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This book tells how quantitative ideas of chance have transformed the natural and social sciences as well as everyday life over the past three centuries. A continuous narrative connects the earliest application of probability and statistics in gambling and insurance to the most recent forays into law, medicine, polling, and baseball. Separate chapters explore the theoretical and methodological impact on biology, physics, and psychology. In contrast to the literature on the mathematical
development of probability and statistics, this book centers on how these technical innovations recreated our conceptions of nature, mind, and society.

**The Empire of Chance** - Gerd Gigerenzer 1990-10-26 Connects the earliest applications of probability and statistics in gambling and insurance to the most recent applications in law, medicine, polling, and baseball as well as their impact on biology, physics and psychology.

**The Empire of Chance** - Gerd Gigerenzer 1989

**The Empire of Chance** - 1989

**Empire of Chance** - Anders Engberg-Pedersen 2015-03-10 Anders Engberg-Pedersen shows how the Napoleonic Wars inspired a new discourse on knowledge in the West. Soldiers returning from battle were forced to reconsider what it is possible to know and how decisions are made in a fog of imperfect knowledge. Chance no longer appeared exceptional but normative—a prism for understanding the modern world.

**The Empire of Chance** - Director of the Center for Adaptive Behavior and Cognition Gerd Gigerenzer 2014-05-14 This book tells how quantitative ideas of chance have transformed the natural and social sciences as well as everyday life over the past three centuries. A continuous narrative connects the earliest application of probability and statistics in gambling and insurance to the most recent forays into law, medicine, polling, and baseball. Separate chapters explore the theoretical and methodological impact on biology, physics, and psychology. In contrast to the literature on the
mathematical development of probability and statistics, this book centers on how these technical innovations recreated our conceptions of nature, mind, and society.

**Classical Probability in the Enlightenment**-Lorraine Daston 2021-05-11 What did it mean to be reasonable in the Age of Reason? Classical probabilists from Jakob Bernouli through Pierre Simon Laplace intended their theory as an answer to this question--as "nothing more at bottom than good sense reduced to a calculus," in Laplace's words. In terms that can be easily grasped by nonmathematicians, Lorraine Daston demonstrates how this view profoundly shaped the internal development of probability theory and defined its applications.

**The Taming of Chance**-Ian Hacking 1990-08-31 This book combines detailed scientific historical research with characteristic philosophic breadth and verve.

**The Probabilistic Revolution**-Lorenz Kruger 1990 This monumental work traces the rise, the transformation, and the diffusion of probabilistic and statistical thinking in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

**Introduction to Probability**-Charles Miller Grinstead 2012-10 This text is designed for an introductory probability course at the university level for sophomores, juniors, and seniors in mathematics, physical and social sciences, engineering, and computer science. It presents a thorough treatment of ideas and techniques necessary for a firm understanding of the subject. The text is also recommended for use in discrete probability courses. The material is organized so that the discrete and continuous probability discussions are presented in a separate, but parallel, manner. This organization does not emphasize an overly rigorous or formal view of probability and therefore offers some
strong pedagogical value. Hence, the discrete discussions can sometimes serve to motivate the more abstract continuous probability discussions. Features: Key ideas are developed in a somewhat leisurely style, providing a variety of interesting applications to probability and showing some nonintuitive ideas. Over 600 exercises provide the opportunity for practicing skills and developing a sound understanding of ideas. Numerous historical comments deal with the development of discrete probability. The text includes many computer programs that illustrate the algorithms or the methods of computation for important problems. The book is a beautiful introduction to probability theory at the beginning level. The book contains a lot of examples and an easy development of theory without any sacrifice of rigor, keeping the abstraction to a minimal level. It is indeed a valuable addition to the study of probability theory. --Zentralblatt MATH

