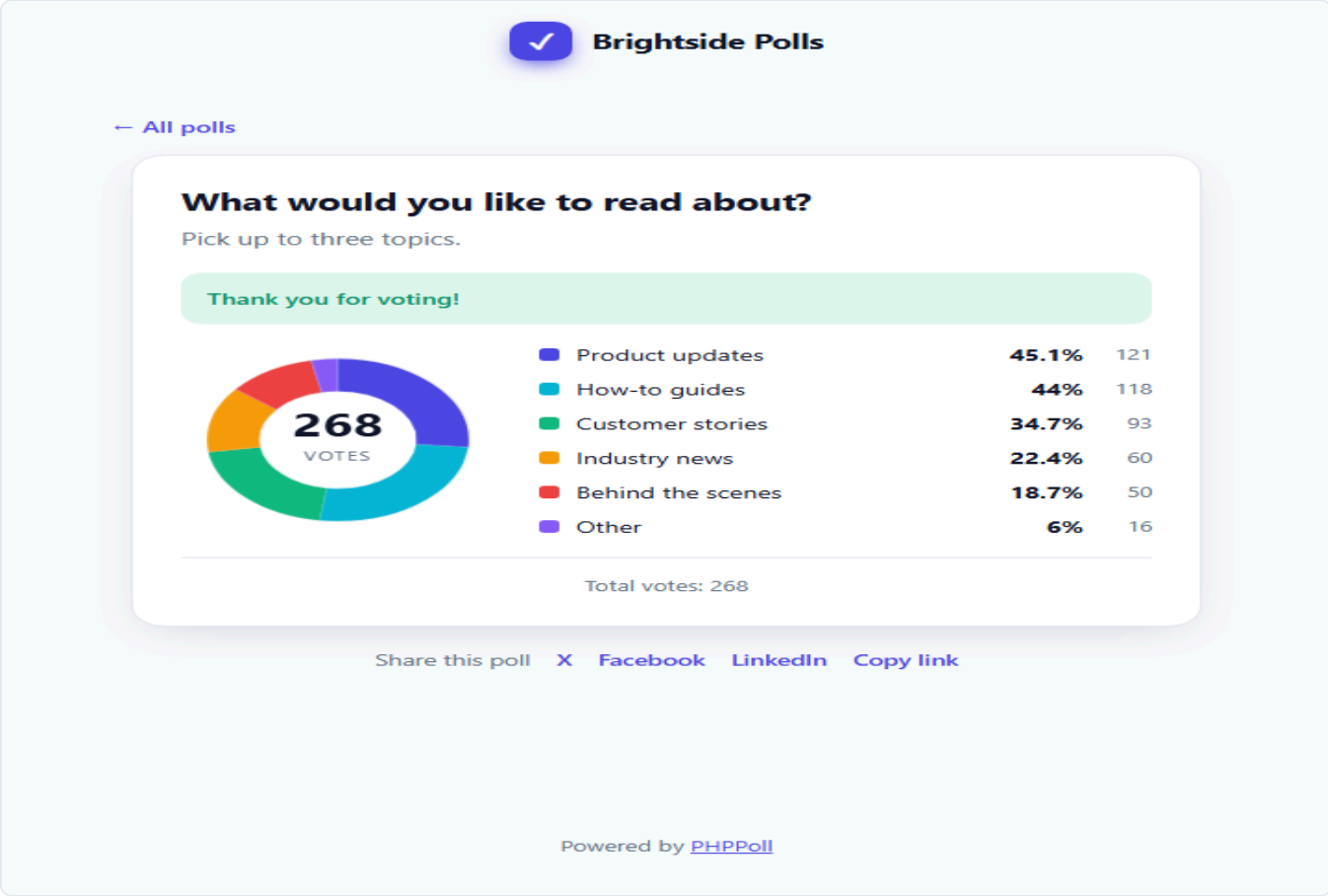
Not using the standalone site? Simply ignore it and embed the polls in your own pages instead: Share and embed polls.

FRONT-END (VISITORS)

How visitors vote

See the voting experience: choose an answer, send the vote and see instant results. Covers single, multiple, image, rating and NPS polls and extra fields.

Voting is designed to take a few seconds. Visitors pick an answer, press the vote button, and the poll updates instantly – without reloading the page.



After voting, the poll shows a thank-you message and the results.

Voting on each poll type

Poll type	What the visitor does
Single choice	Selects one option (round buttons).
Multiple choice	Ticks several options (square boxes). A hint shows the limit, for example "Choose up to 3 options". The script refuses extra choices.
Image choice	Taps a picture in a tile grid. See Image polls.
Star rating	Clicks a star from 1 to the maximum. See Star rating polls.
NPS	Clicks a number from 0 to 10. See NPS (Net Promoter Score) polls.

The "Other" answer

If you enabled **Allow "Other" answer**, the last option shows a text field after it is selected, where visitors type their own answer (up to 120 characters). These answers appear in the results page of the admin. See The results page.

Name, email and comment

You can ask for a name, an email address and a comment together with the vote, as optional or required fields. See Collect voter details and comments.

Security question

When the captcha is enabled, visitors answer a simple math question such as "3 + 4". See Prevent duplicate votes and spam.

After the vote

1. The form is replaced by your **thank-you message** (or a redirect to another page).
2. If results are allowed, the chart appears immediately. See Poll results for visitors.
3. A cookie remembers the vote so the visitor sees the results the next time instead of the form.

Error messages

Clear messages explain problems: no answer chosen, too many options, wrong captcha, poll closed, already voted. Messages are stored in the language file and can be translated: Translate PHPPoll into your language.

Voting works even if JavaScript is disabled: the form is submitted normally and the visitor returns to the poll page.

FRONT-END (VISITORS)

Poll results for visitors

Control when visitors see poll results: always, after voting, after the poll closes or never. See how the live result charts and messages look for your voters.

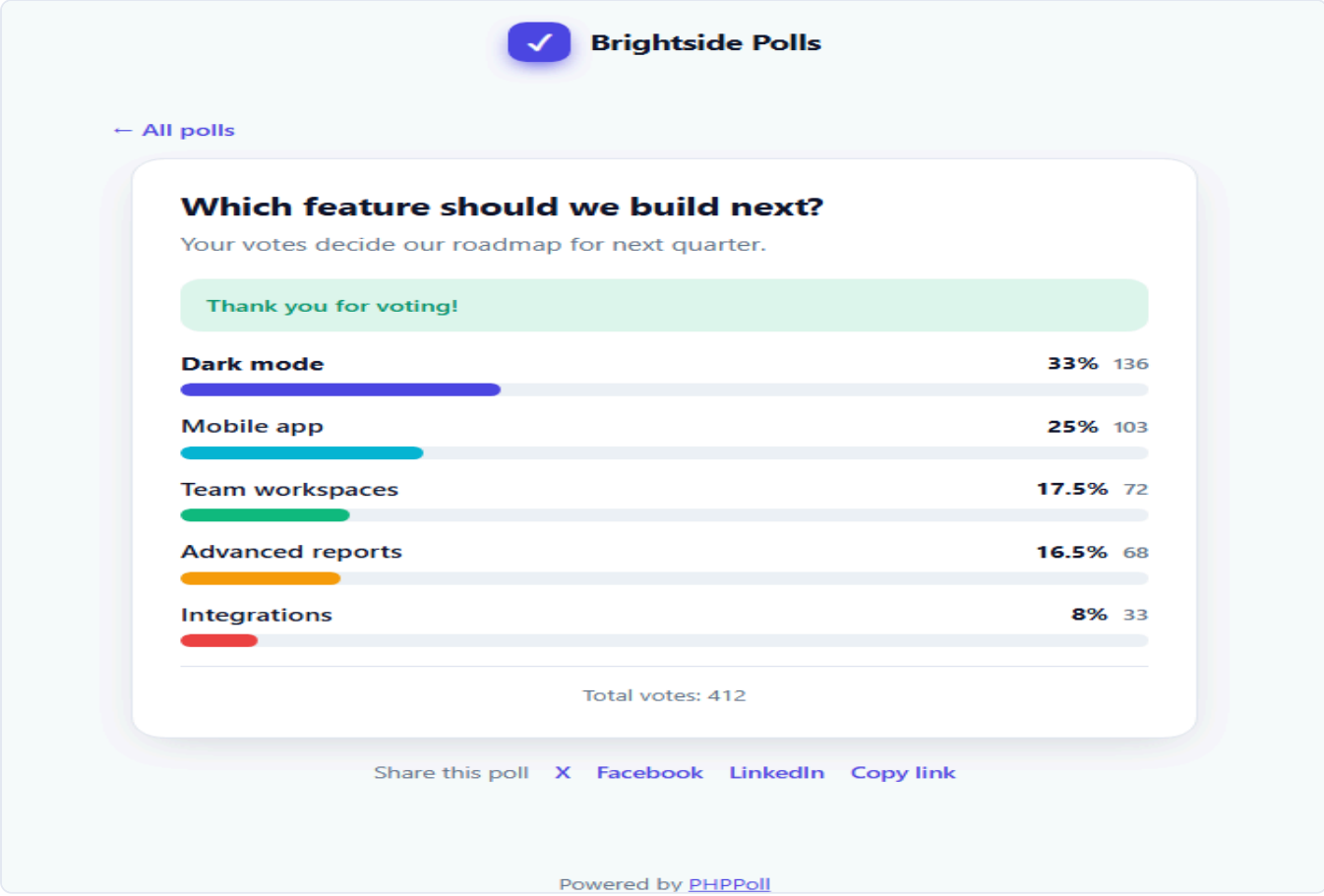
For every poll you decide **who can see the results and when**. This setting is in the poll editor under **Voting rules → Who can see the results**.

The four visibility modes

Mode	Behavior for visitors	Good for
Always visible	A *View results* link is shown next to the Vote button, so people can look before voting.	Fun polls, quick opinion polls
After voting	The results appear once the visitor has voted. Closed polls show results to everyone.	Most polls (default)
After the poll closes	Results stay hidden until the poll is closed, ended or full.	Contests, unbiased research
Only me (admin)	Visitors never see results. You see them in the admin panel.	Private feedback, NPS surveys

What the results look like

The visitor sees the chart you selected for the poll (bars, columns, donut or pie), the percentage of each option and, if enabled, the number of votes. A total is shown at the bottom. Charts animate smoothly and are drawn in pure CSS and SVG, so no external library is loaded.



Results as animated horizontal bars with percentages and vote counts.

Hiding the vote numbers

In **Appearance** you can switch off *Show vote numbers* to show only percentages. See Poll appearance settings. Ratings and NPS polls show an average score or the Net Promoter Score instead of a list of percentages. See Star rating polls and NPS (Net Promoter Score) polls.

Messages shown to visitors

- "Results are shown after you vote."
- "Results will be published when the poll closes."
- "The results of this poll are private."
- A custom message for closed polls, which you can write yourself. See Thank-you message, redirect and closed message.

Choose *After voting* or *After the poll closes* when you want honest answers: people are not influenced by what others voted.

Related: Results visibility settings.

FRONT-END (VISITORS)

Prevent duplicate votes and spam

How PHPPoll stops repeated and fake votes: cookie and IP limits, repeat voting after N hours, math captcha, honeypot and bot filter. IP addresses are never stored.

A poll is only useful when the votes are honest. PHPPoll combines several simple protections that work without any external service. Configure them per poll in **Voting rules**. See Voting rules.

Limit repeated votes

Option	How it works
Cookie and IP address (strict)	The default. A visitor is blocked if the browser cookie *or* the IP address already voted.
Cookie only	Blocks the same browser. People on a shared network (offices, schools) can each vote once.
IP address only	Blocks the same connection, even if the cookie is deleted.
Do not limit	Unlimited votes. Useful for testing or lively events.

Allow voting again after some time

Set **Allow voting again after (hours)** to let people vote again later, for example `24` for a daily poll. `0` means every visitor can vote only once.

Math captcha

Switch on **Require a security question** to show a question like "What is 3 + 4?". It stops simple bots and needs no images or accounts. The answer is checked on the server with a signed token, so it also works when the poll is embedded in an iframe.

Invisible protection (always on)

- **Honeypot field:** a hidden field that real visitors never fill in. Bots that do are silently ignored.
- **Minimum fill-in time:** forms submitted in under two seconds are rejected, and forms older than two days expire.
- **Bot detection:** requests from crawlers and scripts such as curl or Python are refused.
- **Server-side validation:** every answer is checked against the poll definition, so manipulated forms cannot add invalid votes.

Privacy: IP addresses are not stored

To check the IP address PHPPoll saves only a short, irreversible hash, never the address itself. This keeps the duplicate check working while respecting the privacy of your visitors. See Security and privacy.

Cap the total number of votes

Set **Maximum number of votes** and the poll closes automatically when the limit is reached.

If your site is behind a proxy or CDN such as Cloudflare, enable `PP_TRUST_PROXY` in `config.php`. Otherwise all visitors may appear to share one IP address and be blocked after the first vote. See Troubleshooting.

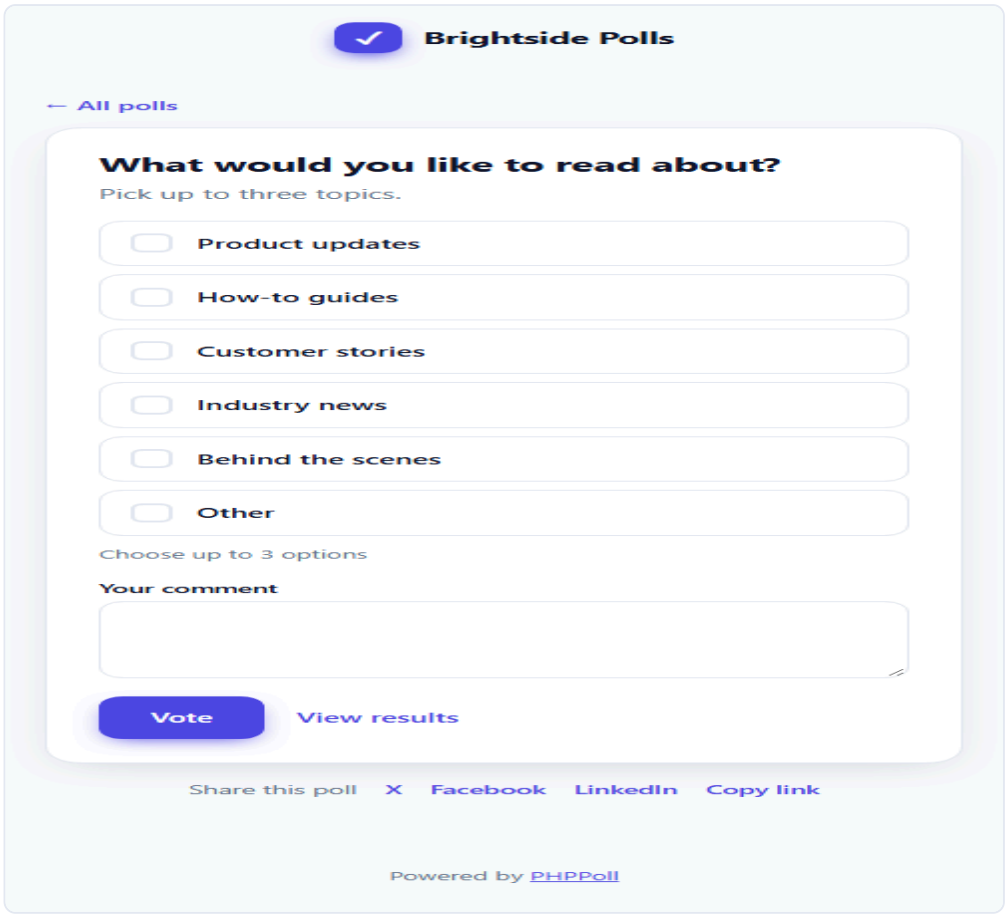
When you test your own poll, switch the limit to *Do not limit* temporarily, or you will see "You have already voted".

FRONT-END (VISITORS)

Mobile, dark mode and themes

PHPPoll polls and the admin panel are fully responsive. Learn about light, dark and automatic themes, accent colors and how polls look on phones and tablets.

More than half of all web visitors use a phone. Every PHPPoll poll, result chart and admin screen adapts to the screen size, so voting is comfortable everywhere.



A poll on a phone: big tap targets and a compact layout.

Responsive by default

- Large touch-friendly option buttons.
- Image polls reflow from several columns to one.
- The NPS scale and rating stars shrink to fit narrow screens.
- Embedded polls resize themselves inside your page, so there are no scrollbars.

Light, dark and automatic themes

Each poll has a theme setting in **Appearance**:

Theme	Result
Site default	Uses the default theme from **Settings** → **General**.

Light	White card, dark text.
Dark	Dark card, light text – ideal for dark websites.
Automatic	Follows the visitor's system setting (light or dark).

Your brand colors

Choose an **accent color** that is used for buttons, selected options and charts, and a **corner radius** from sharp (0) to very round (28 pixels). The live preview in the editor shows the result immediately. See Poll appearance settings.

Override the theme for one embed

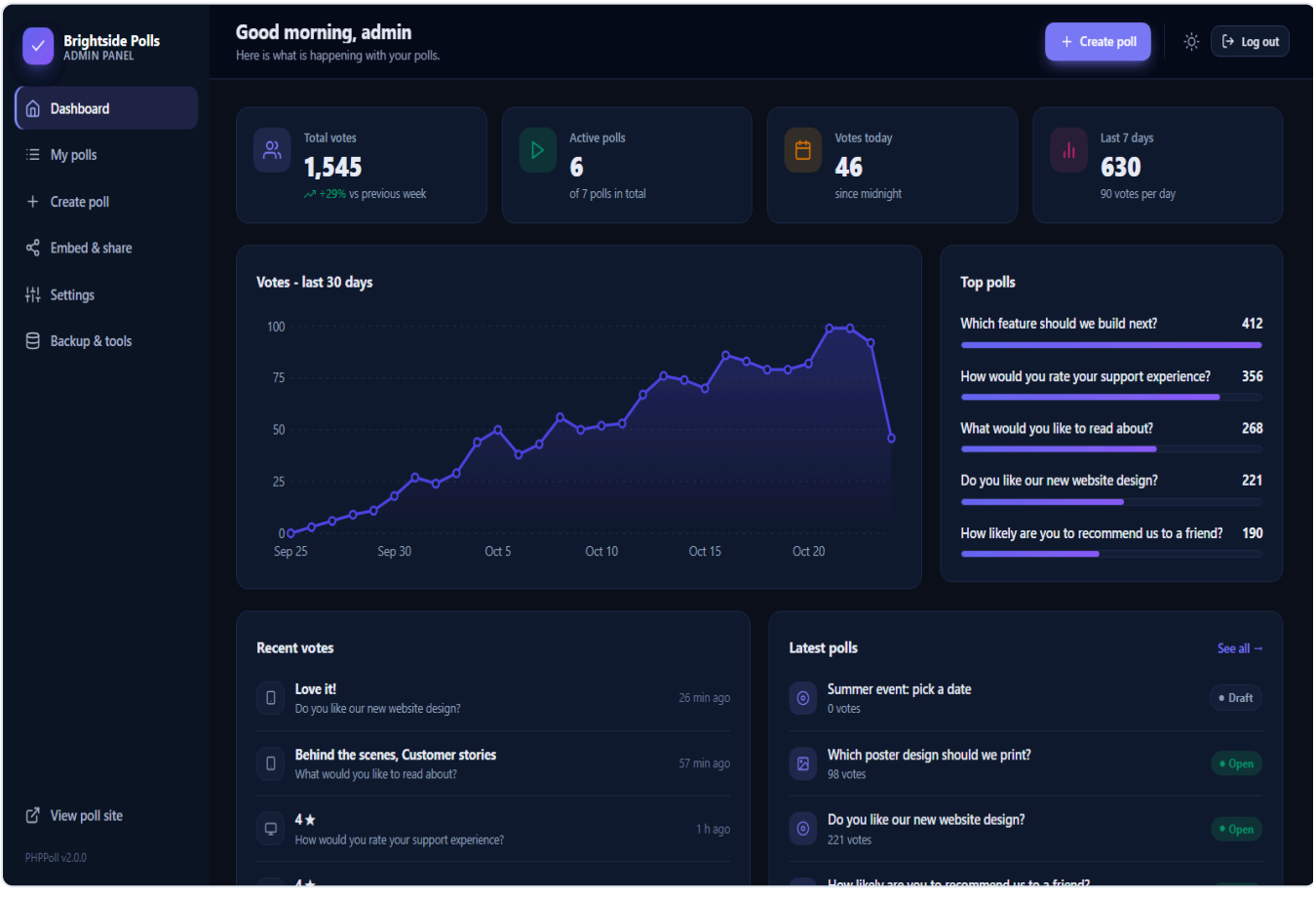
When you embed a poll, you can force a theme and color for that one place without changing the poll:

```
<div data-phppoll="POLL_ID" data-theme="dark" data-accent="#e11d48"></div>
```

More in Embed a poll with JavaScript and Embed a poll with an iframe.

