The Alternative Beliefs Project: Survey 1 Report
Conspiracy Mentality and Science

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I. Method

Sample

Data Collection Procedures

The first sample of participants were recruited by Research Now, a digital data collection company during October of 2017. We requested 500 participants, sampled to be approximately nationally representative based on census numbers for gender, education, age, and race. Anticipating about a 50% completion rate, Research Now sampled over 1,000 participants on their online consumer panel, and we paid the company for the participants who qualified as “complete.” To qualify as complete, participants had to (a) be at least 18 years old, (b) reside in the United States, (c) correctly answer the attention check item (i.e., “if you are reading this, choose ‘likely false’.”), finish and submit the survey, and have taken at least 5 minutes to complete the survey

Research Now Quote

Description	Country	QR	LOI	QTY	Unit Price	Amount
Online Survey Sample – Ages 18+	US	50%	25	500	6.00	3,000

1. Research Now assumes up to a 15% incompleteness rate (IR). If more than 15% of the qualified respondents do not complete the survey for any reason, costs and feasibility might change.
2. Research Now agreed to provide completion incentives to each online survey participant. The CPI costs include all completion incentives and incentive fulfillment.

Research Now Invoice

Project Number: 390097

Invoice Date: October 17, 2017

Description	Country	QR	LOI	QTY	Unit Price	Amount
Online Survey Sample – Ages 18+	US	50%	25	510	6.00	3,060.00
Subtotal						3,060.00
Total Taxes						0.00
Total USD						3,060.00

Drop Criteria

We set up the survey to automatically drop participants who did not match our criteria (which was specified in the survey instructions displayed to potential participants).

- 663 participants began the survey

On the consent page of the survey, we asked participants whether they were under 18 or 18 or older and if they live in the U.S. If participants were under 18 or if they said they did not live in the U.S., then they were bounced out of the survey on the following page.

- 21 participants were dropped for saying that they were under 18

- 7 participants¹ were dropped for saying that they did not live in the U.S.

In addition, we included an attention check question in the survey. The item was embedded in the conspiracy section of the survey. It stated “If you are reading this, choose “likely false”. Participants who did not choose “likely false” were bounced out of the survey after the conspiracy question block.

- 108 participants missed the attention check question. Of the 108, 69 participants finished the survey in under 5 minutes, suggesting that they were “speeding” through the survey.

Given that the survey was expected to take around 20 minutes, consistent with previous surveys, we dropped participants who took *less than 5 minutes* to finish the entire survey. Of the remaining participants, the average length to complete the survey was 35.53 minutes (SD = 127.01, median = 19.33 minutes).

- 0 participants took less than 5 minutes to complete the survey who were not already excluded for the above criteria.

Finally, participants who did not submit the survey (e.g., stopped answering questions at some point and did not click through to finish the survey) were also excluded.

- 17 participants were excluded for not submitting the survey.

Final Sample: 510 participants

Sample Characteristics

Variables

Manipulated Variables

N/A

Measured Variables and Indices

Science Curiosity Scale

¹ In addition to the 7 who were dropped for saying that they were not in the U.S., 10 participants who were dropped for saying that they were under 18 also reported not living in the U.S.

News Interests

There are a lot of issues in the news and it is hard to keep up with every area. Please indicate how closely you follow the news relating to each topic in either the newspaper, on television, on radio, or on the internet.

1. Not at all
2. A little, but not closely
3. Closely, but not very closely
4. Very closely

variable	Description	Mean	Variable	Description	Mean
ni_crime	crime	2.88	ni_bus	business or finance	2.46
ni_educ	education	2.54	ni_sci	scientific research or discoveries	2.50
ni_gov	government or politics	2.98	ni_tech	new technologies	2.59
ni_sport	sports	2.45	ni_ent	entertainment or celebrities	2.19
ni_relig	religion	2.13	ni_wea	local weather	3.29

Interest in science is significantly lower for science than for crime, politics, and weather. Interest in science is significantly higher than for religion and entertainment.

