

# 1 Introduction

In this annotation study you should estimate the argument quality of comments taken from an online discussion forum, called *RegulationRoom*. For each comment you have to give a score from 0 (very low quality) to 5 (very high quality).

Before you start annotating, have a look at the additional information where you find an explanation about the type of data you are looking at and the topics the people have discussed there. Also have a look at the website of the discussion forum. (*link*).

## 2 Annotation: General Guidelines

Read the comment and rate the quality with a score between 0 and 5 (0 equals to very low quality, 5 to very high quality). You can consider the following points when annotating the quality of the argument: Example

hints for bad quality	hints for good quality
language / grammar issues unclear / hard to follow / vague weak /wrong reasoning off-topic / irrelevant no facts or examples as evidence offensive / attacking / abusive inappropriate language or use of emotions	well formed, grammatically correct unambiguous, avoids unnecessary complexity makes you think, well thought through, persuasive on-topic / relevant / interesting provides examples, facts as evidence respectful tone, values / considers other opinions emotionally effective, makes you more open towards the perspective

1 and example 2 show two comments from RegulationRoom. The first one (1) is written in clear language and respectful tone. The user criticizes the rule, but without attacking the institution personally. The user refutes a potential counterargument with an official source and the argument is well structured so that it is understandable and easy to follow. This should be annotated with a high quality score. In the second example (2), the user becomes offensive towards the company. The users' opinion is clear, but it is not substantiated with comprehensible reasons. At the end, another personal attack is added that actually has nothing to do with the topic of discussion. This example should be annotated with a low quality score.

- (1) Driver fatigue is not a real problem according to an FMCSA webinar, that was publicly was communicated on September 30, 2010, hosted by the FMCSA titled: 2009 " " Historic Truck Crash Declines. The number is 1.4% fatigue related accidents in trucking. No, I do not believe the EOBR will be effective of reducing truck crashes - mainly because it will be on the wrong vehicles. My primary concern is FMCSA falsifying its own information to make it seem that new regulations and such are needed. Plus, adding yet another COST to the trucking company or owner operator - without a firm reasoning
- (2) The EOBR is a get rich in a hurry gift to the primary company that is making the unit is making a lot of money and on top of that we are forced to pay 40. dollars a month to stay compliant if that is not another way off letting government reach in your pocket to give it to there friends. And the FMCSA wonders why very few owner operators trust them.

### 3 Annotation: Usage of platform

Open the first document. For annotation **always mark the first word** of the comment (see figure 1). The annotation for this word represents the annotated score for the whole document (= for the whole comment). On the right, next to the comment, you can see a panel where you can select the quality score. 'Layer' should

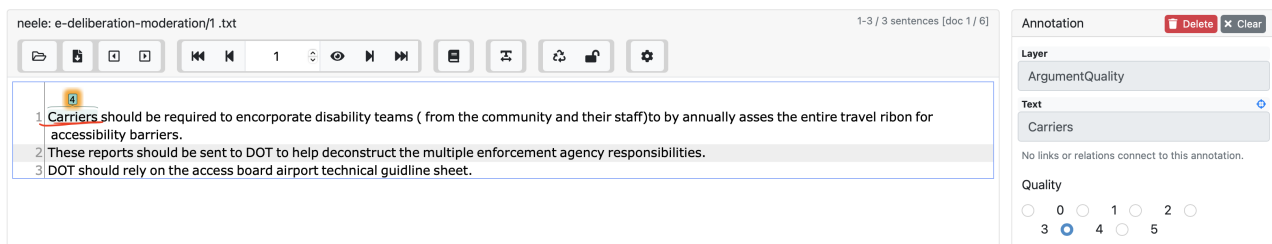


Figure 1: Mark the first work of the document

display 'ArgumentQuality'. (see figure 2)

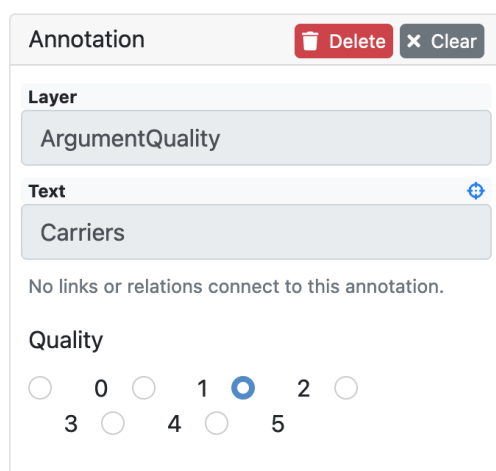


Figure 2: Select radio button on the left of the score you want to give.