Dark mode in the admin panel

The admin panel has its own light and dark mode. Click the moon or sun icon in the top bar. The choice is remembered, and the first visit follows your system setting.



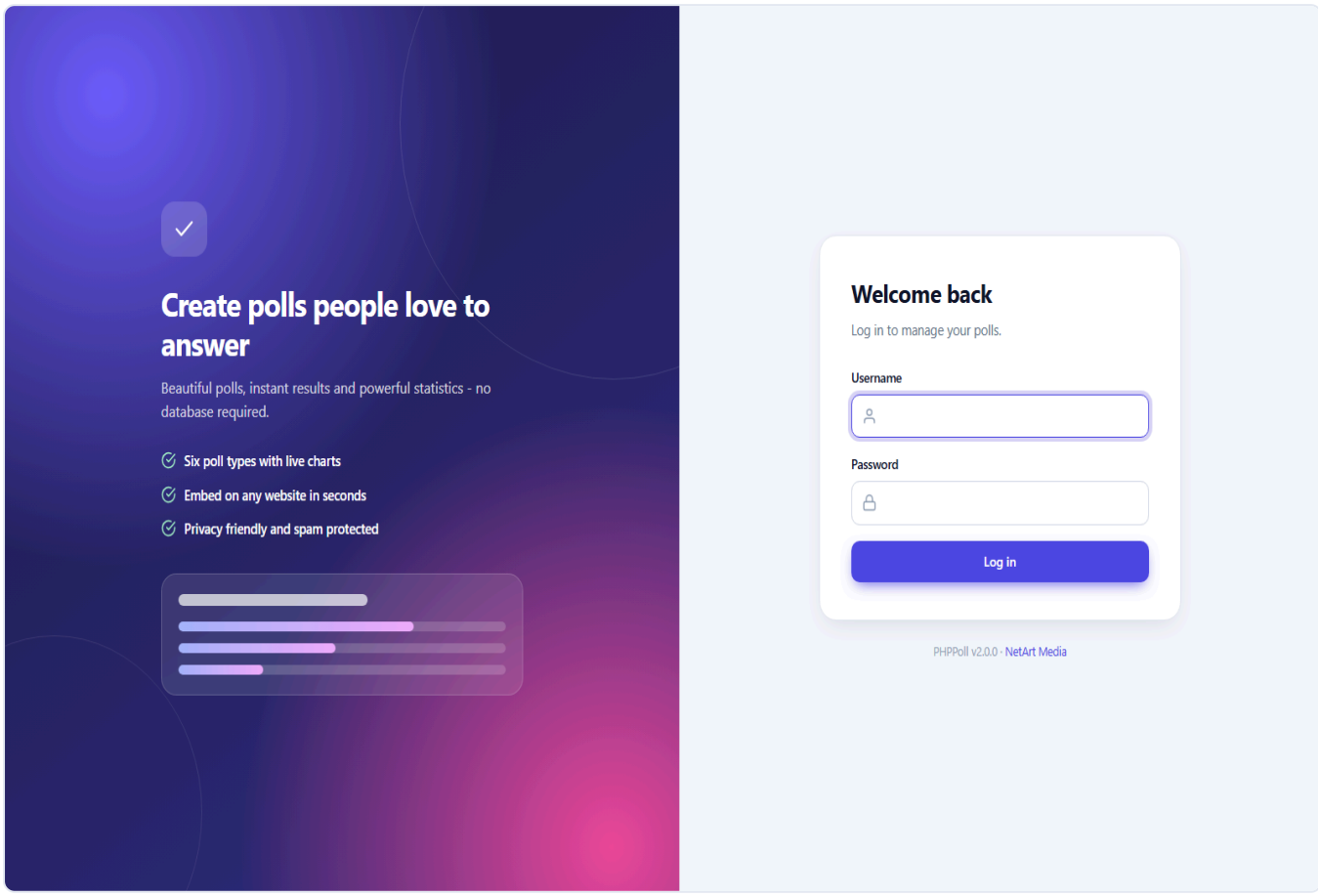
The admin panel in dark mode.

ADMIN PANEL

Admin panel login and account

How to log in to the PHPPoll admin panel, change your username and password, log out safely and what protects the login: hashing, lockout and CSRF tokens.

The admin panel is where you create polls, read results and change settings. It is located in the `admin/` folder of your installation, for example `https://www.example.com/poll/admin/`.



The PHPPoll admin login page.

Log in

1. Open the admin address in your browser.
2. Enter the username and password you created during installation.
3. Click **Log in**. You arrive at the dashboard.

Log out

Click **Log out** in the top bar. Always log out on shared computers.

Change username or password

1. Open **Settings** → **Account**.
2. Change the username if you wish.

3. To set a new password, enter your **current password** and the new password twice (minimum 8 characters). Leave the fields empty to keep the old password.
4. Click **Save changes**.

Forgot your password?

Passwords are stored as one-way hashes and cannot be shown. To reset it, open `data/settings.xml` on your server, delete the lines `<admin_user>` and `<admin_pass>` (leave the empty tags or remove them completely) and open `/admin/` again – the first-start wizard appears and you can create a new account. Your polls and votes are not affected.

> Only do this on your own server and complete the wizard immediately, as the setup screen is open to anyone while no account exists.

How the login is protected

- **Hashed passwords** using PHP's `password_hash`.
- **Login lockout:** after 5 failed attempts from the same address, login is blocked for 15 minutes.
- **CSRF tokens** in every admin form, so other websites cannot trigger actions in your name.
- **Session protection:** the session ID changes on login, and the cookie is HTTP-only.

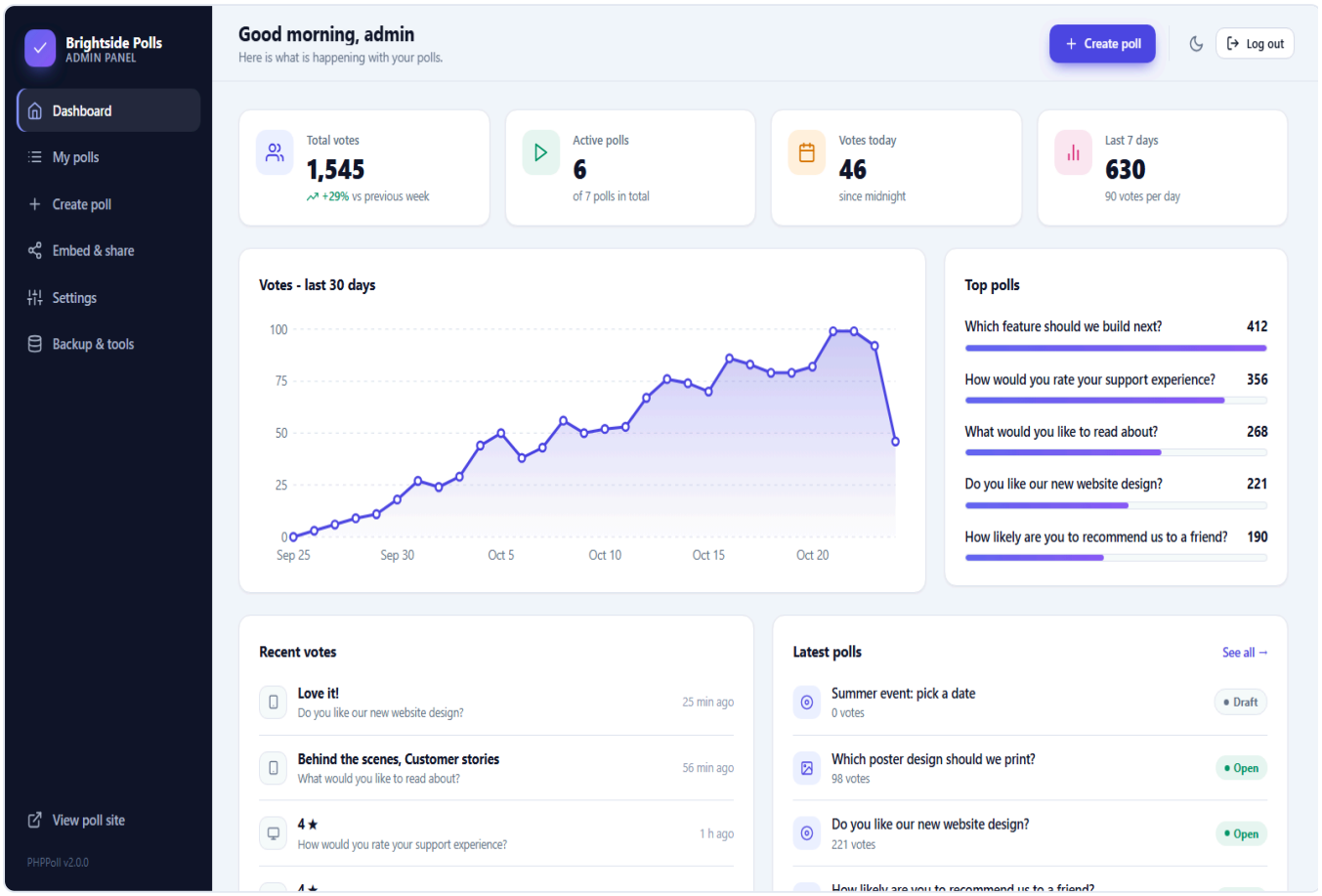
For more see Security and privacy.

ADMIN PANEL

The admin dashboard

A tour of the PHPPoll dashboard: total votes, weekly trend, active polls, 30-day activity chart, top polls, recent votes and quick-start templates.

The dashboard is the first page after login. It summarizes the activity of all your polls so you immediately see what is happening.



The dashboard summarizes votes, trends, top polls and the latest activity.

Statistics cards

Card	Meaning
Total votes	All votes in all polls, with the change compared to the previous week.
Active polls	Polls that are currently open, out of the total number of polls.
Votes today	Votes received since midnight in your time zone.
Last 7 days	Votes in the last week and the daily average.

Votes – last 30 days

An area chart shows how many votes arrived each day. Hover over a point to see the exact number. It helps you spot the effect of a newsletter, a social media post or a new embed.

Top polls

The five polls with the most votes, with a bar for comparison. Click a poll to open its results.

Recent votes and latest polls

- **Recent votes:** the latest answers with the device used and the time.
- **Latest polls:** your newest polls with their status. Click a title to see results.

Templates for the first poll

When no poll exists, the dashboard offers templates: Yes/No, Multiple choice, Star rating, Net Promoter Score, Image poll and a Blank poll. See Create your first poll.

Top bar and menu

- **Create poll:** opens the poll editor.
- **Moon / sun icon:** switches between light and dark mode.
- **View poll site** (sidebar): opens the public poll website in a new tab. See The standalone poll website.
- The sidebar links to **My polls**, **Embed & share**, **Settings** and **Backup & tools**.

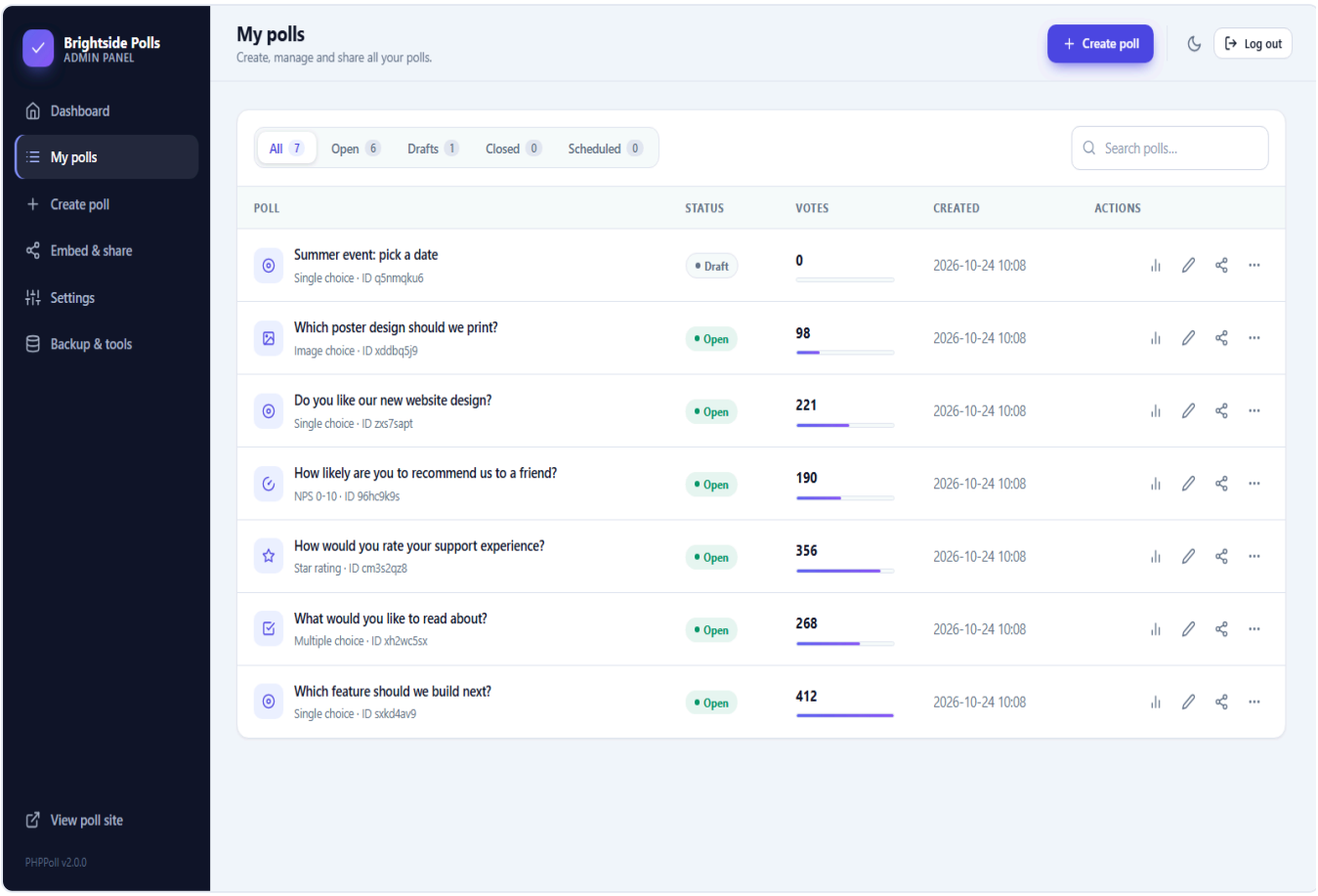
On phones the sidebar opens with the menu button. See Mobile, dark mode and themes.

ADMIN PANEL

Manage your polls

Use the My polls page to search and filter polls, open results, edit, share, duplicate, close, reopen or delete a poll. Learn what each poll status means.

The **My polls** page lists every poll you created, newest first. From here you can reach everything you need for a poll with one click.



The My polls page with filter tabs, search and quick actions.

Find a poll

- **Filter tabs:** All, Open, Drafts, Closed and Scheduled, each with a counter.
- **Search box:** type part of the title or the poll ID to filter the list instantly.

Columns

Column	Shows
Poll	Question, poll type and ID. Click it to open the results.
Status	Open, Draft, Closed, Scheduled, Ended or Full.
Votes	Number of votes with a small bar for comparison.
Created	Date and time of creation, in your time zone.

Actions

The icons on every row open **Results**, **Edit** and **Embed & share**. The **…** menu contains more:

- **Open public page** – shows the poll as visitors see it.
- **Copy link** – copies the poll address to the clipboard.
- **Duplicate** – creates a copy with all settings and options. The copy is a *draft* without votes.
- **Close poll / Reopen poll** – stops or restarts voting. Reopening removes an end date that is already in the past.
- **Delete** – removes the poll and all its votes after a confirmation.

Deleting a poll cannot be undone. Download a backup first if you may need the data. See Backup, restore and moving to a new server.

What the statuses mean

Status	Meaning
Open	Active and accepting votes.
Draft	Hidden from the public. Use it while preparing a poll.
Scheduled	Active, but the opening date is in the future. See Schedule polls and set end dates.
Ended	The closing date has passed.
Full	The maximum number of votes was reached.
Closed	Closed manually by you.

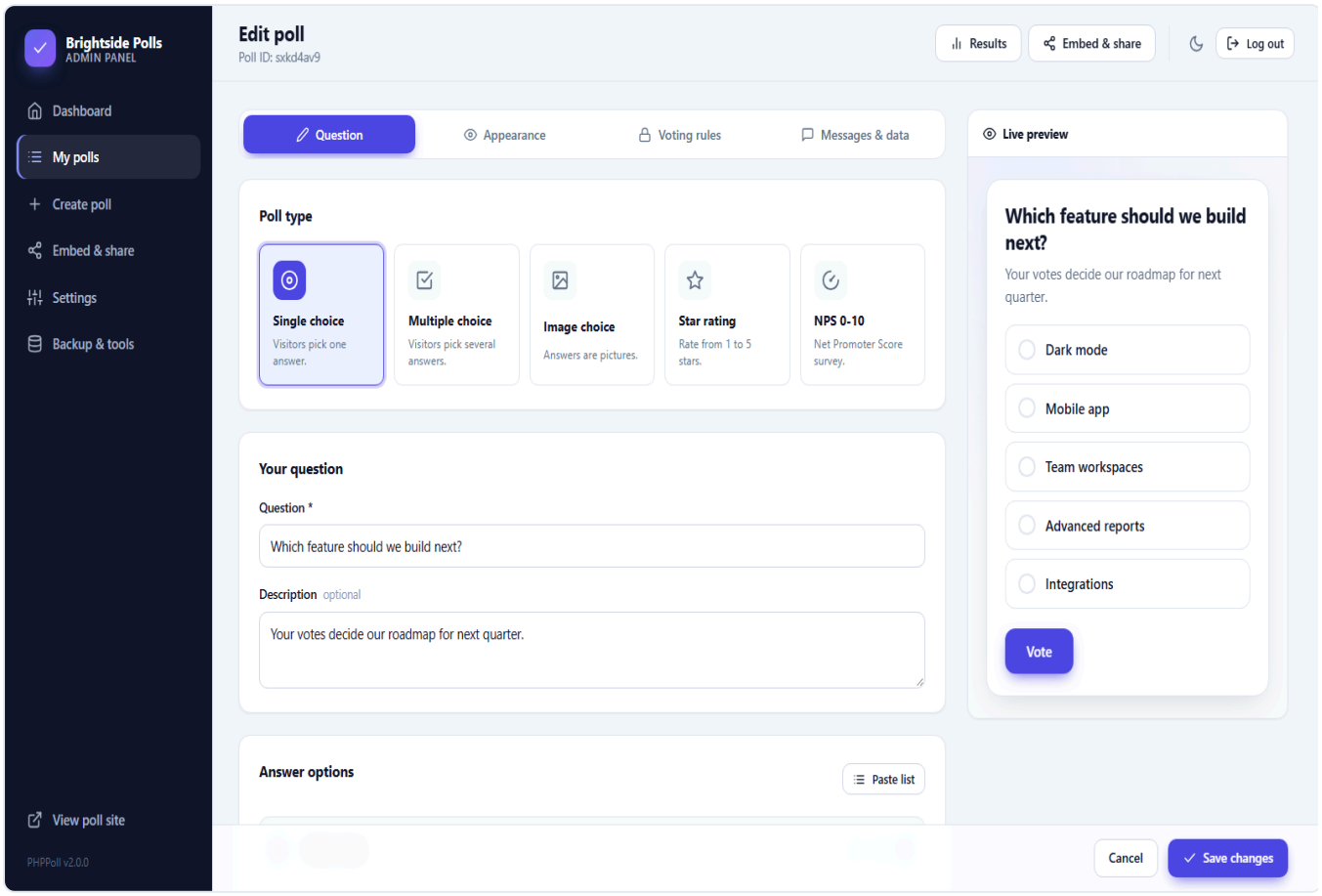
Next: edit a poll in the The poll editor.

ADMIN PANEL

The poll editor

A guide to the PHPPoll poll editor with live preview and four tabs: Question, Appearance, Voting rules and Messages and data. Create any poll quickly.

The poll editor is used to create a new poll and to change an existing one. Open it with **Create poll**, or with the **Edit** icon in the polls list.



Settings on the left, live preview on the right.

Layout of the editor

- **Left side:** four tabs with all settings.
- **Right side:** a **live preview** that shows the poll exactly as visitors will see it. It updates with every keystroke: question, options, colors, theme and extra fields.
- **Bottom bar:** *Cancel* and *Create poll* / *Save changes* are always visible while you scroll.

The four tabs

Tab	What you set	Guide
Question	Poll type, question, description and answer options.	Poll types: which one should you use?

Appearance	Theme, accent color, corners, button text, chart style, result order.	Poll appearance settings
Voting rules	Status, schedule, vote limits, captcha, who sees results.	Voting rules
Messages & data	Thank-you text, redirect, name/email/comment fields, notifications.	Collect voter details and comments

Working with answer options

- **Add option** adds a new line. **Paste list** adds many options at once, one per line.
- Use the **up** and **down** arrows to reorder and the **X** to remove a line.
- Empty lines are ignored when you save. A choice poll needs at least two options.
- Options keep an internal number, so changing the text of an option does not lose its existing votes.

