



**Institute** of  
**Data**

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2021



# Data Science and AI

Module 3

Part 2:

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## Data Science Practices

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# Agenda: Module 3 Part 2

- Defining Data Science
- Hypothesising
- Statistical Evidence
- Statistical Proof
- Causation
- Statistical Inferences



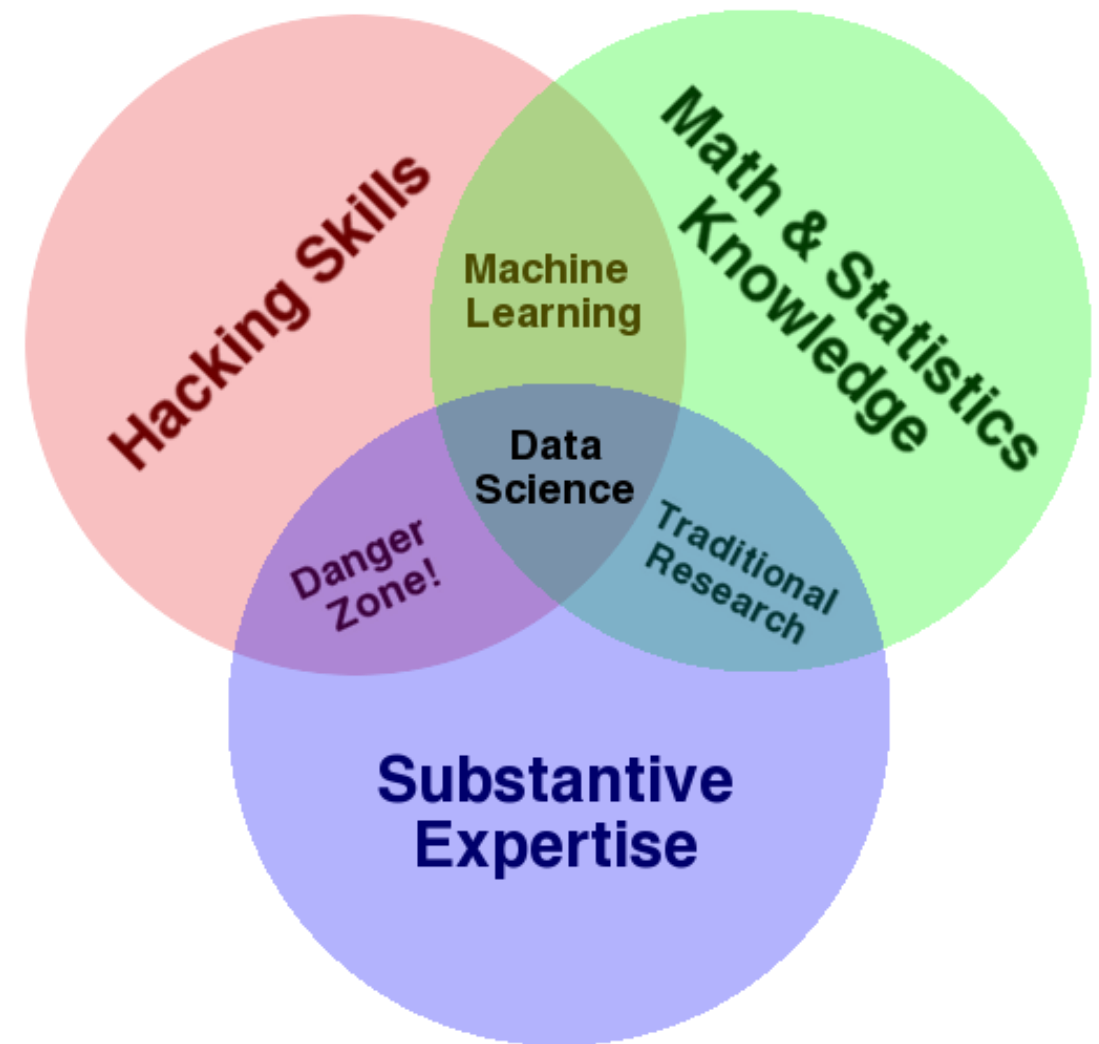
# Defining Data Science

- What is data science?
- Users and use cases
- What makes a data scientist?
- The data science pipeline
- Testable hypotheses



# What is Data Science?

- Cutting-edge techniques and tools for analysing data
- An interdisciplinary approach to problem-solving
- Business analysis on steroids
- The application of scientific method to practical problems



Drew Conway



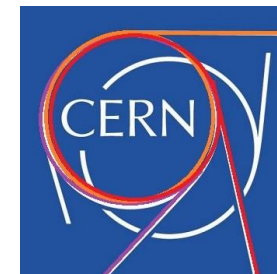
# Who Uses Data Science?

