

Follow-up Questions for Humane League Labs (2017)

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How much time are you (Harish Sethu) spending on Humane League Labs? How much time will you be spending on it in the next 18 months?

Between September 1, 2016 and August 31, 2017 (while I held a full-time position at my university), I estimate I spent an average of about 15 hours per week on HLL-related work.

Currently (beginning on September 1, 2017 when my leave of absence from the university started), I estimate I am spending an average of about 25 hours per week on HLL and the intent is to continue this level of effort through September 30, 2018.

Beyond September 30, 2018 (when most of my commitments to my university position expire), I estimate I will spend an average of about 35 hours per week on HLL.

What progress has HLL made on its goals in the past year?

For the past year, HLL's primary goals were to hire a full-time research associate and begin work on two large projects which are briefly described on HLL's website: (i) [Multivariate Study of Online Engagement](#) and (ii) [Individual Outreach Field Experiment](#). HLL hired a full-time Research Associate (Jacob Peacock) in March of 2017. The following information offers brief details on the progress achieved on the two projects:

(i) The *Multivariate Study of Online Engagement* involves development of a new documentary and multiple variants of it promoting reduced animal product consumption. The project also involves the development of a website on which the video will be hosted along with motivational content, practical guidance, and a meal plan. The goal is a deep examination of online engagement beyond what has been studied by the movement so far and to ascertain determinative features of the video variants, the viewers, and the online ads for effectiveness.

We have been making steady progress on materials and software support required for the launch of this study and we have met all of our goals for the previous year. In particular, we have completed the development of the documentary and many aspects of the website development. We expect to launch the project in January/February of 2018.

(ii) The *Individual Outreach Field Experiment* is a longitudinal randomized controlled study for testing interventions designed to change the eating habits of individuals. Our current plan for interventions include leafleting, direct mail, and online advertising—which will be applied to selected treatment areas in the United States and the results will be compared against equivalent control areas. A key feature of this study is the use of grocery store scanner data as one of the outcome metrics.

Based on extensive mining of precinct-level electoral data, grocery store locations, and population demographics in all of the United States, we are close to determining the set of

intervention and control areas we will use for the experiment. We have also completed a tentative but comprehensive power analysis which will be refined with the purchase of historical scanner data before the launch of the experiment.

What are HLL's goals for next year?

HLL has four major goals for the next year:

(i) Launch of the [Multivariate Study of Online Engagement](#): We expect to begin collecting data for this project in January/February of 2018 in support of an exploratory study. Shortly thereafter, we will be releasing pre-analysis reports with pre-declared hypotheses for a more rigorous confirmatory study of the determinative features of online engagement.

(ii) Launch of the [Individual Outreach Field Experiment](#): We expect to release pre-analysis reports at the beginning of 2018, begin intervention in selected treatment areas in March of 2018 and complete the preliminary set of data collection in September of 2018. This will be the first experiment of its kind evaluating the impact of pro-veg outreach to individuals on their actual purchasing habits at their local grocery stores.

(iii) Personnel expansion (Research Economist): Recognizing that the tools of economics are an under-utilized resource in the movement, HLL plans to hire a full-time economist by the end of 2017 and launch a series of research projects at the intersection of agricultural economics, behavioral economics, and econometrics. These studies will expand our research into the evaluation of corporate campaigns, economic impact analysis, food industry trends, food consumer attitudes, and market research for clean meat and plant-based alternatives.

(iv) Personnel expansion (Social Scientist): HLL plans to further expand its research agenda and launch new experiments grounded in well-developed insights into psychological principles, theories, methods, and data. We expect to hire a social scientist (ideally an applied psychologist) in early 2018 who will apply their professional knowledge to hypothesis generation, qualitative survey designs, message/intervention development, attitude assessments, and research execution.

We noticed HLL has recently published a reanalysis of the 2013 leafleting study, and plans to do the same for some other past studies. Could you briefly describe the rationale behind which studies you are choosing to revisit?

We have chosen studies based primarily on public interest drawn by the results of those studies. The following three have drawn substantially more interest (including criticism) than any of the other reports and so it was an easy decision to at least reanalyze these three:

(i) [Which leaflet is more effective?](#) (July 19, 2013)

(ii) [Which request creates the most diet change?](#) (September 20, 2015)

(iii) [Is animal cruelty or abolitionist messaging more effective?](#) (September 20, 2015)

The current researchers at HLL have also taken note that a set of five studies, including (iii) above, were performed concurrently using a single long survey and the same pool of study participants. We wanted to make sure to study, understand, and comment on the possible issues

arising from this overlap of study participants, and so we included the following additional study out of the five for reanalysis.

(iv) [Which farm animal photos are most likely to inspire people to eat vegan?](#) (January 25, 2015)