Saving

After saving, the editor stays open with a green confirmation and shows the poll ID in the header. From the top bar you can jump to **Results** or **Embed & share**.

Validation

PHPPoll tells you what is missing: the question is required, choice polls need two options, and the closing date must be after the opening date. Correct the highlighted tab and save again.

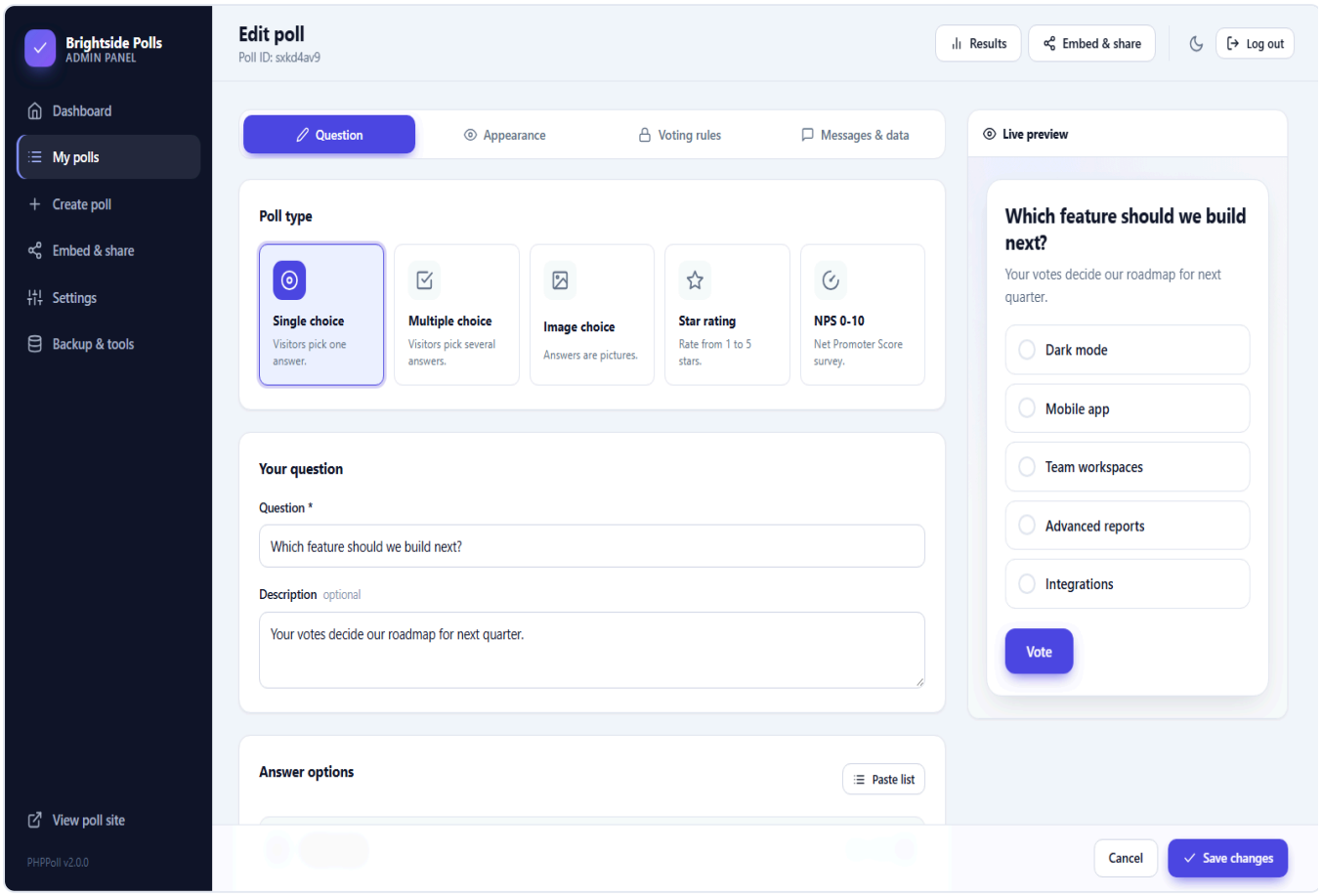
Not sure where to start? Use the template cards on the dashboard: Create your first poll.

ADMIN PANEL

Poll types: which one should you use?

Compare the five poll types of PHPPoll: single choice, multiple choice, image choice, star rating and NPS 0-10. Learn when to use each type for your survey.

PHPPoll offers five poll types. The type is selected at the top of the **Question** tab and can be changed later.



Choose the type with one click.

Overview

Type	Visitors can…	Best for	Guide
Single choice	pick one answer	Opinion polls, yes/no questions, favourites	Choice polls
Multiple choice	pick several answers (with a limit)	Interests, features wanted, "select all that apply"	Choice polls
Image choice	tap a picture	Design contests, logos, product photos	Image polls
Star rating	rate from 1 to 3-10 stars	Satisfaction, content quality, product reviews	Star rating polls

NPS 0-10	rate their likelihood to recommend	Customer loyalty, company benchmarking	NPS (Net Promoter Score) polls

Which type should I choose?

- You want to know **which option wins**: single choice (or image choice for pictures).
- You want to find **all the interests** of your audience: multiple choice.
- You want a **score** that you can track over time: star rating or NPS.

Changing the type of an existing poll

You can switch the type of a poll that already has votes, but old votes belong to the old structure. Results of choice polls are matched by option, ratings by number, so switching between choice and rating types leaves the earlier votes unused. For a clean result, create a new poll and keep the old one closed.

Charts per type

Choice and image polls can show bars, columns, donut or pie charts. Star rating polls show the average with a distribution bar for every star value, and NPS polls show the score with a promoter/passive/detractor split. See Chart types for poll results.

ADMIN PANEL

Single and multiple choice polls

Create single choice and multiple choice polls with PHPPoll. Set options, an Other answer, minimum and maximum choices, shuffled order and result sorting.

The classic poll: a question and a list of answers. A **single choice** poll lets visitors pick exactly one answer, a **multiple choice** poll lets them pick several.

Create a single choice poll

1. Click **Create poll** and select **Single choice**.
2. Enter the question, for example *Which feature should we build next?*
3. Fill in at least two answer options. Use **Paste list** to add many quickly.
4. Click **Create poll**.

Create a multiple choice poll

Select **Multiple choice** instead. Two extra fields appear under the options:

Field	Meaning
Maximum choices	How many options one visitor may select. `0` means no limit. `1` turns it into a single answer.
Minimum choices	How many options must be selected (default 1).

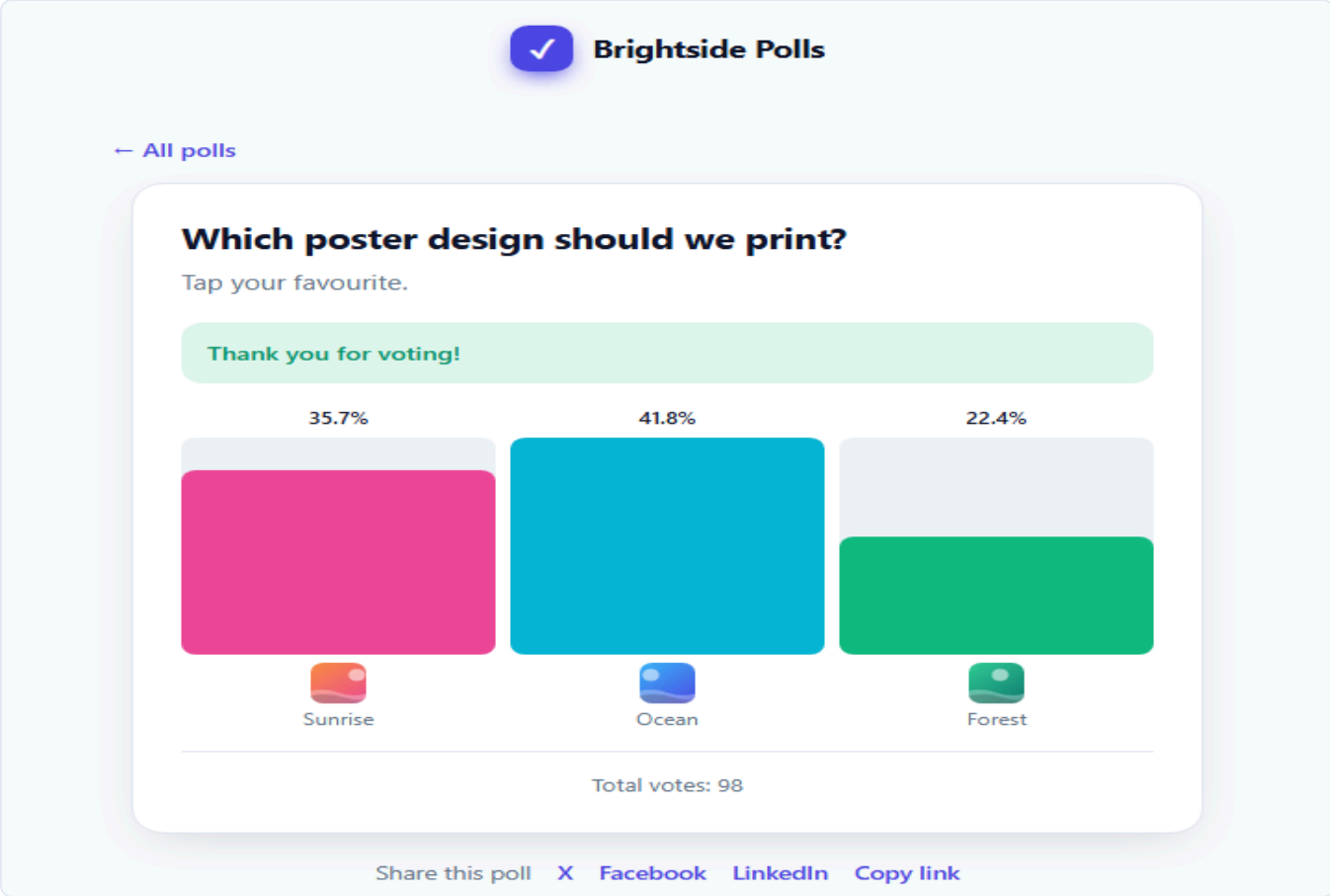
The voting form shows a hint such as "Choose up to 3 options", and the script blocks extra ticks.

Useful option settings

- **Allow "Other" answer:** adds a last option with a text field. You can rename the label, for example "Something else". Typed answers are collected in the results page.
- **Shuffle the options:** shows the options in a random order to each visitor, which removes the bias towards the first option.

Results of choice polls

In a single choice poll the percentages add up to 100%. In a multiple choice poll each percentage is the share of *voters* who selected that option, so the sum can be higher than 100%. In the Appearance tab you can sort results by *most votes first* and choose a chart style. See Poll appearance settings and Chart types for poll results.



A choice poll displayed as a column chart.

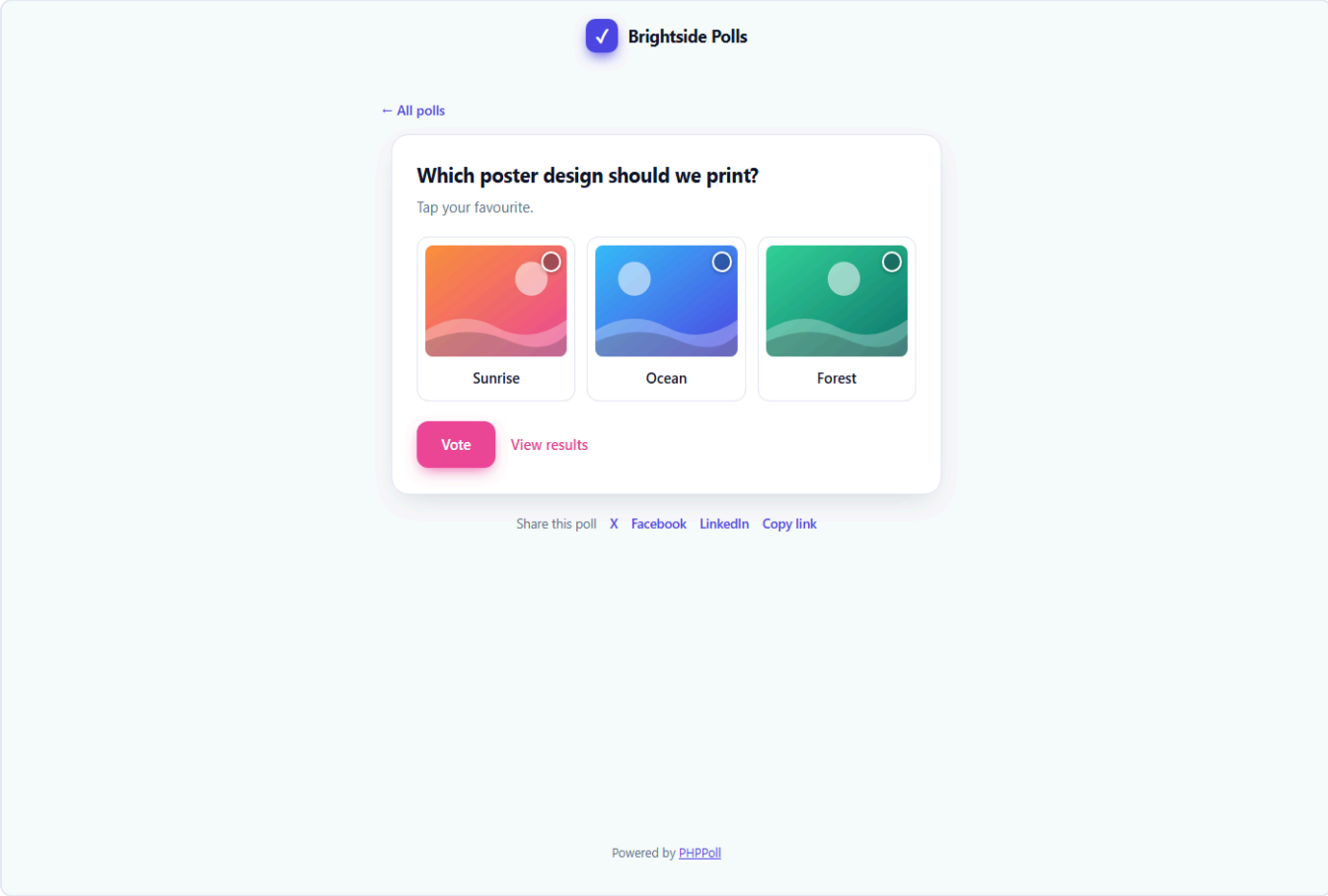
Keep option texts short. They are used as chart labels and in the CSV export. See Export poll votes to CSV.

ADMIN PANEL

Image polls

Create an image poll with PHPPoll: upload pictures or use image URLs, set one or several choices, and show results as charts. Ideal for logos, designs and photos.

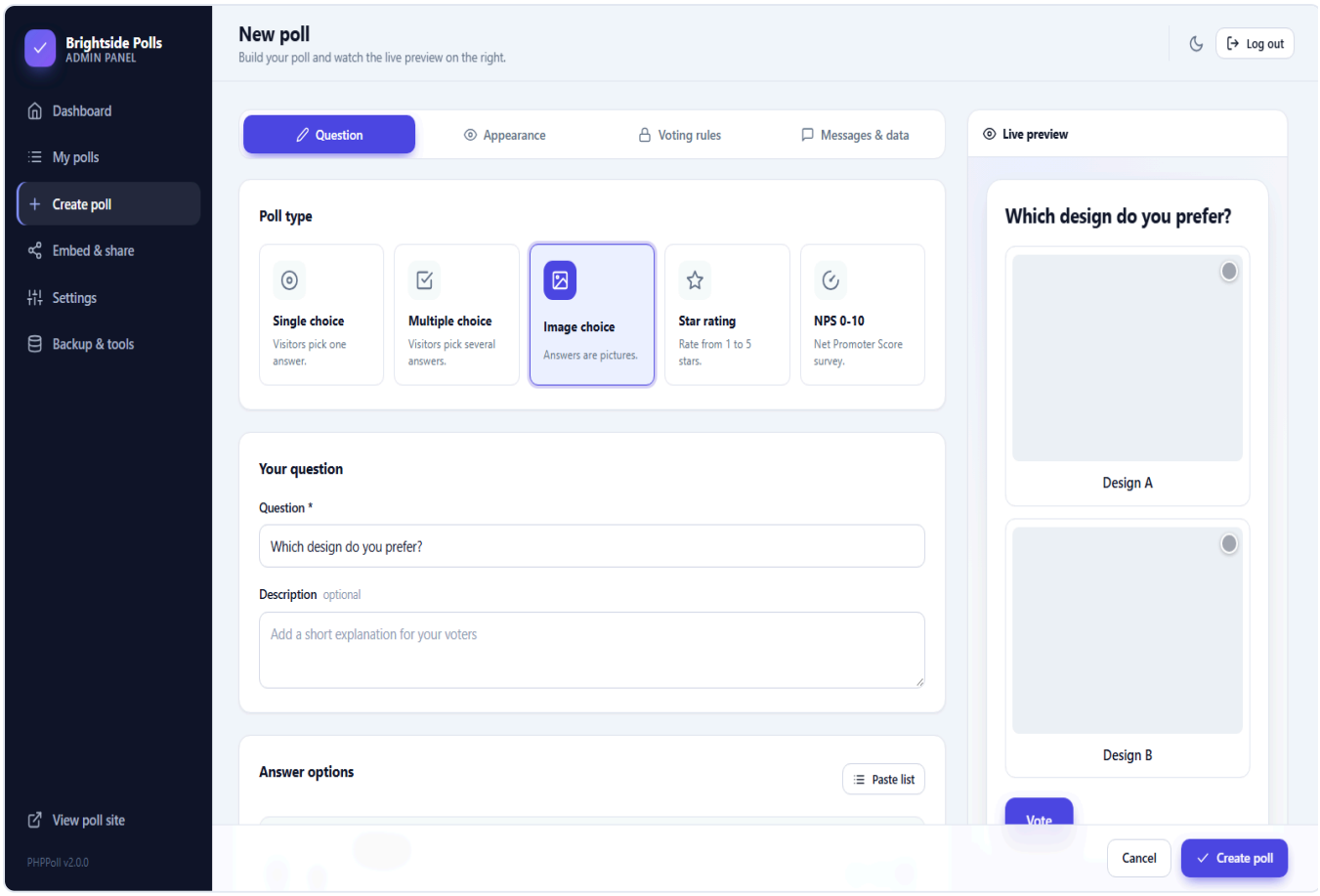
An **image poll** shows each answer as a picture in a tile grid. Visitors tap the image they like best. It is a great way to choose a logo, a poster design, a product colour or a holiday photo.



Visitors see a tile grid with large pictures.

Create an image poll

1. Click **Create poll** and select **Image choice**.
2. Enter a question and a description such as "Tap your favourite".
3. For each option type a **text** (used as caption and alt text) and add a picture, in one of two ways:
   - click the square image box and **upload** a file from your computer, or
   - paste the web address of an existing image into **Image URL**.
4. Set **Maximum choices**: `1` for one favourite, or more to let people select several pictures.
5. Save the poll.



Each option has an image box and a URL field.

Image requirements

- Formats: JPG, PNG, GIF and WebP.
- Maximum size: 3 MB per file.
- Uploaded files are checked and stored in the `uploads/` folder. Files that are not real images are rejected.
- Tiles are shown in a 4:3 ratio, so use pictures of a similar shape for the best result.

Results

Results show a small thumbnail next to each percentage. Choose bars, columns, donut or pie in the Appearance tab. See Chart types for poll results.

Uploaded pictures are not part of the XML backup, only their paths are. When you move to a new server, copy the `uploads/` folder too. See Backup, restore and moving to a new server.

ADMIN PANEL

Star rating polls

Add a star rating poll to your website with PHPPoll. Choose 3 to 10 stars, collect ratings and see the average score and the distribution in live results.

A **star rating** poll asks visitors to rate something on a scale of stars – a product, an article, a support experience. PHPPoll calculates the **average rating** and shows how many people gave each value.

Create a star rating poll

1. Click **Create poll** and select **Star rating** (or use the Star rating template).
2. Write the question, for example *How would you rate your support experience?*
3. Choose the **number of stars** from 3 to 10 (default 5).
4. Save the poll.