**NETFLIX**

**amazon.com**<sup>®</sup>



**Google**





# Where do data scientists come from?

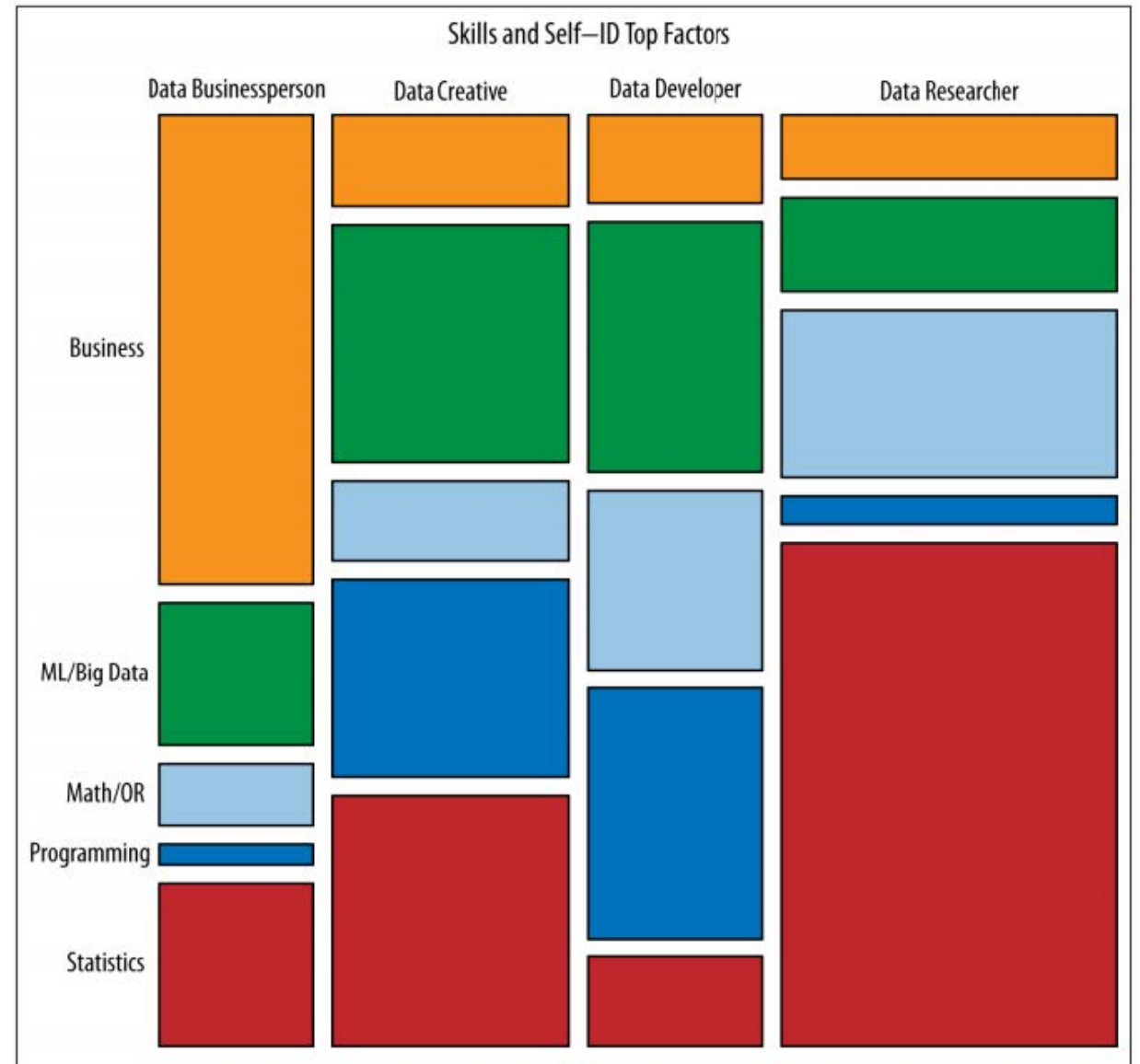
What are their typical strengths?

	Hacking Skills	Math & Stats	Substantive Expertise	Methodology	Abstraction	Communication
Data Science program graduates						
Scientists (especially physics)						
Statisticians						
Developers						
Business Analysts						



# Relative Strengths

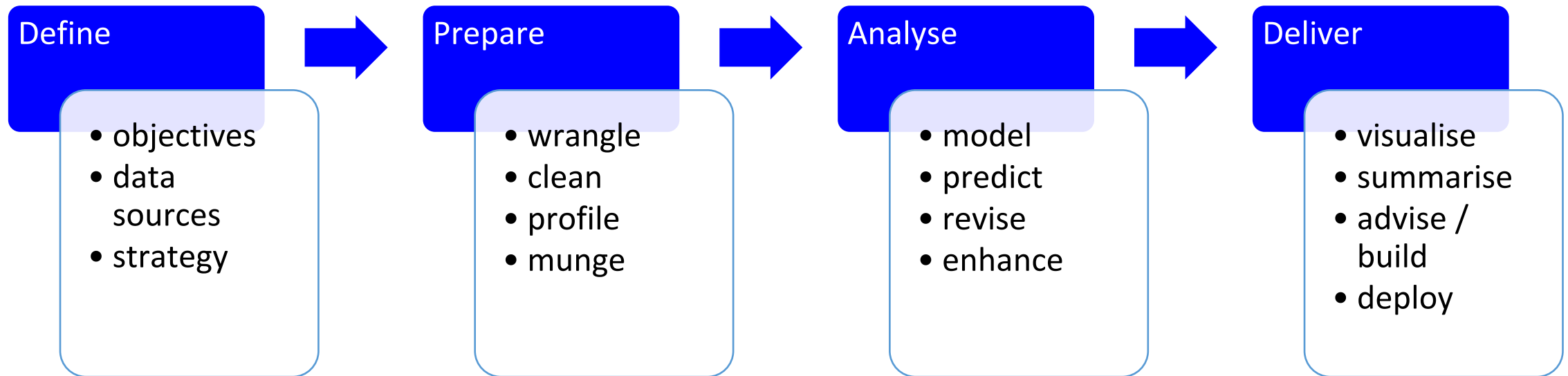
- These roles prioritise different skill sets.
- All roles involve some part of each skillset.
- *Where are your ambitions?*
- *Where are your strengths and weaknesses?*