FCC Record-United States. Federal Communications Commission 1996

**Understanding Uncertainty**-Dennis V. Lindley 2006-08-28 A lively and informal introduction to the role of uncertainty and probability in people's lives from an everyday perspective. From television game shows and gambling techniques to weather forecasting and the financial markets, virtually every aspect of modern life involves situations in which the outcomes are uncertain and of varying qualities. But as noted statistician Dennis Lindley writes in this distinctive text, "We want you to face up to uncertainty, not hide it away under false concepts, but to understand it and, moreover, to use the recent discoveries so that you can act in the face of uncertainty more sensibly than would have been possible without the skill." Accessibly written at an elementary level, this outstanding text examines uncertainty in various everyday situations and introduces readers to three rules--craftily laid out in the book--that prove uncertainty can be handled with as much confidence as ordinary logic. Combining
a concept of utility with probability, the book insightfully demonstrates how uncertainty can be measured and used in everyday life, especially in decision-making and science. With a focus on understanding and using probability calculations, Understanding Uncertainty demystifies probability and:

* Explains in straightforward detail the logic of uncertainty, its truths, and its falsehoods
* Explores what has been learned in the twentieth century about uncertainty
* Provides a logical, sensible method for acting in the face of uncertainty
* Presents vignettes of great discoveries made in the twentieth century
* Shows readers how to discern if another person—whether a lawyer, politician, scientist, or journalist—is talking sense, posing the right questions, or obtaining sound answers

Requiring only a basic understanding of mathematical concepts and operations, Understanding Uncertainty is useful as a text for all students who have probability or statistics as part of their course, even at the most introductory level.

The Norm Chronicles-Michael Blastland
2014-06-03 A statistician and a journalist reveal the real story behind the statistics on risk, chance, and choice

Statistics on the Table-Stephen M. Stigler
2002 This lively collection of essays examines statistical ideas with an ironic eye for their essence and what their history can tell us for current disputes. The topics range from 17th-century medicine and the circulation of blood, to the cause of the Great Depression, to the determinations of the shape of the Earth and the speed of light.


Calculated Risks-Gerd Gigerenzer 2015-11-10
At the beginning of the twentieth century, H. G. Wells predicted that statistical thinking would be as necessary for citizenship in a technological world as the ability to read and write. But in the twenty-first century, we are often overwhelmed by a baffling array of percentages and probabilities as we try to navigate in a world dominated by statistics. Cognitive scientist Gerd Gigerenzer says that because we haven't learned statistical thinking, we don't understand risk and uncertainty. In order to assess risk -- everything from the risk of an automobile accident to the certainty or uncertainty of some common medical screening tests -- we need a basic understanding of statistics. Astonishingly, doctors and lawyers don't understand risk any better than anyone else. Gigerenzer reports a study in which doctors were told the results of breast cancer screenings and then were asked to explain the risks of contracting breast cancer to a woman who received a positive result from a screening. The actual risk was small because the test gives many false positives. But nearly every physician in the study overstated the risk. Yet many people will have to make important health decisions based on such information and the interpretation of that information by their doctors. Gigerenzer explains that a major obstacle to our understanding of numbers is that we live with an illusion of certainty. Many of us believe that HIV tests, DNA fingerprinting, and the growing number of genetic tests are absolutely certain. But even DNA evidence can produce spurious matches. We cling to our illusion of certainty because the medical industry, insurance companies, investment advisers, and election campaigns have become purveyors of certainty, marketing it like a commodity. To avoid confusion, says Gigerenzer, we should rely on more understandable representations of risk, such as absolute risks. For example, it is said that a mammography screening reduces the risk of breast cancer by 25 percent. But in absolute risks, that means that out of every 1,000 women who do not participate in screening, 4 will die; while out of 1,000 women who do, 3 will die. A 25 percent risk reduction sounds much more significant than a benefit that 1 out of 1,000
women will reap. This eye-opening book explains how we can overcome our ignorance of numbers and better understand the risks we may be taking with our money, our health, and our lives.