What visitors see

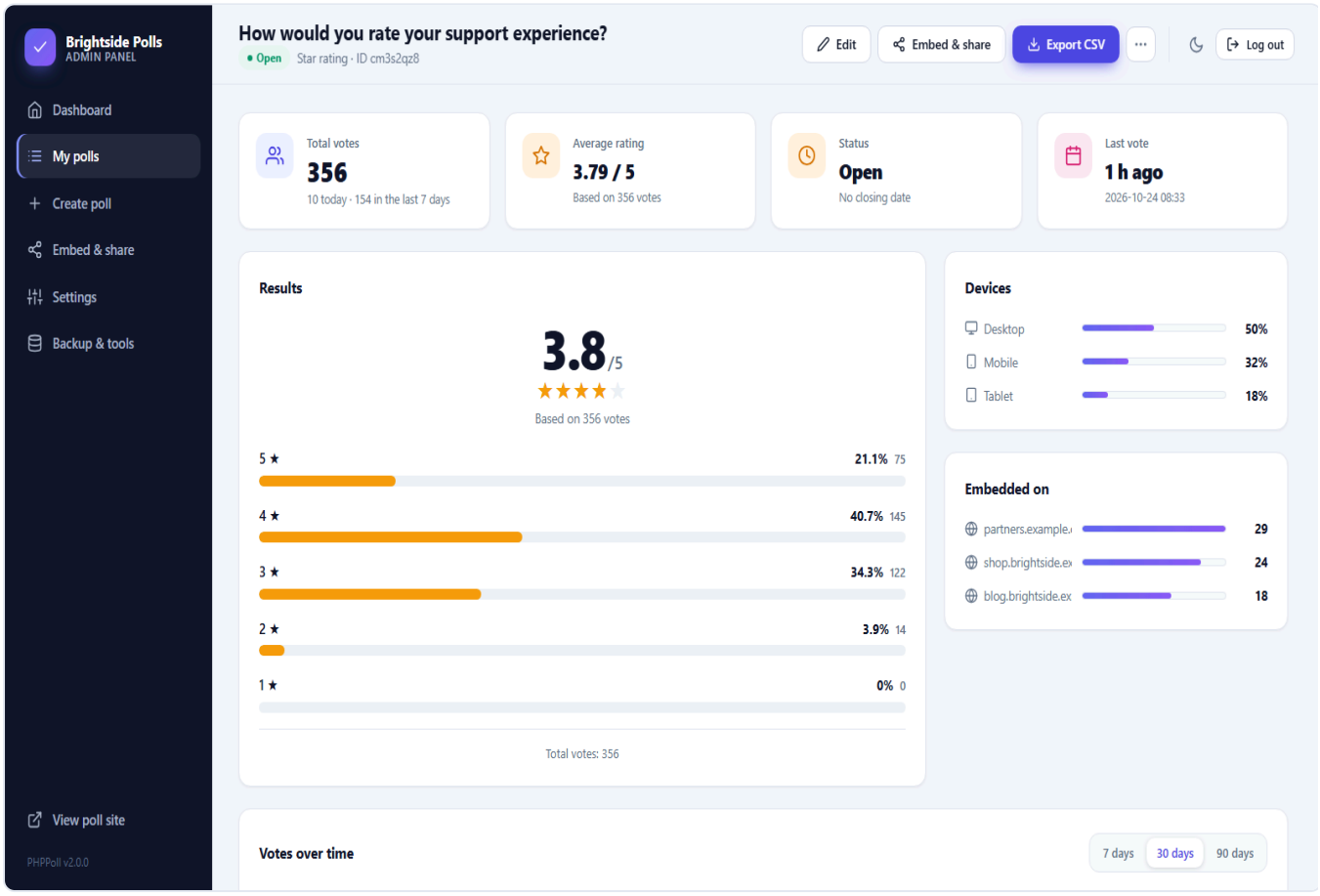
A row of large stars. Hovering fills the stars up to the pointer and clicking selects the rating. After voting, the results are displayed (if allowed by the visibility rule).



The result shows the average score, stars and a bar for each value.

Understanding the results

- **Big number:** the average rating, for example *4.2 / 5*, with partly filled stars.
- **Distribution:** one bar per star value with its percentage and vote count, from the highest rating down to 1.
- In the admin, the card **Average rating** repeats the score and the number of ratings.



The results page in the admin panel for a rating poll.

Tips

- Use the accent color of the poll to change the bar color. Stars always stay golden.
- Enable **Allow comment** in Messages & data to let people explain their rating.
- Combine ratings with a vote limit of 24 hours if you want regular feedback from the same visitors. See Voting rules.

Need a loyalty metric instead? Try an NPS poll.

ADMIN PANEL

NPS (Net Promoter Score) polls

Run a Net Promoter Score (NPS) survey with PHPPoll. Collect 0-10 ratings, get automatic promoter, passive and detractor percentages and the NPS score.

Net Promoter Score is the classic customer-loyalty question: *"How likely are you to recommend us to a friend or colleague?"* answered on a scale from 0 to 10. PHPPoll shows the scale to your visitors and calculates the NPS for you.

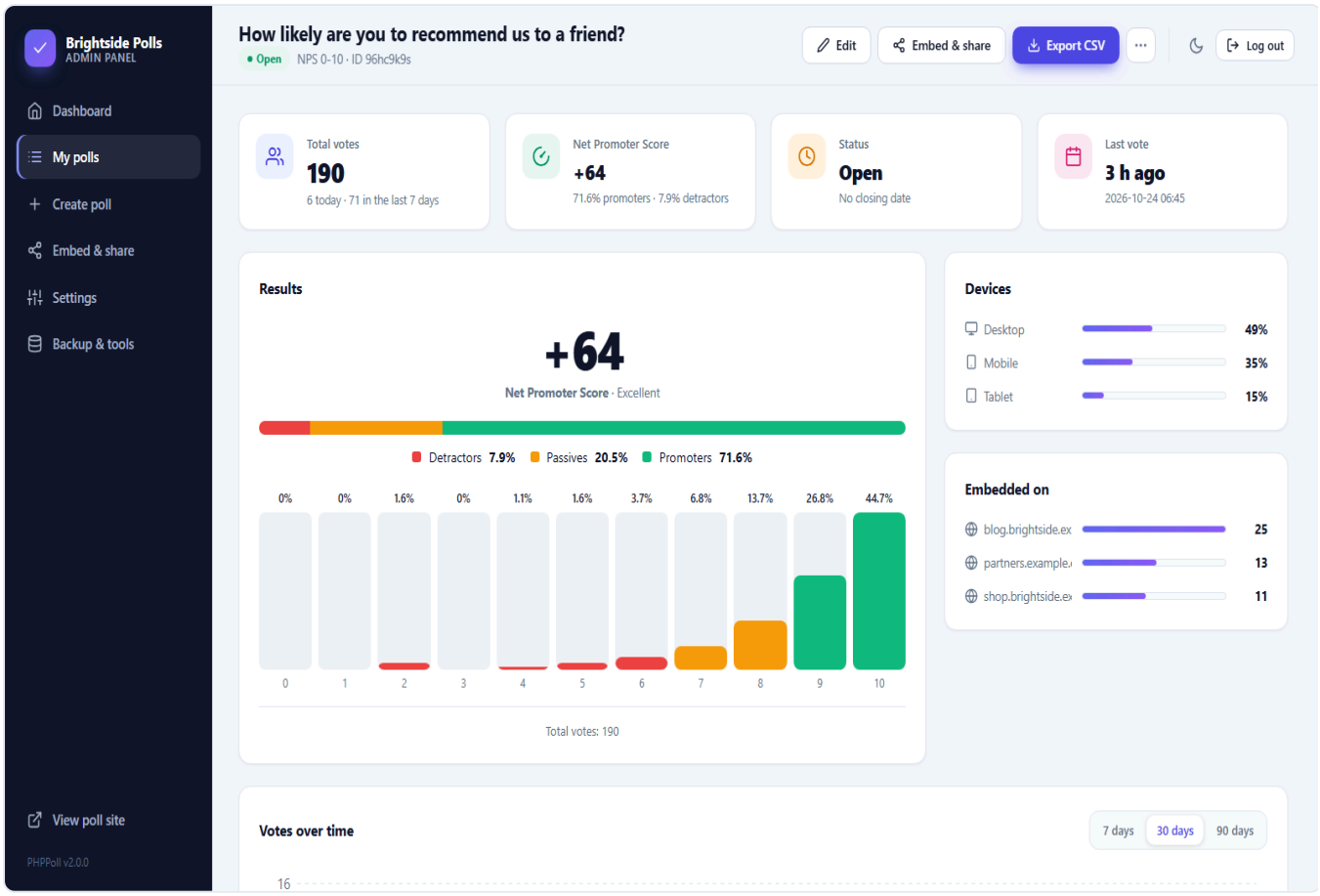
Create an NPS poll

1. Click **Create poll** and select **NPS 0-10** (or the Net Promoter Score template).
2. Edit the question if you like.
3. Optionally set the **labels** below the left and right end of the scale, such as "Not likely" and "Very likely".
4. Save the poll.

How the NPS is calculated

Group	Answers
Detractors	0 to 6
Passives	7 and 8
Promoters	9 and 10

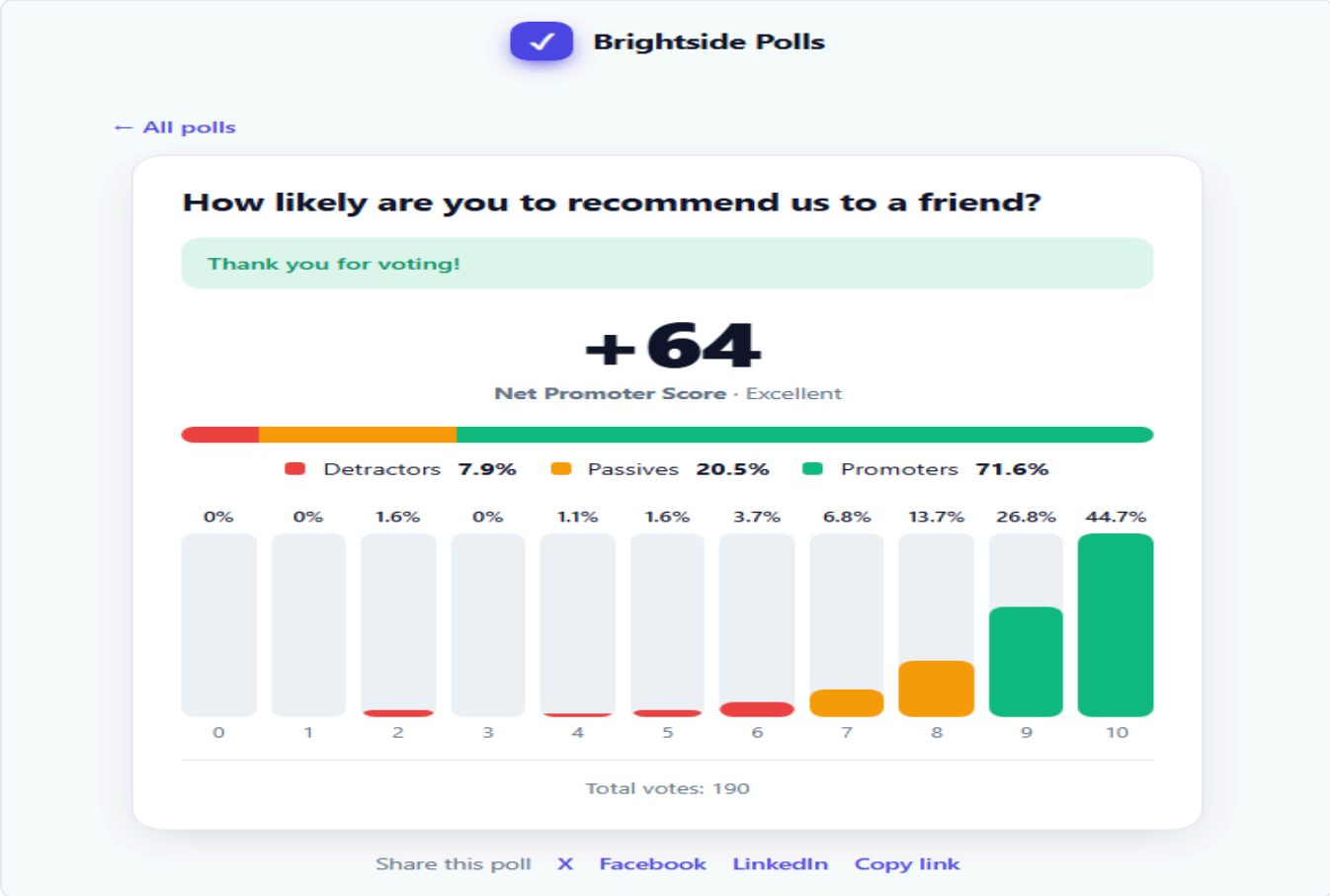
NPS = % promoters – % detractors. The result ranges from −100 to +100. PHPPoll adds a label: *Excellent* (50 or more), *Great* (30–49), *Good* (0–29) or *Needs improvement* (below 0).



The admin shows the score, the group percentages and the 0-10 distribution.

Reading the results page

- A large **score** and its label.
- A colored bar with the share of detractors, passives and promoters.
- A column for each value 0–10 with its percentage.
- The admin stat card shows the score together with the promoter and detractor percentages.



The same results as shown to a visitor after voting.

Good practice

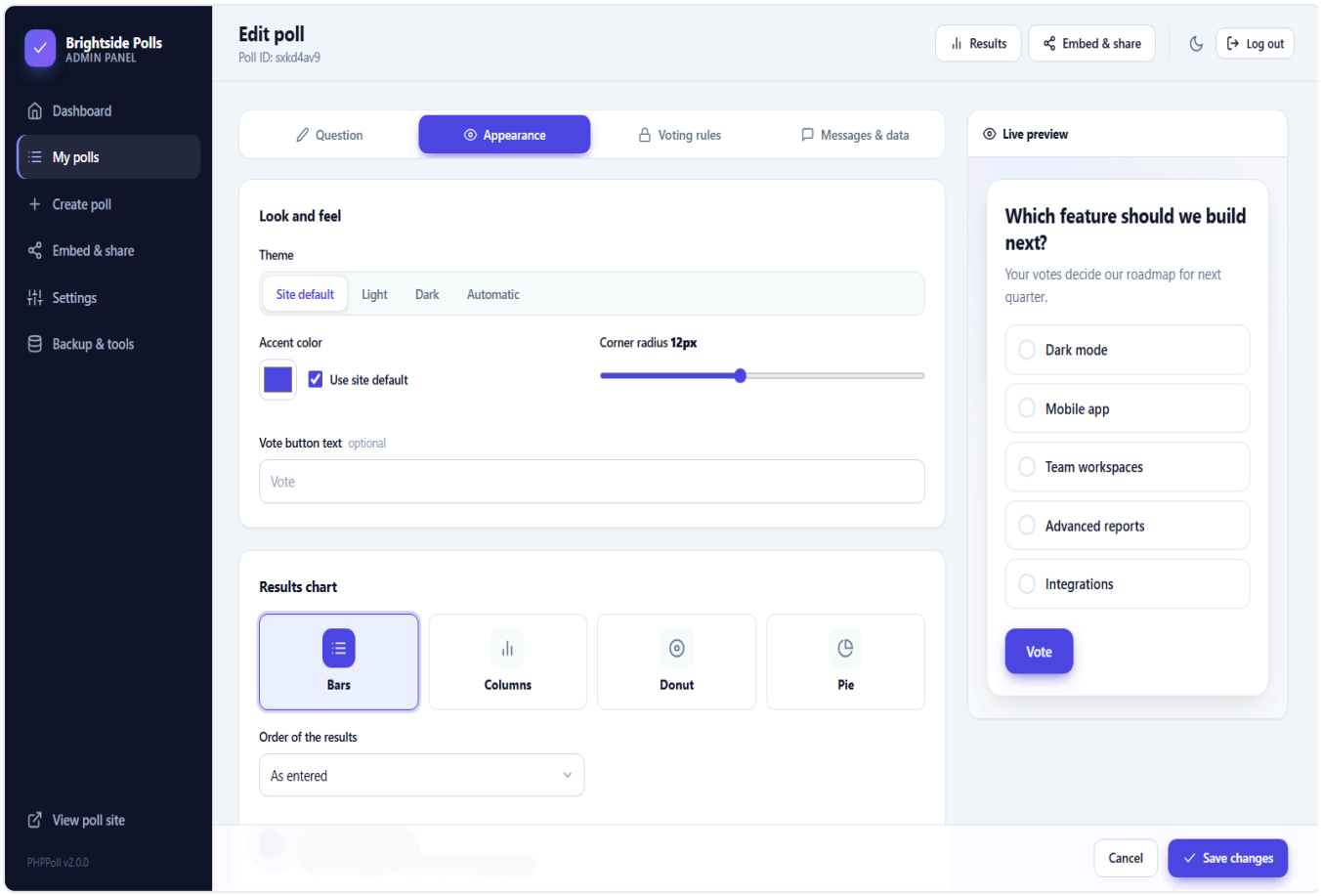
- Set results to **Only me (admin)** if you do not want to publish your score. See Results visibility settings.
- Add an optional **comment** field to ask "What is the main reason for your score?". See Collect voter details and comments.
- Run the same poll again every quarter (duplicate it) and compare the scores. See Manage your polls.

POLL OPTIONS

Poll appearance settings

Style every poll to match your website: light, dark or automatic theme, accent color, rounded corners, button text, chart type, result sorting and vote numbers.

The **Appearance** tab of the poll editor controls how a poll and its results look. The live preview shows every change at once.



The Appearance tab in the poll editor.

Look and feel

Setting	Description
Theme	*Site default*, *Light*, *Dark* or *Automatic* (follows the visitor's device).
Accent color	Used for buttons, selected options, links and the main chart color. Tick *Use site default* to inherit the color from Settings.
Corner radius	From `0` (sharp) to `28px` (very round) for the card, options and buttons.
Vote button text	Replaces the word "Vote", for example "Send my answer".

Results chart (choice and image polls)

Select how the results are drawn: **Bars**, **Columns**, **Donut** or **Pie**. See Chart types for poll results for examples and tips.

Order and numbers

- **Order of the results:** *As entered* keeps your order, *Most votes first* sorts the winners to the top.
- **Show vote numbers:** displays the number of votes next to the percentage. Switch it off to show percentages only.

Site-wide defaults

Set the default theme and accent color once in **Settings** → **General** → **Default poll style**. All polls that use "Site default" change together, which makes it easy to match a redesign of your website. See Settings.

Advanced styling

For full control edit `assets/poll.css`. All colors are CSS variables at the top of the file. See Customize the poll script.

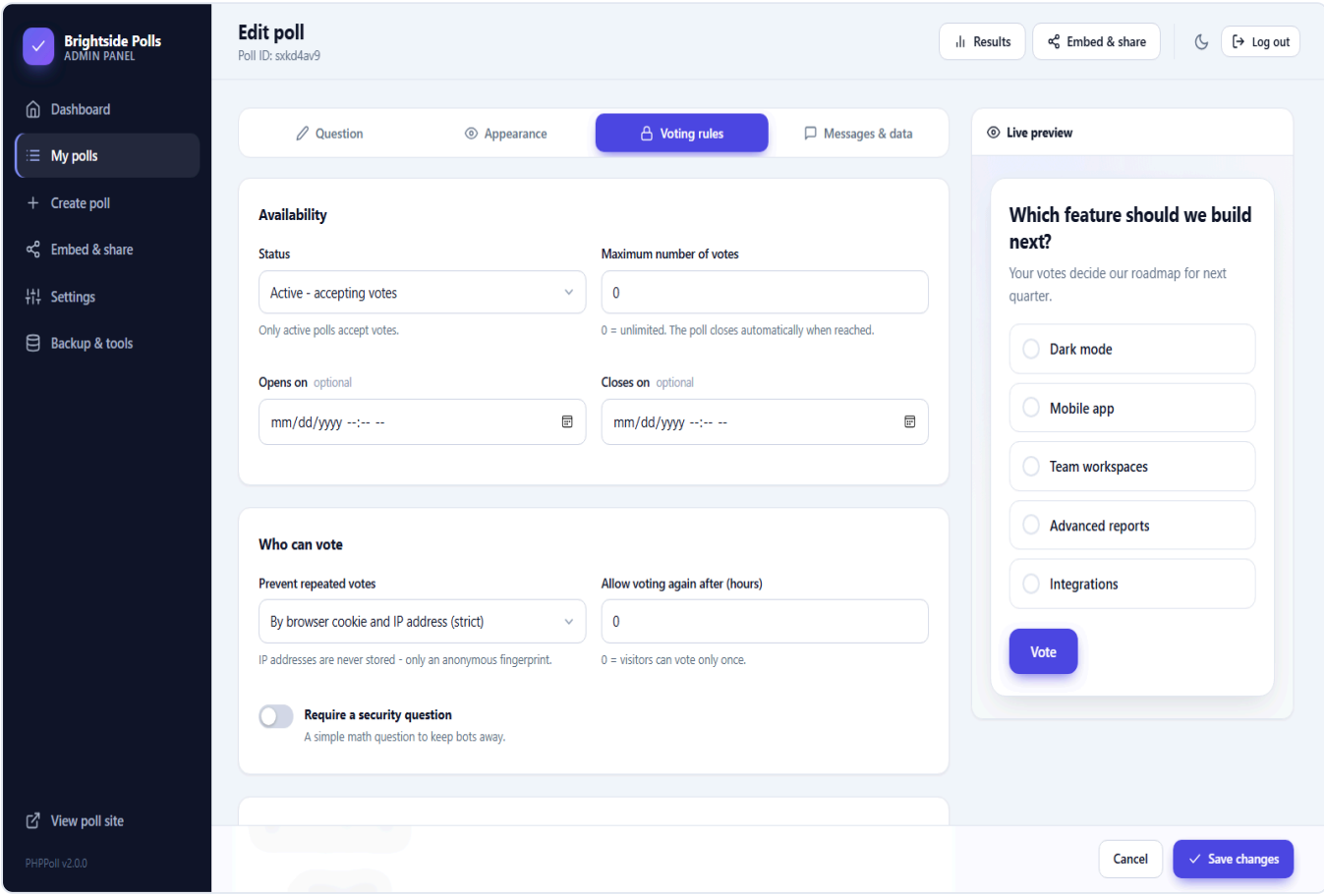
Embedding the same poll on a light and a dark page? Keep the poll theme on *Automatic* or override it in the embed code. See Embed a poll with JavaScript.