# The Data Science Pipeline





# Defining the Problem

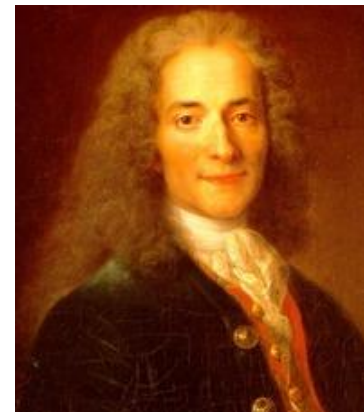
## Every Solution Begins with a Question

- Any business problem, decision-support tool, or clever data product begins life with a well-defined need:
  - A set of questions that frame an analysis
- Sets up for a successful process
- Establishes the basis for reproducibility
- creates scope for future expansion



“A problem well stated is half solved.”

— Charles Kettering



“Judge a man by his questions rather than by his answers.”

— Voltaire



# What is your question?

- What is your name?
- What is your quest?
- What is the average airspeed of an unladen sparrow?





# How to specify the question

A business challenge may be vague:

- “How can we grow our online market share?”

Data science questions need to be focused:

- “Is our website achieving sufficient user engagement?”
- “Are we presenting our products effectively to website visitors?”
- “Are our prices competitive?”
- “Is this market niche saturated?”

> Even these examples are a bit vague, but we could break each one down into a series of more granular questions with quantitative domains



# The Elements of a Good Question

## **Specific**

The dataset and key variables are clearly defined.

## **Measurable**

The type of analysis and major assumptions are articulated.

## **Attainable**

The available data are amenable to the question and unlikely to be biased.

## **Reproducible**

The analysis can be repeated by another person or at another time.

## **Time-bound**

The time period and population to which the analysis pertains is clearly stated.



# *Knowledge check*

**Does this question follow the SMART framework:**

“Is there an association between number of passengers with carry-on luggage and delayed take-off time?”



# *Knowledge check*

**How about this (revised) question:**

“Is there an association between the number of passengers (on JetBlue, Delta, and United domestic flights) with carry-on luggage and delayed take-off time in the data from flightstats.com between January 2015 and December 2015?”



# Dataset Characteristics

- What would we look for if we wanted to be able to describe a dataset?
  - size, completeness
  - accuracy, precision
  - periodicity, stationarity
  - variance
  - bias
  - missing variables
  - correlated variables
    - due to causation or covariation
  - correlated samples
    - time series
    - contaminated or prejudiced sampling





# Data Temporality

## Cross-sectional

- 'static'
- treated as a snapshot in time
- causality is simultaneous

## Longitudinal

- 'time series'
- treated as a series of snapshots with a temporal or serial dependence

## Dynamic

- 'streaming'
- continuously accumulated or refreshed



# Variables in Data Science

Features  
Predictors

Independent variables  
Inputs

A *predictor* is a *feature* that is useful in modelling the *response*. Specifically, its inclusion enables a *model* to account for more of the *variance* in the response.

Responses  
Outcomes

Dependent variables  
Outputs

A covariate is a variable that is possibly predictive of the response. It could also represent an interacting variable.

A confounding variable is one which influences the response but has not been measured (i.e. it introduces bias).



# Data Preparation

*def:* Tidy data: the end goal of data cleaning and munging

- each variable should be in one column
- each observation should comprise one row
- each type of observational unit should form one table
- key columns for linking multiple tables
- top row contains (sensible) variable names
- in general, save data as one file per table



this is Codd's  
3rd normal  
form from  
RDBMS theory

- search: “hadley wickham's tidy data paper”



# Lab 3.2.1: Hypothesising

- Purpose:
  - To create a testable hypothesis
- Resources:
  - 'titanic.csv'
- Instructions:
  1. You should already be familiar with the 'titanic' dataset from the last module's homework. Now, think about what stories the data might tell, and devise a hypothesis that could be tested.
  2. Provide some data profiling results to support your assertion that this hypothesis is testable.





