

# Deep Gaussian processes for estimation of failure probabilities in complex systems

**Annie (Sauer) Booth**

with Robert B. Gramacy and Ashwin Renganathan

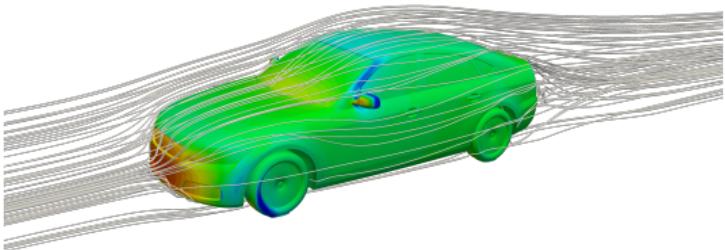
Virginia Tech Department of Statistics

2025

## Problem: failure probability of complex systems

Consider an expensive “blackbox” computer experiment

$$f : \mathcal{X} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$$



Failures occur when  $f(\mathbf{x}) > t$ .

Inputs are governed by a known distribution,  $\mathbf{x} \sim p(\mathbf{x})$ .

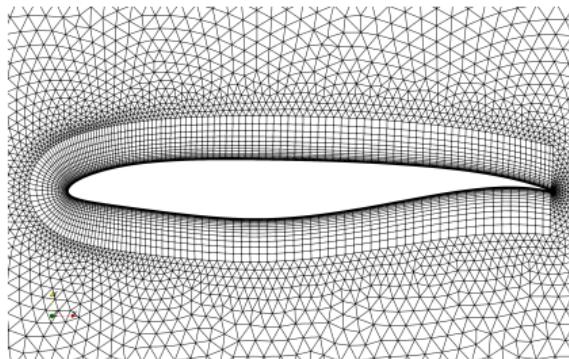
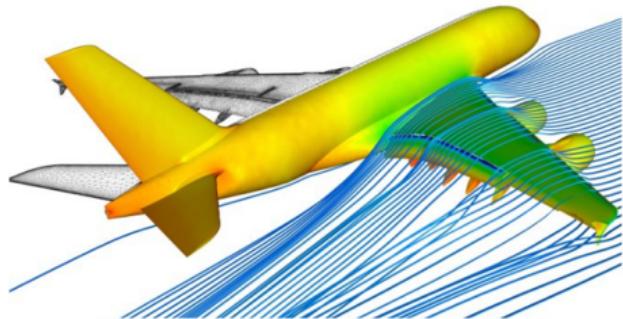
Our goal is to quantify the **failure probability**:

$$\alpha = \int_{\mathbf{x} \in \mathcal{X}} \mathbb{1}_{\{f(\mathbf{x}) > t\}} p(\mathbf{x}) d\mathbf{x}$$

## Motivation: RAE-2822 transonic airfoil efficiency

Consider a simulation of air flow around an RAE-2822 transonic airfoil.

- Solved via SU2: <https://su2code.github.io> (Economou et al., 2016)



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- **1 output:** lift/drag ratio (L/D)

L/D ratios less than 3 are considered **failures**.

**Objective:** to quantify the probability of system **failure**

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## A straightforward solution? ... it's never that easy

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A true **Monte Carlo** approach estimates the integral as

$$\hat{\alpha}_{\text{MC}} = \frac{1}{M} \sum_{i=1}^M \mathbb{1}_{\{f(\mathbf{x}_i) > t\}} \quad \text{for} \quad \mathbf{x}_i \stackrel{\text{iid}}{\sim} p(\mathbf{x})$$

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**Challenge:** the computer simulation is complex and **expensive**

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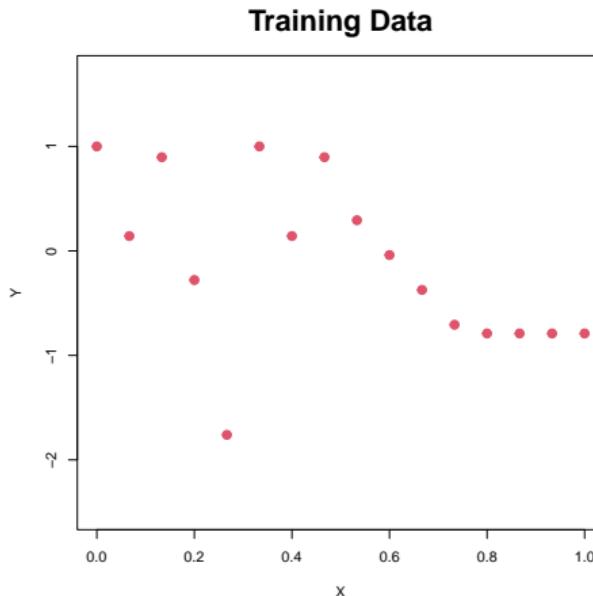
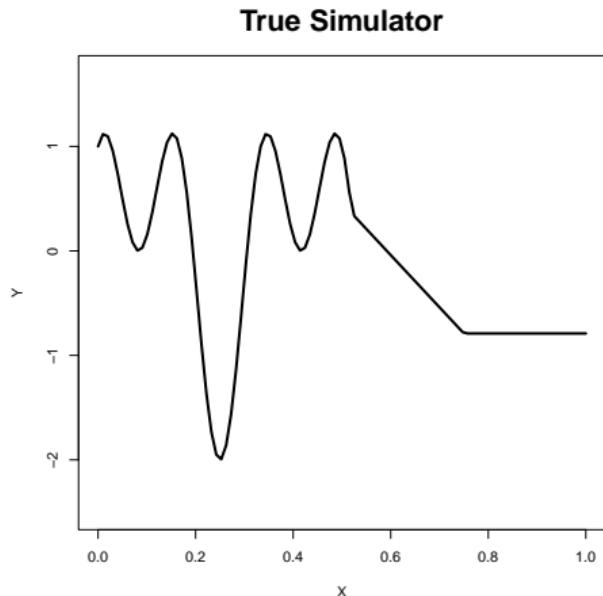
**Solution (?)**: use a surrogate

$$\hat{\alpha}_{\text{SURR}} = \frac{1}{M} \sum_{i=1}^M \mathbb{1}_{\{\hat{f}(\mathbf{x}_i) > t\}} \quad \text{for } \mathbf{x}_i \stackrel{\text{iid}}{\sim} p(\mathbf{x})$$