POLL OPTIONS

Voting rules

Configure who can vote and when: poll status, maximum votes, opening and closing dates, duplicate vote protection, captcha and the visibility of the results.

The **Voting rules** tab decides when a poll accepts votes, who may vote and who may see the results.



All the rules of a poll on one tab.

Availability

Setting	Description
Status	**Active** – accepting votes. **Draft** – hidden from the public. **Closed** – no more votes, results remain visible according to your rule.
Maximum number of votes	`0` is unlimited. When the number is reached the poll closes automatically (status *Full*).
Opens on / Closes on	Optional dates. See Schedule polls and set end dates.

Who can vote

Setting	Description

Prevent repeated votes	By cookie and IP address, cookie only, IP only, or no limit.
Allow voting again after (hours)	`0` = once only. For example `24` allows one vote per day.
Require a security question	Adds a simple math captcha.

Details and recommendations are in Prevent duplicate votes and spam.

Who can see the results

Choose between *Always visible*, *After voting*, *After the poll closes* and *Only me (admin)*. See Results visibility settings.

Examples

Goal	Suggested settings
Daily "poll of the day"	Vote limit: cookie and IP, voting again after 24 hours.
Contest with a deadline	Closes on a date, results after the poll closes, captcha on.
Limited survey	Maximum votes 500, results only for admin.
Testing a new poll	Status Draft, then no limit while you try it.

POLL OPTIONS

Schedule polls and set end dates

Schedule online polls in PHPPoll with an opening date, a closing date and a vote limit. Learn how scheduled, ended and full polls behave for visitors and admins.

Polls can open and close automatically, so you can prepare a campaign in advance and never forget to stop it.

Set the dates

1. Open the poll in the editor and go to **Voting rules**.
2. In **Opens on** choose the date and time when voting should start (optional).
3. In **Closes on** choose when voting should end (optional).
4. Keep the **Status** on *Active* and save.

Dates use the **time zone** from **Settings** → **General**. Check it first, so that "9:00" means 9:00 in your location. See Settings.

What visitors see

Situation	Message
Before the opening date	"This poll opens on <date>." The voting form is hidden.
After the closing date	"This poll has ended." Results are shown according to the visibility rule.
Maximum votes reached	"This poll has reached its maximum number of votes."
Closed manually	"This poll is closed."

You can replace these texts with your own message in **Messages & data** → **Message when the poll is closed**. See Thank-you message, redirect and closed message.

Scheduled polls in the admin

- The status badge shows *Scheduled*, *Ended* or *Full* in the polls list, and the filter tab *Scheduled* collects the waiting polls. See Manage your polls.
- The results page shows when the poll closes or how many votes remain.

Reopen a finished poll

Use **Reopen poll** in the polls list or the results menu. If the closing date already passed, it is removed so the poll opens again. A poll that is full needs a higher vote limit or a limit of `0`.

Scheduled polls are not listed on the public poll website until they open. Draft polls are never listed. See The standalone poll website.

POLL OPTIONS

Results visibility settings

Decide when voters may see poll results in PHPPoll: always, after voting, after the poll closes, or private for admins only. Compare the options for your use case.

Showing results can boost participation, but it can also influence votes. PHPPoll lets you choose per poll. The setting is in **Voting rules → Who can see the results**.

Choose the right mode

Mode	Pros	Cons
Always visible	Curious visitors engage more; a "View results" link is offered.	Early results can influence later voters.
After voting	Rewards participation; results are not seen without voting.	Visitors who only want to peek must vote.
After the poll closes	Fair and unbiased; creates a "reveal" moment.	No instant feedback for voters.
Only me (admin)	Full privacy for surveys and feedback.	Visitors never see the outcome.

Closed and ended polls

When a poll is closed, ended or full, the mode *After voting* shows the results to every visitor, because voting is no longer possible. The mode *After the poll closes* does the same. *Only me* keeps the results private forever.

The admin always sees everything

No matter which mode you choose, the **Results** page in the admin shows all numbers and charts. See The results page.

What visitors are told

For hidden results the poll shows a clear note, for example "Results are shown after you vote" or "The results of this poll are private". You can translate these texts. See Translate PHPPoll into your language.

Publishing the results elsewhere

Keep the results private in the poll, then publish a screenshot or the exported data in your article. See Export poll votes to CSV.

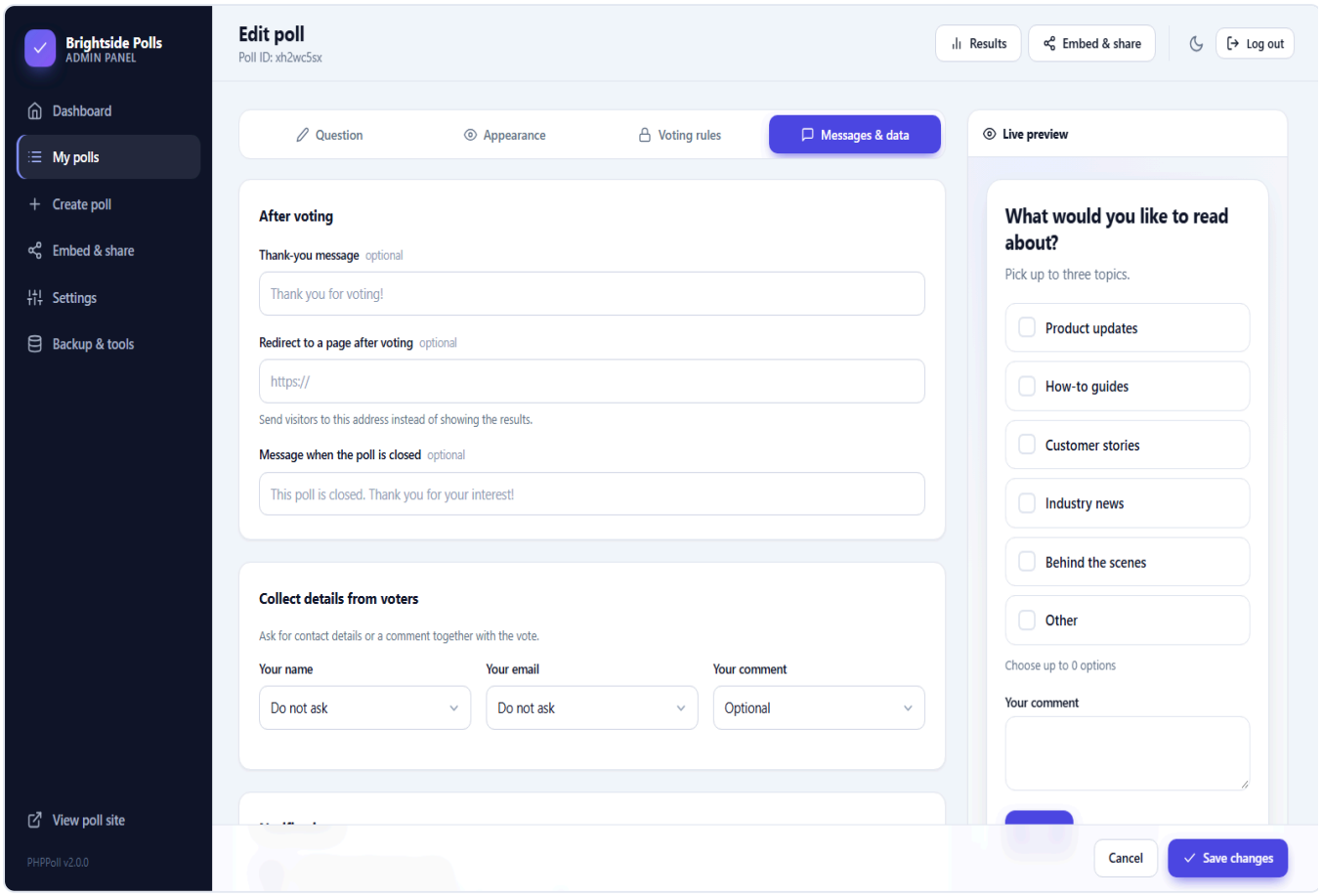
Related: Poll results for visitors.

POLL OPTIONS

Collect voter details and comments

Ask voters for a name, an email address or a comment together with their vote in PHPPoll. Set each field to off, optional or required and review the answers.

Sometimes the vote alone is not enough. With PHPPoll you can ask for **name**, **email** and a **comment**, for example to follow up with unhappy customers or build a mailing list.



The fields are configured on the Messages & data tab.

Enable the fields

1. Open the poll and select the tab **Messages & data**.
2. In **Collect details from voters** set *Your name*, *Your email* and *Your comment* each to **Do not ask**, **Optional** or **Required**.
3. Save. The live preview shows the new fields.

Where to find the answers

- Open the poll's results page and scroll to **Individual votes**. Names, email addresses and comments appear in the table.
- The **Comments** card lists the latest comments with the name of the author.
- **Export CSV** contains the columns name, email and comment. See Export poll votes to CSV.

Validation

Required fields must be filled in. Email addresses are validated. Texts are limited (name and email 120 characters, comment 600) and escaped when displayed, so they cannot inject code into your pages.

Privacy and legal notes

Names and email addresses are personal data. Tell your visitors why you collect them, keep them only as long as needed, and delete votes on request. Depending on your country, GDPR or similar laws may apply. You can delete single votes or all votes of a poll in the admin panel.

Tips

- Make the email **optional** for better completion rates.
- Use a **required comment** in a rating or NPS poll when you want the reason behind low scores.
- Delete personal data after you exported it. See Poll statistics and individual votes.

POLL OPTIONS

Thank-you message, redirect and closed message

Customize what happens after a vote in PHPPoll: write your own thank-you message, redirect voters to another page and set a message for closed polls.

What you say after the vote is a chance to thank people, promote something or guide them to the next step. These texts are on the **Messages & data** tab of the poll editor.

Thank-you message

Type a short text, for example *Thanks! Your opinion shapes our next release.* It appears above the results after a vote. Leave the field empty to use the standard "Thank you for voting!", which you can translate in the language file. See Translate PHPPoll into your language.

Redirect after voting

Enter a full address starting with `http://` or `https://` in **Redirect to a page after voting**. Instead of showing the results, visitors are sent to that page. Use it for:

- a thank-you page with a discount code or a download,
- a signup form or newsletter page,
- the article that continues after the poll.

In an embedded poll the whole page is redirected, not only the poll frame.

Message when the poll is closed

When voting is over (closed, ended or full) visitors see a standard message. Replace it with your own text, for example *Voting is over. The winner will be announced on Friday.* The message is also used when the maximum number of votes is reached.

Notifications

On the same tab, **Email me about new votes** sends a message to the admin email for each vote in this poll. It requires the global switch in Settings. See Email notifications for new votes.

Button text

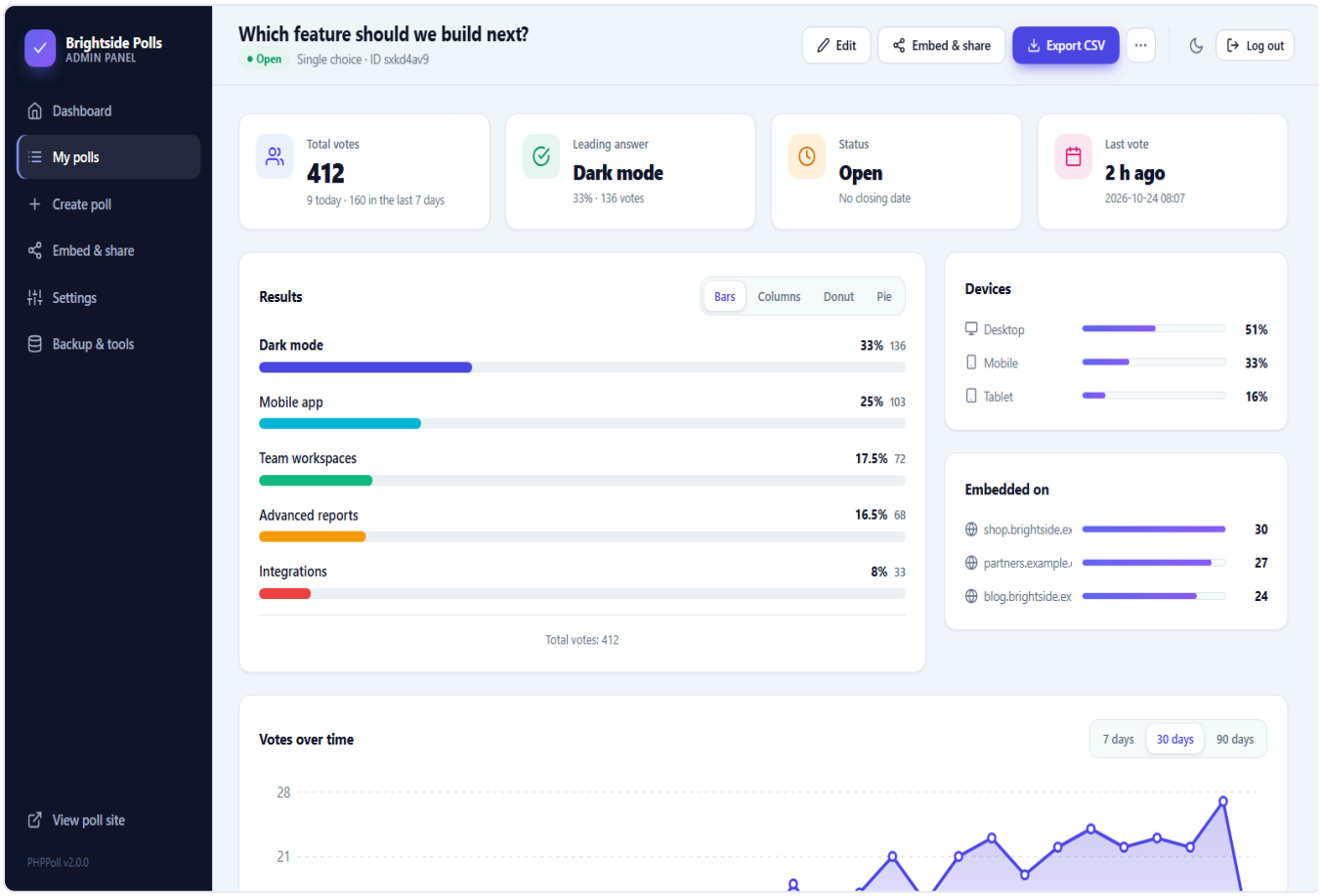
The text of the vote button is changed in the Appearance tab. See Poll appearance settings.

RESULTS & STATISTICS

The results page

Read your poll results in the PHPPoll admin: total votes, leading answer, chart switcher, status, last vote, actions menu to close, reset, print or delete a poll.

Every poll has a results page in the admin panel. Open it from **My polls** by clicking a poll title or the **Results** icon.



The results page: statistics on top, chart in the middle, details below.

Header and actions

The header shows the question, the status badge, the poll type and ID. The buttons on the right:

- **Edit** and **Embed & share** – jump to the editor or the sharing tools.
- **Export CSV** – downloads all votes. See Export poll votes to CSV.
- **… menu:** open the public page, **Print**, close or reopen the poll, **Reset all votes** and **Delete poll**.

Statistic cards

Card	Shows
Total votes	All votes, plus how many arrived today and in the last 7 days.

Leading answer / Average rating / NPS	The current winner with its percentage, the average star rating, or the Net Promoter Score, depending on the poll type.
Status	Open, closed, scheduled… with the closing date or votes remaining.
Last vote	How long ago the last vote arrived and the exact time.

Results chart

The main card shows the results in the same style that visitors see. Use the buttons **Bars / Columns / Donut / Pie** to try a different chart. This is a preview for you only; to change the style for visitors use the Appearance tab. See Chart types for poll results.

More cards

Below the chart you find devices, embed sources, a timeline, other answers, comments and the table of individual votes. See Poll statistics and individual votes.

Reset or delete

- **Reset all votes** removes every vote but keeps the poll and its settings. Useful after testing.
- **Delete poll** removes the poll together with its votes.

Both actions ask for confirmation and cannot be undone. Export or back up first. See Backup, restore and moving to a new server.

RESULTS & STATISTICS

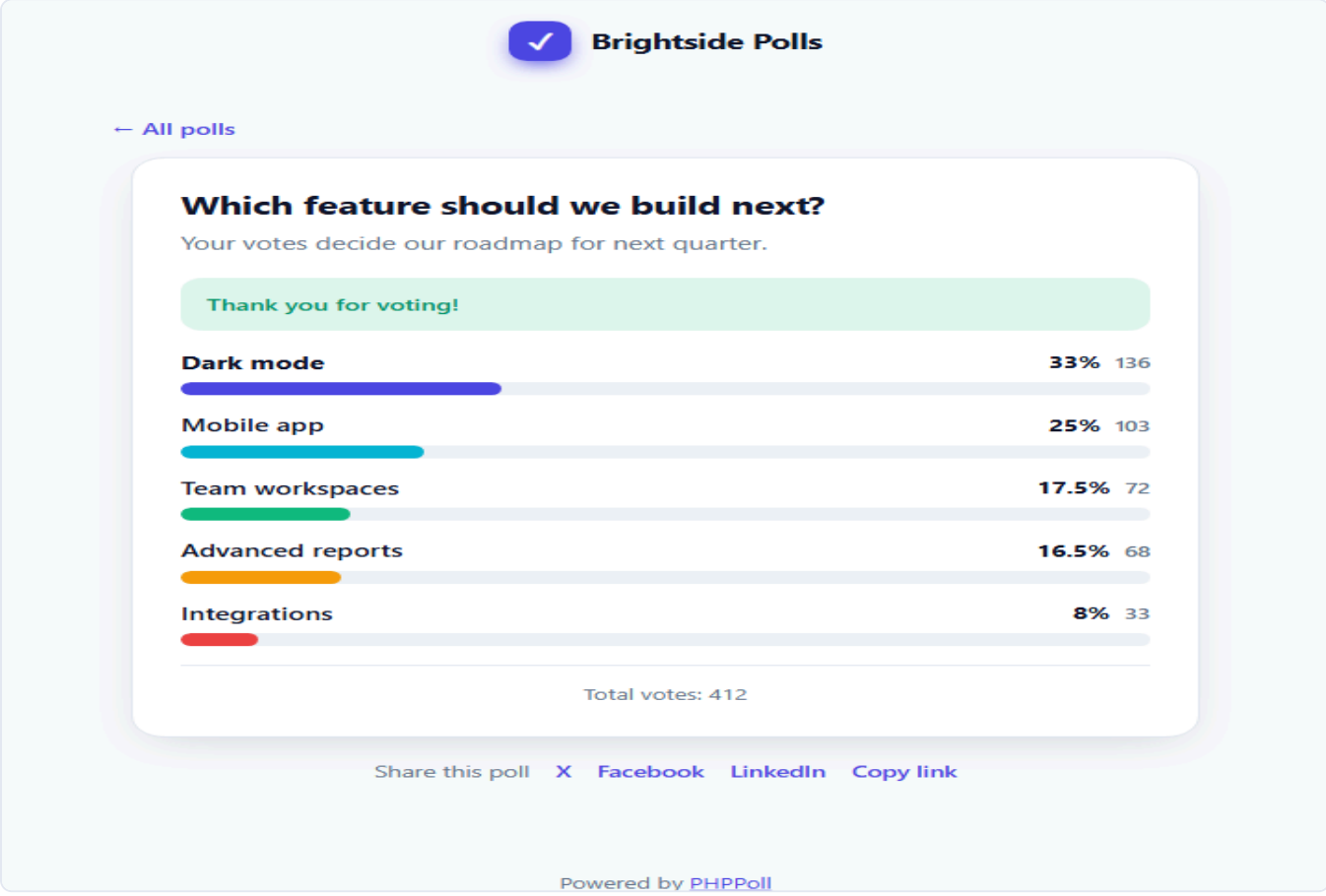
Chart types for poll results

PHPPoll draws poll results as animated bar, column, donut or pie charts without any chart library. See examples and learn how to choose the best chart style.

