CREATE Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q) What is the difference between CREATE and ACE?

A) ACE focused on improving forecasting, whereas CREATE will focus on improving reasoning. This difference has consequences. For example, ACE had available to it a single, well-established, unambiguous metric for forecast accuracy: the Brier score. There is no analogous metric for quality of reasoning in documents, in part because it is multi-factorial. Thus, a major part of CREATE is to develop methods for measuring the quality of reasoning.

Q) Will CREATE require any classified research?

A) No.

Q) Do any of our team members need to have a security clearance?

A) No.

Q) Should CREATE research focus entirely on intelligence topics?

A) No. Although the ultimate goal is to improve reasoning in Intelligence Community (IC) analysis, the IC's reasoning problems are similar to those found everywhere: fallacies, biases and heuristics, the human tendency to favor one's own theories, unreliable sources, difficulties in clearly presenting reasoning, groupthink, etc. For methodological reasons, many of these topics might be best explored with examples from multiple domains. Further, a large range of topic areas might attract and retain a larger subject pool, with more diverse backgrounds and interests. This could enable more robust testing of the power and generalizability of experimental techniques, possibly guiding further improvements.

Q) It is possible that existing structured techniques are alien to the ways people naturally think; no matter how technically good the software becomes, people would have difficulties learning it, would rarely spontaneously use it, and would often misuse it. Would CREATE be interested in, for example, structured narrative approaches to reasoning that would lack the rigor of, say, a Bayesian argument net, but could put reasoning in a more psychologically natural format?

A) Yes. CREATE's goal is to substantially improve reasoning and is interested in all plausible approaches. If a structured narrative-based approach can achieve this without using a more rigorous formal structure, it will have the potential to increase usability and perhaps actual use. A technically excellent structured technique that most people would not use or that many would use incorrectly is of little practical value. On the other hand, such structured techniques might clarify thinking in areas that narrative approaches cannot. Since little research compares different types of techniques, CREATE is willing to consider any structured approach that can show promise.

Q) There has already been substantial progress in developing sophisticated, computer-assisted structured techniques. Is CREATE interested in developing

them further?

A) Yes. Researchers wishing to advance existing techniques are encouraged to apply. Their proposals should detail the progress already made and clearly indicate the work to be done. The work remaining to be done must be substantial; CREATE is intended to fund new work. If the progress made prior to joining CREATE would affect the Government's rights to use that team's CREATE products, this should be clearly noted and it may affect the source selection decision.

Q) Would IARPA be interested in a structured technique that works extremely well, but only for one type of reasoning problem?

A) Possibly. It depends on the how serious the reasoning problem is and whether other, more flexible structured techniques deal adequately with that problem. If it is a serious problem and no other technique deals well with it, it could contribute to CREATE, particularly if there is an easy way for analysts to determine when that problem type arises.