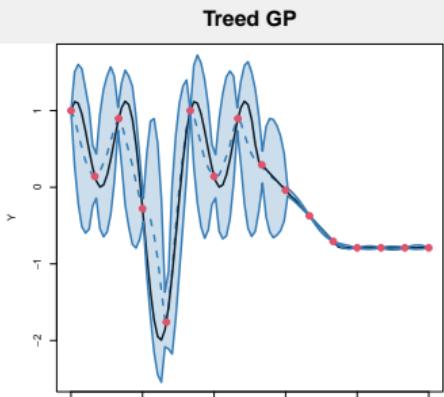
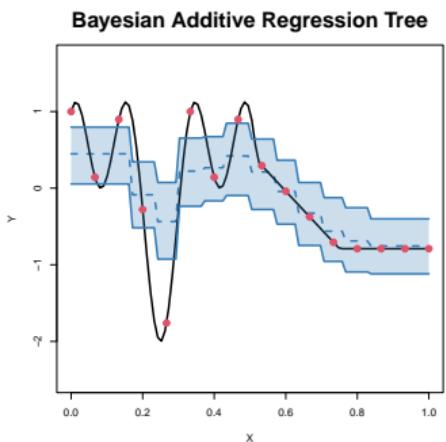
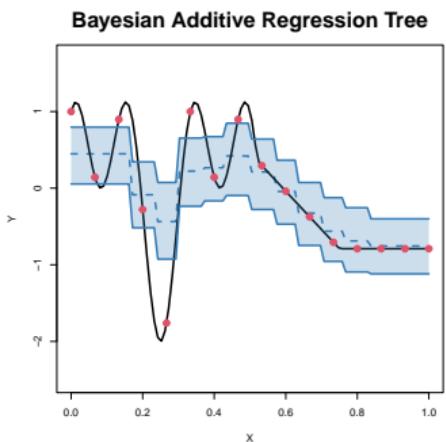
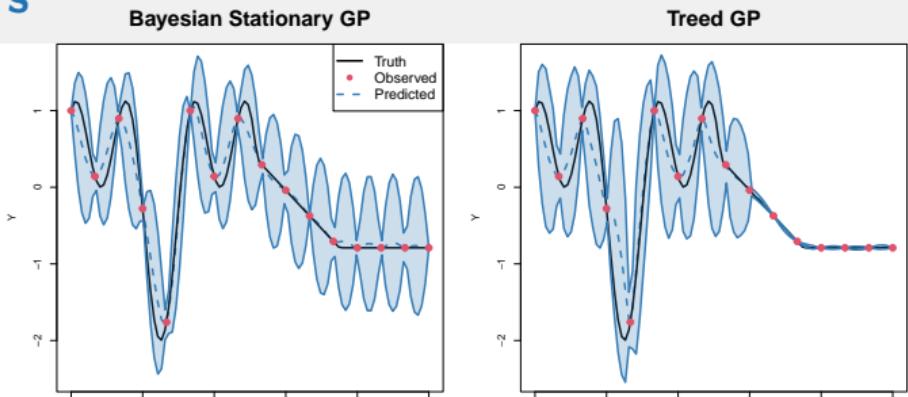
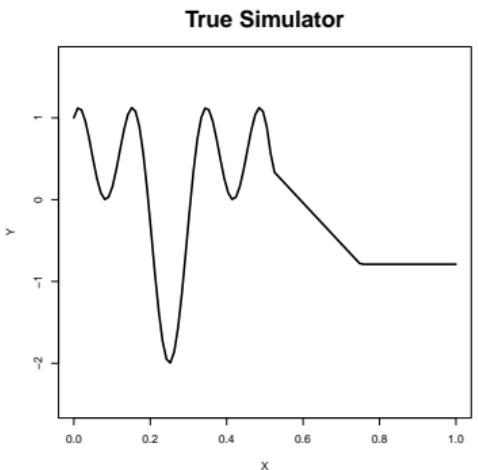
# I probably don't need to tell you... but I will anyways

There are **two** essential pieces of a surrogate:

- A statistical model
- An experimental design



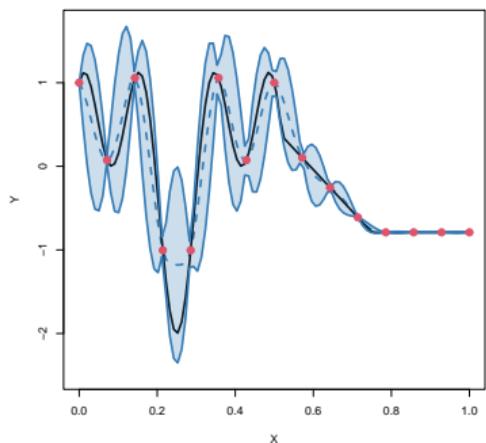
# Your model choice matters



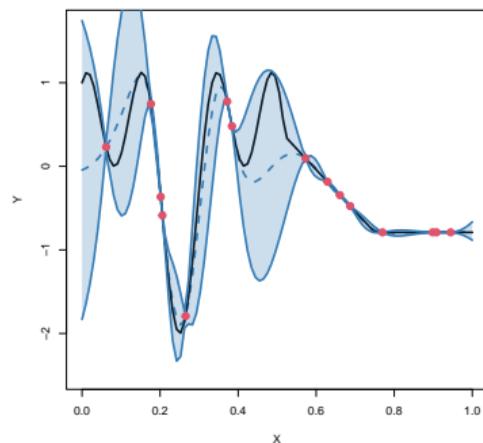
R packages (in order): deepgp, tgp, BART, deepgp

# Your design choice matters

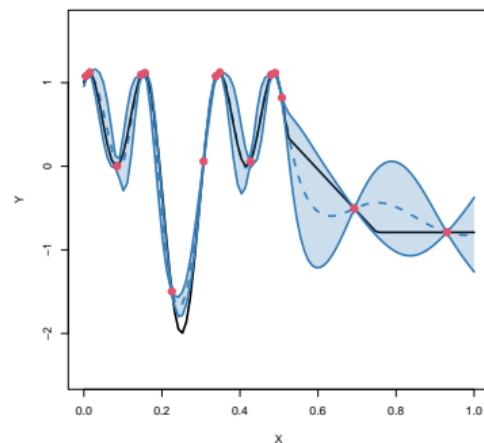
DGP – Uniform



DGP – Random



DGP – Strategic?



## Motivation: RAE-2822 transonic airfoil efficiency

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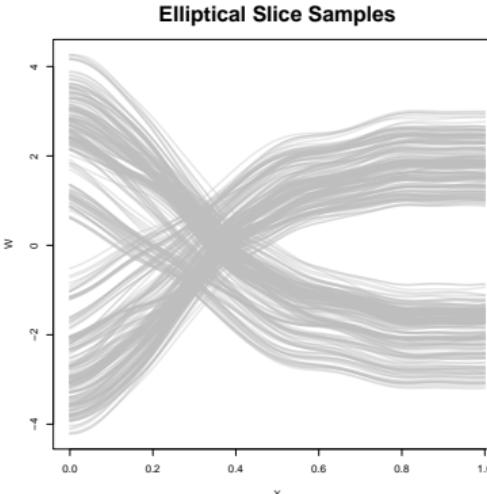
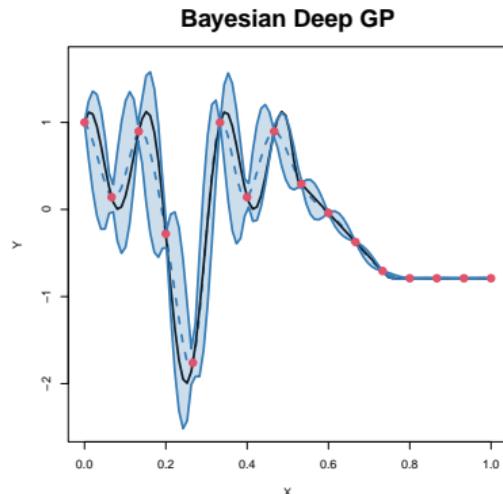
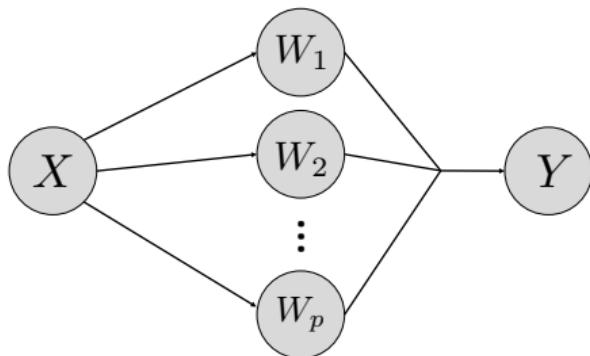
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**What model should we use? What design should we use?**

Ashwin thinks there will be **nonstationarity** in the L/D surface...

# Deep GPs offer nonstationary flexibility while preserving UQ

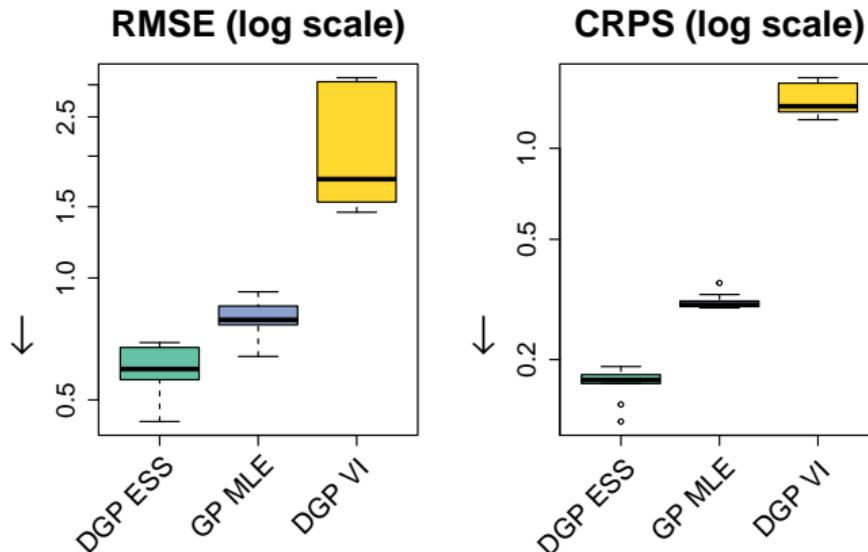
- DGP are functional compositions of GPs
- Latent layers act as warped inputs
- But they require MCMC sampling
  - Elliptical slice sampling
  - Murray et al. (2010)
- Wrapped in deepgp R-package



# Motivation: RAE-2822 transonic airfoil efficiency

How well can we predict L/D?

