From: Statistical Society of Australia
To: Contact us
Subject: Stats Matters & Events
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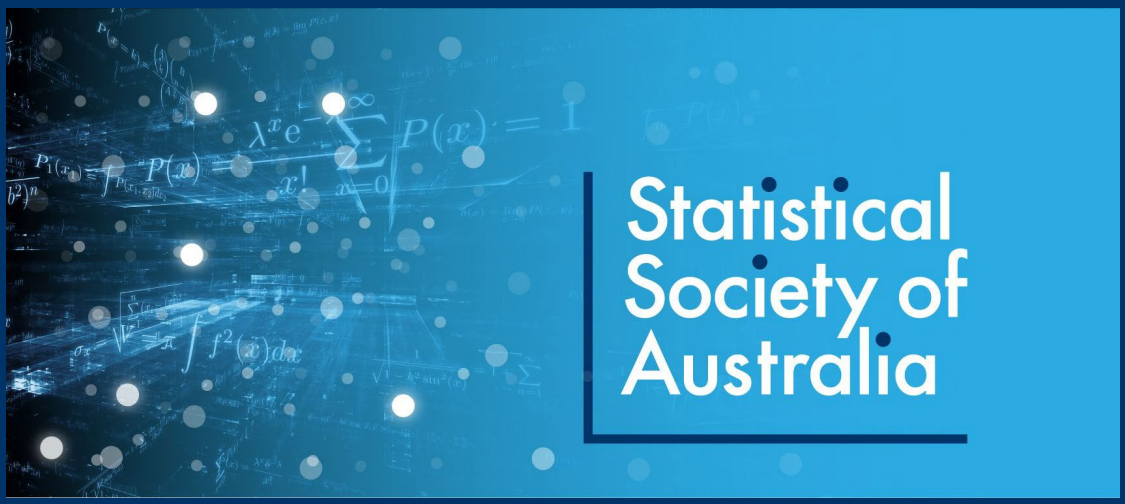

STATS MATTERS & EVENTS

6 April 2023

Dear Contact,

It was an exciting week at the SSA office: We were so thrilled to finally be able to open registrations for ASC and OZCOTS 2023! No sooner had the announcement been made than the first registrations started to trickle in, and we are pleased to see that except for one person, everyone registered for the in-person version event! That's so good see. We look forward to catching up with many of you at the conference.

Would you please note that when you register for the conference, you need to be logged in as a member with the email address linked to your membership account, to be able to take advantage of the member discount. If you try to register and your registration category is not highlighted, it means that either you are not logged in or your membership has expired. If you think there is an error on our part, please contact me.

Our Event Coordinator, Jodi Phillips, was able to negotiate excellent accommodation deals with four Wollongong hotels, so make sure you check out those options. Public transport to the conference venue is available from each of these hotels. There is even a free bus!

These days, no event will get any traction unless it is advertised heavily via

social media as well. If you are on Twitter and follow the Statistical Society of Australia (SSA) (and why wouldn't you?), you will have seen tweets posted by our Vice President (Communications), Atousa Ghahramani. However, we need your help: Whether you are planning on attending the conference or not, could you please support the Society by sharing our tweets and Facebook posts with your colleagues and in your private circles as well? We really want to get the word out. Thank you!

Opening for registrations feels like a milestone has been achieved. Getting to this point took enormous effort, and I'm sure that everyone who was involved is looking forward to a well-deserved Easter break.

You may have four days off, or you may be making the most of school holidays and have a proper holiday: Whatever your plans are, have a wonderful Easter break and if you hit the road, stay safe.

Marie-Louise Rankin
SSA Executive Officer

Read newsletter in your browser

In this newsletter:

Canadian Professor Uses Statistics to Dominate Tim Hortons' Roll Up To Win Contest

April Issue of Significance out now!

How old are you?

Why accreditation is critical

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Canadian Professor Uses Statistics to Dominate *Tim Hortons' Roll Up To Win* Contest

Thank you to SSA member Benjamin Phillips, who alerted me to the article "Canadian statistics professor games Tim Hortons contest for 80-98%

win rates” (ARS Technica, 4 April 2023):

A University of Waterloo professor has used statistical analysis to win 80% of *Tim Hortons' Roll Up To Win* contest, a virtual version of the Canadian coffee chain's annual contest.

Michael Wallace said the *Roll Up* contest, in which players attempt to win prizes by rolling back the rim of a coffee cup, had become "like a slot machine" since going online.

During the course of his research, he discovered that playing the online game at a certain time gave him an about 98% chance of winning. Unfortunately, Wallace's win rate fell off when Tim Hortons caught on, and the game mechanics were changed, but he used Canada's multiple time zones to increase his success rate back to 40% in 2022.

