

Alex Psomas: Lecture 18.

Random Variables: Variance

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1. Variance
2. Distributions

Variance

Flip a coin:

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Any other measures???

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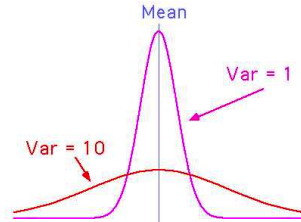
$$E(Y) = 0.$$

Any other measures???

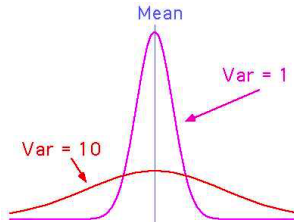
What else that's informative can we say?

Variance

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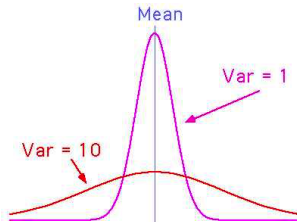


Variance



The variance measures the deviation from the mean value.

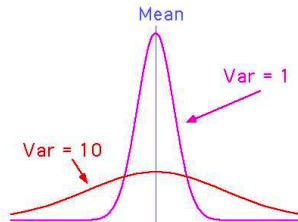
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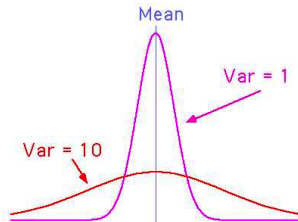


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$\sigma(X)$ is called the **standard deviation** of X .

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Fact:

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Example

Consider X with

$$X = \begin{cases} -1, & \text{w. p. } 0.99 \\ 99, & \text{w. p. } 0.01. \end{cases}$$

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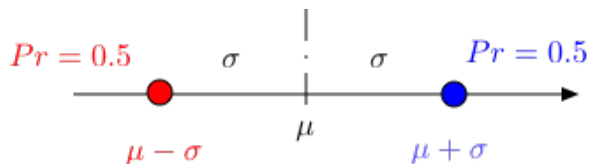
$$\text{Var}(X) \approx 100 \implies \sigma(X) \approx 10.$$

A simple example

This example illustrates the term 'standard deviation.'

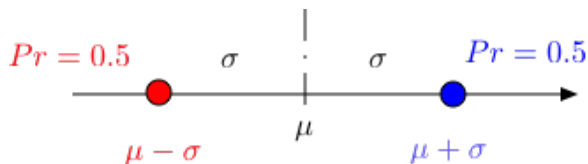
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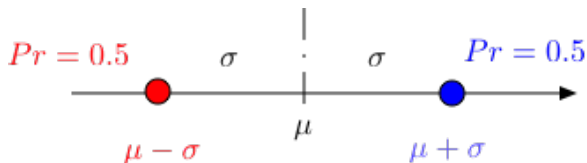


Consider the random variable X such that

$$X = \begin{cases} \mu - \sigma, & \text{w.p. } 1/2 \\ \mu + \sigma, & \text{w.p. } 1/2. \end{cases}$$

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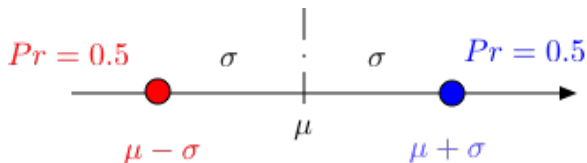
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Then, $E[X] = \mu$ and $E[(X - E[X])^2] = \sigma^2$.

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$$\text{var}(X) = \sigma^2 \text{ and } \sigma(X) = \sigma.$$

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$$\begin{aligned} \text{var}(X + Y + Z + \dots) &= E((X + Y + Z + \dots)^2) \\ &= E(X^2 + Y^2 + Z^2 + \dots + 2XY + 2XZ + 2YZ + \dots) \\ &= E(X^2) + E(Y^2) + E(Z^2) + \dots + 0 + \dots + 0 \\ &= \text{var}(X) + \text{var}(Y) + \text{var}(Z) + \dots. \end{aligned}$$



Distributions

- ▶ Bernoulli
- ▶ Binomial
- ▶ Uniform
- ▶ Geometric
- ▶ Poisson

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Flip a coin, with heads probability p .

