

Implicit Association Test

It is well known that people don't always 'speak their minds', and it is suspected that people don't always 'know their minds'. Understanding such divergences is important to scientific psychology.

This web site presents a method that demonstrates the conscious-unconscious divergences much more convincingly than has been possible with previous methods. This new method is called the Implicit Association Test, or IAT for short.

www.implicit.harvard.edu

Origins and measurement with the IAT

The IAT was originally developed as a device for exploring the unconscious roots of thinking and feeling. This web site has been constructed for a different purpose -- to offer the IAT to interested individuals as a tool to gain greater awareness about their own unconscious preferences and beliefs.

Many years ago, Fyodor Dostoyevsky wrote: *"Every man has reminiscences which he would not tell to everyone but only his friends. He has other matters in his mind which he would not reveal even to his friends, but only to himself, and that in secret. But there are other things which a man is afraid to tell even to himself, and every decent man has a number of such things stored away in his mind."*

These lines from Dostoyevsky capture two concepts that the IAT helps us examine. First, we might not always be willing to share our private attitudes with others. Second, we may not be aware of some of our own attitudes. Your results on the IAT may include both components of control and awareness.

The links in the menu bar and below provide information about the Implicit Association Test (IAT) research tool, the specific measures that appear at this website, and general information about the implications and interpretations of the results of these tests. The [FAQs](#) section, in particular, provides answers to many of the common questions about this tool.

Understanding and interpreting IAT results

Although the IAT was developed for research use, it has clear potential for application outside the laboratory. Our goal, in developing website demonstrations of the IAT, is to make this technique available for educational purposes (including self-education). The IAT may be especially interesting if you find that it reveals an automatic association that you could not control. For example, you may believe that women and men should be equally associated with "science" - yet, your automatic associations may show that you (like many others) associate male (more than female) with science.

How might you use experiences with these various tests to think about the implications of unconscious thoughts and feelings? We can tell you about the types of questions we considered after taking the age IAT: "What does it mean that we show an automatic association between *old* and *unpleasant*? What is the source of such knowledge? Should we be disturbed by the fact that we possess such associations? If we are (and indeed we are!), what might we do about it?" Such questions are addressed further in the answers to [frequently asked questions](#).

We urge caution in using the IAT to reach conclusions about yourself or others. You might wonder, for example, if this test can be used to make decisions about yourself (e.g., what should I buy, where should I go to school, etc.) If you are female, and you show a greater association between *male* and *science* (as the majority of men and women do), should you decide to avoid a scientific career? Our opinion is: Most definitely not! This test result might instead prompt you to take note of the broad reach of gender stereotypes and to ask what it means to be setting out towards a scientific career in a world in which so many people automatically associate *science* with *male* (including perhaps yourself).

Can (or should) people use this test to make decisions about others? Can one, for example, use this test to measure somebody else's automatic racial preference, and use it to decide that they should or should not serve on a jury? We assert that the IAT should **not** be used in any such way. Especially at this early stage of the IAT's development, it is much preferable to use it mainly to develop awareness of one's own and others' automatic preferences and stereotypes. Using the IAT as the basis for making significant decisions about self or others could lead to undesired and unjustified consequences.

We hope you have been able to take something of value from the experience of taking one or more of these tests. Looking to the future: We shall periodically revise the IATs that you can sample at this site. We shall also continue to update the information that the site provides on developments in psychological understanding of the unconscious or automatic roots of thought and feeling.

Duncan's Results

Gay and Straight Australians

Your data suggest a slight automatic preference for Straight People compared to Gay People.

Aboriginal Australian - White Australian

Your data suggest a slight automatic preference for Aboriginal Australians compared to White Australians.

Gender

Your data suggest a strong association of Male with Science and Female with Humanities compared to Female with Science and Male with Humanities.