



Conducting Search Data Related Studies with the Result Assessment Tool (RAT)

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1. Overview

The Result Assessment Tool (RAT) is a free open-source research software that enables researchers to analyze results from search engines, large language models (LLMs), and other search systems. RAT provides an integrated environment for designing studies, collecting results, and performing automated analysis. The system has already been used in various studies, including search engine effectiveness studies, interactive information retrieval studies, and classification studies (Sünkler et al., 2025). Research teams have successfully applied RAT across a range of fields, demonstrating its wide applicability. For example, the tool has been applied to assess ranking procedures in library information systems (Behnert et al., 2019). Communication researchers have employed RAT to examine online information on wind power (Ekström & Tattersall Wallin, 2023; Haider et al., 2023) and climate obstruction networks (Rödl & Haider, 2025). More recently, RAT has been used to assist in a study of the informational structures underlying climate change denial, using search engine results pages and responses from large language models (Ekström & Haider, 2026). Moreover, the software has been used to study data voids and the politics of exclusion in Google search results (Norocel & Lewandowski, 2023).

This 180-minutes workshop session will actively engage participants by incorporating their expertise and experiences. The workshop is open to everyone, regardless of experience or profession. No prior knowledge or materials are necessary.

After introducing the software, we will discuss specific study ideas from participants, explore how RAT can assist in addressing potential research questions, and consider additional features that could enhance the software.

2. Workshop structure

1. *Introduction (30 minutes)*

Introduction of the RAT software and its various components. Participants will learn about the types of studies that can be conducted using RAT. Additionally, we will explain RAT's modules for designing studies, collecting data, juror assessment, and performing automatic data analysis. Participants will also learn more about our plans to make RAT more powerful, flexible, and sustainable.

2. *Tutorial (60 Minutes)*

Participants will learn more about the functionalities of RAT and how they can use it for their own study ideas. They will be guided through the process of

- creating a study
- identify relevant search queries
- collecting data from search engines
- analyzing the results
- having jurors evaluate the results.

3. *Showcases (25 minutes)*

Participants will gain insights into current studies being conducted using RAT.

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4. **Activity (30 minutes)**

Participants will consider individually and in groups

- in which specific use cases a toolbox like RAT can be utilized in their research and which RAT functions would be applicable for this purpose
- what additional features and capabilities are currently missing in RAT to support these use cases.

5. **Discussion (25 minutes)**

Groups will present their findings from the activity and discuss any open questions or further thoughts from the audience.

6. **Wrap-up (10 minutes)**

3. Outcomes

In this workshop, participants will learn the following topics:

- Identification of relevant search queries.
- Automatic gathering of search results from various search systems.
- Automatic analyses, including result overlap as well as search engine optimization (SEO) and readability scorings for various study types.
- Evaluation of the search results with jurors – for relevance or usability, for example.

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