- 500-point Latin hypercube sample for training
- 4,500-point hold-out testing set



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Recall...

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$$\hat{\alpha}_{\text{SURR}} = \frac{1}{M} \sum_{i=1}^M \mathbb{1}_{\{\hat{f}(\mathbf{x}_i) > t\}} \quad \text{for } \mathbf{x}_i \stackrel{\text{iid}}{\sim} p(\mathbf{x})$$

The primary purpose of our surrogate is to *predict passes/failures...*

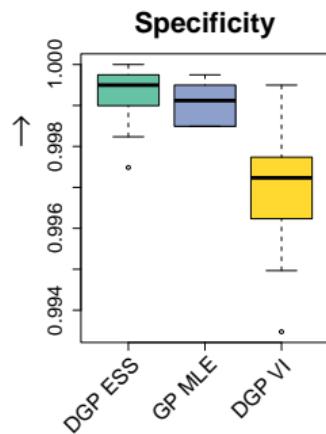
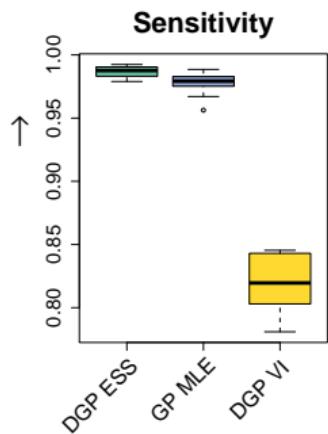
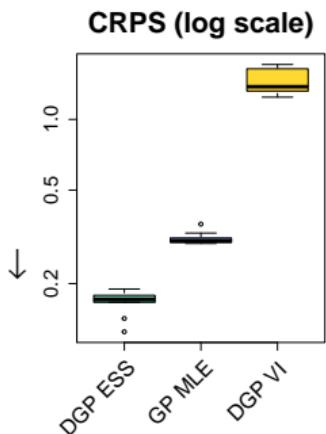
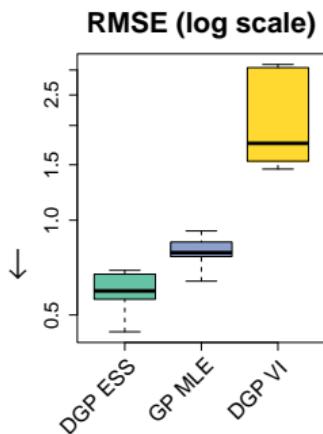
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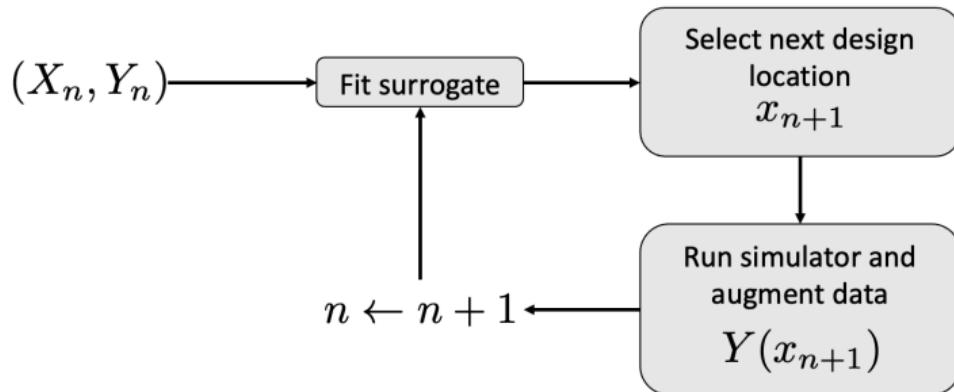
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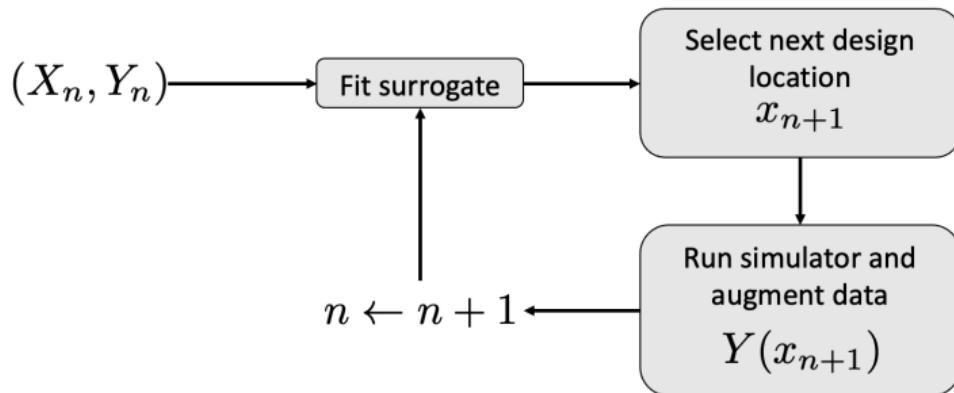
# We can do better with a sequential design

**Contour Location:** strategic sequential design targeting a contour/level set



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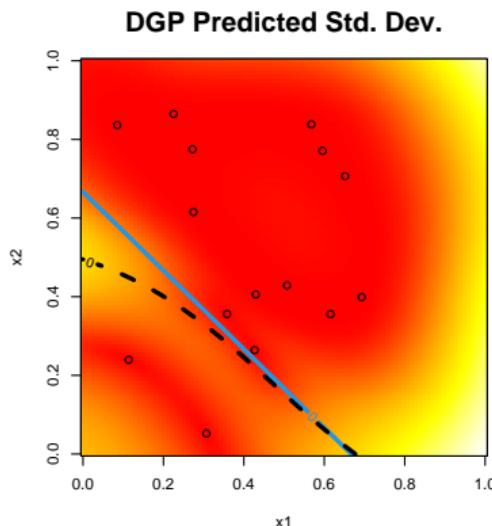
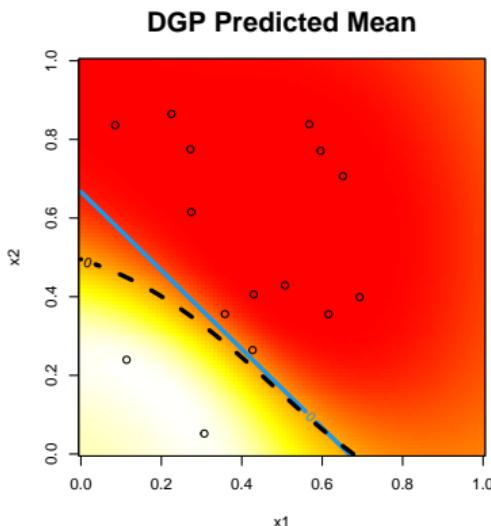
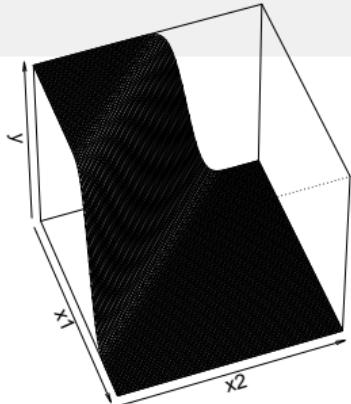


$x_{n+1}$  is chosen by optimizing an **acquisition function**

We need an acquisition scheme that effectively targets the failure contour...

