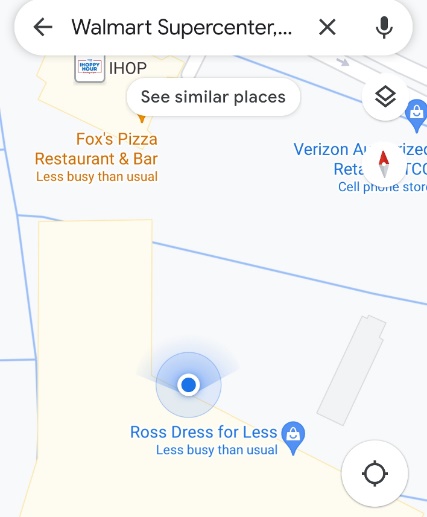
Shortly after the advent of commercial radio, the industry became sullied with a ‘pay for play’ scandal called payola. Music producers would pay disk jockeys money under the table so that certain songs would be played more than would be requested or called for by public opinion in the hopes of shaping public opinion. After decades of controversy, the practice was eventually made illegal and any paid promotions need to be fully and publicly disclosed. We at Blog Wyrm can’t help but wonder if a similar situation is developing in ‘Big Tech’.

The reason for that speculation is concrete. While recently visiting a new town, we asked Google Maps to point us towards a local Walmart. Google Maps provided the following map



Our location, given by the blue circle with the upward-facing fan, was immediately outside a Michaels craft store that was adjacent to a Ross Dress for Less location. No matter how much we manipulated the map by pinching and turning, we couldn’t get the Michaels existence to appear. Other stores also find a home in the beige ‘L’ but didn’t appear. This observation lead to the immediate speculation (as we are sometimes very cynical) that the reason Michaels didn’t appear while Ross did was that the latter had made its ‘anti-hush’ payment while the former didn’t. Big Tech will, no doubt, have great reasons for this disparity that don’t have anything to do with ‘something shady’ but, so too, did the music industry nearly 100 years ago. Just sayin’.

Now onto the posts.

[Aristotle2Digital](http://aristotle2digital.blogwyrm.com/?p=1482) has recently explored the Metropolis-Hastings algorithm as a way of producing arbitrary distributions using a Markov Chain Monte Carlo method. So far, explaining how and why the method works and the actual generating of random realizations has been confined to 1 dimension for clarity. But, of course, the real power of Monte Carlo methods shines in multi-dimensional problems. This month, [Aristotle2Digital](http://aristotle2digital.blogwyrm.com/?p=1482) looks at how the Metropolis-Hastings method fairs in a 2-dimensional problem of covarying statistical data for the correlated height and weight of animals.

One of the immutable things about human nature is our ability to have short memories about bad things that have happened in the past. For example, it is relatively easy to look past COVID-19 by thinking of it as a pandemic of the past. Afterall, most everyone has given up on masks and, while there will always be new variants, it looks as if they’ve regressed to the mean in terms of severity. Likewise, it is easy to forgot the stupidity of emotion-driven policy making (an adequate, if naïve, definition of socialism) and think that this time making economic decisions based on ideology will be different. [CommonCents](http://commoncents.blogwyrm.com/?p=983) explores how the collision of these two ‘amnesias’ has led to a total economic meltdown in Sri Lanka.

Most everyone knows, or at least believes they know, that perpetual motion machines are impossible. There is even a homage to this in the Simpsons. But, as [UnderTheHood](http://underthehood.blogwyrm.com/?p=1780) discusses, the Second Law of Thermodynamics is, by no means, on as solid footing as we collectively think; nor is the notion of entropy understood in any meaningful way as there seems to be almost as many formulations and definitions of both of these ideas as there are physicists on the planet to think about them.

Enjoy!