**Rationality for Mortals**
Gerd Gigerenzer
2010-04-16
Gerd Gigerenzer's influential work examines the rationality of individuals not from the perspective of logic or probability, but from the point of view of adaptation to the real world of human behavior and interaction with the environment. Seen from this perspective, human behavior is more rational than it might otherwise appear. This work is extremely influential and has spawned an entire research program. This volume (which follows on a previous collection, Adaptive Thinking, also published by OUP) collects his most recent articles, looking at how people use "fast and frugal heuristics" to calculate probability and risk and make decisions. It includes a newly written, substantial introduction, and the articles have been revised and updated where appropriate. This volume should appeal, like the earlier volumes, to a broad mixture of cognitive psychologists, philosophers, economists, and others who study decision making.

**Cardano**
Øystein Ore 2017-03-14
Cardano, next to Vesalius the greatest physician of his day, was also a devoted and skilled gambler who played for personal pleasure and profit. His mathematical genius enabled him to devise simple rules of probability for his own benefit and for his gambling contemporaries. These he collected in his Book on Games of Chance and embellished them with essays on the tricks of cheats and kibitzers, as well as on psychological rules of play. In this biography of a stormy Renaissance personality, Cardano's gambling studies are deciphered for the first time, and a translation of the Book on Games of Chance is appended. Originally published in 1953. The Princeton Legacy Library uses the latest print-on-demand technology to again make available previously out-of-print books from the
The Challenge of Chance - Klaas Landsman
2016-06-09 This book presents a multidisciplinary perspective on chance, with contributions from distinguished researchers in the areas of biology, cognitive neuroscience, economics, genetics, general history, law, linguistics, logic, mathematical physics, statistics, theology and philosophy. The individual chapters are bound together by a general introduction followed by an opening chapter that surveys 2500 years of linguistic, philosophical, and scientific reflections on chance, coincidence, fortune, randomness, luck and related concepts. A main conclusion that can be drawn is that, even after all this time, we still cannot be sure whether chance is a truly fundamental and irreducible phenomenon, in that certain events are simply uncaused and could have been otherwise, or whether it is always simply a reflection of our ignorance. Other challenges that emerge from this book include a better understanding of the contextuality and perspectival character of chance (including its scale-dependence), and the curious fact that, throughout history (including contemporary science), chance has been used both as an explanation and as a hallmark of the absence of explanation. As such, this book challenges the reader to think about chance in a new way and to come to grips with this endlessly fascinating phenomenon.

Probability Guide to Gambling - Catalin Barboianu 2006 Over the past two decades, gamblers have begun taking mathematics into account more seriously than ever before. While
Probability theory is the only rigorous theory modeling the uncertainty, even though in idealized conditions, numerical probabilities are viewed not only as mere mathematical information, but also as a decision-making criterion, especially in gambling. This book presents the mathematics underlying the major games of chance and provides a precise account of the odds associated with all gaming events. It begins by explaining in simple terms the meaning of the concept of probability for the layman and goes on to become an enlightening journey through the mathematics of chance, randomness and risk. It then continues with the basics of discrete probability (definitions, properties, theorems and calculus formulas), combinatorics and counting arguments for those interested in the supporting mathematics. These mathematic sections may be skipped by readers who do not have a minimal background in mathematics; these readers can skip directly to the Guide to Numerical Results to pick the odds and recommendations they need for the desired gaming situation. Doing so is possible due to the organization of that chapter, in which the results are listed at the end of each section, mostly in the form of tables. The chapter titled The Mathematics of Games of Chance presents these games not only as a good application field for probability theory, but also in terms of human actions where probability-based strategies can be tried to achieve favorable results. Through suggestive examples, the reader can see what are the experiments, events and probability fields in games of chance and how probability calculus works there. The main portion of this work is a collection of probability results for each type of game. Each game's section is packed with formulas and tables. Each section also contains a description of the game, a classification of the gaming events and the applicable probability calculations. The primary goal of this work is to allow the reader to quickly find the odds for a specific gaming situation, in order to improve his or her betting/gaming decisions. Every type of gaming event is tabulated in a logical, consistent and comprehensive manner. The complete methodology and complete or partial calculations
are shown to teach players how to calculate probability for any situation, for every stage of the game for any game. Here, readers can find the real odds, returned by precise mathematical formulas and not by partial simulations that most software uses. Collections of odds are presented, as well as strategic recommendations based on those odds, where necessary, for each type of gaming situation. The book contains much new and original material that has not been published previously and provides great coverage of probabilities for the following games of chance: Dice, Slots, Roulette, Baccarat, Blackjack, Texas Hold 'em Poker, Lottery and Sport Bets. Most of games of chance are predisposed to probability-based decisions. This is why the approach is not an exclusively statistical one (like many other titles published on this subject), but analytical: every gaming event is taken as an individual applied probability problem to solve. A special chapter defines the probability-based strategy and mathematically shows why such strategy is theoretically optimal."

