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Drs. **Leonie A. Marks** (MarksLA@missouri.edu) and **Nicholas Kalaitzandonakes** (KalaitzandonakesN@missouri.edu) and Graduate Research Assistant Ms. **Ludmilla Zakharova** are a team of researchers in the **Economics and Management of Agrobiotechnology Center** (**EMAC**) (http://www.emac.missouri.edu) at the University of Missouri-Columbia investigating how information affects consumer perceptions of biotech foods. As most consumers get their information about biotech foods from the news media, it has a role to play in the formation of such perceptions. In particular, understanding how different media outlets report risk information about biotech foods is important.

We are currently using T-Lab to investigate how different types of reporters (e.g., staff, science, environmental) write about biotech foods. T-Labs allows us to create cognitive maps of each reporters' perception of the risks and benefits associated with biotech foods and, in turn, make inferences about how different types of reporters frame risk messages in the media. In order to create these cognitive maps we have collected a large set of newspaper articles covering biotech foods from five UK and US papers over a period of 14 years.

One of the main advantages of using T-Lab is that it allows us to analyze large amounts of text with the help of customized dictionaries. Customized dictionaries minimize manual coding of text, while objectively measuring different risk concepts. Complementary to this customized approach, T-Lab also offers automated searches which identify the most frequently used words and phrases and which mark the occurrence of each word in the text. Both methods allow us to use the "Word Associations" function in order to perform co-word analysis and mapping, which is a technique based on co-occurrence frequencies of pairs of words or phrases. We use it to discover the linkages and relationships among ideas and themes in our corpus of text. While T-Lab offers its own co-mapping function, we convert the results of these pairwise relationships into a customized two-dimensional map showing clusters of related words based on their proximity in the text. The cognitive maps can then be compared in terms of unique and shared concepts and relationships (statements). As our work is in progress the results have yet to be published, however, we anticipate publication of our findings in the form of a published thesis and in relevant communications journals.

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