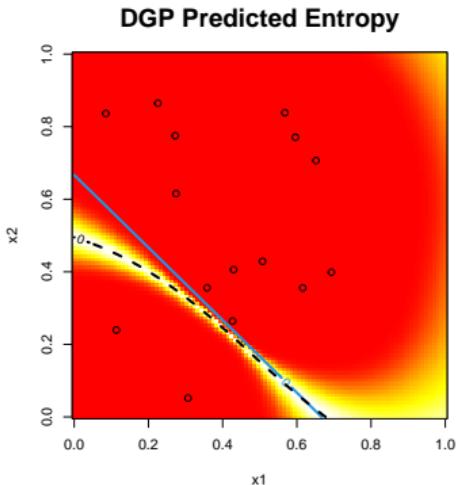
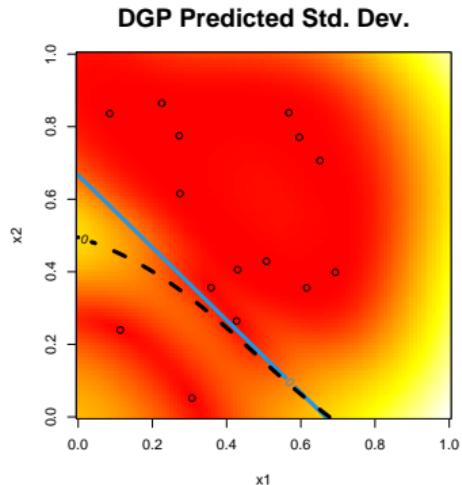
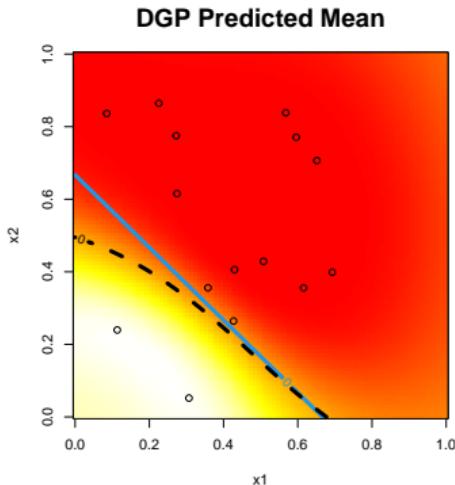
# An illustrative example

- Plateau function in 2d
- Two-layer DGP surrogate fit to an initial random design of size  $n = 15$



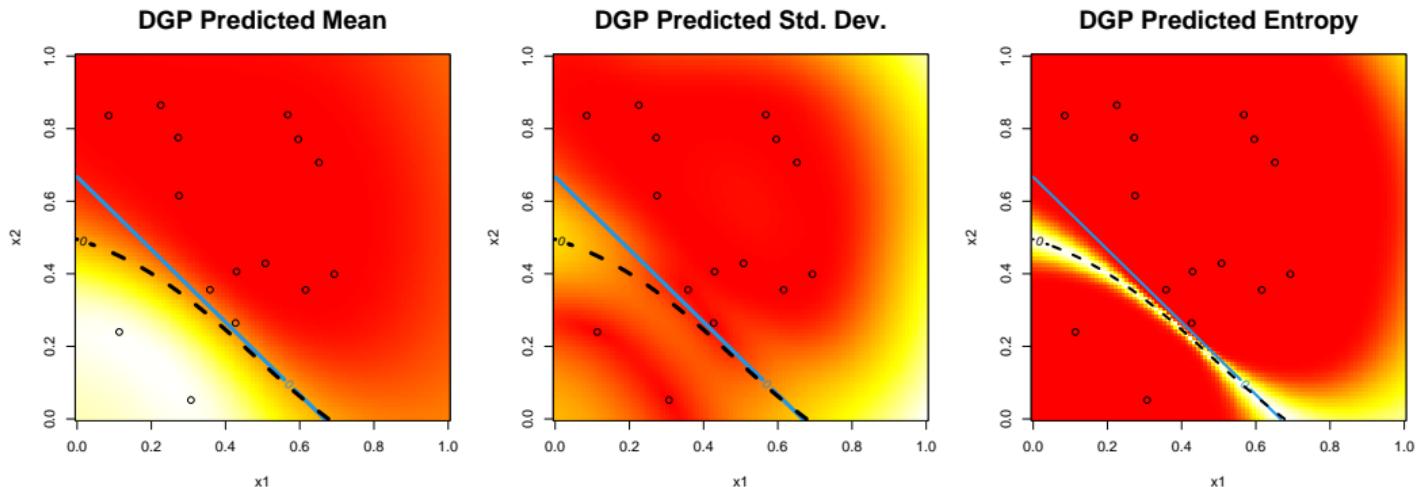
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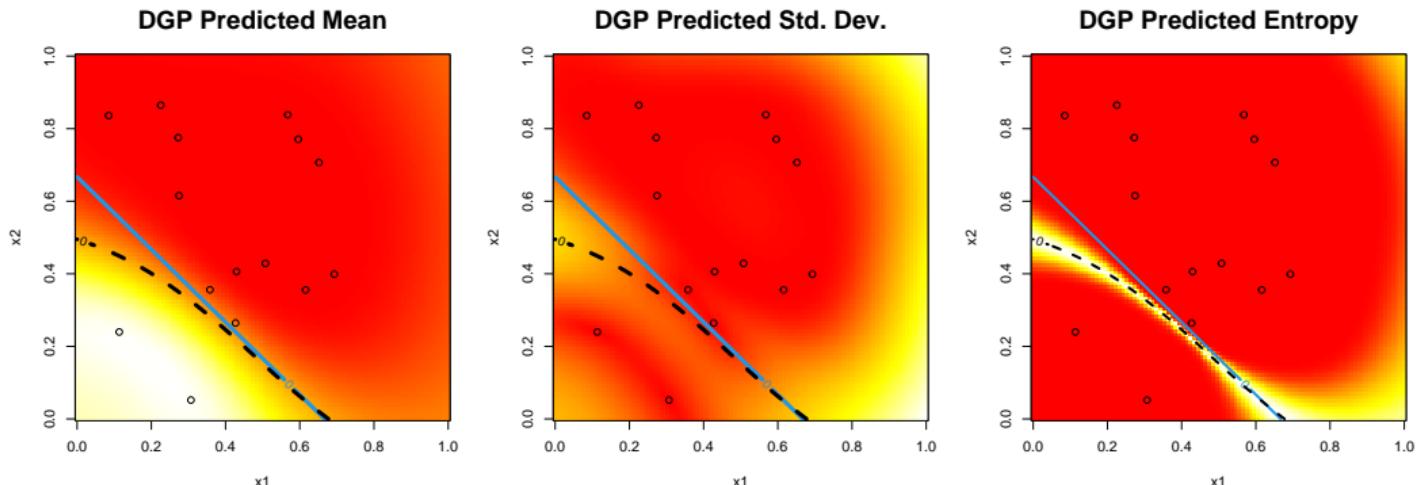
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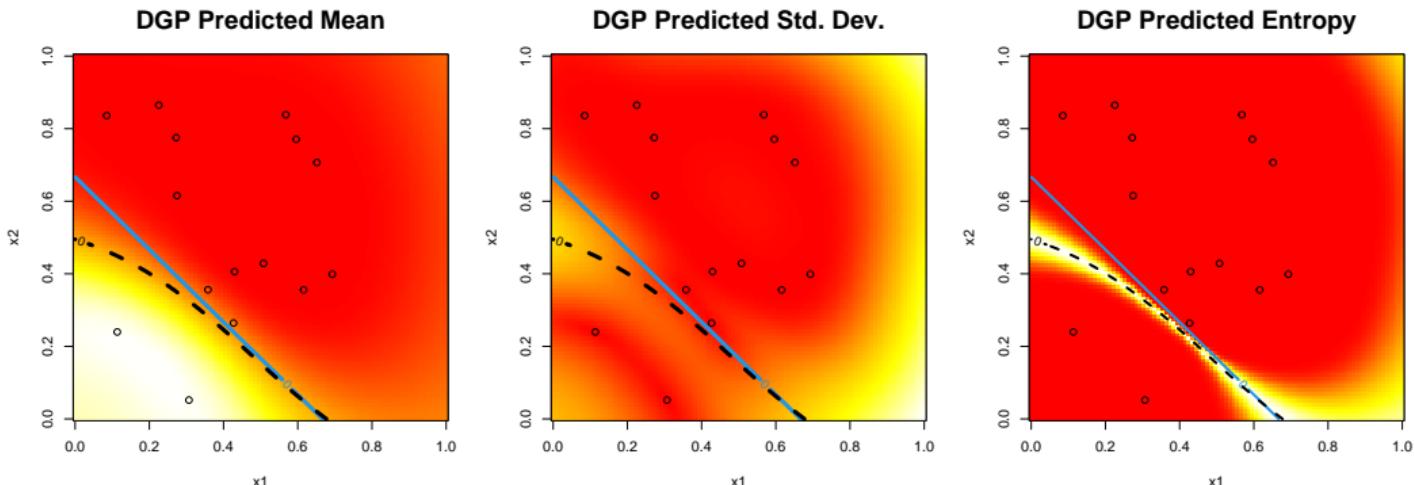
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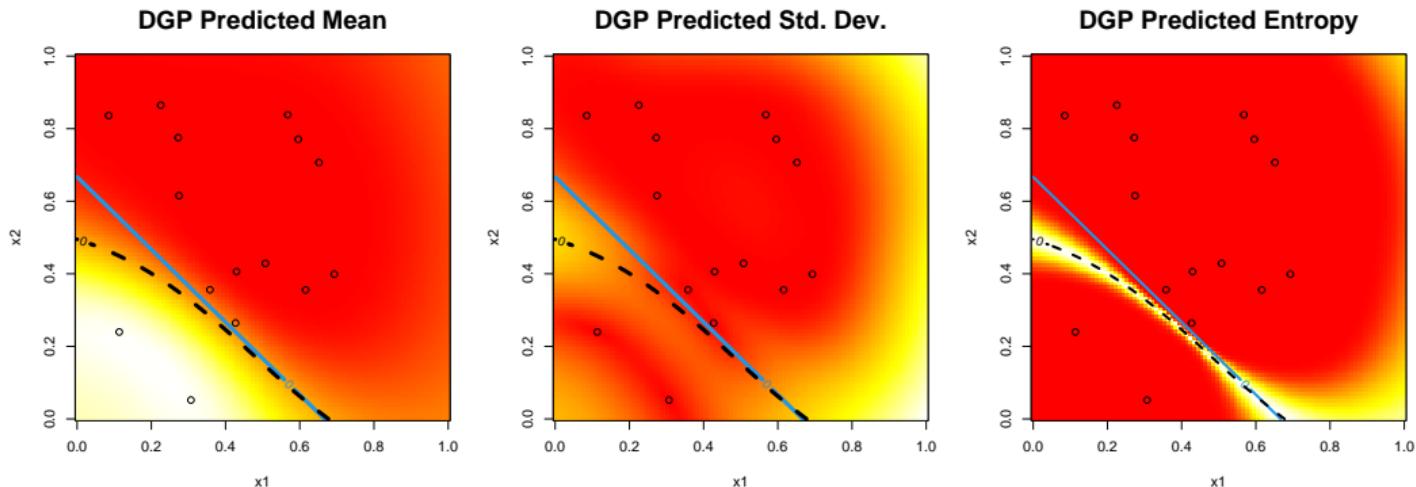
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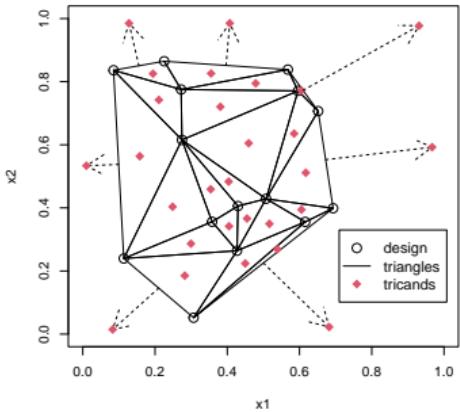
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- But numerical optimizations are hefty → **strategic candidates**
- And entropy does not encourage exploration → **Pareto front with uncertainty**