PHPPoll draws all charts itself with CSS and SVG. They are crisp on every screen, adapt to dark mode, need no external library and load instantly. Choose the style per poll in **Appearance → Results chart**.

Bars

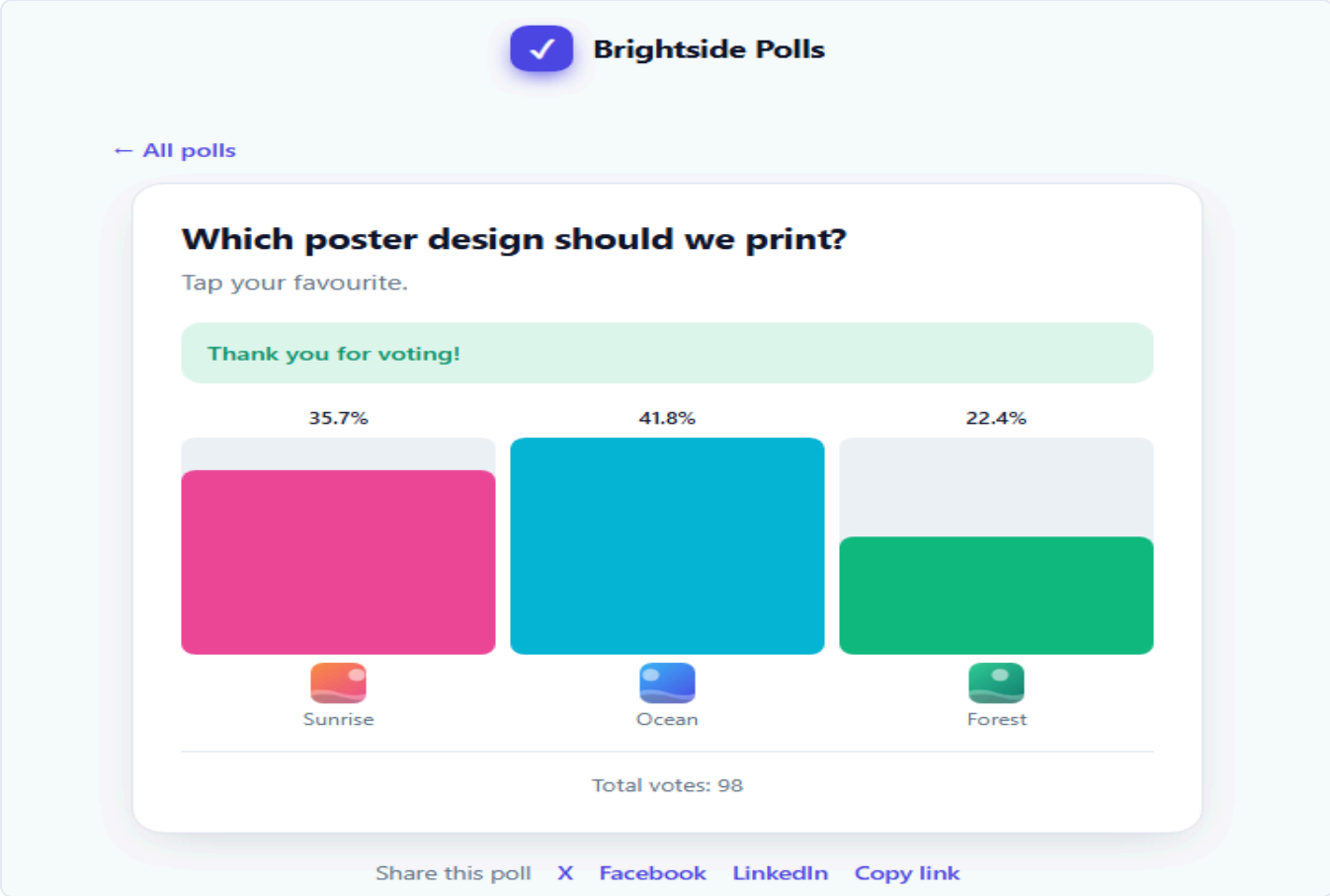
Horizontal bars with the option name above each bar. The best all-rounder: long answer texts stay readable, and differences are easy to compare. The leading answer is highlighted.



Horizontal bar chart.

Columns

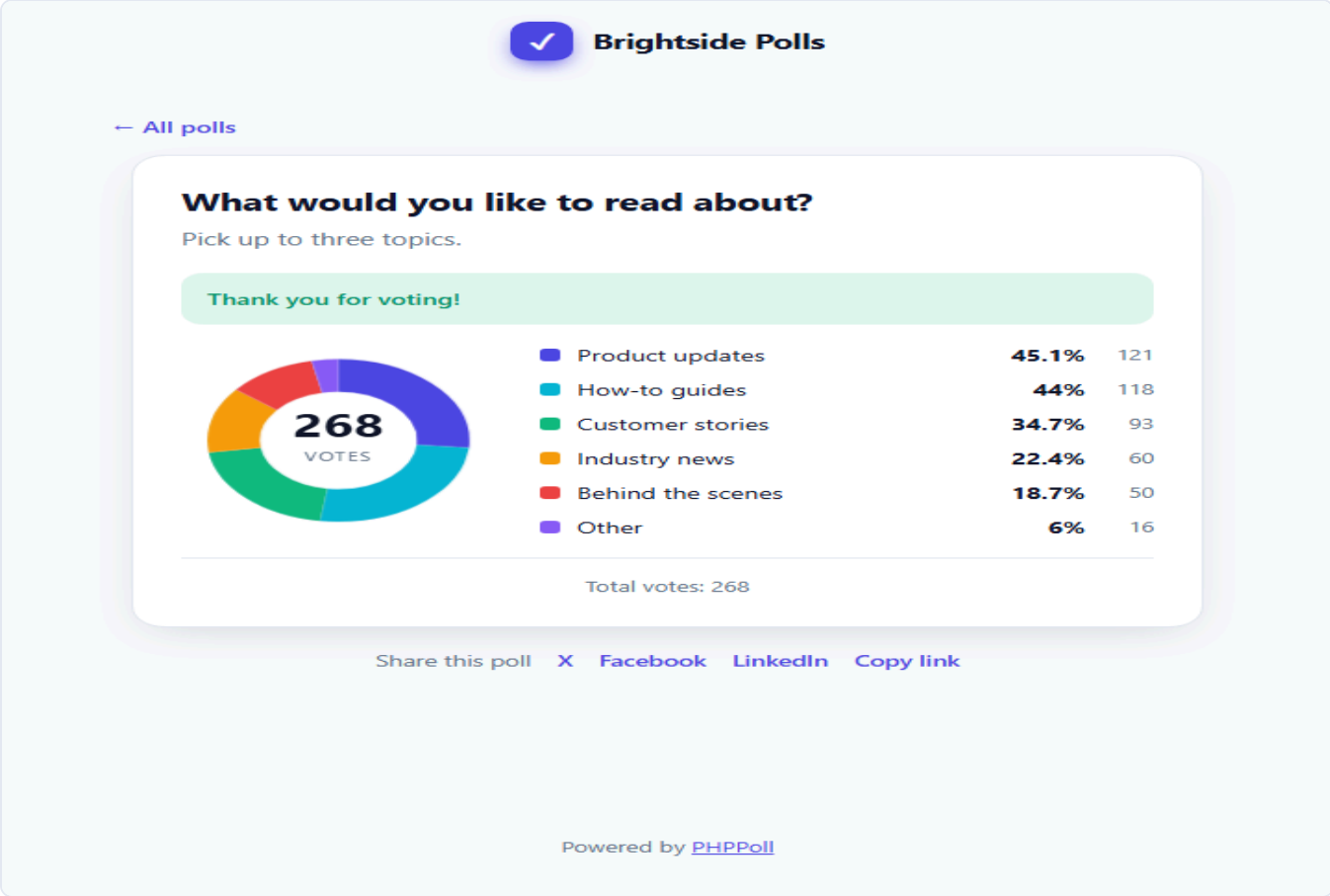
Vertical columns side by side, scaled to the highest value. Works best with short labels and up to about eight options. Also used for the 0–10 distribution of NPS polls.



Column chart.

Donut

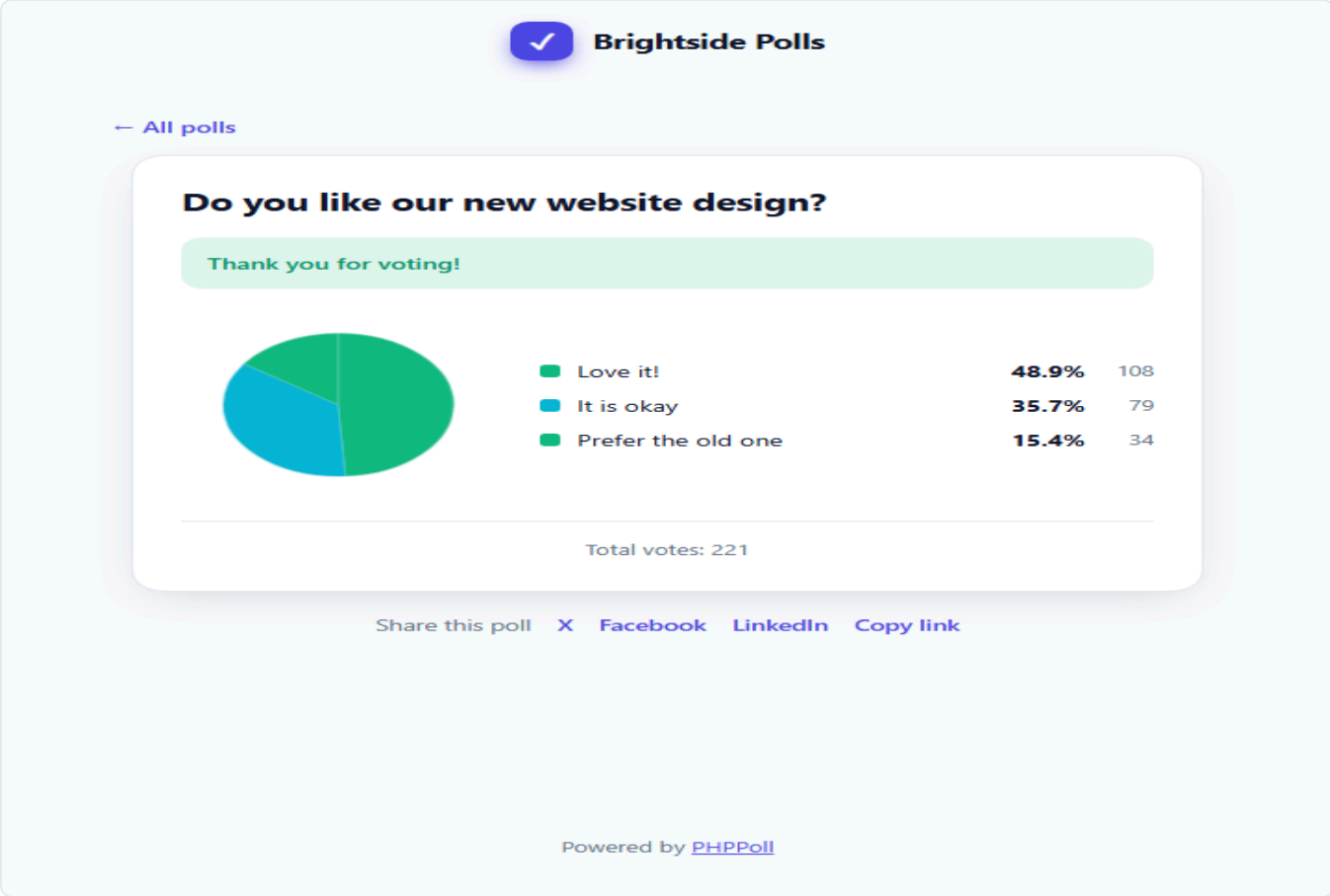
A ring with the total number of votes in the center and a legend with percentages and counts. Good for showing parts of a whole, such as yes / no / not sure.



Donut chart with legend.

Pie

A solid pie chart with the same legend. Ideal for two to five options.



Pie chart.

Ratings and NPS

These types have their own result views: the average with stars and distribution bars for ratings, and the score with a colored promoter/passive/detractor bar for NPS. See Star rating polls and NPS (Net Promoter Score) polls.

Which chart should I choose?

Situation	Recommended
Many options or long texts	Bars
3–8 short options	Columns
Yes / No / Maybe	Donut or pie
Multiple choice (percentages above 100% total)	Bars or columns – a pie would be misleading

Colors

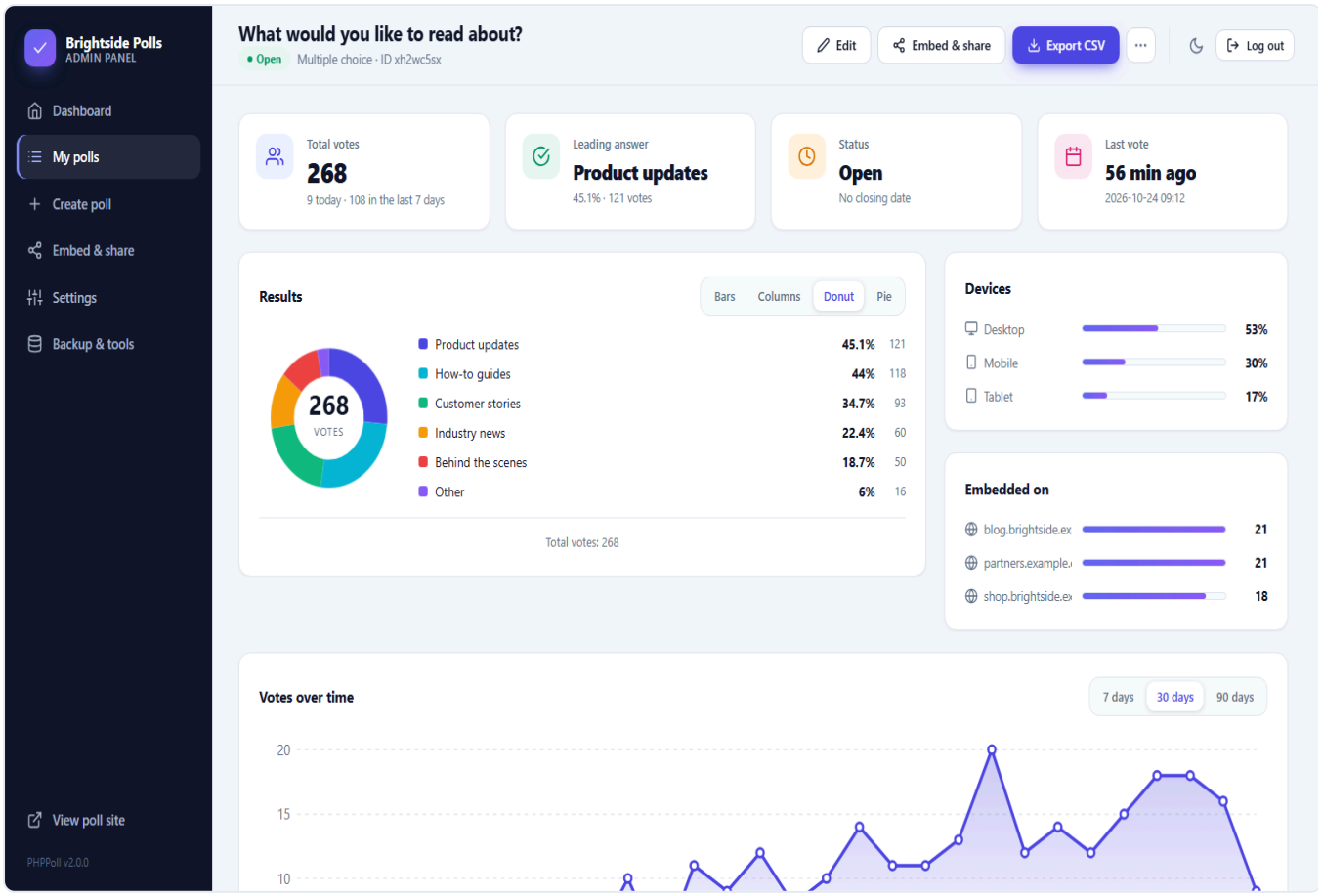
Each option gets its own color from a balanced palette. The first color follows the accent color of the poll. See Poll appearance settings.

RESULTS & STATISTICS

Poll statistics and individual votes

Go beyond the percentages: PHPPoll shows votes over time, the desktop/mobile/tablet split, the websites where a poll is embedded, comments and every single vote.

Below the main chart, the results page contains extra panels that explain *who* voted, *when* and *from where*.



Devices, embed sources and the timeline of a poll.

Devices

The share of votes from **desktop**, **mobile** and **tablet** devices, detected from the browser. Use it to decide whether to design your page mobile-first.

Embedded on

When a poll is embedded with the JavaScript or iframe code, PHPPoll records the **website** (domain only) where the vote was cast and lists the top five. This shows which of your sites or partner pages deliver the most votes. Polls opened through the standalone site or a PHP include have no source.

Votes over time

An area chart with the votes of the last **7, 30 or 90 days**. The chart uses the accent color of the poll. Hover over the points to see the exact numbers per day.

"Other" answers and comments

- **"Other" answers:** the texts typed by visitors who chose the Other option.
- **Comments:** comments with the name of the author, newest first.

Individual votes

The table at the bottom lists each vote: date, answer, voter (if you collected names or emails), comment and device. Twenty votes are shown per page.

1. Tick the checkboxes of the unwanted votes (spam or tests), or use the header checkbox to select the whole page.
2. Click **Delete selected** and confirm.

Results and statistics update immediately.

> Votes store an anonymous fingerprint instead of the IP address, so you cannot see the IPs of voters. See Security and privacy.

To analyze the data further, use CSV export.

RESULTS & STATISTICS

Export poll votes to CSV

Download all votes of a poll as a CSV file that opens in Excel or Google Sheets. See which columns are exported and how PHPPoll protects against formula injection.

Need the raw data for a report, a spreadsheet or a presentation? Export the votes of any poll as a CSV file with one click.

How to export

1. Open the poll's results page. See The results page.
2. Click **Export CSV** in the top right.
3. Your browser downloads `poll-POLLID-YYYY-MM-DD.csv`.
4. Open it in Excel, Numbers, LibreOffice or import it into Google Sheets.

Columns in the file

Column	Content
Date	Date and time of the vote (`YYYY-MM-DD HH:MM:SS`).
Answer	The text of the chosen option(s), the star value, the 0–10 score, or "Other: text".
Your name	Name entered by the voter (if collected).
Your email	Email address (if collected).
Your comment	Comment (if collected).
Device	Desktop, Mobile or Tablet.
Website	The domain where an embedded poll was used.

The newest votes come first. Multiple choice answers are separated by commas inside the Answer cell.

Excel and encoding

The file is encoded in UTF-8 with a byte-order mark, so accented and non-Latin characters display correctly in Excel. Headers use the language selected in the settings. See Translate PHPPoll into your language.

Safe against formula injection

Spreadsheet programs run text that starts with `=`, `+`, `-` or `@` as a formula. PHPPoll adds a leading apostrophe to such texts in names, emails, comments and answers, so a malicious voter cannot run formulas on your computer.

