

Open Source IRAP

Implicit Relational Assessment Procedure

License

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Version

Open Source IRAP: 0.9.7

R processing script: 0.7

NB This code is still in beta - I haven't used it in an experiment yet.

Description & purpose

The IRAP is an indirect measure of implicit attitudes.

This implementation of the IRAP has very high fidelity to the procedure described in Barnes-Holmes et al. (2010: a sketch of the IRAP and REC model), and to other implementations of the IRAP (e.g., the IRAP "2010" and variants, written in Visual Basic 6). Most task parameters are soft coded and can be changed via the `task.xlsx` file (see task parameters section below).

- Each trial presents a "label" stimulus at the top of the screen, a "target" stimulus in the middle of the screen, and two response option labels at the bottom left and right of the screen. See screenshots folder.
- There are two label stimuli categories and two target stimuli categories, which when combined create four "trial types".
- Incorrect responses result in a red X being presented on screen. Progression to the next trial is contingent on a correct response.
- Inter trial interval is set to 400 ms.
- Participants complete pairs of blocks of trials in which the response contingencies alternate (e.g., flowers-positive-similar vs. flowers-positive-different). Each block is preceded by a customisable responding rule (Rule A and Rule B, e.g., "Respond AS IF flowers are positive and insects are negative"), and followed by feedback about the median latency and % accuracy in the block.
- Participant complete practice block pairs (e.g., max 4) until they meet mastery criteria on both blocks in a pair (e.g., median latency ≤ 2000 ms and accuracy $\geq 80\%$), and then a fixed number of test block pairs (e.g., 3). If mastery criteria are not met within the max the task skips the test blocks and goes to the end screen.
- Typically, reaction time differences between the two block then are quantified (e.g., using the *D1* effect size score, below) in order to produce a measure of "implicit attitudes" (although see [De Houwer, 2006](#)).

NB If you notice any unwanted divergences from other implementations of the IRAP, or there are additional features or refinements you would like to see in the Open Source IRAP, please feel free to contribute to the project yourself (by branching, editing, and submitting a pull request on Github) or email me (ian.hussey@ugent.be).

Requirements

- [PsychoPy - v1.82](#)
 - A free and open source program for delivering psychology experiments written in Python. See [here for documentation](#).
 - PsychoPy runs locally on Windows, Mac, and Linux. It's not possible to run PsychoPy scripts online.
 - You might be able to use more recent versions, but will probably need to run the `Open Source IRAP.py` file rather than the `Open Source IRAP.psyexp` file.
- [R - v3.3.1](#) or later
 - The included data processing script is written in R. I recommend you run it in [RStudio](#), a very user friendly interface for R.

Usage

1. Running

You can run either the `Open Source IRAP.psyexp` file or the `Open Source IRAP.py` file inside PsychoPy. The `Open Source IRAP.py` file should have greater cross platform support; if you run into errors

with the `Open Source IRAP.psyexp` file use `Open Source IRAP.py` instead.

- If you're using a newer version of PsychoPy, the `Open Source IRAP.psyexp` will not run. Use the `Open Source IRAP.py` instead.
- The left response is the "e" key, and the right response is the "i" key.
- The return key ends the task properly once you reach the end of "task screen".
- The escape key quits the task at any time.

If you run the `Open Source IRAP.psyexp` file, a `Open Source IRAP_lastrun.py` will be created. This can be ignored.

If you run the `Open Source IRAP.py` file, a `Open Source IRAP.pyc` file will be created. This can also be ignored.

2. Localisation and customisation

All stimuli and instructions within the task are set via the `stimuli.xlsx` and `task.xlsx` files.

PsychoPy has Unicode support, so translating the task into other languages (Spanish, Polish, Japanese, etc.) only requires changes to these excel files.

- NB a poorly documented bug is that if you zip and unzip excel files using archive utility on Mac OS X, Unicode characters are no longer correctly displayed and will throw an ASCII error in PsychoPy. Make new excel files to correct the issue.

3. Stimuli

Label and target stimuli can be either text or image stimuli. The default `stimulus.xlsx` file employs text stimuli for both labels and targets. The alternative file in the `alternative stimuli files` folder employs images as labels and text stimuli as targets. Although, you can mix and match as you like; you can even make some rows text stimuli and some rows image stimuli.

The file that will be used is that which is placed in the same folder as the `Open Source IRAP.psyexp / Open Source IRAP.py` that is run. All image stimuli should be placed in the same folder. Remember to reduce your image files to as small as possible so as to minimise load and rendering time.

If using text stimuli, put `blank.png` in the image columns (e.g., `labelB_image_stimuli`) and the text stimuli in text stimuli column (e.g., `labelB_stimuli`). The task presents images on every trial either way; this sets it to present a black square that is effectively invisible. As such, the `blank.png` file must always be left in the same folder as the `Open Source IRAP.psyexp / Open Source IRAP.py` files.

