Technical Standards and Measurement

Oliver Reed Smoot

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

March 20, 2021



Outline

Outline

- 1 Introduction
 - Smoot's Ear: The Measure of Humanity

- 2 Conclusions
 - Where can I learn more?



Outline

- 1 Introduction
 - Smoot's Ear: The Measure of Humanity

- 2 Conclusions
 - Where can I learn more?



What is a Smoot?

- An imprecise unit of measurement originating from famous MIT hack
- 1 smoot = 5 feet and 7 inches
- Harvard bridge = 364.4 smoots (+ an ear)





Smoot's Ear: The Measure of Humanity

MIT Hack

The HACK:

■ Tom O'Connor - wanted to measure Harvard bridge to track his progress when walking



- Tom O'Connor wanted to measure Harvard bridge to track his progress when walking
- Smoot's height chosen as unit of measurement (he was the shortest)



- Tom O'Connor wanted to measure Harvard bridge to track his progress when walking
- Smoot's height chosen as unit of measurement (he was the shortest)
- Seven freshman measured Harvard bridge using Smoot's body to mark distance



- Tom O'Connor wanted to measure Harvard bridge to track his progress when walking
- Smoot's height chosen as unit of measurement (he was the shortest)
- Seven freshman measured Harvard bridge using Smoot's body to mark distance
- Result: Harvard Bridge = 364.4 smoots (+an ear)



Smoot's Ear: The Measure of Humanity

Career

■ Chairman of the American National Standards Institute



Smoot's Ear: The Measure of Humanity

Career

- Chairman of the American National Standards Institute
- Served as president of the International Organization for Standardization from 2003 to 2005.



Outline

- 1 Introduction
 - Smoot's Ear: The Measure of Humanity

- 2 Conclusions
 - Where can I learn more?



Questions and Answers

Want to know more?

- Browse http://web.mit.edu/smoot/history.htm.
- Smoot's Legacy http://alum.mit.edu/news/AlumniNews/ Archive/smoots_legacy.
- Smoot Salute! http://web.mit.edu/spotlight/smoot-salute.

