

## Appendix 1:

If an individual left a question blank or chose “I prefer not to answer this question”, we considered it as refusal. However, since it was also possible that leaving a question blank would also mean “I don’t know anyone”, we reclassified no answers as “I don’t know anyone” and reran the analysis to test for the sensitivity of the findings to the classification of answers.

**Table A1: The frequency of refusal and choosing “I don’t know anyone” according to two various definitions of blank responses**

		Revised classification		
		Refusal	I don’t know anyone	Names provided
Original classification	Refusal	276	61	0
	I don’t know anyone	0	355	0
	Names provided	0	0	1076

As shown in the Table A1, among 1768 answers, 61 were left blank, which in this analysis will be assumed to represent “I don’t know anyone”.

Table A2 shows the result of the multi-level multinomial regression to predict the likelihood of refusal and choosing “I don’t know anyone”, according to the revised definition, by the network type and the position of the question in the survey and their interactions (corresponding to the Table 1 of the manuscript).

**Table A2: the odds ratio (95% CI) of refusing to answer and answering “I don’t know anyone” (revised definition) to each question at different positions in the survey**

	Information seeking	Reverse information seeking	Expertise recognition	Friendship
<b>Refusal</b>				
First in the list	0.01 (0.01 to 0.03) <sup>1</sup>	2.57 (0.66 to 10.03) <sup>2</sup>	0.36 (0.04 to 2.86) <sup>2</sup>	18.94 (5.21 to 68.86)*** <sup>2</sup>
second	0.55 (0.11 to 2.75) <sup>3</sup>	2.72 (0.76 to 9.68) <sup>3</sup>	2.25 (0.2 to 25.57) <sup>3</sup>	2.97 (0.83 to 10.64) <sup>3</sup>
third	4.03 (1.23 to 13.23)* <sup>3</sup>	5.37 (1.25 to 23.03) <sup>3</sup>	2.15 (0.26 to 17.91) <sup>3</sup>	2.56 (0.67 to 9.71) <sup>3</sup>
fourth	4.22 (1.21 to 14.71) <sup>3</sup>	6.47 (1.4 to 29.96) <sup>3</sup>	7.48 (0.8 to 70.3) <sup>3</sup>	1.58 (0.52 to 4.85) <sup>3</sup>
<b>I don’t know anyone</b>				
First in the list	0.13 (0.08 to 0.22) <sup>1</sup>	3.29 (1.36 to 7.97)** <sup>2</sup>	0.87 (0.34 to 2.24) <sup>2</sup>	0.07 (0.01 to 0.77)* <sup>2</sup>
second	0.51 (0.15 to 1.73) <sup>3</sup>	2.76 (1.18 to 6.5)* <sup>3</sup>	0.75 (0.22 to 2.53) <sup>3</sup>	7.72 (0.55 to 109.36) <sup>3</sup>
third	1.37 (0.57 to 3.32) <sup>3</sup>	1.27 (0.41 to 3.93) <sup>3</sup>	1.21 (0.47 to 3.11) <sup>3</sup>	6.89 (0.49 to 96.58) <sup>3</sup>
fourth	2.61 (1.11 to 6.12) <sup>3</sup>	2.91 (0.96 to 8.82) <sup>3</sup>	1.27 (0.4 to 4.07) <sup>3</sup>	18.72 (1.7 to 206.66) <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>:the odds of the event for information seeking question when it comes first on the list

<sup>2</sup>: the odds ratio of the event for different question types compared to information seeking when they all come first on the list

<sup>3</sup>: the odds ratio of the event by moving later towards the end, compared to the first in the row. The pvalues indicate the statistical significance of the difference from previous level

\*,<0.05 \*\*,<0.01 \*\*\*,<0.001