Reviewer's report

Title: Quantitative Evaluation of Recall and Precision of CAT Crawler, a Search Engine Specialized on Retrieval of Critically Appraised Topics

Version: 1 Date: 20 September 2004

Reviewer: Ann Mckibbon

Reviewer's report:

General

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?

Yes, this is a good question. It is fairly well defined.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?

Methods are adequate. I would like to see information added re inter-rater reliability checks as well as fuller details. For example, how may articles were relevant and irrelevant in the total set of documents? Did anyone try to search for CATs in the two sets using other search engines?

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?

Yes, but need numbers in the results section and the abstract—not only in the tables.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?

See Question 3 above. I want to see more numbers and have them in the results section and abstract.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

Not bad. I would like to see an explanation of why the recall was identical?

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?

Yes.

7. Is the writing acceptable?

Yes, and needs an edit.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the
1. Reference 14 does not have page numbers. Page numbers for reference 2 should be "71-72".

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
None.