# Candidates on the Pareto front of entropy and uncertainty

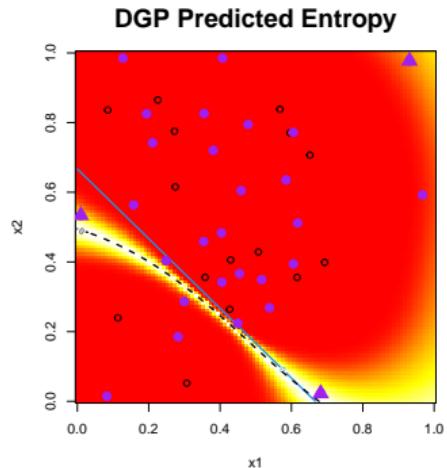
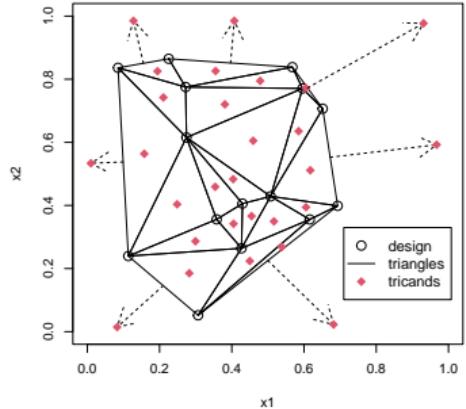
## ① Propose triangulation candidates



(Gramacy, Sauer, & Wycoff, 2022; Booth, Renganathan, & Gramacy, 2023)

# Candidates on the Pareto front of entropy and uncertainty

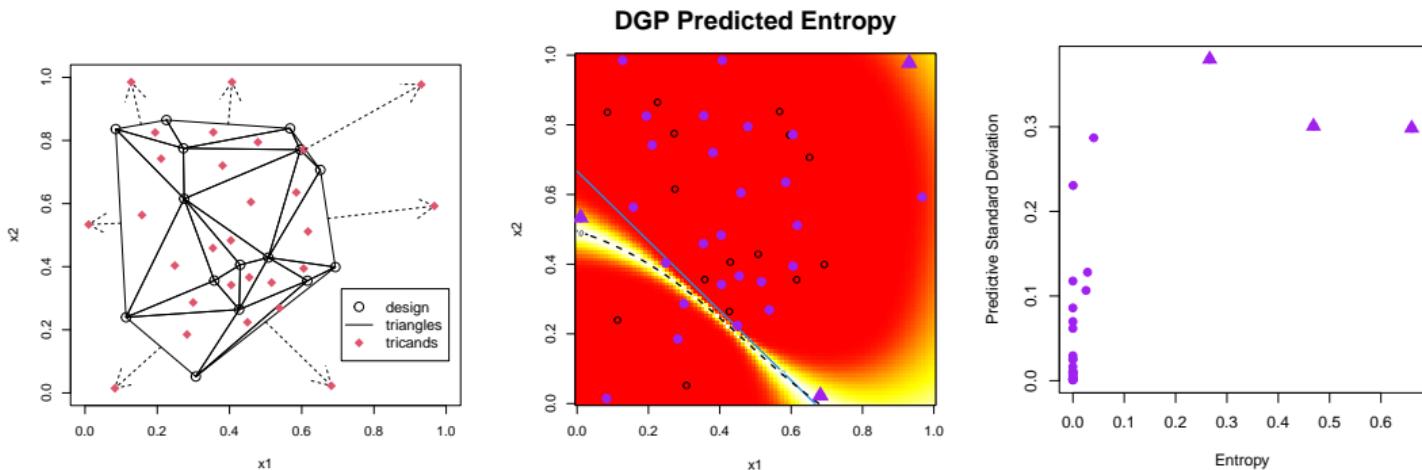
- ① Propose **triangulation candidates**
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# Candidates on the Pareto front of entropy and uncertainty

