

Case Studies in Bayesian Statistics

The past few years have witnessed dramatic advances in computational methods for Bayesian inference. As a result, Bayesian approaches to solving a wide variety of problems in data analysis and decision-making have become feasible, and there is currently a growth spurt in the application of Bayesian methods. The purpose of this volume is to present several detailed examples of applications of Bayesian thinking, with an emphasis on the scientific or technological context of the problem being solved. The papers collected here were presented and discussed at a Workshop held at Carnegie-Mellon University, September 29 through October 1, 1991. There are five major articles, each with two discussion pieces and a reply. These articles were invited by us following a public solicitation of abstracts. The problems they address are diverse, but all bear on policy decision-making. Though not part of our original design for the Workshop, that commonality of theme does emphasize the usefulness of Bayesian methods in this arena. Along with the invited papers were several additional commentaries of a general nature; the first comment was invited and the remainder grew out of the discussion at the Workshop. In addition there are nine contributed papers, selected from the thirty-four presented at the Workshop, on a variety of applications. This collection of case studies illustrates the ways in which Bayesian methods are being incorporated into statistical practice. The strengths (and limitations) of the approach become apparent through the examples.

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