“.gov” Mental Modeling Protocol

**Goal of Experiment:**

This activity asks students to create a word cloud of their perception of “.gov” sites. Students will work individually. As they are creating, researchers will talk individually with students about what they are writing. The activity will end with a group discussion. The goal of this activity is to capture youths’ perceptions of “.gov” sites after discussions of credibility and trust have been taught in the program.

**Approximate time:** 20 minutes

**Materials Needed:**

* Colored copy paper
* Markers
* Audio recorder (& batteries)
* Protocol (this document)

**Steps of Experiment:**

1. Begin audio recording.
2. Ask students to make a list of what words they associate with the term ‘.gov.’
3. Ask students to rank these words in terms of importance to their personal definition.
4. Tell participants: Today, just like earlier in HackHealth, you’ll be creating your own word cloud. This time you’ll be answering the question, what words do you associate with the term ‘.gov’?
5. Tell students: Once again, the lower the word you listed is ranked, the smaller it will be in your graphic.
6. Ask students to work individually at first, but tell them that they’ll have time to share their work at the end if they want.
7. As students work, researchers should probe them for their thoughts on the addition of particular words and their relative size/importance.
8. After about 10 minutes, ask students to share their word clouds. Prompt them to describe the words they made biggest and smallest and why they used these particular terms to describe ‘government.’
9. Collect the word clouds at the end of the activity and log pictures into the server.