Other ways to keep your data

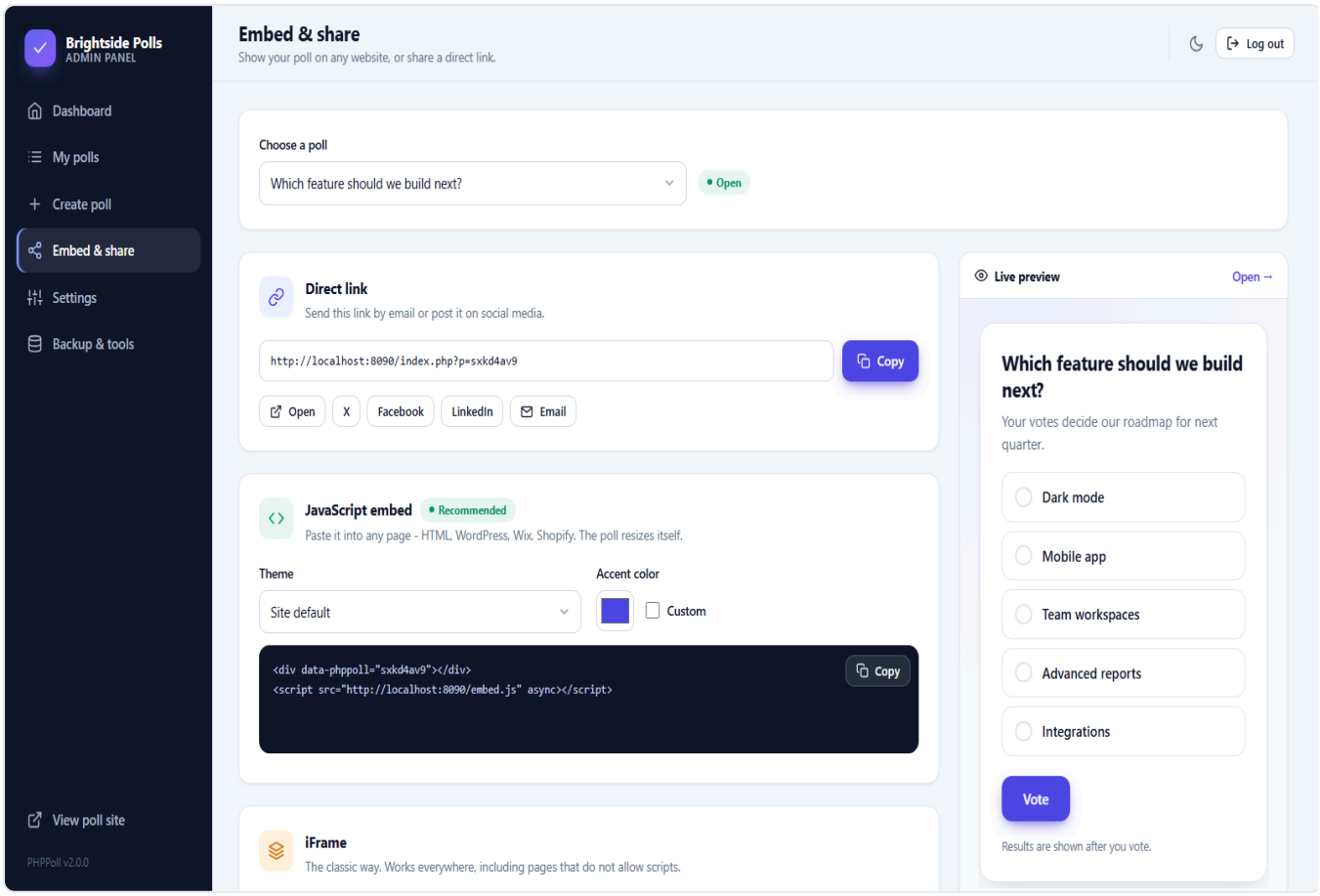
- For a complete copy of all polls and votes use the XML backup. See Backup, restore and moving to a new server.
- To print a summary of a poll, use **Print** from the results menu.

EMBED & SHARE

Share and embed polls

Four ways to publish a PHPPoll poll: direct link, JavaScript embed, iframe and PHP include. The Embed and Share page creates the code and shows a live preview.

The page **Embed & share** in the admin menu prepares everything you need to publish a poll. Choose a poll from the list at the top (or click the share icon in the polls list) and copy what you need.



Copy a link or code snippet, and watch the live preview on the right.

Four ways to publish

Method	Best for	Guide
Direct link	Emails, social media, QR codes, messaging	below
JavaScript embed (recommended)	Any website or CMS – two lines of HTML, automatic height	Embed a poll with JavaScript
iFrame	Pages that allow iframes but not scripts	Embed a poll with an iframe
PHP include	PHP websites on the same server	PHP include: add a poll to a PHP page

Direct link

Copy the poll address, open it, or share it with the buttons for **X**, **Facebook**, **LinkedIn** and **Email**. The link opens the poll on the standalone site. See The standalone poll website. With *Pretty poll links* enabled it looks like `https://www.example.com/poll/abc123`.

Customize the embed

For the JavaScript and the iframe code you can choose a **theme** (site default, light, dark or automatic) and a custom **accent color**. The code and the preview update as you change them, so one poll can match several websites.

Live preview

On the right side the poll appears exactly as it will on your page, including the automatic height. Use **Open** to see it in a separate tab.

Important

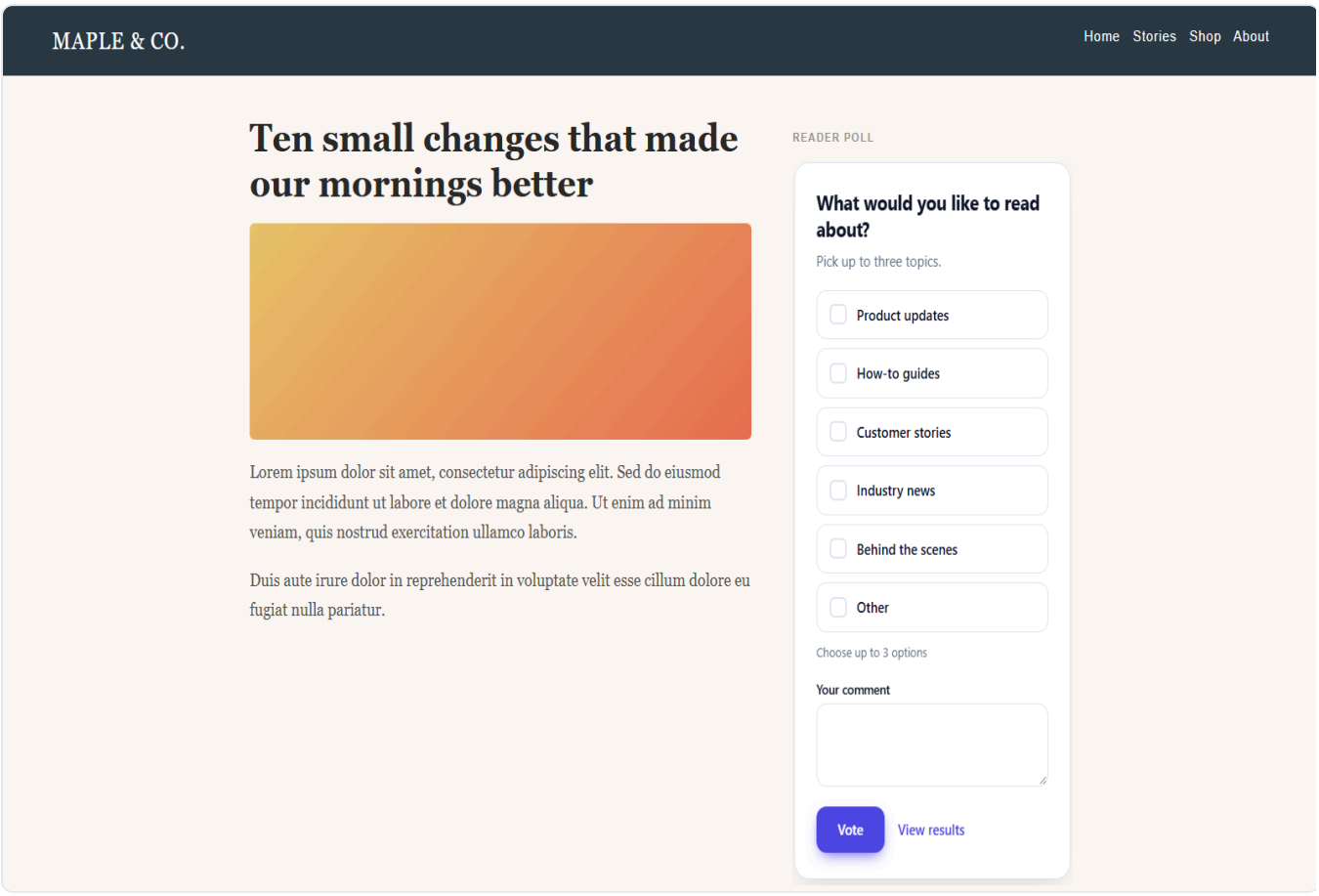
- Only **Active** polls collect votes. Draft polls show a warning on this page. See Manage your polls.
- If the code contains a wrong web address, correct the *Script URL* in **Settings** → **Public site**. See Settings.
- You may embed the same poll on as many pages as you like. Votes are counted together, and the sources are listed in the statistics. See Poll statistics and individual votes.

EMBED & SHARE

Embed a poll with JavaScript

Add a poll to any HTML page with two lines of JavaScript. The PHPPoll embed resizes itself, supports light and dark themes and custom accent colors.

The JavaScript embed is the easiest and most flexible way to show a poll on another page. It works in plain HTML, WordPress, Joomla, Wix, Shopify and any other system that lets you paste HTML.



A poll embedded in the sidebar of an existing website.

The code

Copy the code from **Embed & share → JavaScript embed**:

```
<div data-phppoll="POLL_ID"></div>
<script src="https://www.example.com/poll/embed.js" async></script>
```

1. Paste the `<div>` exactly where the poll should appear.
2. Paste the `<script>` line once on the page, usually just before `</body>`. It activates all poll placeholders on the page.

Several polls on one page

Add one `<div data-phppoll="...">` for each poll. The script tag is needed only once.

Options

Attribute	Values	Effect
`data-phppoll`	poll ID	Which poll to show (required).
`data-theme`	`light`, `dark`, `auto`	Overrides the theme of the poll.
`data-accent`	color like `#e11d48`	Overrides the accent color.

```
<div data-phppoll="abc123" data-theme="dark" data-accent="#e11d48"></div>
```

Single-tag alternative

If you can add only one tag, use the script with the poll ID. The poll appears right after the script:

```
<script src="https://www.example.com/poll/embed.js" data-poll="POLL_ID"></script>
```

How it works

The script creates a responsive iframe that loads the poll from your PHPPoll folder. The poll reports its height to the page, so the frame grows when the results appear – no scrollbars. Because the poll lives in its own frame, your website's CSS cannot break it and it cannot break your site.

> The embed uses the *Script URL* to find `embed.js`. When the address in the code is wrong, fix it in Settings. See Settings.

No scripts allowed on your page? Use the iframe code.

EMBED & SHARE

Embed a poll with an iframe

Use the iframe code to place a PHPPoll poll on any page that allows iframes. Learn the URL parameters for theme and accent color and how to set the height.

An iframe is the classic way to show content from another address. It needs no JavaScript on your page and works almost everywhere.

The code

```
<iframe src="https://www.example.com/poll/embed.php?id=POLL_ID"
        width="100%" height="520" style="border:0;max-width:600px"
        title="Poll"></iframe>
```

Copy it from **Embed & share** → **iFrame**. The code already contains the correct poll ID and web address.

URL parameters

Parameter	Example	Effect
`id`	`id=abc123`	The poll to show (required).
`theme`	`theme=dark`	`light`, `dark` or `auto`.
`accent`	`accent=e11d48`	Accent color without the `#`.

```
https://www.example.com/poll/embed.php?id=abc123&theme=dark&accent=e11d48
```

Choosing the height

A plain iframe has a fixed height. Pick a height that fits the results with the most options, usually 450–650 pixels for choice polls and 400 pixels for ratings. If the content is higher, a scrollbar appears inside the frame. To avoid fixed heights altogether, use the JavaScript embed, which resizes automatically.

Transparent background

The page inside the frame is transparent. Only the poll card itself is drawn, so the poll blends with your page background.

Allowed everywhere

The embed page sends headers that allow it to be framed on any website, which is what you need for embedding. The admin panel, in contrast, can only be framed by your own site.

Votes from iframes are counted with the source domain of the page that contains the frame, and the vote limit also works inside iframes. See Prevent duplicate votes and spam.

EMBED & SHARE

PHP include: add a poll to a PHP page

Show a poll directly inside a PHP page with phppoll(). Use the newest or a random poll, set theme and accent options and fix missing styles.

If your website is written in PHP and runs on the same server as PHPPoll, you can print a poll straight into your page with one function call. The poll becomes part of your page – no iframe.

Basic usage

```
<?php require_once '/home/user/public_html/poll/phppoll.php'; ?>

<!-- ... your page ... -->

<?php phppoll('POLL_ID'); ?>
```

1. Add the `require_once` line once, near the top of your PHP file. Use the **absolute path** shown on the Embed & share page.
2. Call `phppoll('POLL_ID')` where the poll should appear.

Show the newest or a random poll

```
<?php phppoll('latest'); ?>   // your newest open poll
<?php phppoll('random'); ?>   // a random open poll
```

Perfect for a sidebar widget that always shows something fresh.

Options

```
<?php phppoll('abc123', array(
    'theme'  => 'dark',        // light, dark or auto
    'accent' => '#e11d48'      // accent color
)); ?>
```

How it behaves

- The stylesheet and script of PHPPoll are added automatically the first time you call the function. Several polls on one page share them.
- With JavaScript the poll updates in place after voting. Without it, the form posts to `vote.php` and the visitor returns to the same page.
- Draft polls are not shown, and a missing poll prints nothing.
- All PHPPoll functions start with `pp_`, so they do not clash with the functions of your site.

When the poll has no styling

PHPPoll builds the address of its CSS file from the location of its folder. If the poll appears without styles, open the admin panel once (it remembers the address), or set the **Script URL** in **Settings** →

Public site. See Settings and Troubleshooting.

Your website does not need to be inside the PHPPoll folder. It only needs to be able to read the PHPPoll files on the same server.

EMBED & SHARE

Add a poll to WordPress and other CMS

Add a PHPPoll poll to WordPress, Wix, Joomla, Shopify or any CMS using a Custom HTML block and the JavaScript embed code. Step-by-step with tips for each platform.

You do not need a plugin to use PHPPoll with a content management system. Every CMS that accepts HTML can display a poll through the JavaScript embed code. Your poll data stays on your own server.

WordPress

1. In PHPPoll open **Embed & share**, select the poll and copy the **JavaScript embed** code.
2. In WordPress edit the post or page. Click **+** and add a **Custom HTML** block.
3. Paste the code into the block and click **Preview**. The poll appears.
4. Publish or update the page.

To show a poll in the sidebar or footer, add a **Custom HTML** widget under **Appearance → Widgets** and paste the same code.

Some security plugins or user roles strip `<script>` tags. In that case use the iframe code from the same page. See Embed a poll with an iframe.

Other platforms

Platform	Where to paste the code
Joomla	A *Custom HTML* module, or the editor in "Code" / source mode.
Drupal	A block or text format that allows full HTML.
Wix	The *Embed code* element (HTML). If scripts are not accepted, use the iframe code.
Shopify	A *Custom Liquid* section or the HTML view of a page.
Squarespace, Webflow	A *Code / Embed* block.
Static HTML	Directly into the page source.

Match the poll to your theme

- Choose a theme and accent color on the Embed & share page, so the code matches your site. See Share and embed polls.
- For dark websites select the *Dark* theme.

Tips

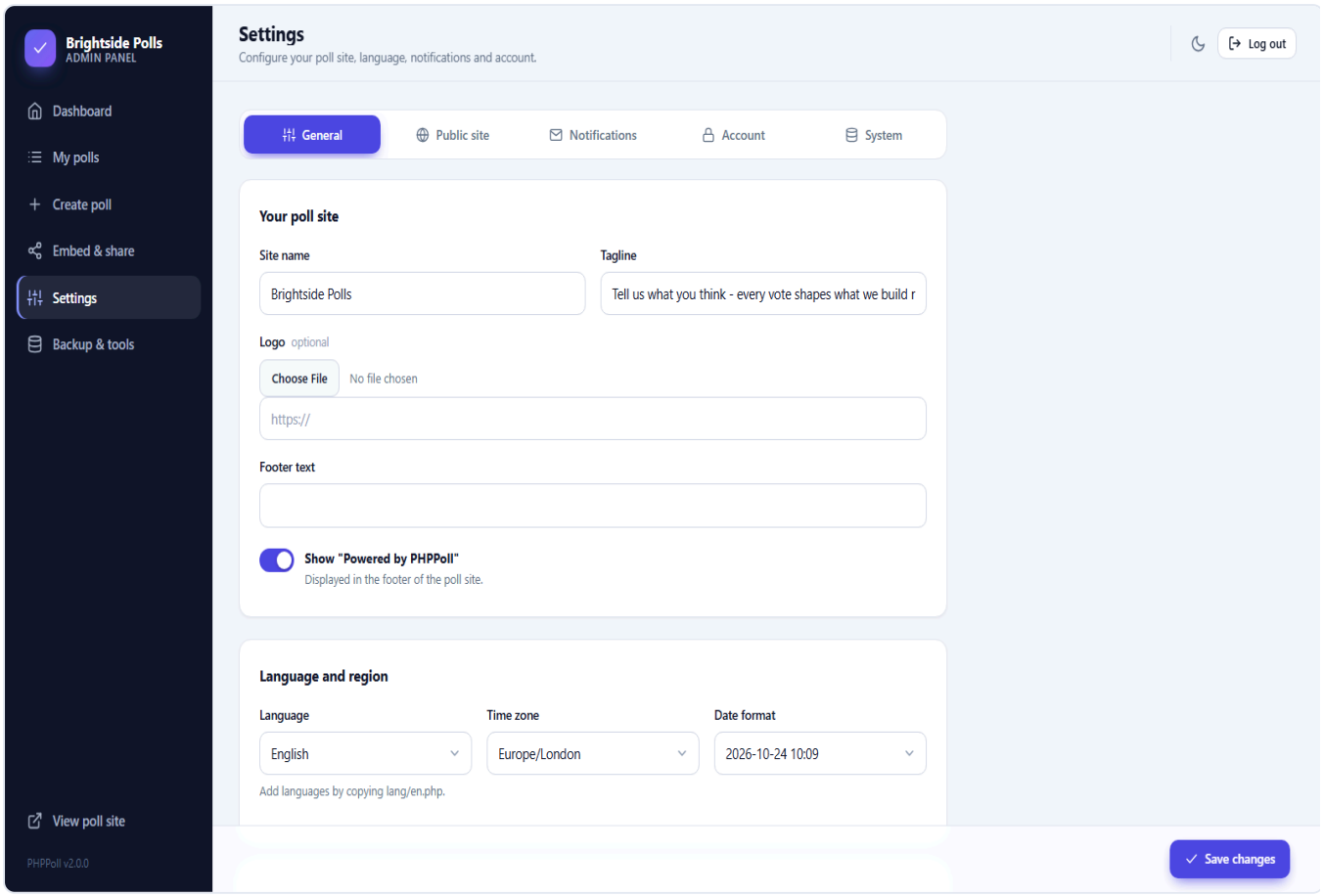
- Place the poll below the introduction of the article, where readers are engaged.
- Embed the same poll in several posts to collect more votes. The statistics show the sources. See Poll statistics and individual votes.
- For the highest speed on PHP-based sites you can use the PHP include instead.

SETTINGS & MAINTENANCE

Settings

All PHPPoll settings explained: site name, logo, language, time zone, default theme, public site, pretty URLs, notifications, account and system check.

Open **Settings** in the sidebar. Settings are grouped into five tabs. Changes are saved with the **Save changes** button at the bottom.



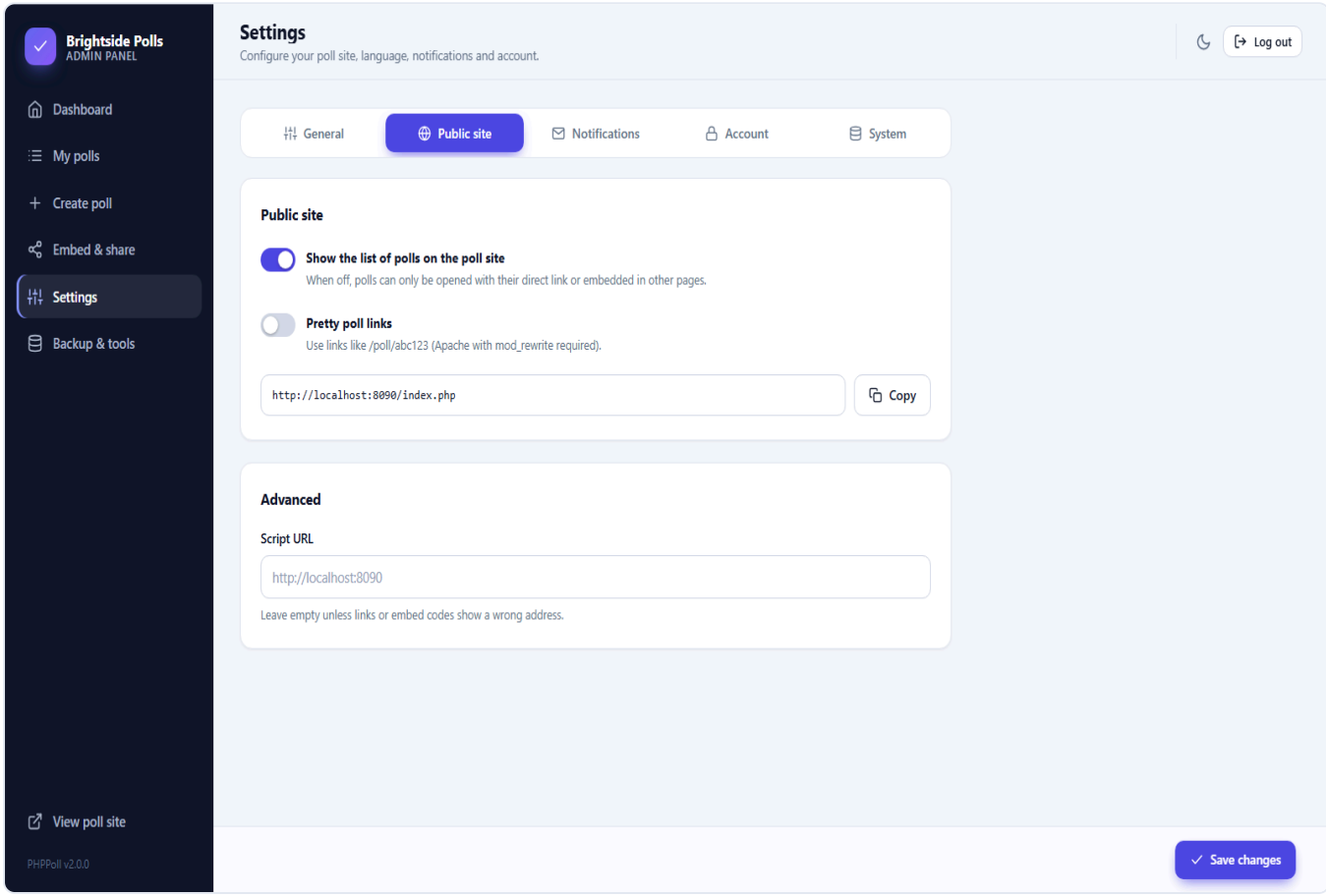
The General tab of the PHPPoll settings.

