Survey Details

After completing the consent form, respondents for the survey were shown instructions along with (Fig. 1) that included:

1. When looking at a time series of *counts* (e.g. the count of how many people tested positive for COVID on any given day), it is important to consider **the actual scale (magnitude) of the counts** for your flagging decision. For example, if there are 4-5 positive cases every day, followed by a day of only 2 cases, that may not be very surprising because of natural fluctuations. But if there are 4000-5000 cases every day, followed by a day of only about 2,000 cases, that might be considered surprising/interesting. So, you might want to flag a point where, after considering the historical scale of the counts, there is a **meaningful and surprising/interesting change** in the value on a single day.

2. There may also be a sawtooth pattern in the data because health data metrics may change depending on the day of the week (e.g. there may be fewer doctors' visits on weekends). This is normal and does not on its own warrant an investigation.

3. Points that have value 0 will be identified with an open circle. 0's are a special case and can represent a lack of data or that there were truly 0 cases. These points can still warrant interest, and require extra attention.

4. We expect surprising/interesting data points to occur no more than once every 3 months or so *on average*. So if a timeseries covers 6 months, we expect you might flag about 2 data points outside of holiday regions. Of course sometimes you might want to flag more than that, and sometimes less – any number is okay. Rank 1 is the point that warrants the most interest (followed by rank 2, 3,... as relevant).

After completing a pretask to familiarize respondents with the interface, all questions had instructions similar to the following:

1. Investigate the time series plot and become familiar with the Plot Options dropdown menu. Use the rangeslider below the plot to control which dates you see. If you click in the center of the slider you can pan using the set window. Otherwise, you can change the window by clicking and dragging on the ends of the rangeslider.
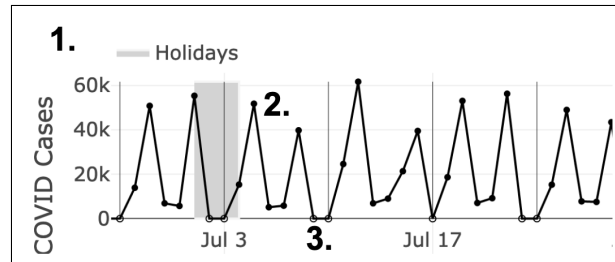

Figure 1: Figure accompanying inital instructions for the survey.

2. **Part 1: Evaluate Points**: For each unevaluated point, determine if you would want the point flagged for human review ('Warrants Investigation'). Click the point once on the graph for 'warrants investigation' and twice for 'uninteresting' (not a double click - wait after the first click!).

3. **Part 2: Rank Interesting Points**: Rank the points you find warrant investigation by using the dropdown menu (ties are OK). *Rank 1 is the point that warrants the most human interest*. You can also note if there is a large gap in 'interestingness' (warrants investigation) between this point and the points ranked above it.