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Jacob Bernoulli



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$$Pr[X = i] = \binom{n}{i} p^i (1 - p)^{n-i}, i = 0, 1, \dots, n : B(n, p) \text{ distribution}$$

Expectation of Binomial Distribution

Indicator for the i -th coin:

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This gives

$$\text{var}(X) = \frac{1+3n+2n^2}{6} - \frac{(n+1)^2}{4} = \frac{n^2-1}{12}.$$

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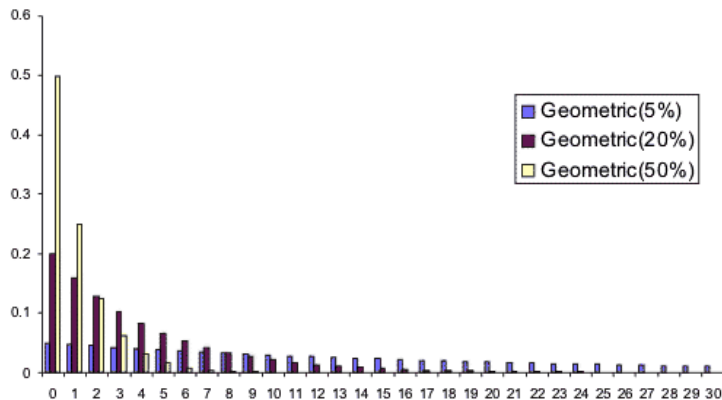
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Experiment: Get coupons at random from n until collect all n coupons.

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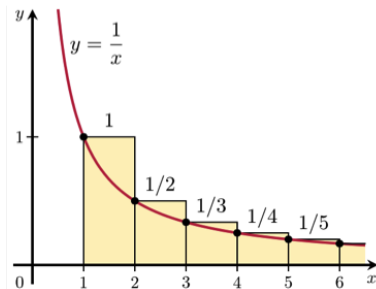
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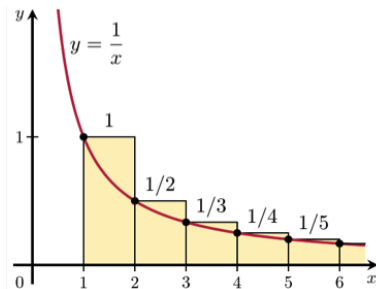
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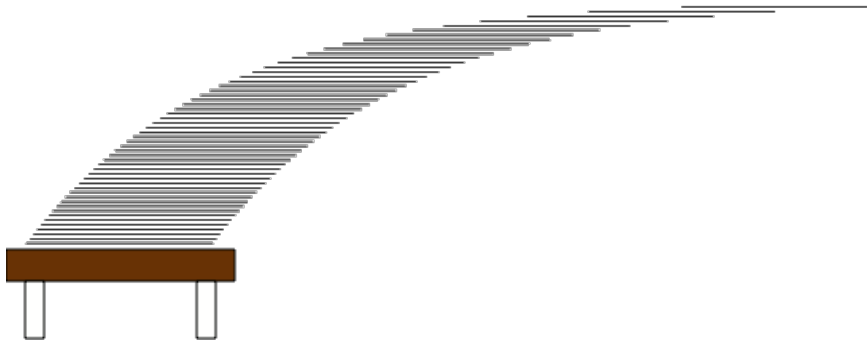
$$H(n) \approx \ln(n) + \gamma \text{ where } \gamma \approx 0.58 \text{ (Euler-Mascheroni constant).}$$

Harmonic sum: Paradox

Consider this stack of cards (no glue!):

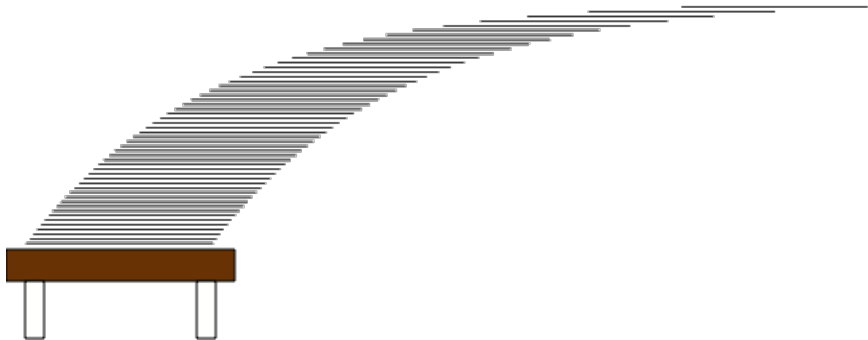
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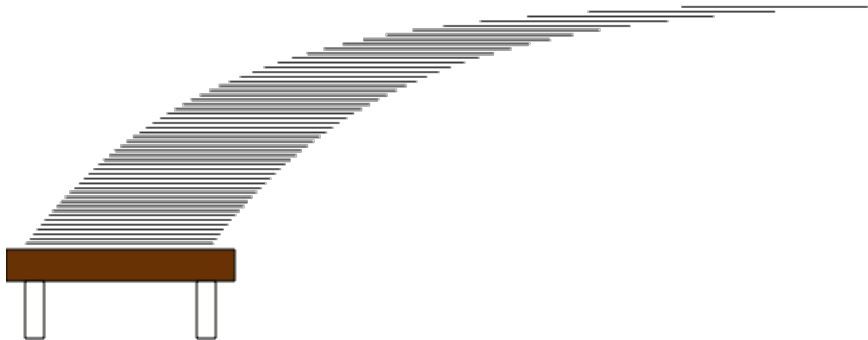
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If each card has length 2, the stack can extend $H(n)$ to the right of the table.