General

Setting	Description
Site name, Tagline	Shown in the header of the poll website and the admin panel.
Logo	Upload an image or paste a URL. It replaces the site name in the poll website header.
Footer text	A line of text below the poll website.
Show "Powered by PHPPoll"	Switch the credit line in the footer on or off.
Language	Language of the admin panel and the public texts. See Translate PHPPoll into your language.

Time zone, Date format	Used for dates, schedules and "votes today". Pick your own time zone.
Default poll style	Theme and accent color for polls set to "Site default". See Poll appearance settings.

Public site



Options for the public poll website.

Setting	Description
Show the list of polls	When off, the home page of the poll site shows no list. Polls are reachable only by direct link or embed. See The standalone poll website.
Pretty poll links	Use `/poll/abc123` instead of `index.php?p=abc123`. Needs Apache `mod_rewrite` and the included `.htaccess`.
Script URL	Leave empty. Set it only if links or embed codes show a wrong address, for example behind a proxy. Without a trailing slash.

Notifications

Admin email address, the global switch for vote notifications and a button to send a test email. See Email notifications for new votes.

Account

Change your username and password. See Admin panel login and account.

System

A health check of the server: PHP version, SimpleXML, mbstring, writable data and uploads folders, mail function and the detected script URL. A security tip reminds you to protect the data folder. See Security and privacy.

Advanced server options such as moving the data folder are set in `config.php`. See Customize the poll script.

SETTINGS & MAINTENANCE

Translate PHPPoll into your language

Translate the PHPPoll admin panel and poll texts into any language by copying one language file. Step-by-step guide with placeholders, fallback and tips.

All texts that PHPPoll shows – in the admin panel, on the voting forms, in error messages and emails – are stored in **one language file**. Translating the script means translating that file. No code changes are needed.

Steps

1. Open the folder `lang/` and make a copy of `en.php`. Name it with your language code, for example `de.php`, `fr.php`, `es.php` or `bg.php`.
2. Open the new file in a text editor that saves in **UTF-8** (for example VS Code or Notepad++).
3. Change `'_language_name' => 'English'` to the name of your language, for example `'Deutsch'`.
4. Translate the text on the **right** side of each `=>`. Do not change the keys on the left.
5. Upload the file and choose the language in **Settings** → **General** → **Language**. Save.

Example

```
'vote' => 'Abstimmen',
'thank_you' => 'Danke für Ihre Stimme!',
'already_voted' => 'Sie haben bereits abgestimmt.',
```

Placeholders

Some texts contain `%s` or `%d`. They are replaced by names or numbers and must stay in the translation, for example `'n_votes' => '%s Stimmen'`. If you need a literal percent sign in such texts, write `%%`.

Apostrophes and quotes

Texts are wrapped in single quotes. Write a single quote inside a text as `\'`, or use typographic quotes.

What if some texts are missing?

Missing keys are taken from the English file automatically, so you can translate step by step and your site always works.

Where texts appear

Part of the file	Where the text is used
Public poll	Buttons, messages, hints and errors seen by voters.
Standalone poll website	Headings and share links.

Emails	Notification and test emails.
Login & setup, menu, dashboard...	The admin panel.

Use the same file to adjust English wording to your taste: change "Vote" to "Send my answer" or "Thank you for voting!" to your own brand voice.

The language also affects the CSV export headers. See Export poll votes to CSV.

SETTINGS & MAINTENANCE

Email notifications for new votes

Receive an email when someone votes. Set the admin email, switch notifications on globally and per poll, send a test email and fix mail problems on your server.

PHPPoll can send you an email whenever a vote is cast. The message contains the poll title, the total number of votes and a link to the results page.

Switch notifications on

1. Open **Settings** → **Notifications**.
2. Enter your **Admin email**.
3. Turn on **Email notifications for new votes**.
4. Click **Save and send test email** to check that mails arrive.

Then decide per poll: on the **Messages & data** tab of the poll editor, the switch **Email me about new votes** is on by default and can be switched off for polls that are too busy. See Thank-you message, redirect and closed message.

How it works

- PHPPoll uses the standard PHP `mail()` function. No SMTP configuration is required, but your hosting must allow it.
- The sender is `noreply@your-domain`.
- The subject is "New vote: <poll title>". You can translate it. See Translate PHPPoll into your language.

The test email does not arrive

- Check the spam folder.
- Look at **Settings** → **System**. If the email function is missing, ask your hosting provider to enable `mail()`.
- Some hosts only deliver mail from addresses of your own domain. Make sure the website domain has proper mail records (SPF).
- For high-traffic polls consider switching notifications off. One email per vote can flood your inbox.

Poll notifications contain no personal data from the voter. Names, emails and comments are visible in the results page. See Collect voter details and comments.

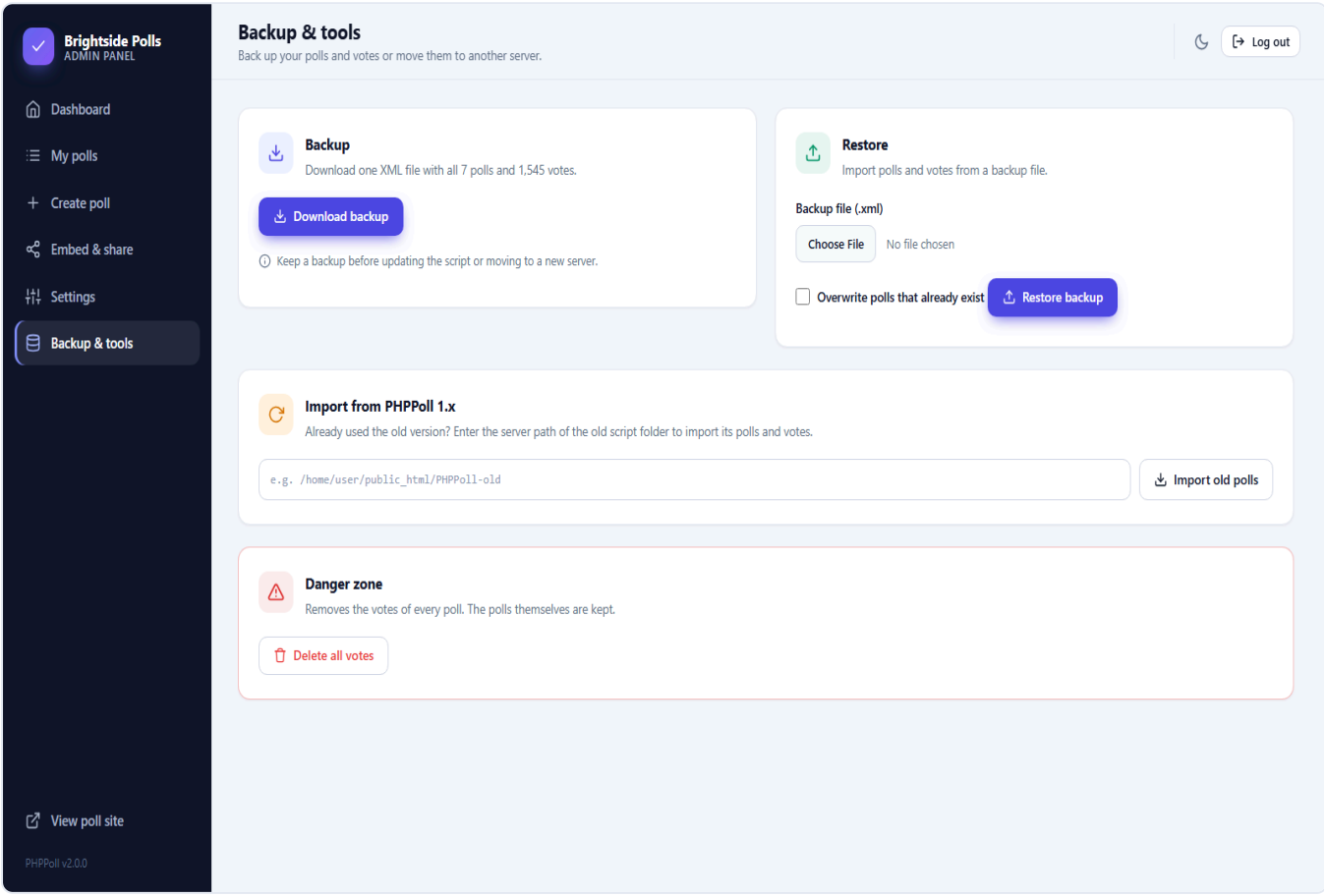
More troubleshooting tips: Troubleshooting.

SETTINGS & MAINTENANCE

Backup, restore and moving to a new server

Download a full XML backup of all PHPPoll polls and votes, restore it on any server, delete all votes and learn what to copy besides the backup file.

The page **Backup & tools** protects your polls and makes it easy to move the script.



Backup, restore and the danger zone.

Download a backup

1. Open **Backup & tools**.
2. Click **Download backup**.
3. Store the file `phppoll-backup-YYYY-MM-DD.xml` safely.

The file contains all polls with their settings and all votes. It is readable XML.

Restore a backup

1. Install PHPPoll on the new server and create an account. See How to install the PHP poll script.
2. Open **Backup & tools**, choose the XML file in the **Restore** card.
3. Tick **Overwrite polls that already exist** only if you want to replace polls with the same ID.
4. Click **Restore backup**. A message shows how many polls were imported and how many were skipped.

What is not in the backup

- **Uploaded images** (`uploads/` folder) – copy this folder yourself when you move servers.
- **Settings and account** – you set these up again on the new installation, or copy `data/settings.xml` too.
- Your own changes to the script files.

Back up by copying files

Because everything is plain files, you can also back up by copying the `data/` and `uploads/` folders with FTP. That is the most complete copy.

Delete all votes

The **Danger zone** removes the votes of every poll but keeps the polls. Use it to start fresh after testing. To remove votes of a single poll use **Reset all votes** on its results page. See The results page.

> Download a backup before updating the script, deleting polls or changing servers. A scheduled FTP/cron copy of the `data/` folder is a good habit for busy sites.

Moving from the previous version? See Upgrade from PHPPoll 1.x.

SETTINGS & MAINTENANCE

Security and privacy

How PHPPoll keeps your polls secure and your voters private: protected data folder, hashed passwords, CSRF tokens, safe uploads, anonymous IP hashes and server tips.

PHPPoll is built with security and privacy in mind. This page lists what is already protected and what you should check on your server.

Built-in security

Area	Protection
Admin login	Passwords are hashed, login is locked for 15 minutes after 5 failed attempts, the session ID changes on login.
Admin forms	CSRF tokens on every form. Destructive actions need a confirmation.
Output	All texts from visitors are escaped before display, preventing cross-site scripting (XSS).
Voting	Server-side validation of answers, honeypot, minimum fill-in time, captcha option, bot filter. See Prevent duplicate votes and spam.
Uploads	Only real JPG, PNG, GIF and WebP images up to 3 MB. The `uploads/` folder cannot execute PHP.
CSV export	Protected against spreadsheet formula injection. See Export poll votes to CSV.
Data storage	XML files, written atomically with file locking, so simultaneous votes cannot corrupt them.

Protect the data folder

The folder `data/` contains settings (including the password hash) and all votes. Make sure it cannot be opened in a browser.

- **Apache:** the included `.htaccess` files already deny access.
- **nginx:** add a rule to your server block, adjusting the path:

```
location ^~ /poll/data/    { deny all; return 404; }
location ^~ /poll/uploads/ { location ~ \.php$ { deny all; } }
```

- **IIS:** use request filtering to deny the `data` folder.
- **Best practice:** move the folder outside the web root and point to it in `config.php`:

```
define('PP_DATA', '/home/youruser/phppoll-data');
```

Test it: open `https://www.example.com/poll/data/settings.xml`. You must see an error, not the file.

Privacy of your voters

- IP addresses are **never stored**. Only a salted, irreversible hash is saved to enforce the vote limit.
- No third-party services, trackers, fonts or analytics are loaded by polls.
- The only cookie set on voters is a small one that remembers that they voted (when cookie limits are on).
- Names, emails and comments are collected only if you enable them. See Collect voter details and comments.

Recommendations

1. Use HTTPS on your website.
2. Choose a strong admin password. See Admin panel login and account.
3. Keep PHP updated on your hosting.
4. Take regular backups. See Backup, restore and moving to a new server.
5. Optionally protect the `admin/` folder with an extra HTTP password.

SETTINGS & MAINTENANCE

Customize the poll script

PHPPoll uses plain PHP functions, so it is easy to change. Learn the file structure, how to edit CSS and texts, add admin pages and use config.php options.

PHPPoll is written in simple, commented PHP. There are no classes, no framework and no build step. If you know basic PHP and CSS you can adapt the script, and changes appear after you save the file.

File structure

File / folder	Purpose
`index.php`	The public poll website (list and single poll).
`embed.php`, `embed.js`	Iframe page and JavaScript embed loader.
`phppoll.php`	The `phppoll()` include function.
`vote.php`	Receives and validates votes.
`includes/functions.php`	Storage, settings, polls, votes, results and security functions.
`includes/render.php`	HTML of the poll form, results and charts.
`lang/en.php`	All texts. See Translate PHPPoll into your language.
`assets/poll.css`, `poll.js`	Style and behavior of polls.
`assets/site.css`	Style of the standalone site.
`admin/`	`index.php` router, one file per screen in `pages/`, `assets/admin.css`.
`data/`, `uploads/`	Your data and images.

Change the look of polls

Open `assets/poll.css`. Colors, backgrounds and borders are CSS variables at the top (`--pp-bg`, `--pp-fg`, `--pp-border` ...), separately for the light and the dark theme. Change a variable to recolor everything. Per-poll accent color and corner radius are set in the editor. See Poll appearance settings.

Change the admin colors

Edit the `:root` block at the top of `admin/assets/admin.css`. For example `--primary: #4f46e5;` controls the main color of buttons and highlights.

Change the HTML of polls

The functions `pp_render_form()`, `pp_render_results()` and the chart functions in `includes/render.php` create the markup. Because every poll type uses these functions, one edit changes all polls.

Add an admin screen

1. Create `admin/pages/yourpage.php`. Start it with `pp_admin_header('Title', 'yourpage');` and end with `pp_admin_footer();`.
2. Add `'yourpage'` to the `$pages` list in `admin/index.php`.
3. Link to `index.php?page=yourpage` from the menu in `admin/includes/layout.php`.

config.php options

Constant	Effect
`PP_DEBUG`	Show PHP errors in the admin while troubleshooting.
`PP_DATA`	Location of the data folder, ideally outside the web root.
`PP_BASE_URL`	Force the public address of the script.
`PP_TRUST_PROXY`	Read visitor IPs from `X-Forwarded-For` behind a proxy or CDN.

Make a copy of the files you change. When you update PHPPoll later, you can compare and re-apply your changes. Keep a backup of `data/` first. See Backup, restore and moving to a new server.

HELP

Troubleshooting

Solutions for common PHPPoll problems: settings not saving, wrong embed URLs, pretty links 404, no emails, "already voted" messages, blank pages and upload errors.

Most problems are caused by folder permissions, server settings or a wrong address. Open **Settings → System** first: it checks the most important server conditions. See Settings.

"Settings could not be saved" or polls cannot be created

PHP cannot write to the `data/` folder. Set its permissions to `755` or `775`, and make sure the folder is owned by the web-server user. Do the same for `uploads/`.

A blank page or error 500

1. Open `config.php` and set `define('PP_DEBUG', true);`.
2. Reload the page. The error message tells you what is wrong, for example a missing extension or an old PHP version. See System requirements.
3. Set `PP_DEBUG` back to `false` when you are done.

The embedded poll has no styling or does not load

- The web address in the embed code is wrong. Set the **Script URL** in **Settings → Public site** (for example `https://www.example.com/poll`, no slash at the end).
- For the PHP include, open the admin panel once so the address is remembered.
- Check that the page uses HTTPS if your poll folder uses HTTPS, to avoid mixed-content blocking.

"You have already voted" while testing

The vote limit works. Temporarily set **Prevent repeated votes** to *Do not limit*, or use a private window with cookie-only limits. Delete test votes with **Reset all votes**. See Prevent duplicate votes and spam.

Everybody gets "already voted" after the first vote

Your site is behind a proxy or CDN, so all visitors seem to share one IP address. Enable `PP_TRUST_PROXY` in `config.php`, or switch the vote limit to *cookie only*.

Pretty links (/poll/abc123) show 404

They need Apache with `mod_rewrite` and `AllowOverride All` so the `.htaccess` file is read. On nginx add a rewrite rule such as `rewrite ^/poll/([a-z0-9]+)/?$ /index.php?p=$1 last;`, or switch off *Pretty poll links*.

No notification emails

See Email notifications for new votes: check the spam folder, the System page and with your host whether `mail()` is enabled.

Images cannot be uploaded

- Only JPG, PNG, GIF and WebP are accepted, up to 3 MB.
- The PHP limits `upload_max_filesize` and `post_max_size` may be lower than your file.
- The `uploads/` folder must be writable.

I cannot log in

After 5 wrong attempts login is blocked for 15 minutes. If you forgot the password see Admin panel login and account.

Dates and times are wrong

Select your time zone in **Settings** → **General**.

Still stuck? Read the frequently asked questions.

HELP

Frequently asked questions

Frequently asked questions about PHPPoll: database, votes limit, multiple polls, WordPress, GDPR, translations, moving servers, customization and poll types.

Does PHPPoll need a database?

No. All settings, polls and votes are stored in XML files in the `data/` folder. You do not need MySQL, SQLite or any other database. See What is PHPPoll? Overview of the PHP poll script.

How many votes can a poll have?

XML storage works comfortably with thousands of votes per poll, and simultaneous votes are safe thanks to file locking. For polls expecting hundreds of thousands of votes a database solution is a better fit. See System requirements.

Can I have unlimited polls?

Yes. You can create as many polls as your hosting space allows, and show as many as you want on one page.

What poll types are available?

Single choice, multiple choice, image choice, star rating and NPS (0–10). See Poll types: which one should you use?.

Can I embed a poll on WordPress or another CMS?

Yes. Paste the JavaScript or iframe code into a Custom HTML block. See Add a poll to WordPress and other CMS and Share and embed polls.

Can I use the polls on several websites?

Yes. Embed the same poll on as many sites as you like. The votes are counted together, and the statistics show where each vote came from. See Poll statistics and individual votes.

How do I stop people from voting many times?

Use the vote limit by cookie and IP address and, if needed, a captcha. See Prevent duplicate votes and spam.

Can voters see the results?

You decide: always, after voting, after the poll closes, or never. See Results visibility settings.

Is PHPPoll GDPR friendly?

IP addresses are not stored (only a hash), no third-party services are loaded and personal data like names or emails is collected only if you enable it. You remain responsible for your privacy notice. See

Security and privacy.

Can I translate the interface?

Yes, copy `lang/en.php` and translate it. See Translate PHPPoll into your language.

How do I move to another server?

Download a backup, install PHPPoll on the new server, restore the backup and copy the `uploads/` folder. See Backup, restore and moving to a new server.

Can I export the results?

Yes, as a CSV file for Excel or Google Sheets. See Export poll votes to CSV.

Can I change the design?

Yes: theme, accent color, corners and chart style are options in the editor, and everything else is a CSS file. See Poll appearance settings and Customize the poll script.

Can I limit a poll to a time period?

Yes, with opening and closing dates and a maximum number of votes. See Schedule polls and set end dates.

Can I upgrade from PHPPoll 1.x?

Yes, with the import tool. See Upgrade from PHPPoll 1.x.

Where can I learn more about the product?

Visit the PHPPoll product page for features, demos and ordering information.

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