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Introduction

This document contains a quick reminder of the aims and approach of the repliCATS project, followed by a guide to the Discussion and Round 2 assessment. Included are a list of suggested questions that may be useful during the Discussion phase.
The repliCATS project

The University of Melbourne repliCATS team elicits expert judgements about the replicability of research claims in the Social and Behavioural Sciences through an online platform using the IDEA protocol. Judgements are aggregated into measures of reliability and the reasoning used is analysed. IDEA (“Investigate”, “Discuss”, “Estimate” and “Aggregate”) has been found to improve judgements under uncertainty. More information about the repliCATS project is contained in the Plain Language Statement and on the repliCATS website.

The IDEA protocol

This protocol, developed at the University of Melbourne, has been found to improve judgements under uncertainty. IDEA stands for “Investigate”, “Discuss”, “Estimate” and “Aggregate”, the four steps in the process of this elicitation.

As used in the repliCATS project, the IDEA protocol will involve participants:

1. Independently Investigating the claim, providing their personal judgement on the replicability of the claim, and commenting on their thinking.
2. Seeing the judgements of the rest of their team, the aggregated judgement and all of the comments that have been made and having a facilitated Discussion with the group. This phase can resolve uncertainties, and investigate evidence and thinking.
3. Providing a revised Estimate and describing how their thinking has changed.

The repliCATS team will use an Aggregate of the group judgements as the final assessment of the replicability of the research claim.

More information on the IDEA protocol can be found here.
Guidelines for discussion and Round 2

The discussion phase provides an opportunity to discuss the claims, resolve differences in how the claims and questions were interpreted, and share and examine evidence.

Ground rules

Some ground rules for the discussion phase:

- Respect that the group is composed of a diversity of individuals.
- Be mindful of others, and allow an opportunity for everyone to speak.
- Don’t assume everyone has read the same papers or has the same skills as yourself - explain your reasoning in plain language.
- If someone questions your reasons, they are usually trying to increase their own understanding. Try to provide simple and clear justifications.
- Try to be open-minded about new ideas and evidence.
- It’s ok if you don’t have good evidence for your beliefs - please feel free to state this.
- If you have changed your mind since your Round 1 estimates it’s good to share this. Actively entertaining counterfactual evidence and beliefs improves your judgements.
- Be wary that there is a limited time for discussion - try to keep the discussion on track. Use notepads or your comments box to record tangential thoughts.
- If you disagree with the group that is fine. Please state your true belief when completing Round 2 estimates. This represents the true uncertainty regarding the question, and it should be captured.
- Encourage quieter individuals to discuss their views.
- Encourage individuals to be mindful of others, and allow an opportunity for everyone to have an opportunity to speak.

Instructions

Step 1. Login to the repliCATS online platform in the same way as in the Guide to Round 1.

Step 2: Select a claim. When you login you’ll see the claims which have been assigned to you. Claims which have feedback available will be marked as “Round 2”.

Step 3: QUIET TIME (5 minutes)- Review the estimates and comments made by others. The feedback page will have the estimates of others in the group, and a list of rationales provided by them to support their estimates. We ask each group to take five minutes to review the claim, make sure they understand what the claim is asking and examine how the judgements of others differed from or supported their beliefs.

Step 4: Discuss judgements (~10-15 minutes). Some aspects to look for and to discuss are provided below.

Step 5: QUIET Time (5 minutes)- Round 2 judgements. Following the discussion phase, each member of the group should enter their private individual estimates, and any additional information to accompany their judgements. Remember to press ‘submit and save’. If your estimates have not changed that’s okay, but please re-enter them.
**Top tips for a good discussion**
The following list may be useful to consider when reviewing and discussing judgements. You do not have to work through it systematically:

- What did people believe the claim being made was? Was the claim clear?
- Clarify the terms and scope of the claim. Ideally, everyone should understand the information and terms in the same way.
- Discuss the data (the group’s estimates) rather than asking people to identify their judgements e.g. “What would cause someone to provide a really high/low estimate?”
- Share information, and comment on the information shared by others. Does anyone have any specific knowledge of the domain or topic in the claim?
- Ask questions about extreme values, i.e. the very low or very high estimates that look different to the rest of the groups’ responses.
- Look for very wide intervals, they suggest unconfident responses. Perhaps those individuals are aware of contradictory evidence?
- Look out for very narrow intervals, suggesting very confident responses (see the format of the questions section). Do those individuals have extra information?
- Use discussion to raise counterarguments to others’ arguments. The purpose of this is not to annoy each other, but to make sure your group as a whole is considering the full range of evidence. Moreover, this guards against the availability bias which makes people remember events that have occurred more recently (i.e. are easier to recall) and deem them to be more plausible, therefore assigning them a higher probability.

**Useful questions during discussion**
The following list of questions may be useful for both participants and facilitators during the discussion phase, for questioning people’s reasoning and assumptions. These questions aim to promote critical thinking and counterfactual reasoning.

**Questions of clarification**

- What do you mean by ______?
- Could you explain that further?
- How does your comment relate to the question? [If it doesn’t, encourage participants to “park” it for discussion later, perhaps write it down in a notebook]

**Questions that probe assumptions**

- What would need to be true for [person 1] to be right? And what would need to be true for [person 2] to be right?
- [Person 1] I’m interested in hearing from you, what things were you thinking would occur that would lead to your estimate?
- There seems to be little divergence in the group here, what information has informed everyone’s choice?
- What events might occur to cause the mean to be substantially lower than the current estimate?
o What events might occur to cause the mean to be substantially higher than the current estimate?

o What were you assuming when you provided your estimate?

o All of your reasoning depends on the idea that _____. Why have you based your reasoning on ______ rather than ______?

o Is it always the case? Why do you think the assumptions hold here?

Questions that probe evidence and reasoning

o How did you come to believe that?

o Do you have any evidence for your belief?

o Is that good evidence to believe?

o What other information do we need?

o What would change your mind?

Question about viewpoints and perspectives

o What would someone who disagrees say?

o You seem to be approaching this issue from ________ perspective. Why have you chosen this rather than that perspective?

Questions that probe implications and consequences

o But if that happened what else would happen as a result?

o When you say ________, are you implying ________?

o If this and this are the case, then what else must also be true?

Questions about questions

o To answer this question what information would we need to have?

o Is this the same issue as ______?

o Is the question clear, do we understand it?

Key contacts during the workshop

Technical problems: Contact a repliCATS team member at the workshop
Complaints or code of conduct breaches: Hannah Fraser hfraser@unimelb.edu.au or Racquel Ashton raquel.ashton@unimelb.edu.au
General non-urgent enquiries: repliCATS-contact@unimelb.edu.au