# Statistical Evidence

- What is statistical proof?
- Revisiting the null hypothesis
- The Student's  $t$ -test



# Statistical Proof

## Can a hypothesis be proved?

- in science, no theory (or hypothesis) can actually be proved
  - must explain known phenomenon
  - must make testable predictions
  - *will gain acceptance if it survives rigorous testing*

## How can a hypothesis be tested?

- by formulating it in a way that makes its claims amenable to statistical analysis
  - must explain the data
  - must have a corresponding null hypothesis that can be rejected at a predefined level of confidence

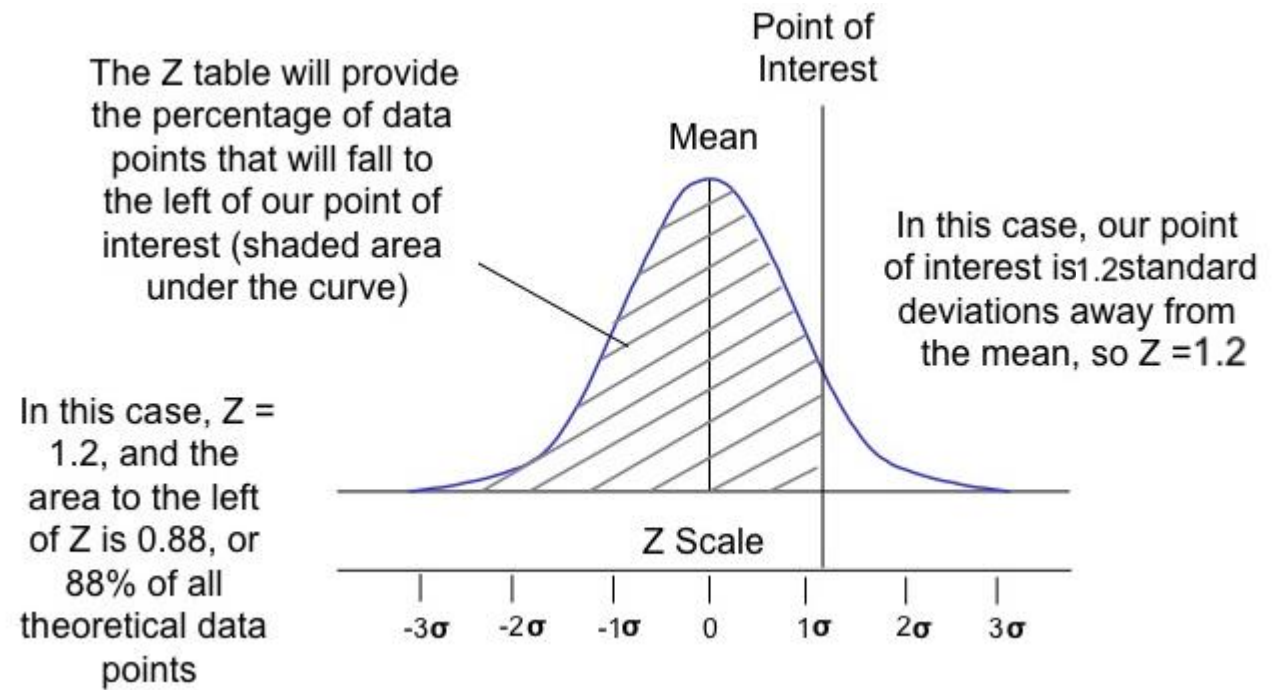


# Statistical Proof – cont'd

## Z-statistic

- provides a measure of the likelihood that a data point belongs to a given population

$$Z = \frac{\bar{X} - \mu}{\sigma}$$





# The Null Hypothesis

## Example:

- dataset comprised of patients' responses to two different therapies:
  - drug A (the old drug, or 'control' treatment)
  - drug B (the new drug, or 'test' treatment).
- we are interested in testing the **alternative hypothesis  $H_a$** :
  - A & B deliver significantly different outcomes
- but we do this by assuming (and then trying to reject) the **null hypothesis  $H_0$** :
  - there is **no** significant difference between A & B
  - the distributions we get from the 'A' data and the 'B' data represent two sample sets from the same 'population'