Correlation plot for news interests items

Leisure Activities

We'd also like to know about some of the activities that you engage in. We will list some activities. Please indicate how many times you have engaged in that activity in the last year. [Note: any number of times greater than 5 times was coded as 6].

variable	Description	Mean	Variable	Description	Mean
la_art	visited an art museum	0.88	la_gun	went to a gun show	0.12
la_mus	Attended a concert	1.61	la_sci	went to a science museum	0.59
la_poli	participated in a political rally	0.34	la_lib	went to a public library	1.98
la_sport	attended a live sports event	1.44	la_park	went to a theme park	0.82
la_zoo	went to a zoo or aquarium	0.79	la_lec_sci	attended a public lecture (science)	0.07
la_lec_poli	attended a public lecture (politics)	0.08	la_lec_hist	attended a public lecture (history)	0.05
la_lec_rel	attended a public lecture (religion)	0.04	la_lec_eco	attended a public lecture (economics)	0.04

Correlation plot for leisure activities

Books

We'd also like to know whether you read books in your spare time, and if so, what kinds. Please indicate whether you have read a book (or listened to an audio book) on that topic in the previous year by checking that box.

variable	Description	Frequency	Variable	Description	Frequency
b_1	Real-life crime	18%	b_2	Science fiction	25%
b_3	Mystery novel	38%	b_4	Education	15%
b_5	Government or politics	12%	b_6	Sports	15%
b_7	Religion (other than holy scripture)	15%	b_8	International affairs	6%
b_9	Business or finance	15%	b_10	Scientific research or discoveries	12%
b_11	History or Historical fiction	37%

Conversation

We are also interested in knowing about the sorts of topics that you discuss with your family members, friends, or co-workers. We will list some conversation topics. Please indicate how often you discuss these topics with friends, family, or co-workers.

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. More than rarely, but not often
4. Often

variable	Description	Mean	Variable	Description	Mean
c_crime	crime	2.83	c_bus	Business or Finance	2.57
c_educ	education	2.61	c_sci	Scientific research or discoveries	2.51
c_gov	government or politics	3.02	c_tech	New technologies	2.67
c_sport	Sports	2.71	c_relig	Religion	2.36
c_int	International affairs	2.63	c_ent	Entertainment	2.35

Reading Selection Task

Now, we'd like to get your reactions to an interesting news story. One story will be drawn randomly from the story set of your choice. After you read the story, we will ask you some questions about it. Please select the story set that contains the stories you'd be most interested in reading.

Sports	Business	Science	Entertainment
<p>FOX Sports poaches one ESPN personality but may lose another <small>Sporting News</small></p>	<p>Markets are entering 'frothy territory' reached before financial crises <small>Business Insider</small></p>	<p>Iowa scientists excited for Jupiter 'Great Red Spot' flyby <small>NASA</small></p>	<p>Michael Phelps on racing a great white shark during shark week <small>Entertainment Weekly</small></p>
<p>Michael Vick to be inducted into Virginia Tech's Sports Hall of Fame <small>CBS Sports.com</small></p>	<p>Optimism in financial services falls but business recovers <small>Economica</small></p>	<p>Scientists 'teleport' a particle hundreds of miles, but what does that mean? <small>Glomodo</small></p>	<p>Game of Thrones Writer talks about crafting Season 7 <small>Entertainment Weekly</small></p>
<p>Mercedes-Benz Stadium all set to open week prior to Florida State-Alabama <small>NBC Sports.com</small></p>	<p>Pricier Frito-Lay snacks help PepsiCo's sales <small>Financial Post</small></p>	<p>Protein tangles behind Alzheimer's disease may be critical for reproduction <small>Science Magazine</small></p>	<p>Jay Z admits relationship with Beyoncé started 'Cracking' <small>New York Daily News</small></p>
<p>2024 and 2028 Olympics go to LA, Paris – if they can agree who goes first <small>The Boston Globe</small></p>	<p>Blac Chyna: I still want to Co-Parent with Rob Kardashian! <small>The Hollywood Gossip</small></p>	<p>Scientists have mapped the heart of an exploded star in 3D <small>Science Alert</small></p>	<p>Blac Chyna: I still want to Co-Parent with Rob Kardashian! <small>The Hollywood Gossip</small></p>
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