When you are done with the document and you don't want to change the score anymore, don't forget to click on the "finish document" button (see figure 3)

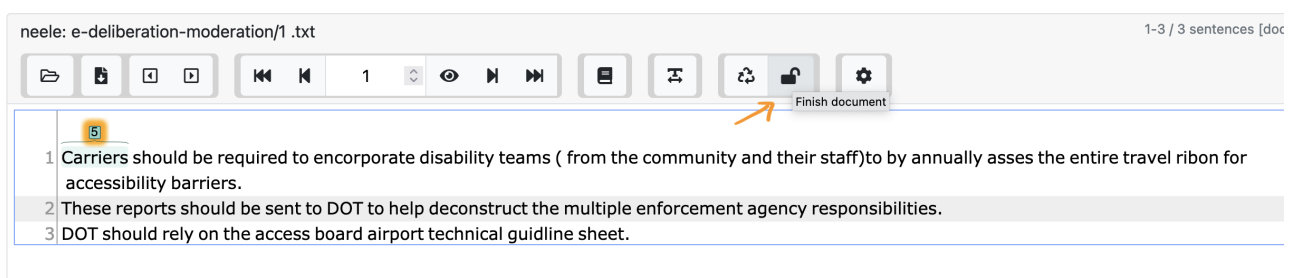


Figure 3: Click finish document once you're done

## 4 Additional information

## 5 What is E-rulemaking & RegulationRoom?

E-rulemaking is a type of (e-)deliberation process which originated in the United States. Its goal is to use digital innovations to increase participation and transparency in the decision-making process of the Federal Government. More concretely, given a new regulation to be written (or the need to significantly update an existing one), a government agency directly involves the citizens in the discussion of specific aspects of that rule, sharing relevant data with the citizens and committing to incorporate the output of their deliberation in the final rule. A crucial role is obviously paid by the E-rulemaking "provider", who sets up the infrastructure both practically (e.g., creating websites and portals for citizens to participate) and qualitatively (by monitoring the discussion and creating summaries to be submitted to the agency).

RegulationRoom is a deliberation platform designed by the Cornell eRulemaking Initiative (CeRI) to support various large scale e-deliberation, hosted by the Legal Information Institute (LII) at the Cornell Law School, has been employed by public institutions to gather citizens contributions on rules targeting very heterogeneous issues. The comments you will annotate are taken from this discussion forum. For each topic, the agency proposes concrete rules that are available on the main page of each thread. Sometimes they also add specific questions they want the participants to give their opinion on. The participants share their thoughts about the regulations, possible advantages and disadvantages as well as how these regulations (or the current lack of certain regulations) affect their experiences.

**Example comment from regulation room (claims are in bold and premises are underlined.)**

*User 3: I don't dispute the distraction factor. 10 Minutes on any highway in the country should offer enough proof for all but the most obtuse. **What I object to is the singling out of any particular group of drivers as the focus of another un-enforceable law** (or, shall we say, really only enforceable after the fact).*

*Truckers already face a huge pile of regulations that apply only to them, and not to other drivers on the road. In most cases, these regulations are at least tangentially appropriate given the nature of the vehicle driven. In this case, however, the activity in question is one engaged in by drivers off all classes of vehicle. **It seems to me to be more appropriate for the regulation or non-regulation to come at the state level, and cover ALL vehicle operators.***

## 6 Discussion Summaries

### 6.1 APR (Airline Passenger Rights)

The Department of Transportation (called DOT) proposes regulations that would give airline passengers more protections, for example compensation when flights are cancelled, better protection when flights are delayed, more transparent information about additional fees (e.g. for additional luggage). For example, these regulations include

- restricting peanut products on a flight (because of people suffering from peanut allergies)
- tarmac delay (regulations about what rights users have when there is a tarmac delay)
- pricing advertising (which additional fees should be allowed? how can the pricing be more transparent for the customers?)

### 6.2 EOBR (Electronic On-Board Recorders)

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (called FMCSA) is proposing to require that electronic on board recorders (EOBRs) be used instead of paper logs for recording commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers' hours of service (HOS). This is an electronic tracking device for vehicle operators (often the tracking of the drive is done via paper). A big part of the discussion is about whether this device should be required (and by whom and when) and potential advantages and disadvantages of it. (e.g. more safety vs more pressure on the workers / restricted privacy)