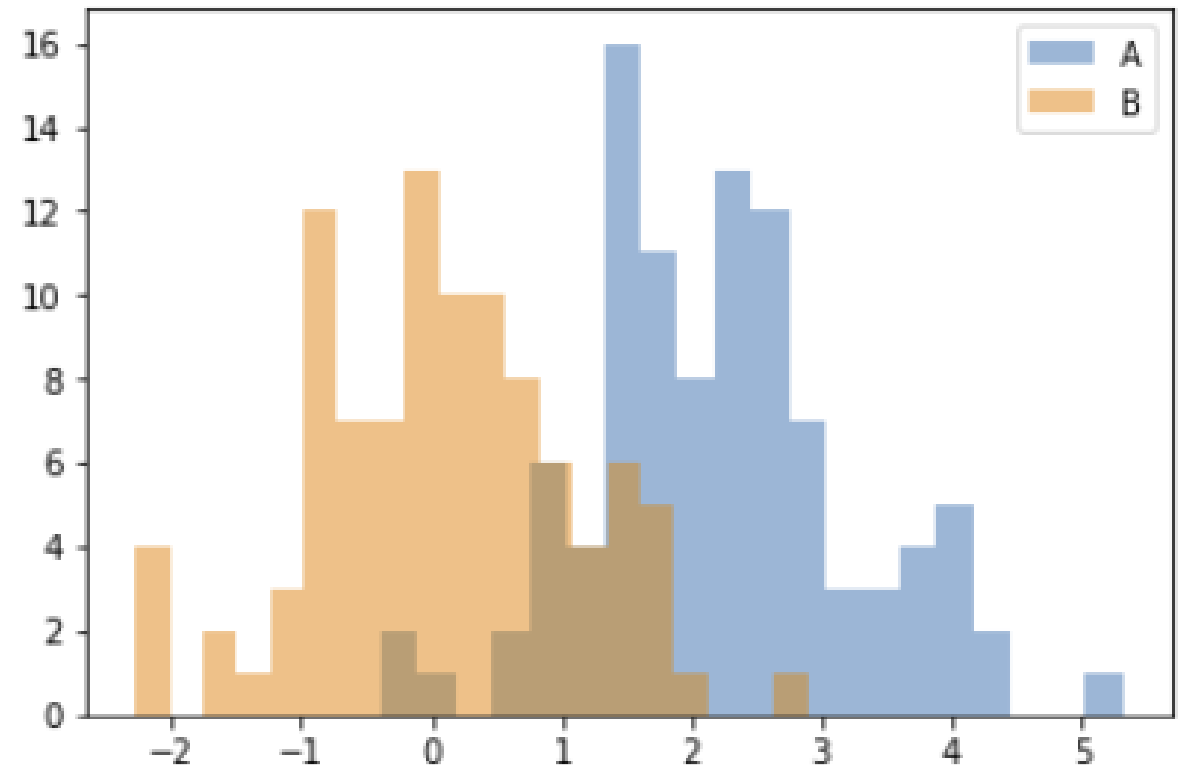




# Testing the Null Hypothesis for Two Samples

Given two samples, A and B

- compute the means  $X_A, X_B$
- compute the variances  $\sigma^2_A, \sigma^2_B$
- calculate how close  $X_A$  is to  $X_B$  given the uncertainty implied by their variances
- calculate the likelihood that this value of our closeness parameter could be obtained at random





# The Student's $t$ -Test

The  $t$ -statistic for comparing two samples is:

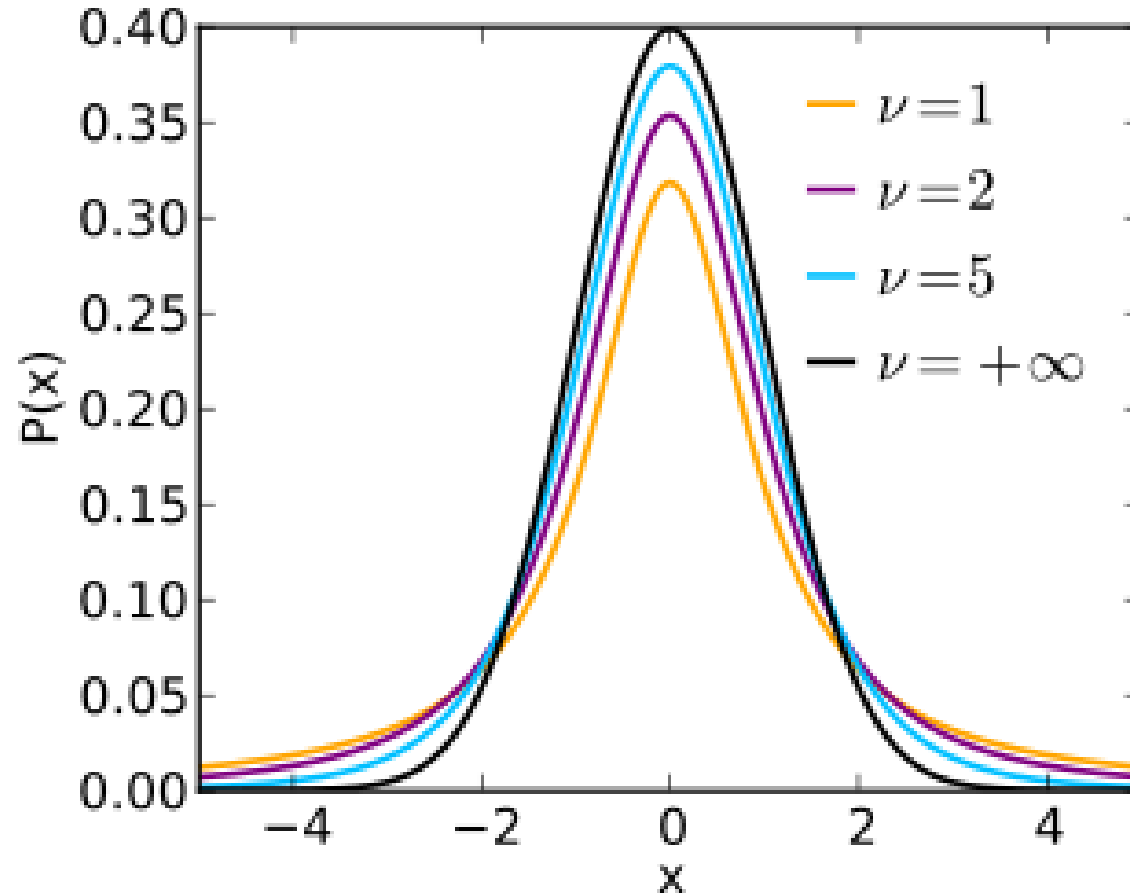
$$t = \frac{\overline{X}_1 - \overline{X}_2}{s_{1,2} \sqrt{2/N}}$$

where the *mutual* or *joint* standard deviation is given by:

$$s_{1,2} = \sqrt{\frac{\text{var}(X_1) + \text{var}(X_2)}{2}}$$



# The $t$ -Distribution



- $\nu$  is the number of degrees of freedom
- the distribution narrows (approaches normal distribution) as  $\nu$  gets larger