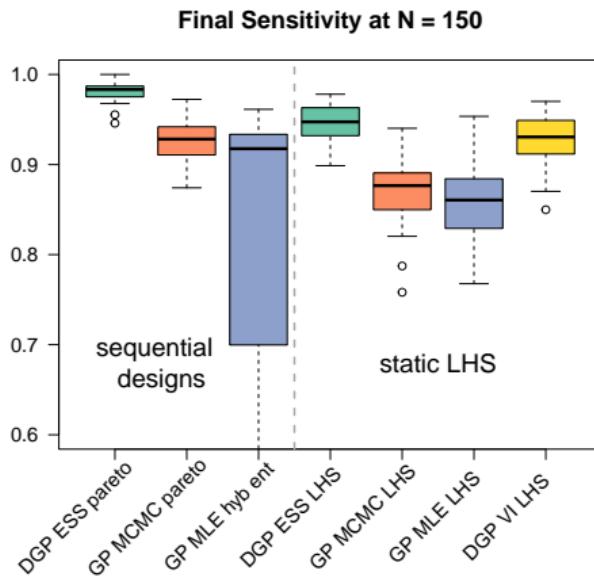
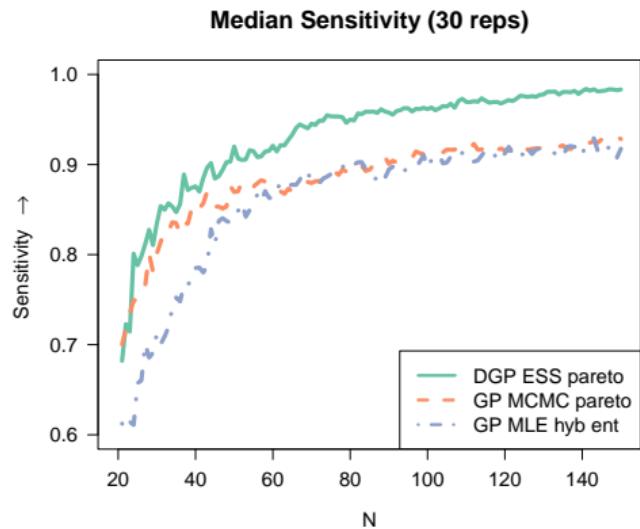
- ① Propose triangulation candidates
- ② Calculate **entropy** and **uncertainty**
- ③ Choose candidate on the Pareto front



(Gramacy, Sauer, & Wycoff, 2022; Booth, Renganathan, & Gramacy, 2023)

# The “secret sauce”: DGP + tricands + Pareto front

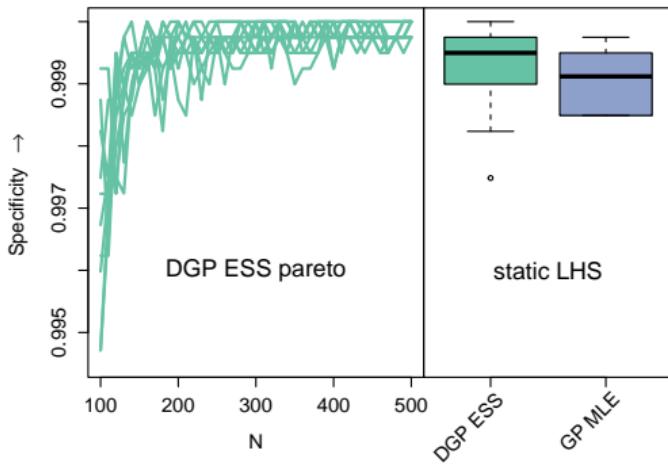
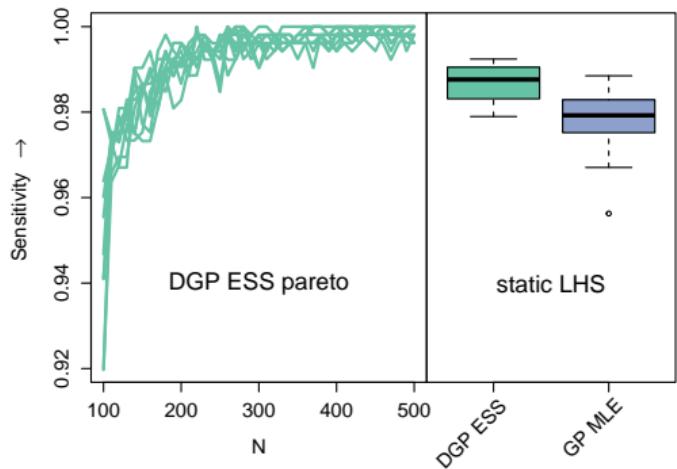
Plateau function bumped up to  $d = 5$



“hyb ent” uses strategic local optimization of entropy (Cole et al., 2022)

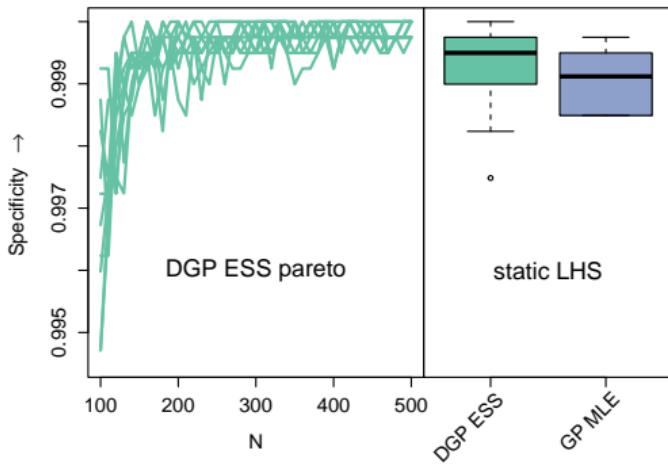
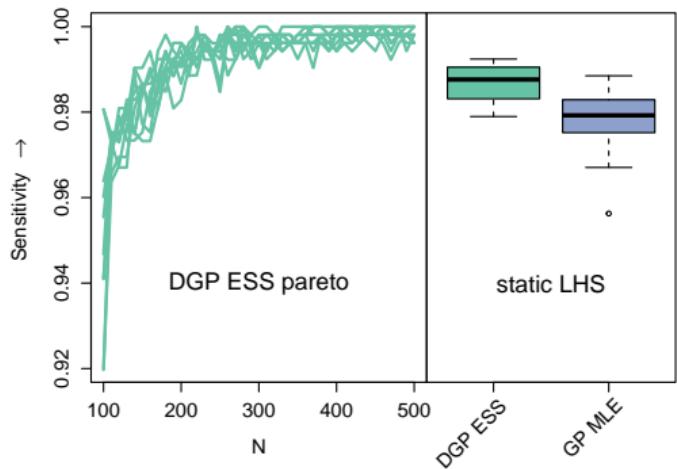
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- 100-point initial LHS
- 400 acquisitions using DGP + tricards + Pareto
- Compared to static LHS of size 500



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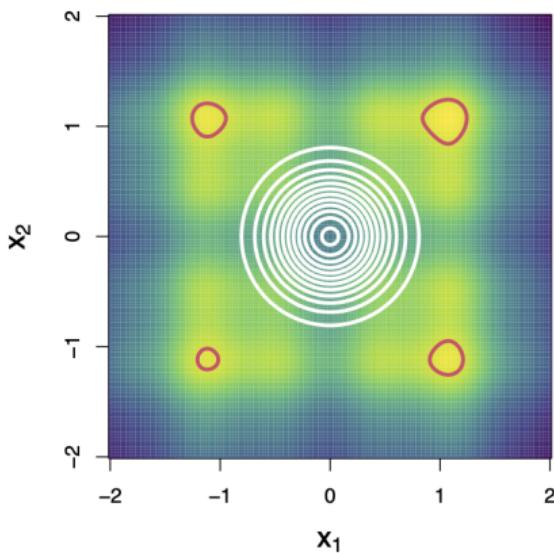
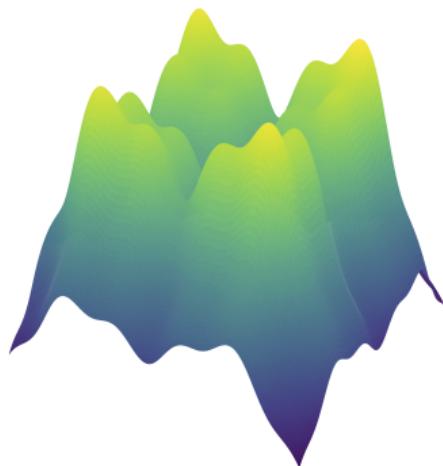
But what if  $N = 500$  exhausts our *entire* budget...  
...should we spend it *all* on training the surrogate?

