The cleverness of crowds

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ABSTRACT

What is it to be wise? An online search for dictionary definitions of the word 'Wisdom' reveals the following example: "The ability to use your experience and knowledge in order to make sensible decisions or judgments" (Collins Cobuild English Dictionary, 2003). A second example is the following: "The ability to discern or judge what is true, right, or lasting; insight" (American Heritage Dictionary, 2009). As a final example: "Knowledge of what is true or right coupled with just judgment as to action; sagacity, discernment, or insight" (Dictionary.com, 2009). There are plenty of dictionaries to skim, but I believe these definitions pretty much sum up what people usually mean when they use the word 'Wisdom'. The definitions highlighted above are not identical, of course. It might, for example, be sensible from the point of view of a jury wanting to go home to make a hasty and ill-considered decision about the defendant's guilt, but does this make their action wise? In this example, the jury may indeed be acting wisely in their immediate personal interests but can we justifiably describe their behaviour as wise in a greater context?

FULL TEXT:

REFERENCES


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REFBACKS