Then Tim Hortons decided to add real-time data of the winnings on their website. The data showed how many prizes were won at any given moment. Wallace enlisted the help of some friends to help him to record the prize data across hours and days. It did not take long for him and his team to claw back some of the earlier success rate: play the game at 3:16 am, and your chances of winning are roughly 80%!

Read the article here

April Issue of Significance out now!

Many statisticians will be among the 160 million people around the world glued to the Eurovision Song Contest in May. Yet even those with zero interest in kitsch pop music will enjoy our expert analysis of the statistics behind Eurovision’s notoriously peculiar and easy-to-abuse scoring system and its (ostensibly less peculiar and harder-to-abuse) replacement for 2023.

Meanwhile, our cover feature celebrates a somewhat quieter, simpler spectacle - the mathematical beauty hidden in a “particularly messy corner of statistical theory”.

April issue highlights:

Eurovision voting: a game of two halves

As Liverpool prepares to host this year’s Eurovision Song Contest on behalf of last year’s winner, Ukraine, Andrew Gustar investigates the statistics of the competition’s scoring system.

Food poverty: a scale unimagined

When Dan Clarkson volunteered to help at a UK food bank, he discovered how statistics and data analysis can help organisations assess need, plan for demand, and better understand the extent of food poverty.

Seen to be done?

In criminal justice, the controversial peremptory challenge allows lawyers to dismiss potential jury members without giving a reason. Chris Salahub gathers data to paint a picture of racial bias in jury selection.

The beauty of binomial coverage curves

Matt Stapleton sheds light on the baffling behaviour of binomial interval coverage and demonstrates how to find your way through the chaos.

Product reliability: How statistics fits in

Customers demand, and manufacturers strive for, increasingly higher product reliability. Statistics plays a key role in achieving this. Necip Doganaksoy, William Q. Meeker and Gerald J. Hahn explain how.

Interview: Nonhlanhla Yende-Zuma

Nonhlanhla Yende-Zuma is head of biostatistics at global research organisation CAPRISA in Durban, South Africa. She has been named one of Bill Gates’s “Heroes in the Field” – those “putting in the real work to improve lives” – and has her sights set on a future in global policy-making. Anna Britten finds out more.

Access the digital version of *Significance* through the membership portal of the SSA website. You'll need to be logged in to get access.

Print issues will be mailed to subscribers soon.

Significance is also online at www.significancemagazine.com.

How old are you?

As a statistician you are well aware of how important data is. These days we ask new members for their birthdate when they sign up, but for many years we did not. Having an idea about the demographic of the membership is important when trying to cater to our members' needs. If you have not yet done so, when you have a minute, could you please add your birthdate to your membership profile?

While the system will ask you for the full birthdate, once saved, it will convert it to the 1 January of your birthyear. While that means we won't know your exact birthdate and can't send you a birthday card, it also means that your data is safe. Thank you in advance!

This week, when looking through some older files, I came across an article from 2007 about accreditation. It was written by Dr John Henstridge of Data Analysis Australia. At the time, John was the Chair of the SSA Accreditation Committee. What John wrote in 2007 is still 100% relevant today:

Why accreditation is critical

The statistical profession in Australia (and around the world) is constantly under pressure from many directions. It sees statistical work being done by non-statisticians (often poorly) and new areas of research such as data mining passing to other professions in a way that often prevents statisticians being able to contribute. Ever growing computing availability increases these pressures.

Accreditation is a key element in the statistical profession's action against these trends. In Australia the system of accreditation evolved by the Statistical Society of Australia emphasises the outward face of statistics, providing standards so that those needed statistical advice know where to turn and providing a structure useful to those who want to develop a career in applied statistics.

Two levels of accreditation are provided. Graduate Statistician (GStat) status recognises the completion of an undergraduate level course with sufficient content and level in statistics, both theory and application. It marks the individual as being able to start a statistical career. An applicant may ask for

accreditation on their individual merits, or through completing a course accredited by the Society. The standards are the same but an accredited course provides students the surety when embarking on a course that completion will lead to automatic recognition. A number of universities in Australia already have accreditation or are in the process of applying for it.

Accredited Statistician (AStat) status provides a higher level of accreditation and applies only to individuals. It requires a combination of qualifications, ability and experience, and evidence must be provided in the form of documented work (papers or reports) and referees.

The Accreditation Committee of the Society administers the accreditation system. While the Committee sees its role of encouraging the accreditation process (and will often suggest improvements to applications if it feels that an applicant has not done themselves justice), it rigorously follows standards so that the terms GStat and AStat are seen as highly desirable and meaningful qualifications.