## A new illustrative example

Recall...

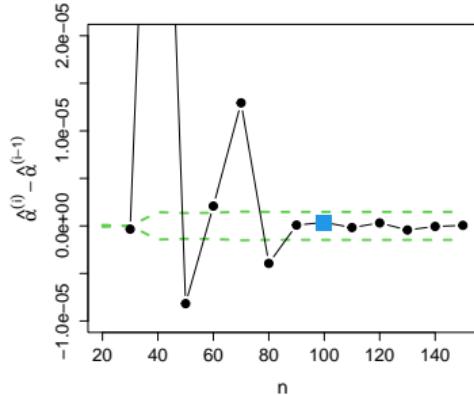
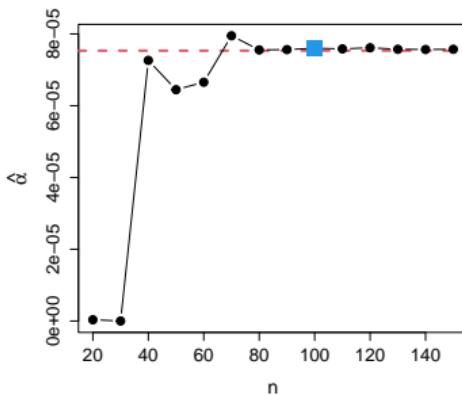
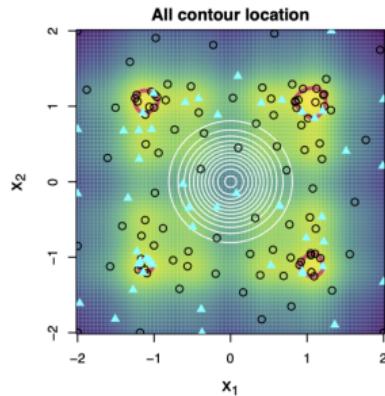
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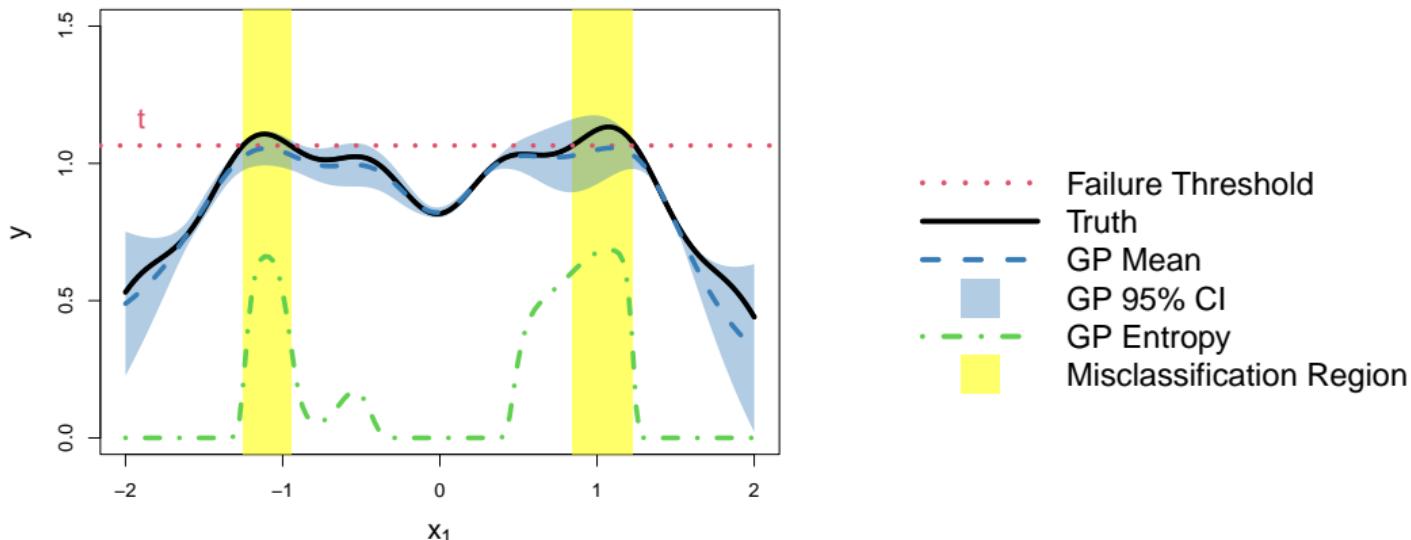
As we train our surrogate with contour location, the learning plateaus...



We propose a stopping rule based on the standard error of this estimate...  
...then what do we do with our remaining budget?

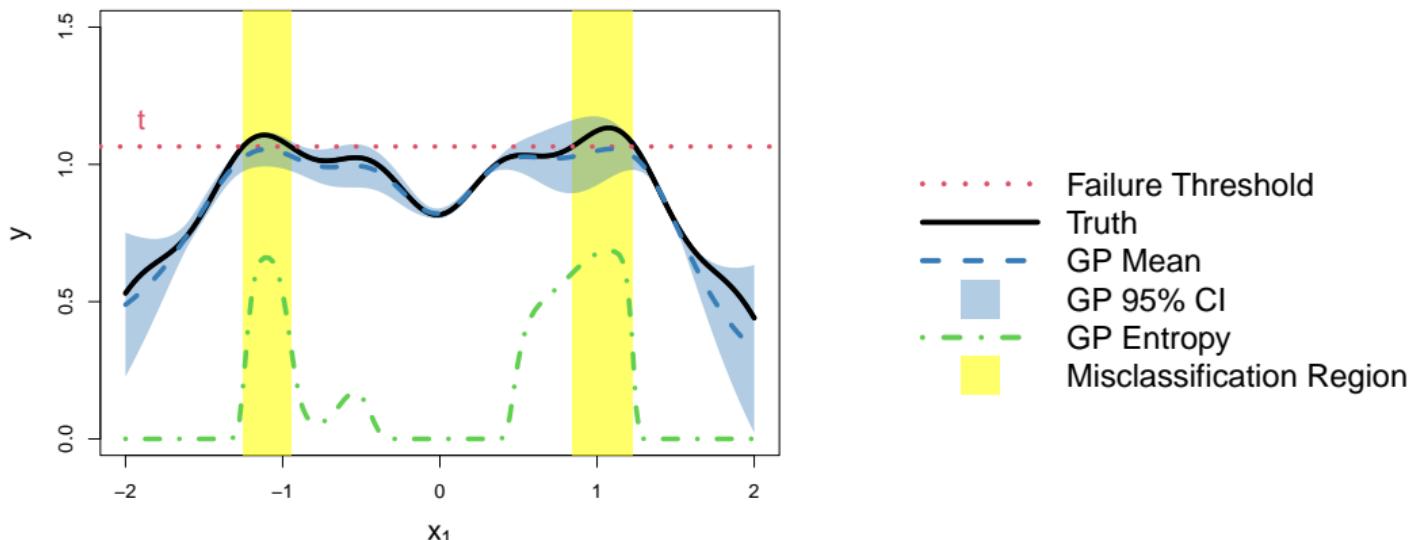
## Two-stage design: what to do with our remaining budget?