**Dicing with Death**-Stephen Senn 2003-11-20
Explanation of the whys and hows of statistical reasoning in medicine and health.

**Choice and Chance**-Brian Skyrms 1975

**Bayes' Rule**-James V. Stone 2013-06-01 In this richly illustrated book, a range of accessible examples are used to show how Bayes' rule is actually a natural consequence of commonsense reasoning. The tutorial style of writing, combined with a comprehensive glossary, makes this an ideal primer for the novice who wishes to become familiar with the basic principles of Bayesian analysis.

**Sugar in the Blood**-Andrea Stuart 2013
Presents a history of the interdependence of sugar, slavery, and colonial settlement in the New World through the story of the author's
ancestors, exploring the myriad connections between sugar cultivation and her family's identity, genealogy, and financial stability.

**Advanced Statistics with Applications in R**
Eugene Demidenko 2019-11-12

Advanced Statistics with Applications in R fills the gap between several excellent theoretical statistics textbooks and many applied statistics books where teaching reduces to using existing packages. This book looks at what is under the hood. Many statistics issues including the recent crisis with p-value are caused by misunderstanding of statistical concepts due to poor theoretical background of practitioners and applied statisticians. This book is the product of a forty-year experience in teaching of probability and statistics and their applications for solving real-life problems. There are more than 442 examples in the book: basically every probability or statistics concept is illustrated with an example accompanied with an R code. Many examples, such as Who said π? What team is better? The fall of the Roman empire, James Bond chase problem, Black Friday shopping, Free fall equation: Aristotle or Galilei, and many others are intriguing. These examples cover biostatistics, finance, physics and engineering, text and image analysis, epidemiology, spatial statistics, sociology, etc. Advanced Statistics with Applications in R teaches students to use theory for solving real-life problems through computations: there are about 500 R codes and 100 datasets. These data can be freely downloaded from the author's website dartmouth.edu/~eugened. This book is suitable as a text for senior undergraduate students with major in statistics or data science or graduate students. Many researchers who apply statistics on the regular basis find explanation of many fundamental concepts from the theoretical perspective illustrated by concrete real-world applications.

**The Oxford Handbook of Probability and Philosophy**
Alan Hájek 2016-02-18
Probability
theory is a key tool of the physical, mathematical, and social sciences. It has also been playing an increasingly significant role in philosophy: in epistemology, philosophy of science, ethics, social philosophy, philosophy of religion, and elsewhere. A case can be made that probability is as vital a part of the philosopher's toolkit as logic. Moreover, there is a fruitful two-way street between probability theory and philosophy: the theory informs much of the work of philosophers, and philosophical inquiry, in turn, has shed considerable light on the theory. This Handbook encapsulates and furthers the influence of philosophy on probability, and of probability on philosophy. Nearly forty articles summarise the state of play and present new insights in various areas of research at the intersection of these two fields. The articles will be of special interest to practitioners of probability who seek a greater understanding of its mathematical and conceptual foundations, and to philosophers who want to get up to speed on the cutting edge of research in this area. There is plenty here to entice philosophical readers who don't work especially on probability but who want to learn more about it and its applications. Indeed, this volume should appeal to the intellectually curious generally; after all, there is much here to be curious about. We do not expect all of this volume's audience to have a thorough training in probability theory. And while probability is relevant to the work of many philosophers, they often do not have much of a background in its formalism. With this in mind, we begin with 'Probability for Everyone--Even Philosophers', a primer on those parts of probability theory that we believe are most important for philosophers to know. The rest of the volume is divided into seven main sections: History; Formalism; Alternatives to Standard Probability Theory; Interpretations and Interpretive Issues; Probabilistic Judgment and Its Applications; Applications of Probability: Science; and Applications of Probability: Philosophy.

