

*Words or Deeds? Choosing what to know about others (link to the article)*

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Social cooperation often relies on individuals' spontaneous norm obedience when there is no punishment for violation or reward for compliance. However, people do not consistently follow pro-social norms. Previous studies have suggested that an individual's tendency toward norm conformity is affected by empirical information (i.e. what others did or would do in a similar situation) as well as by normative information (i.e. what others think one ought to do). Yet little is known about whether people have an intrinsic desire to obtain norm-revealing information. In this paper, we use a dictator game to investigate whether dictators actively seek norm-revealing information and, if so, whether they prefer to get empirical or normative information. Our data show that although the majority of dictators choose to view free information before making decisions, they are equally likely to choose empirical or normative information. However, a large majority (more than 80%) of dictators are not willing to incur even a very small cost for getting information. Our findings help to understand why norm compliance is context-dependent, and highlight the importance of making norm-revealing information salient in order to promote conformity.