Riverside Accuracy Project Q-Sort Program
http://www.rap.ucr.edu

Overview

The Q-sort program was developed to provide an efficient and less error-prone application of the Q-sort method. With this program, people can sort Q-items without having to fuss with piles of cards that are spread all over a table, and the sorts can be directly saved as a .txt file so that the data entry step is eliminated. The Q-sort program can be used with the CAQ, RBQ, and/or RSQ (which are provided on this web site), or it can be used with your own Q-deck.

There are two general steps in using the Q-sort program. If you are using one of the decks provided, then you can install the program and download the deck of choice. If you are using your own deck, then you can install the program and create your own deck file using the instructions below. NOTE: This program will not work on a Macintosh.

How To Use the Q-sort Program

NOTE: Before installing the program, you will need to make sure that the resolution on your computer is set appropriately for the program. To do this, click on the "Start" button on your computer and select "Control Panel." Double click on "Display" and select the "Settings" tab. At he bottom left corner, it will say "Screen Resolution" with an adjusting slider beneath. Under the adjusting slider will tell you how many pixels are being used for your computer resolution (e.g. "985 by 635 pixels"). The requirement for the Q-Sort program is that this needs to be set at 1024 by 768 pixels (or higher). If your resolution pixels are set lower than this, click and hold the adjusting slider and move it to the right until your pixels are set high enough.

Installing The Q-sort Program on a PC:

To install the program, copy and paste the "Q_sort" icon onto your desktop and copy and paste the "dotnetfx" icon onto your desktop.

Double click on the "dotnetfx" icon.
The screen will ask, "Would you like to install Microsoft.NET Framework 1.1 Package?" Click "yes."
On the following screen, under "Terms and conditions," select "I agree" and click on "Install."
The installation may take a few minutes.
When the screen indicates that installation is complete, click on "OK."

Double click on the "Q_sort" icon.
The screen will say, "Welcome to the Q_sort Setup Wizard."

Click "Next" on this screen and on the two following screens. This will initiate the installation.
When installation is complete, click on "Close."

Now there should be a new, black and white icon on your desktop called "Q Sort." This is the Q-sort program.

Using The Q-sort Program:

Before using the program, the Q-deck that you want to use will need to be in a .txt file. A .txt file for the CAQ, RBQ, and RSQ are available on the RAP website at http://www.rap.ucr.edu/qsorter. Copy and paste these files onto to your desktop. If you want to use your own Q-deck, instructions for creating a properly formatted .txt file are under the heading "Creating Your Own Q-deck."

Once you have Q-deck saved on your computer, open the Q-sort program by double clicking the "Q Sort" icon.

The screen will display a box to denote the identification number of the person being rated by the sorter ("Target") and a box to denote the identification number of the sorter ("Rater"). The screen will also have three piles for Q-items (Uncharacteristic, Neutral, and Characteristic). These are the preliminary piles from which the sorter will eventually sort the final piles. The preliminary piles are used rather than directly sorting into final piles because, in our experience, it is overwhelming for a sorter to start with nine piles.

To access a Q-deck, click on "File" at the top of the screen, and then click "Open Deck." To use the CAQ, RBQ, or RSQ, open the .txt file from your desktop. To use your own deck, open the .txt file that you created.

Having opened your deck, a second screen will be displayed that has a thin blank box at the top, three preliminary Q-piles, and the first item from the Q-deck you are using. The full text of the item will be displayed and the item number will follow the text. To sort the items, position the cursor (the white arrow) over the first item, click and hold the item, and drag and drop it into the pile you want to place it in. The program will not allow you to drop an item anywhere on the screen except into a pile. The next item will appear, which is then placed into a pile, and so forth.

When items are placed into the piles, only the first 23 characters can be seen. In order to read the full item, click on it once and the full text can be seen in the box at the top of the screen. Also, once items have been placed into piles they can be switched into different piles by dragging and dropping them from pile to pile. As a pile gets full, a scroll bar will appear to the right of the box so that you can scroll up and down to view all of the items. In the preliminary piles, there is no limit on the number of items that can be placed into a pile.