Much remains to be done. Ideally the profession should achieve a full professional status as is held by architects and engineers. The public expects that a bridge they use has been designed by a qualified engineer to be safe. They should have the same expectation that decisions that affect their lives are based, where appropriate, on the proper statistical evaluation of the evidence carried out by a properly qualified statistician. We are a long way from achieving that but it should remain our goal.

I strongly urge all members of the Society to support the accreditation system. Statisticians who do applied work should seriously consider personal accreditation. Staff in universities should consider having their courses accredited. Employers should recognise the value in accredited applicants where appropriate. (We often overlook that some statisticians are employers of other statisticians.) We should all publicise it more widely.

Mentioned in previous newsletters (click on the relevant heading to find out details)

SSA PhD Top-Up Scholarships: the SSA wants to support you (deadline 26 April 2023)

Society Awards - Do you know anyone deserving of one of SSA's Society Awards?

Expression of Interest in Survey and Data Science Courses in 2023–24

2023 Venables Award for Developers of Open Source Software for Data

Analytics - (deadline 22 April 2023)

SSA Events

Mathematical Engineering of Deep Learning - Part One Foundations

20 Apr 2023, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM (AEST) held at Room 163, 14 Sir Christopher Ondaatje Ave Macquarie University, NSW 2109, Australia

This workshop is presented by the NSW Branch and School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences, Macquarie University. It is targeted at people interested in engineering, signal processing, statistics, physics, econometrics, operations research, quantitative management, pure mathematics, bioinformatics, applied machine learning, or even applied deep learning.

For more details and to register click here.

Statistical Consulting Network April Meet-Up

28 April 2023, 12:30 PM – 1:30 PM AEST, held online

Come along with your thinking cap, maybe a problem, and some lunch!

The Statistical Consulting Network invites you to their monthly meet-up, a virtual lunchtime meeting where statisticians help each other out with problems that they aren't sure how to deal with. This virtual meeting is held on Zoom at lunchtime on the last Friday of each month, 12:30-1:30 PM (AEDT). We start each meet-up with announcements, or occasionally a special topic discussion, then discuss problems that attendees have brought along with them.

We also have a Slack workspace where members of the consulting network can communicate between meetings, or post problems or relevant materials they would like to discuss during a meeting.

Zoom link

Slack Workspace link

Item Nonresponse And Imputation Course

20 Jun 2023, 5:00 PM (AEST) – 11 Jul 2023, 6:00 PM (AEST), held online - weekly 1 hour live discussions with Professor Dr Jörg Drechsler

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The ASC2023 workshops are open for registration:

10 December 2023

ASC 2023 Workshops- Essential Skills for Statistical Communication

ASC 2023 Workshops-Statistical Consultancy – The Essentials for Getting Started and Ongoing Success

ASC 2023 Workshops-Deep Statistics for More Rigorous and Efficient Data Science

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ASC and OZCOTS 2023

10-15 December 2023, University of Wollongong, NSW

Abstract submission and registration now open!

The Scientific Program Committee is pleased to invite authors to submit abstracts for oral and poster presentations, to be delivered at ASC and

OZCOTS 2023.

Please click here to submit your abstract. You will be asked to create an account with Oxford Abstract. Just follow the prompts.

Presenters should aim for 10-15 minute presentations. Depending on the number of submissions a final decision on the length of presentations will be made closer to the event.

The abstract submission deadline is 24 April 2023.

Find out more

Current Vacancies in SSA's Career Centre

Multiple Data Analyst Roles - APS6 and APS5 - Perth

Western Australia

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Department of Employment and Workplace RelationsLocation ...

Multiple Data Analyst Roles - APS6 and APS5 - Sydney

New South Wales

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Department of Employment and Workplace RelationsLocation ...

Multiple Data Analyst Roles - APS6 and APS5 - Canberra

Australian Capital Territory

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Department of Employment and Workplace RelationsLocation ...

Multiple Assistant Directors - Data Management and Reporting - EL 1

New South Wales

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

The Evidence and Assurance Division provides ...

Multiple Assistant Directors - Data Management and Reporting - EL 1

Australian Capital Territory

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

The Evidence and Assurance Division provides ...

Revenue Officer- DIRECT HIRE (12 Month Register)

Multiple Locations (see description)

Internal Revenue Service

Duties WHAT IS THE DIVISION? SMALL BUSINESS ...

Internal Revenue Agent (Examiner) - Direct Hire (12 Month Register)

Multiple Locations (see description)

Internal Revenue Service

Duties WHAT ARE THE APPEALS (AP), LARGE BUSINESS ...

Lecturer in Applied Statistics

Western Australia

Curtin University

A new role for a statistician to teach data science ...

View All Jobs

If you have news from the Australian statistical community to share in Stats Matters and Events, please get in touch with us! We love getting feedback too.

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