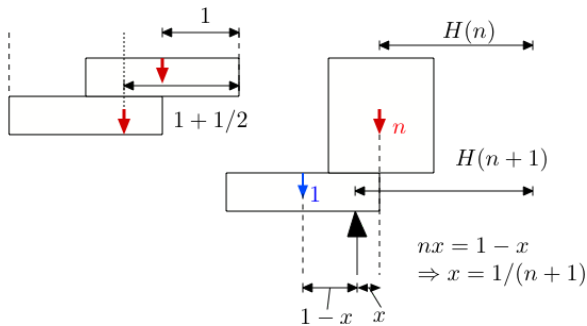
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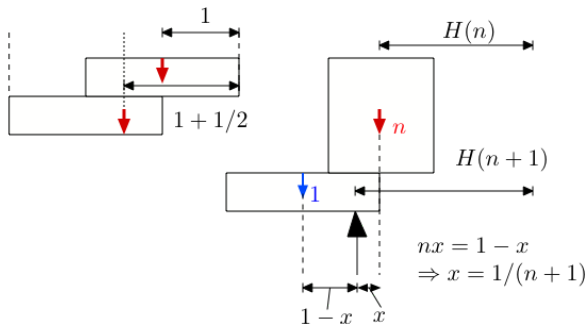


If each card has length 2, the stack can extend $H(n)$ to the right of the table. As n increases, you can go as far as you want!

Stacking

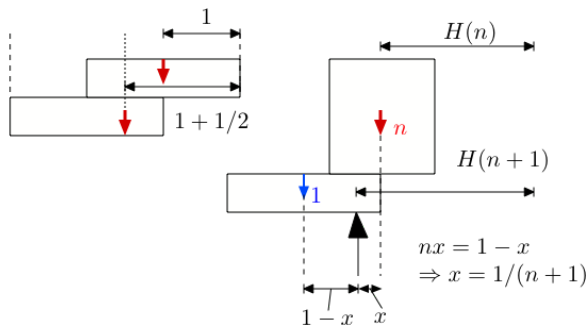


Stacking



The cards have width 2.

Stacking



The cards have width 2. Induction shows that the center of gravity after n cards is $H(n)$ away from the right-most edge.

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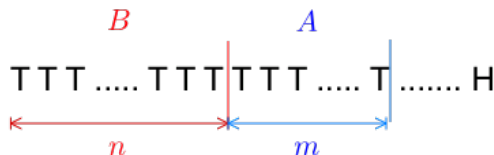
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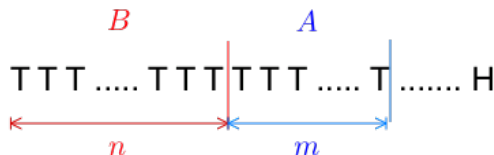
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The coin is memoryless, therefore, so is X .

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Theorem: For a r.v. X that takes the values $\{0, 1, 2, \dots\}$, one has

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[See later for a proof.]

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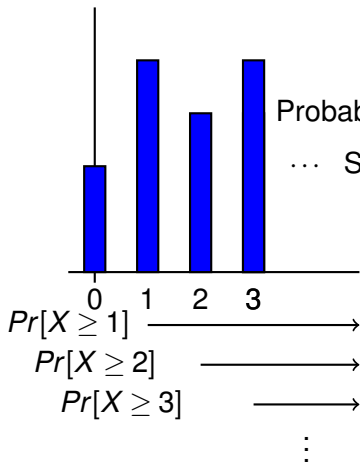
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Probability mass at i , counted i times.

... Same as $\sum_{i=1}^{\infty} i \times \Pr[X = i]$.

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$$\implies E[X^2] = (2 - p)/p^2$$

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