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Usability News is a free web newsletter that is produced by the Software Usability Research Laboratory (SURL) at Wichita State University. The SURL team specializes in software/website user interface design, usability testing, and research in human-computer interaction.

[Barbara S. Chaparro](#), Editor

Randomize and Test (RAT): A Program to Randomize Conditions

by Greg Bender

The design of research experiments often requires the randomizing of subjects across conditions or the randomization of the order in which conditions are presented to a given subject. Accomplishing this task entails consulting a random number table, drawing numbers from a hat, or some other tedious method. Using a computer program to automate this task could save time. With this in mind, the program, RAT (Randomize And Test), was written to randomize the presentation of conditions to test participants.

RAT is a 32-bit Windows-based application developed with Microsoft Visual Basic version 6.0. The design of RAT concentrated on simplicity, ease of use, and utility. The user interface reflects these goals. It uses the random function available in Visual Basic. The random function is seeded with the current system time in milliseconds. The experimenter can save the output to a comma-delimited ASCII text file or print the output to a local or network printer using common Windows dialog boxes.

RAT is free, but please reference it in any papers, reports, or publications that document research in which it is used. Let us know when you use it and what you think!

- [Register and Download RAT Now!](#)

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