# Statistical Errors

## Type I errors

- false positives (FP)
- we erroneously rejected the null hypothesis

## Type II errors

- false negatives (FN)
- we erroneously upheld the null hypothesis

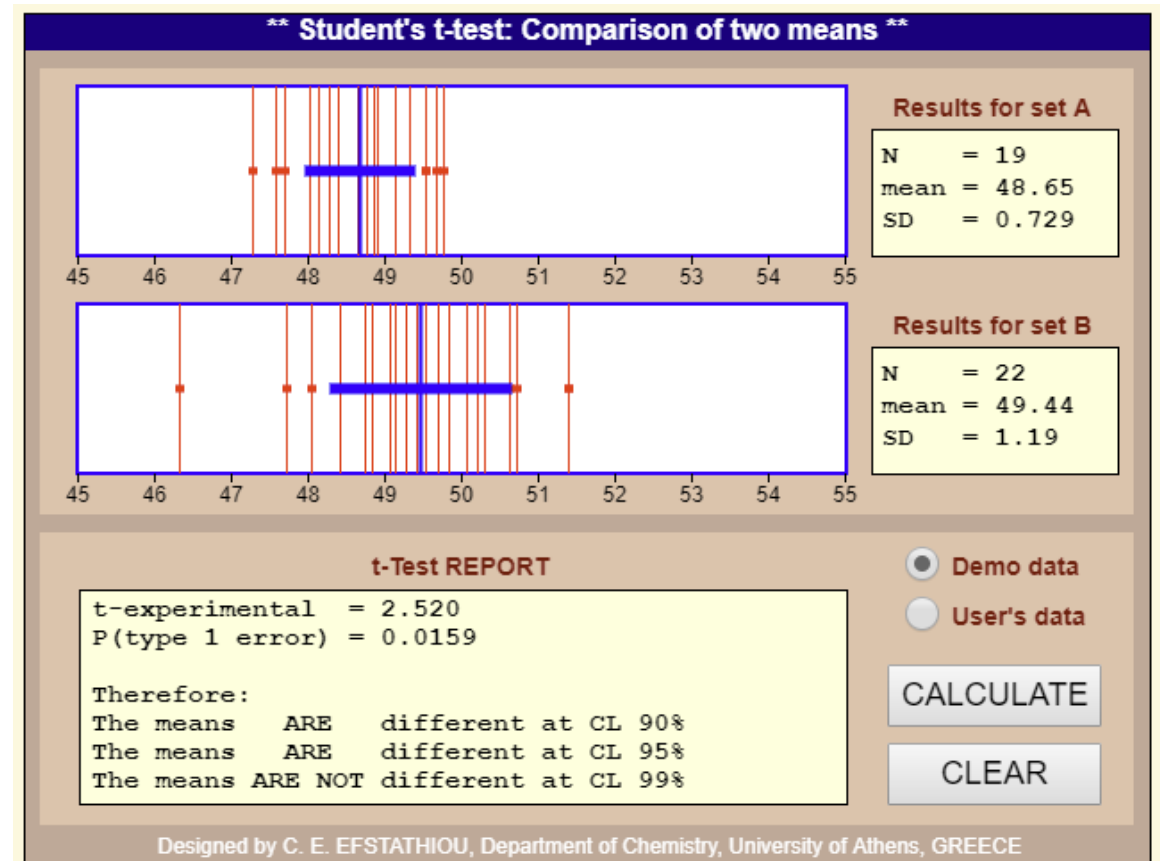
predicted positives  $PP = TP + FP$       predicted negatives  $PN = TN + FN$

actual positives  $P = TP + FN$       actual negatives  $N = TN + FP$



# Lab 3.2.2: Statistical Proof

- Purpose:
  - To learn how to use the Student's *t*-test for comparing two samples
- Materials:
  - 'Lab 3.2.2.ipynb'
- Reference:
  - <http://195.134.76.37/applets/AppletTtest/AppletTtest2.html>





# Discussion

- Is it sufficient to declare statistical significance at  $p < 0.05$  ?
  - how much confidence is enough?
- Is it okay to mine for significance by testing each variable in turn?
  - how would we control the error estimate in multivariate testing?
- Resources:
  - Statistical Thinking for Managerial Decisions  
<https://home.ubalt.edu/ntsbarsh/Business-stat/opre504.htm>
  - Statistics: The Art & Science of Learning from Data  
<http://www.artofstat.com/webapps.html>



# ANOVA

## Analysis of variance

- generalises  $t$ -test to  $>2$  samples (groups)
  - more conservative
  - reduces Type I errors
- decomposes data additively
  - compares mean squares,  $F$ -statistic
  - can test a nested sequence of models
- comprises a suite of methods
  - one-way, two-way, multiple



# ANOVA – cont'd

## One-way ANOVA

- $F$ -statistic:

$$F = \frac{(\text{variance between groups})}{(\text{variance within groups})} = \frac{SS_T / (I - 1)}{SS_E / (n_T - I)}$$