If using image stimuli, put a single space character (i.e.,) in the text stimuli column and the name of the image file (including extension) in the image stimuli column. Failure to do either this or the above step will cause PsychoPy to throw an error message.

You can employ an arbitrary number of stimulus exemplars per category, but all columns in the excel stimulus file must have the same number of rows (i.e., exemplars). The number of trials per block is a function of the number of exemplars (see task parameters below).

The response options (i.e., "similar" and "different") are specified in the `task.xlsx` file.

- NB response option "A" will be presented on the *right* hand side

in the first block (assuming block order = "a" and moving response options = False). Here, I have followed practices from the IAT literature to map the most probable response (e.g., similar is "default" over different, true over false, etc) to the right hand, which is more likely to be the dominant hand. This may differ in other implementations of the task.

The pre block rules are also specified in the `task.xlsx` file. These can be generic for both blocks (e.g., "learn to respond correctly based on the feedback") or specific to each and the stimulus set (e.g., "respond AS IF flowers are positive and insects are negative").

4. Task parameters

The number of trials per block is equal to (the number of rows in the `stimuli.xlsx` file) * (4 [the number of trial types]).

- For example, IRAPs frequently employ four exemplars per stimulus category, and 32 trials per block. The default stimulus file accomplishes this by including the four exemplars twice each (on separate rows) in the `stimuli.xlsx` file. $8 \text{ rows} (4 \text{ exemplars} * 2 \text{ rows each}) * 4 (\text{trial types}) = 32 \text{ trials per block}$.

Each block contains an equal number of each trial type. This is determined by the `block_layout.xlsx` file, which specifies how label and target stimuli are combined to make trial types. This file should not be altered.

The `task.xlsx` file also specifies:

- IRAP_name, a variable for specifying which study/task a produced data file belongs to
- practice block mastery accuracy criterion
 - This is specified out of 100% (e.g., 80), not 1 (e.g., .8)

- practice block median latency criteria
 - This is specified in *seconds*, not milliseconds.
- maximum number of practice block pairs
- number of test block pairs
- location of the response options (left vs. right)
 - Response options locations can be either fixed or moving randomly. Default is "False" (fixed), set this to "True" for moving.
- the screen location of all stimuli
 - All screen locations are specified in PsychoPy's [normalised units](#).

The values provided in the included file are representative of commonly used task parameter values among published studies. E.g.:

- accuracy \geq 80% correct
- median latency \leq 2.0 seconds
- Max 4 practice block pairs
- 3 test block pairs
- fixed location of response options

One key parameter that is not set in the `task.xlsx` file is the order of presentation of the blocks (i.e., block order). Instead, this is set for each participant in the dialogue box that appears after you run the task. This was implemented this way as it's the only variable that sometimes differs between participants within a study. The default is "a" (rule A first). Set this to "b" for rule B first. I.e., if you wish to counterbalance block order, the researcher must set the block order for each participant using the dialogue box when the participant number is entered.

5. Auto-response "monkey" for piloting the task

When you run the task, an auto-response 'monkey' can be invoked by setting "UseMonkey" in the dialogue box to "y" or "yes". This will simulate key presses throughout the task so that you can test your script without you having to hit E and I interminably. NB you may have to lower your accuracy criterion to below 50% (i.e., just put it to 0) for the task to run through entirely, as the monkey simply simulates the I key and then the E key, in that order, on every trial.

Output

1. Data files

`.psydat`, `.csv` and `.log` files are produced for each participant. The `.csv` file alone is sufficient for most analyses (e.g., calculation of D scores). To my understanding, the format of the `.csv` output files are Tidy Data compliant (Wickham, 2014) and therefore easy to analyse (e.g., in R) with little to no processing needed.

2. Data processing

The included `data_processing.r` R script produces accuracy and latency summary data and *D1* scores for each participant (including "overall" *D1* scores, *D1* scores for each trial-type, and split-half overall *D1* scores).

Very little familiarity with R/RStudio is needed to use this script.

1. change the set working directory line to the location of your data (e.g., `setwd("~/git/Open Source IRAP/data")`)
 - NB you must have at least one output file that has test block data for the script to run.
2. change the save output line to your chosen directory (e.g., `write.csv(all_tasks_df, file = '~/git/Open Source`


```
IRAP/data processing/processed_IRAP_data.csv',  
row.names=FALSE) ),
```

3. run the script (e.g., in RStudio on mac: ⌘-a to select all lines and ⌘-↵ to run; windows: ctrl-a to select all lines and ctrl-↵ to run).