Churchill, Hitler, and "The Unnecessary War"-Patrick J. Buchanan 2008-05-27 Were
World Wars I and II inevitable? Were they necessary wars? Or were they products of calamitous failures of judgment? In this monumental and provocative history, Patrick Buchanan makes the case that, if not for the blunders of British statesmen—Winston Churchill first among them—the horrors of two world wars and the Holocaust might have been avoided and the British Empire might never have collapsed into ruins. Half a century of murderous oppression of scores of millions under the iron boot of Communist tyranny might never have happened, and Europe’s central role in world affairs might have been sustained for many generations. Among the British and Churchillian errors were:

• The secret decision of a tiny cabal in the inner Cabinet in 1906 to take Britain straight to war against Germany, should she invade France
• The vengeful Treaty of Versailles that mutilated Germany, leaving her bitter, betrayed, and receptive to the appeal of Adolf Hitler
• Britain’s capitulation, at Churchill’s urging, to American pressure to sever the Anglo-Japanese alliance, insulting and isolating Japan,

pushing her onto the path of militarism and conquest
• The greatest mistake in British history: the unsolicited war guarantee to Poland of March 1939, ensuring the Second World War

Certain to create controversy and spirited argument, Churchill, Hitler, and “the Unnecessary War” is a grand and bold insight into the historic failures of judgment that ended centuries of European rule and guaranteed a future no one who lived in that vanished world could ever have envisioned.

Servant of the Empire—Raymond E. Feist
2017-08-22 "A sweeping drama unveiling a tale of love, hate and sacrifice against the panorama of an alien yet familiar society."--Publishers Weekly. "Uncommonly satisfying."--Locus

Introduction to Probability and Statistics—William Mendenhall 2012-01-01 Used by hundreds of thousands of students since its first edition, INTRODUCTION TO PROBABILITY AND
STATISTICS, Fourteenth Edition, continues to blend the best of its proven, error-free coverage with new innovations. Written for the higher end of the traditional introductory statistics market, the book takes advantage of modern technology—including computational software and interactive visual tools—to facilitate statistical reasoning as well as the interpretation of statistical results. In addition to showing how to apply statistical procedures, the authors explain how to describe real sets of data meaningfully, what the statistical tests mean in terms of their practical applications, how to evaluate the validity of the assumptions behind statistical tests, and what to do when statistical assumptions have been violated. The new edition retains the statistical integrity, examples, exercises, and exposition that have made this text a market leader—and builds upon this tradition of excellence with new technology integration. Important Notice: Media content referenced within the product description or the product text may not be available in the ebook version.

Probability—David Morin 2016-04-03 This book is written for high school and college students learning about probability for the first time. It will appeal to the reader who has a healthy level of enthusiasm for understanding how and why the various results of probability come about. All of the standard introductory topics in probability are covered: combinatorics, the rules of probability, Bayes' theorem, expectation value, variance, probability density, common distributions, the law of large numbers, the central limit theorem, correlation, and regression. Calculus is not a prerequisite, although a few of the problems do involve calculus. These are marked clearly. The book features 150 worked-out problems in the form of examples in the text and solved problems at the end of each chapter. These problems, along with the discussions in the text, will be a valuable resource in any introductory probability course, either as the main text or as a helpful supplement.
The Signal and the Noise-Nate Silver 2015 The founder of FiveThirtyEight.com challenges myths about predictions in subjects ranging from the financial market and weather to sports and politics, profiling the world of prediction to explain how readers can distinguish true signals from hype, in a report that also reveals the sources and societal costs of wrongful predictions.

