
Have You Seen This?

Title: The Rossman/Chance Applet collection
URL: www.rossmanchance.com/applets/

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There are many statistical applets on the web, but a particularly useful collection that are suitable for illustrating elementary statistical principles and ideas can be found on Beth Chance's web site at California Polytechnic State University, USA. The authors (Beth Chance and Allan Rossman) classify them as 'currently under development', but as they stand, with some work, they could be incorporated into non-specialist (and specialist?) quantitative courses. With judicious use I believe that they have the potential to enhance the statistical numeracy of students in the early stages of learning statistics.

The applets cover:

- Simulating Confidence Intervals for Population Parameter;
- Behavior of Regression Line;
- Histogram Bin Width;
- Guess the Correlation, Dotplot Summaries;

and focusing on sampling distributions:

- Reeses Pieces;
- Sampling Senators; and
- Sampling Pennies.

Under an LTSN project, to be jointly run with Dr Chance, we plan to modify one or more of them so that they can be used with user-specified data files, and evaluate their usage with different groups of students across a range of subjects.

We would welcome colleagues' experiences with using them and urge you to write these up for reporting in future issues of *MSOR Connections*.

Title: *The Lady Tasting Tea: How Statistics Revolutionized Science in the Twentieth Century* by David Salsburg; pp340, W.H. Freeman and Company

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Ever wish you could sit down for a cup of tea with William Gosset? Curious who came up with the idea of a pie chart and why? Want to know how the term "statistically significant" came about? And why are so many results named after the wrong person anyway?

The Lady Tasting Tea: How Statistics Revolutionized Science in the Twentieth Century by David Salsburg provides an insightful glimpse into the minds and lives of 20th century "statisticians" (many of the contributors were not necessarily statisticians). This book discusses many of the techniques developed during this time, but at a very nontechnical level. Without using formulas, he describes the reasoning behind randomized designs, maximum likelihood, Bayesian statistics, Monte Carlo

methods and so on. All the while, the focus is on the personalities and interactions of the remarkable men and women who were behind these ideas. I found lots of interesting tidbits that I can immediately use in the classroom to help personalize the material and to remind my students that statistics is an evolving discipline, and that many of the "facts" we are teaching are less than 50 years old and often hotly debated.

Software Evaluator Training Day

A workshop on how to gather reviews and case study information on learning technology materials.

24 June 2002, Watson Building, University of Birmingham

Drawing on expertise developed by the EASEIT-Eng project, this event is open to academic staff interested in becoming evaluators, who could then carry out case studies into how various software packages are being used to support teaching and learning of maths, stats, operational research or other subjects. Places are offered on a first come first served basis although priority will be given to those who have previously indicated interest in this event.



To book a place on the day please use the online booking form at:
http://www.ltsneng.ac.uk/nef/events/event_apply/

Online information about the day can be found at:
<http://www.ltsneng.ac.uk/nef/events/index.asp>