Herbie function slice at  $x_2 = 1.1$



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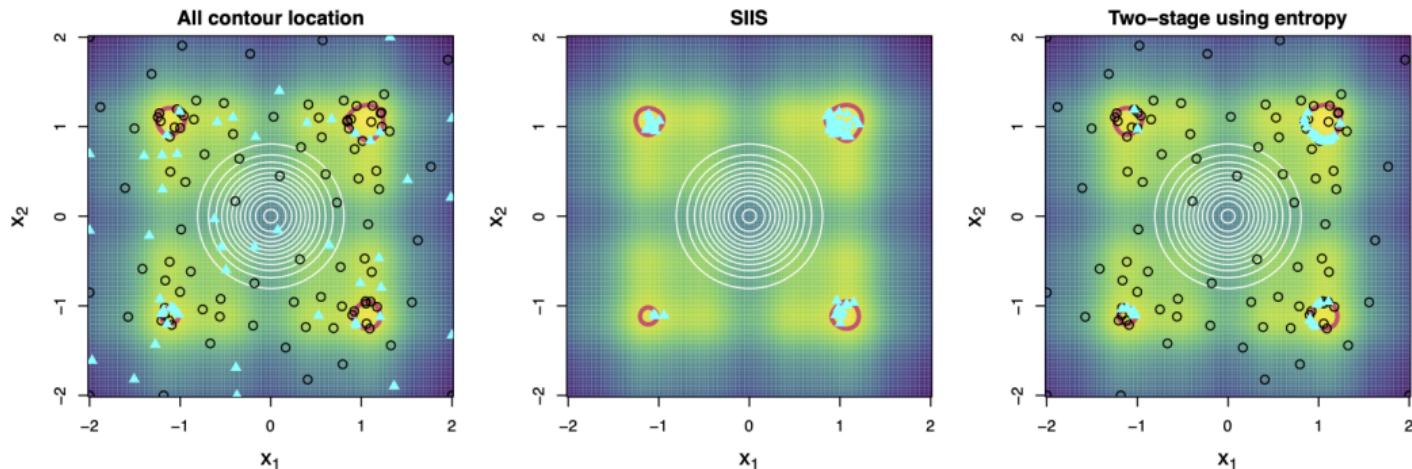


*The misclassification region aligns with the peaks in entropy...*

**... we propose using the remaining budget on the highest entropy samples.**

## Two-stage design: CL + highest entropy samples

- ① Perform contour location until learning has saturated
- ② Use remaining budget on highest entropy samples (ensuring correct classification)

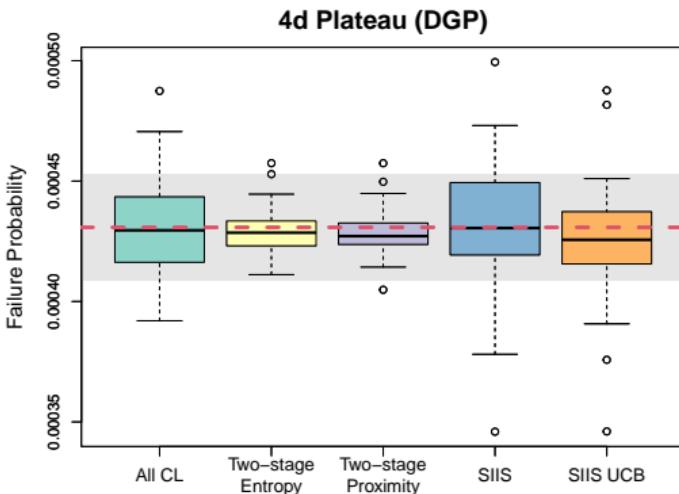
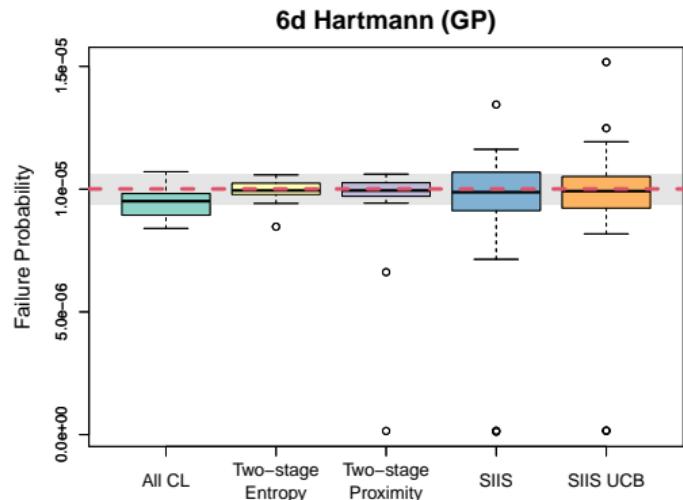


With the same surrogate and starting design, this outperforms

- Exhaustive contour location
- Surrogate-informed importance sampling (Peherstorfer et al., 2016)

# Two-stage design outperforms exhaustive CL and IS

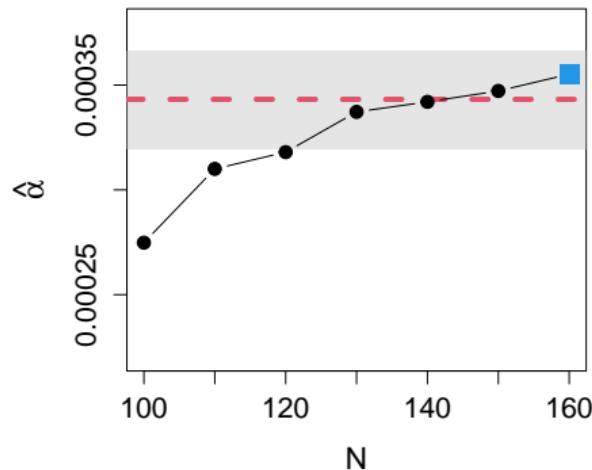
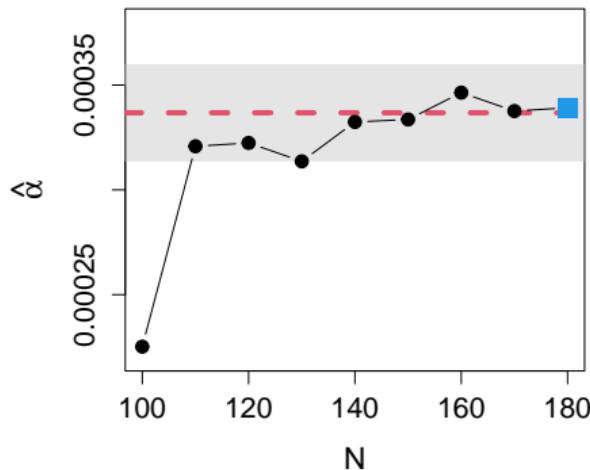
Function	True $\alpha$	$d$	$n$	$M$	Surrogate	CL Scheme
Hartmann	$1.001 \times 10^{-5}$	6	600	$1.0 \times 10^8$	GP	Cole et al. (2023)
Plateau	$8.530 \times 10^{-4}$	4	200	$3.5 \times 10^7$	DGP	Booth et al. (2024)



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$$\alpha = \int_{\mathbf{x} \in \mathcal{X}} \mathbb{1}_{\{f(\mathbf{x}) > t\}} p(\mathbf{x}) d\mathbf{x}$$

- Total budget of 500,  $M = 2.5 \times 10^6$
- DGP with two-stage design (Pareto + tricands for contour location)
- Two repetitions with re-randomized starting designs
- Final estimate shown in red



# Thanks!

Takeaways:

- Models matter, but they are intertwined with design
- A good surrogate with a strategic sequential design is hard to beat
- For failure probability estimation, a two-stage design is key
  - ① Balance exploration and exploitation to learn the contour
  - ② Greedily exploit to make sure uncertain Monte Carlo samples are classified correctly

Everything you saw today is supported by

- [deepgp](#) for R on CRAN ([Booth, 2024](#))
- and two git repositories of examples:

<https://bitbucket.org/gramacylab/deepgp-ex/>  
<https://bitbucket.org/boothlab/failprob/>