



How To Merge Two Inconsistent Data Files

Problem

You have two waves of survey data that have been collected by two different companies and you would like to merge them together. Variable names and labels may be different, and value attribute labels may also have changed. You would like to edit one of the data files so that the two are consistent and may be merged.

Steps to solve

1. Create a new project with the data file that you like the most (e.g. the one that you have already been working on in Q) and we will call this the *Good Project*. Select **No** when Q asks to set up your data.
2. Open up a second copy of Q and start a project with your other data file – we will call this the *Project to Change*. Select **No** when asking about setting things up.
3. Arrange the two projects side-by-side on your screen and open the **Variables and Questions** tab in each. All of the following work will be done from this tab.
4. Move variables around in the *Project to Change* so that they are in the same order as the corresponding variables in the *Good Project*.
5. Copy variable labels from the *Good Project* to the *Project to Change*. You can copy and paste multiple labels at a time by highlighting the entries in the **Labels** column using the **Shift** key, right-clicking them and selecting **Copy Labels/Text** and **Paste Labels** respectively.
6. To copy value labels between variables in the two projects:
 - a. Highlight all of the variables that share a codeframe, and press the **Values** button (...) to bring up the **Values Attributes** dialog box in both projects.
 - b. Change the *Project to Change* labels and values so that they match those in the *Good Project*.
7. To change the variable name of any variables whose names are mismatched:
 - a. Select the variable in the *Project to Change*, right-click and select **Copy and Paste Variables | Exact Copy**.
 - b. Change the name of the copy to match the correct name from the *Good Project*.
 - c. Hide the original variable (i.e. the one with the mismatched name) by selecting the **H** in the **Tags** column.
8. Save your data in the *Project to Change* by selecting **Tools | Save Data as SPSS File**.
9. Merge your data into the *Good Project* by selecting **Tools | Merge Data Files**. See the *Q Reference Manual* for more on how to merge data files.

Additional reading

Terms shown in italics and bold can be found in the index of the *Q Reference Manual*, the *Quick Start Manual* and via the **Help** menu within Q.

What to do if the problem is not solved

If these instructions are insufficient, please email us (**Help | Email Support...**) with a detailed description of what in the instructions is not working for you and we will either provide you with more comprehensive instructions, or, upon your request, we can do the analysis for you in your file (fees apply) .