The script produces a `processed_IRAP_data.csv` file with the following variables for analysis:

```
IRAP_name  
participant  
gender  
age  
date  
starting_block  
max_pairs_practice_blocks  
n_pairs_test_blocks  
latency_criterion  
accuracy_criterion  
moving_response_options  
auto_response_monkey  
rule_A  
rule_B  
response_option_A  
response_option_B  
labelA_text_stimuli_exemplars  
labelB_text_stimuli_exemplars  
targetA_text_stimuli_exemplars  
targetB_text_stimuli_exemplars  
labelA_image_stimuli_exemplars  
labelB_image_stimuli_exemplars  
targetA_image_stimuli_exemplars  
targetB_image_stimuli_exemplars  
n_pairs_practice_blocks  
rt_mean  
rt_sd  
rt_block_A_median  
rt_block_B_median  
D1  
D1_trial_type_1
```

```
D1_trial_type_2  
D1_trial_type_3  
D1_trial_type_4  
D1_odd  
D1_even  
percentage_accuracy  
exclude_based_on_fast_trials
```

Note that while this file includes contains all the necessary info to replicate an IRAP in the absense of having access to the psychopy script, `stimuli.xlsx` file and `task.xlsx` file , including all stimuli exemplars. Only the screen locations and initial instructions are not saved here. This also allows one to easily determine what experiment an output file was produced by should it have been misplaced.

a. *D1* scoring method

D scores are (Greenwald et al., 2003) are a variant of Cohen's *d* effect size, and are used to quantify the effect size difference between two response patterns (e.g., rts on block As vs. block Bs in an IRAP). They differ from Cohen's *d* in how standard deviations are calculated, sub variants differ in their exclusion criteria and the presence/absence of an error penalty. *D1* scores are have been employed in the majority of published IRAP research to date (although see next heading). The generic steps in calculating *D1* scores are as follows:

1. Participants with >10% of (test block) trials <300ms are excluded.
2. All rts > 10000 ms are excluded.
3. $D1 = (\text{mean rt block B} - \text{mean rt block A}) / \text{SD of all trials in blocks A and B.}$

As noted above, one key step in calculating *D1* scores is excluding participants who produce >10% rts < 300ms. The current R script outputs the variable `exclude_based_on_fast_trials` which indicates that a participant should be excluded if `TRUE` .

- These exclusions must be done by the researcher, and are not automatically done by the script. This is in order to allow the auto response monkey functions correctly and quickly, and due to the fact that the majority of IRAP research to date has not explicitly included this step, given that some other implementations of the task do not output this specific information.

b. Interpretation

In brief, a positive *D1* score (overall only, not by trial type) indicates an automatic preferences for responding in block A over block B. That is for responding to label A (e.g., flowers) and target A (e.g., positive) faster with response option A (e.g., similar) than with response option B (e.g., different).

- Positive *D1* scores can be referred to using the formula:
 - $\text{labelA-targetA}/\text{labelB-targetB}|\text{responseOptionA}/\text{responseOptionB}$
 - e.g., a flowers-positive/insects-negative|similar/different effect
- Negative *D1* scores can be referred to using the formula:
 - $\text{labelA-targetB}/\text{labelB-targetA}|\text{responseOptionA}/\text{responseOptionB}$
 - e.g., a flowers-negative/insects-positive|similar/different effect

NB The columns in which you enter stimuli into the `stimuli.xlsx` and `task.xlsx` files will therefore influence the direction of your effects and how they should be interpreted (e.g., placing the "flowers" stimuli in the labelA or labelB column, or "similar" in the responseOptionA or responseOptionB column).

See Hussey, Thompson, McEnteggart, Barnes-Holmes & Barnes-Holmes (2015) and Greenwald, Nosek & Banaji (2003) for paper length

discussions of the *D1* score, its interpretation generally, and its application and interpretation within the IRAP.

NB other scoring algorithms are available, such as the *G* score (adjusted gaussian fractional rank score: Sriram et al., unpublished) and the Probabilistic Index (PI: De Schryver, 2013; Thas, De Neve, Clement & Ottoy, 2012) but have not seen much use, despite their apparant conceptual and statistical advantages.

c. *D-IRAP* vs *D1* nomenclature

Many published articles refer to the "*D-IRAP*" score rather than the "*D1*" score, as it was originally referred to by Greenwald et al. (2003). This was on the rationale that there are differences between the two, e.g., when applied to the IRAP scores are often calculated for each trial type rather than one overall score. However, *D1* refers only to the general strategy of [difference between means/SD of all items, with some exclusion criteria]. Indeed, even when applied to the IAT, "pure" *D1*s are not typically calculated; rather, one is typically calculated for blocks 3&6 and a second for 4&7 and the two are then averaged. As such, to separate the generic effect size scoring method from the specific analytic strategy employed in a given experiment (e.g., overall *D* scores, trial-type *D* scores, etc.), this script refers to *D1* scores throughout.

d. Block-pair *D1* scores vs. All-task *D1* scores

Some background is required to provide the rationale to this design decision. The method employed to calculate *D1* scores in much of the published research to date notes that four *D1* scores are calculated for each test block pair, one for each trial type. Given that most IRAP studies deliver three pairs of test blocks, 12 *D1* scores are therefore usually calculated. These are then averaged across the three block pairs to leave four trial-type *D1* scores. One "overall" *D1* score is then

often calculated by averaging these four trial- type *D1* scores (see Barnes-Holmes, Barnes-Holmes, Stewart & Boles, 2010). As such, this method involves the calculation of a large number of point estimation effect sizes and then averaging them together.