Once all of the items have been sorted, a box will appear indicating that no items are left and you must click "OK" to continue.

A new screen will appear with the final number of piles that will be used, the three preliminary piles that have already been sorted, and the "Target" and "Rater" numbers. As with the preliminary piles, items are sorted into their final piles by dragging and dropping them. When items are placed into the piles, only the first few characters can be seen. In order to read the full item, click on it once and the full text can be seen in the box at the top of the screen. Items can be switched into different piles by dragging and dropping them from pile to pile. There is a specified number of items that can be placed into each of the final piles, so when a sorter has exceeded this number, the pile title will turn red and scroll bar will appear to the right of the box.

Saving a "Sort":

The program will not allow you to save a sort with too many items in a given pile, an incomplete sort, or if the "Target" and Rater" identification numbers have not been indicated. A dialogue box will tell you if the sort is incomplete or an ID number is missing, and you will know if there are too many items in a pile because it will be red. When the full sort is complete, it can be saved by clicking on "File," then "Save Sort." Be sure the sort is saved as a .txt file.

After it has been saved, you can either close the program or re-start the program for a new sort. If you try to close the program before the sort is complete and/or saved, a dialogue box will ask if you are sure that you want to close an unsaved session. This is to safeguard against accidentally closing the program and losing information.

When you open the .txt file of the saved sort, the first number indicates the "Target" ID number and the second number indicates the "Rater" ID number, and these are separated by an underscore. Following the "Rater" ID number, each number is separated by a space and indicates the pile that each Q-item was placed in, starting with the first item. For example, if item one was placed in the "Extremely Characteristic" pile, and there are nine piles, then the first number following the "Rater" ID would be 9. If the second item was placed in the "Extremely Uncharacteristic" pile, then the next number would be 1. And so on.

Sorts that are saved into the existing .txt file are appended to the end of the existing sorts.

Creating Your Own Q-deck:

The general process of creating your own deck involves indicating the total number piles for the deck, providing a title for each pile, indicating the number of items to be put in each pile, and providing the full text and number of each item. The deck must be created in a .txt file. The following is an example of how we created the RBQ file. You can download the RBQ .txt file from our website to see how it actually looks.

Line 1	Total number of piles that you will be using (e.g. 9)
Line 2	Title for the first pile (e.g. "Extremely Uncharacteristic")
Line 3	The number of items that go into the pile just named (e.g. 3)
Line 4	Title for the next pile (e.g. "Quite Uncharacteristic")
Line 5	The number of items that go into the pile just named (e.g. 5)
Line 6	Title for the next pile (e.g. "Fairly Uncharacteristic")
Line 7	The number of items that go into the pile just named (e.g. 7)
Line 8	Title for the next pile (e.g. "Somewhat Uncharacteristic")
Line 9	The number of items that go into the pile just named (e.g. 10)
Line10	Title for the next pile (e.g. "Relatively Neutral")
Line11	The number of items that go into the pile just named (e.g. 14)
Line12	Title for the next pile (e.g. "Somewhat Characteristic")
Line 13	The number of items that go into the pile just named (e.g. 10)
Line 14	Title for the next pile (e.g. "Fairly Characteristic")
Line 15	The number of items that go into the pile just named (e.g. 7)
Line 16	Title for the next pile (e.g. "Quite Characteristic")
Line 17	The number of items that go into the pile just named (e.g. 5)
Line 18	Title for the next pile (e.g. "Extremely Characteristic")
Line 19	The number of items that go into the pile just named (e.g. 3)

On the line proceeding the number of cards to go into the last pile, you begin typing the text for each Q-item followed by the item number. Put a period at the end of the Q-item text and a space between the period and Q-item number.

e.g. Expresses awareness of being on camera or in an experiment (regardless of whether reaction is positive or negative). 1

Line 20	Expresses awareness of being on camera or in an experiment (regardless of whether reaction is positive or negative). 1
Line 21	Interviews his/her partner(s). (e.g. asks a series of questions). 2
Line 22	Volunteers a large amount of information about self. 3
And so forth throughout all of the items.	
Final Line	Partner(s) seeks advice from subject. 64

After creating your deck file, see "Using the Q-sort Program."