$I$  = number of groups

$n_T$  = number of subjects

- compare this statistic to  $F$ -distribution for  $I - 1, n_T - I$  degrees of freedom
- reject  $H_0$  for  $F \geq F_{\text{critical}}$

<https://www.marsja.se/four-ways-to-conduct-one-way-anovas-using-python/>





# Controlled Trials

objectives:

- to evaluate an experimental cohort (*test group*) against a baseline (*control group*)
- to measure every factor that has the potential to influence the response variable



challenges / considerations:

- the control group must be representative of the test group in every way except for the influence of the effect that is under test
- if we have limited understanding of the phenomenon, we may neglect important variables
  - *this will lead to experimental bias*
- others?



# Randomised Controlled Trials

objective:

- to minimise experimental bias by evenly distributing uncontrolled variables between the study cohorts

challenges / considerations:

- different classes of subjects should be evenly distributed between cohorts
  - e.g. age range, weight range, sex, medical status
  - requires data profiling of subjects prior to commencing experiment
- others?



# Blind Randomised Controlled Trials

blind

- subjects do not know if they have been allocated to the test group or the control group



double blind

- experimenters do not know which individuals are test subjects or control subjects
- *only the analysts know!*



# A/B Testing

*def:* a randomized experiment with two variants

*examples*

- evaluate / compare options for improving performance
  - marketing campaigns
  - website engagement
  - product variants
- conversion rate
  - proportion of sales resulting from all visits
- funnel
  - stages from visit through to conversion



# Experimental Design for Big Data

- processing time (cost)
  - sample small subsets of the data
    - design the experiment, validate analytic methods before progressing to full dataset
    - for time-dependent data, need to sample many epochs so that periodicity is captured
- the curse of high-dimensionality
  - special methods required when number of features  $\sim 10^3$ 
    - $O(n^2)$  algorithms too slow
    - exploit sparseness where possible
  - large number of features  $\rightarrow$  many spurious correlations
- *other issues?*



# Causation

- Causation vs correlation
- Domain knowledge



# Causation vs Correlation

## *example:*

- a study finds that homicide correlates with ice cream consumption
  - what does this mean?

### Headline #1: *'Ice Cream Linked to Murder'*

- scientists are desperately trying to discover which brands or flavours of ice cream are driving the murder rate

### Headline #2: *'Heat Wave Pushes Murder Rate Up'*

- scientists suspect elevated brain temperatures increase mental instability
- meanwhile, ice cream sales are soaring



# Causation vs Correlation – cont'd

## A few cups of coffee may lower colon cancer risk

Posted: 01 August 2007 17:08 hrs

TOKYO : Drinking a few cups of coffee a day may lower the risk of advanced colon cancer, at least for women, Japanese researchers said Wednesday.

The study, supported by Japan's health ministry, showed women who drink more than three cups of coffee a day were 56 percent less likely to develop advanced colon cancer than those who drink no coffee at all.

"Drinking coffee sustains the secretion of bile acid and keeps down cholesterol levels, the mechanisms thought to prevent colon cancer," the report said.

But unfortunately the effect was not seen in men, the medical research team said.

Many men smoke and drink alcohol more than women, and those habits probably offset the effect of coffee, the study said.

The research team tracked down about 96,000 people in Japan aged from 40 to 69 between the early 1990s and 2002, of whom 726 men suffered colon cancer.



Photos

The screenshot shows the CancerConsultants.com website. The header includes the site name and 'oncology resource center'. A navigation bar has links for Patient Home, Professional Home, Newsletters, and Feedback Survey. A search bar is present with radio buttons for Medicine, CancerConsultants.com, and Both. A sidebar on the left lists various categories like Home, Conference Coverage, Current Topics in Oncology, Cancer News, Disease Centers, Physician Resources, and About Us. The main content area displays a 'Cancer News: Rectal Cancer: Article' with a 'Printable Version' link. The article title is 'Coffee Does Not Decrease Risk of Colorectal Cancer'. The text of the article states that researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health reported that coffee consumption does not appear to reduce the risk of colorectal cancer, contrary to previous studies. It mentions a review of 12 studies with 646,846 participants and 5,403 cases of colorectal cancer, finding no significant effect of coffee consumption on colorectal cancer risk.





# Causation vs Correlation – cont'd

## Simpson's paradox

- a trend appears in different groups of data but disappears or reverses when these groups are combined
  - common in social-science and medical-science statistics
    - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simpson%27s\\_paradox](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simpson%27s_paradox)
- caused by experimental bias
- results in  $H_0$  rejected despite insufficient statistical power
  - difference in means is too small
  - variances are too large
  - number of samples is too small