An alternative "whole task" method is employed here to calculate *D1* scores in the `data_processing.r` script, whereby the number of point estimation effect sizes that are calculated is purposefully minimised. Instead, a smaller number of effect sizes are calculated using the maximum number of data points each. Specifically, an "overall" *D1* score (simply called *D1*) is calculated from all the test block reaction times at once. These are split only by which half of a block pair they occurred in. Next, trial type *D1* scores are calculated by splitting the reaction times up into trial types and recalculating *D1* scores, but again pooling across all test blocks. This is arguably statistically more appropriate.

I've compared *D1* scores produced by the two methods from a real dataset of typical size ($n = 61$), and correlations between the two methods are extremely high ($r > .99$), and means and SDs are equivalent. Additionally, difference scores between the two are not correlated with *D1* score or absolute values of *D1* scores.

The *take home point* here is that the two methods are generally comparable, so choice of method should not affect publication etc. However, the "whole task" method employed here is:

- a. Arguably more statistically appropriate.
- b. Requires fewer steps and is therefore easier to explain in a manuscript, e.g., "*D1* scores (Greenwald et al., 2003) were calculated from the test block data"
- c. As such, it is therefore also easier to interpret.
- d. Finally, by calculating all-task *D1* scores, this method constrains the degrees of experimenter freedom regarding how to conduct

exclusions of test block data (see Hussey, Thompson et al., 2015). While several articles to date have employed the method used by Nicholson & Barnes-Holmes (2012), which exclude *D1* scores from single test block pairs and averages the remaining ones, De Schryver, Hughes, De Houwer & Rosseel (in prep: "On the Interpretation of Reliability in the Context of Implicit Cognition") make a persuasive argument for treating the data produced by a given instance of a measure as a single analytic unit. Test block exclusions can then be applied to data (e.g., median $rt < 2000ms$, mean $rt < mean + 2.5 SD$, etc.).

Timing accuracy

PsychoPy is technically capable of millisecond timing, depending on design choices by the researcher (see Garaizar & Vadillo, 2014).

The current implementation is written to be at least as accurate as other implementations of the IRAP (i.e., accurate to within a frame or c.17ms). The stimuli to be presented within a block are generated on the pre-block rule screen, and then `pop()` 'd on each trial.

If you're looking for higher accuracy (e.g., for EEG/fMRI work) you'll want to change all timings to frames rather than seconds. You may also want to remove the presentation of images if you're not using them.

- NB no assessment of jitter has been conducted for the current implementation.

Known issues

1. If a participant gets 100% of trials correct throughout the task then the incorrect response RT column will not be created for that

participant. This is a) extremely unlikely, and b) not a problem if you process data files based on column header matching (e.g., most R methods, including the bundled script). However, it can be problematic if your data processing workflow relies on column order rather than column header name (e.g., a SPSS script using a GET command).

To do list

1. Update the `Open Source IRAP.psyexp` file to work in PsychoPy v1.84+ once it's released.
2. Alter `data_processing.r` script to explicitly quantify the number of participants who failed the practice blocks. currently they appear as participants with `N prac blocks = the max allowed`, who also have `test block data == NA`.

Changelog

0.9.7

1. Changes to the stimuli selection and shuffling function. All functions now in the first routine. All stimulus exemplars are now saved to the output file (first row only).
2. R script (v.7) now saves the stimulus exemplars, rules, and response options to the `processed_IRAP_data.csv` file. This file now contains all the necessary info to replicate an IRAP in the absense of having access to the psychopy script, `stimuli.xlsx` file and `task.xlsx` file . Only the screen locations and initial instructions are not saved here. This also allows one to easily determine what experiment an output file was produced by should it have been misplaced.

0.9.6

1. Made the code that generates and selects the stimuli for each trial in a block more transparent by writing it as a function and calling it rather than repeating code. No functional difference for the user, but better code transparency and consistency across the IAT/RRT/IRAP codebase.
2. Added data processing R script.

0.9.5

1. Added option for block order selection via the dialogue box.
2. Added auto response monkey
3. Added option for image stimuli.
4. Added option for moving response options.
5. Tidied up post block text and locations.
6. Added warning level logging
7. Separated the block layout and stimuli excel files. This allows for an arbitrary number of exemplars for each stimulus category.