



The Availability Heuristic

MyJoVE Corp,
2016

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A heuristic is a general problem-solving framework (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). You can think of these as mental shortcuts that are used to solve problems. Different types of heuristics are used in different types of situations, and the impulse to use a heuristic occurs when one of five conditions is met (Pratkanis, 1989): When one is faced with too much information When the time to make a decision is limited When the decision to be made is unimportant When there is access to very little information to use in making the decision When an appropriate heuristic happens to come to mind in the same moment Availability Heuristic The availability heuristic is a heuristic in which you make a decision based on an example, information, or recent experience that is that readily available to you, even though it may not be the best example to inform your decision. Biases tend to "preserve that which is already established-to maintain our preexisting knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and hypotheses" (Aronson, 1995; Kahneman, 2011). This text is adapted from OpenStax, Psychology. OpenStax CNX

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Título: The Availability Heuristic

Editorial: Cambridge, MA MyJoVE Corp 2016

Descripción física: 1 online resource (68 secs.)

Mención de serie: Core Psychology

Audiencia: For undergraduate, graduate, and professional students

Lengua: English

Materia: Psychology Core Psychology Psychology.

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