Games of No Chance-Richard J. Nowakowski 1998-11-13 Is Nine-Men Morris, in the hands of perfect players, a win for white or for black - or a draw? Can king, rook, and knight always defeat king and two knights in chess? What can Go players learn from economists? What are nimbers, tinies, switches and minies? This book deals with combinatorial games, that is, games not involving chance or hidden information. Their study is at once old and young: though some games, such as chess, have been analyzed for centuries, the first full analysis of a nontrivial combinatorial game (Nim) only appeared in 1902. The first part of this book will be accessible to anyone, regardless of background: it contains introductory expositions, reports of unusual tournaments, and a fascinating article by John H. Conway on the possibly everlasting contest between an angel and a devil. For those who want to delve more deeply, the book also contains combinatorial studies of chess and Go; reports on computer advances such as the solution of Nine-Men Morris and Pentominoes; and theoretical approaches to such problems as games with many players. If you have read and enjoyed Martin Gardner, or if you like to learn and analyze new games, this book is for you.

Chance and the Sovereignty of God-Vern S. Poythress 2014-04-30 What if all events—big and small, good and bad—are governed by more than just blind chance? What if they are governed by God? In this theologically informed and philosophically nuanced introduction to the study of probability and chance, Vern Poythress argues
that all events—including the seemingly random or accidental—fall under God’s watchful gaze and are part of his eternal plan. Poythress tackles questions related to everything from natural disasters to the roll of the dice, explaining how God’s sovereignty functions as the lens through which we study subjects such as science, mathematics, modern physics, evolutionary biology, human choice, and gambling. Comprehensive in its scope, this book lays the theistic foundation for our scientific assumptions about the world while addressing personal questions about the meaning and significance of everyday events.

**The Precipice**-Toby Ord 2020-03-24 This urgent and eye-opening book makes the case that protecting humanity's future is the central challenge of our time. If all goes well, human history is just beginning. Our species could survive for billions of years - enough time to end disease, poverty, and injustice, and to flourish in ways unimaginable today. But this vast future is at risk. With the advent of nuclear weapons, humanity entered a new age, where we face existential catastrophes - those from which we could never come back. Since then, these dangers have only multiplied, from climate change to engineered pathogens and artificial intelligence. If we do not act fast to reach a place of safety, it will soon be too late. Drawing on over a decade of research, The Precipice explores the cutting-edge science behind the risks we face. It puts them in the context of the greater story of humanity: showing how ending these risks is among the most pressing moral issues of our time. And it points the way forward, to the actions and strategies that can safeguard humanity. An Oxford philosopher committed to putting ideas into action, Toby Ord has advised the US National Intelligence Council, the UK Prime Minister's Office, and the World Bank on the biggest questions facing humanity. In The Precipice, he offers a startling reassessment of human history, the future we are failing to protect, and the steps we must take to ensure that our generation is not the last. "A book that
seems made for the present moment." —New Yorker

**The Founder's Dilemmas**-Noam Wasserman 2013-04-01 Often downplayed in the excitement of starting up a new business venture is one of the most important decisions entrepreneurs will face: should they go it alone, or bring in cofounders, hires, and investors to help build the business? More than just financial rewards are at stake. Friendships and relationships can suffer. Bad decisions at the inception of a promising venture lay the foundations for its eventual ruin. The Founder's Dilemmas is the first book to examine the early decisions by entrepreneurs that can make or break a startup and its team. Drawing on a decade of research, Noam Wasserman reveals the common pitfalls founders face and how to avoid them. He looks at whether it is a good idea to cofound with friends or relatives, how and when to split the equity within the founding team, and how to recognize when a successful founder-CEO should exit or be fired. Wasserman explains how to anticipate, avoid, or recover from disastrous mistakes that can splinter a founding team, strip founders of control, and leave founders without a financial payoff for their hard work and innovative ideas. He highlights the need at each step to strike a careful balance between controlling the startup and attracting the best resources to grow it, and demonstrates why the easy short-term choice is often the most perilous in the long term. The Founder's Dilemmas draws on the inside stories of founders like Evan Williams of Twitter and Tim Westergren of Pandora, while mining quantitative data on almost ten thousand founders. People problems are the leading cause of failure in startups. This book offers solutions.