***Can't we just use 'common sense'?***

**Common sense is the collection of  
prejudices acquired by age eighteen.**

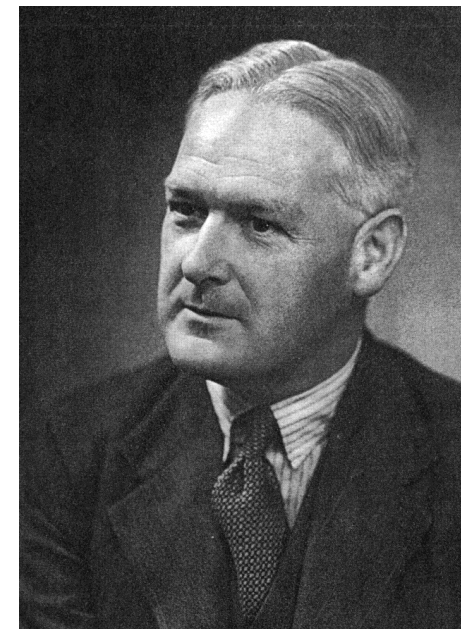
Albert Einstein



# Criteria for Evaluating Causation

- Strength of association
- Consistency
- Specificity
- Temporality
- Biological gradient
- Plausibility
- Coherence
- Experiment
- Analogy

> **subject matter expertise + statistics + reasoning**



Bradford Hill



## Lab 3.2.3: Statistical Inference

- Purpose:
  - To consolidate the basic concepts of sampling and distributions.
- Materials:
  - 'Lab 3.2.3.ipynb'



# Appendix



# Statistical Power

*def:* the probability that the test correctly rejects the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) when a specific alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is true

## *example*

- let A, B be the control & test cohorts:

$$D(N) = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N B_i - A_i$$

- define test statistic:

$$T(N) = \frac{D(N) - \mu_D}{\sigma_D / N}, \quad \mu_D = 0 \quad (H_0)$$



## Statistical Power – cont'd

- specify  $p < 0.05$  for significance
- from the  $t$ -distribution,  $p = 0.05$  corresponds to  $t = 1.64$
- therefore, to reject  $H_0$  we require:

$$T(N) > 1.64$$

- specify power  $> 0.9$  to detect  $\mu_D > 1$
- after a few more steps, we obtain this requirement:

$$N > 8.56 \sigma_D$$



# Statistical Power – cont'd

## Errors and Power in Significance Testing

Select null hypothesis value  $p_0$ :

0.05

Type of alternative hypothesis:

☒ greater ☐ not equal ☐ less

Show:

☒ Type I error ☒ Type II error ☒ Power

True value of  $p$ :

0.05 0.15 0.95

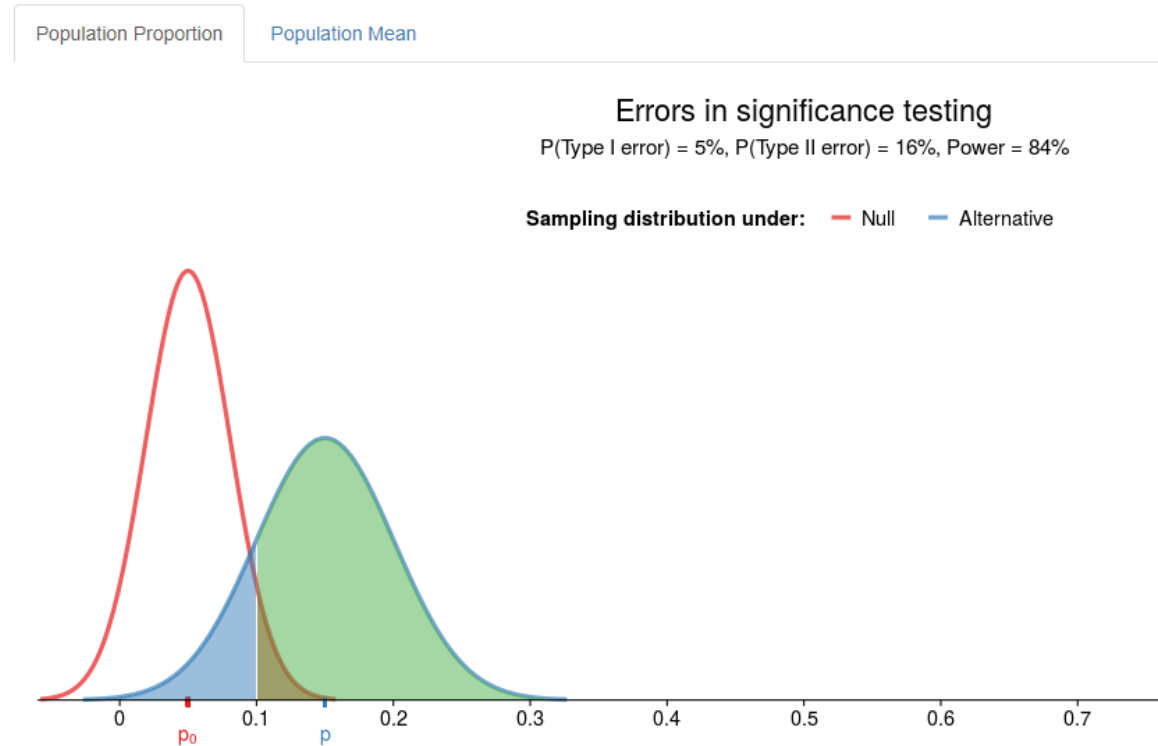
Sample size  $n$ :

30 50 200

Type I Error  $\alpha$ :

0 0.05 0.15

[Download Graph](#)



<https://istats.shinyapps.io/power/>