**Agathe**-Robert Musil 2019 "Agathe is the sister of Ulrich, the so-called "man without qualities" who is the major character in Robert Musil's great, unfinished novel of that name. Ulrich is intellectual and skeptical and rebellious and yet for all that rule-bound, held hostage by his
attraction to the systematic, even if every existing system-political, ethical, metaphysical—strikes this onetime mathematician as fundamentally suspect. When, however, after many years Ulrich and his younger sister, Agathe, reunite over the bier of their dead father, a celebrated lawyer, both siblings are electrified. They are, for one thing, almost each other's spitting image, while Agathe, who has just separated from her husband, is even more resistant to any kind of status quo than her brother. Engaging in a series of ever more intense and questioning "holy conversations," brother and sister progressively enlarge the boundaries of sexuality, sensuality, and identity, seeking to arrive at a new conception of reality that they are sure lies within each other to discover. Musil's Agathe, or the Forgotten Sister is one of the most unexpected and breathtaking adventures of twentieth-century fiction, while Joel Agee's new English translation captures all the nuance of Musil's famously acute and penetrating style"--


The Towers of Trebizond-Rose Macaulay 1956
In an hilarious novel set on an overland journey across Turkey, the narrator encounters sorcerers, cops, and southern evangelists as she and her companion travel from Istanbul to Trebizond on a tourist adventure that quickly runs afoul of an ancient and sometimes unbendable culture. Reprint.

The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire-Edward Gibbon 1789

Rethinking Randomness-Jeffrey Buzen 2015-08-21 Mathematical models based on stochastic processes have proven surprisingly accurate in many situations where their
underlying assumptions are unlikely to be correct. Rethinking Randomness introduces an alternative characterization of randomness and a new modeling framework that together explain the improbable success of these probabilistic models. The new approach, known as observational stochastics, is derived from "back of the envelope" methods employed routinely by engineers, experimental scientists and systems oriented practitioners working in many fields. By formalizing and extending these intuitive techniques, observational stochastics provides an entirely rigorous alternative to traditional mathematical theory that leads to vastly simpler derivations of certain major results and a deeper understanding of their true significance. Students who encounter probabilistic models in their courses in the physical, social and system sciences should find this book particularly helpful in understanding how the material they are studying in class is actually applied in practice. And because all mathematical arguments are self-contained and relatively straightforward, technically oriented non-specialists who wish to explore the connection between probability theory and the physical world should find most of the material in this book readily accessible. Most chapters are structured around a series of examples, beginning with the simplest possible cases and then extending the analysis in multiple directions. Powerful generalized results are presented only after simpler cases have been introduced and explained thoroughly. Readers who choose to bypass the mathematically complex sections of this book can still use these simpler examples to obtain a clear understanding of the basic principles involved. The most extensive series of examples appear in Chapter 7, which incorporates a "mini course" on queuing theory and its applications to Computer Science. The author's first hand accounts of early developments in this area lend Rethinking Randomness a unique flavor. Chapter 8 examines the implications of observational stochastics for the debate between Bayesians and frequentists regarding the true meaning of "probability." Once again, the discussion is centered on a series of simple and highly approachable
examples, leading ultimately to an interpretation of probability that is aligned most closely with the view of the great French mathematician Poincare (1854-1912). This proportionalist interpretation of chance then provides the foundation for the intuitive discussions of the Law of Large Numbers and the Ergodic Theorem that appear in Chapter 9. Advanced students and researchers will recognize that observational stochastics has the potential to be extended in many directions that are largely unexplored. These include the use of shaped simulation to improve the speed and accuracy of Monte Carlo simulations, the development of new error bounds for cases where assumptions of empirical independence are not satisfied exactly, and the investigation of mathematical properties of special formal structures known as t-loops. Extensions required to deal with transient and trans-distributional aspects of observable behavior may also be feasible, but represent a substantially more difficult undertaking for researchers who wish to take up the challenge.

Intellectual History Newsletter- 1991