

W's Practice

Weighing bears. Because of the difficulty of weighing a bear in the woods, researchers caught and measured 54 bears, recording their weight, neck size, length, and sex. They hoped to find a way to estimate weight from the other, more easily determined quantities.

Who?

What?

When/Where?

Why?

How?

By Whom?

Fuel economy. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) tracks fuel economy of automobiles based on information from the manufacturers (Ford, Toyota, etc.). Among the data the agency surveys are the manufacturer, vehicle type (car, SUV, etc.), weight, horsepower, and gas mileage (mpg) for city and highway driving.

Who?

What?

When/Where?

Why?

How?

By Whom?

Refrigerators. In 2006, *Consumer Reports* published an article evaluating refrigerators. It listed 41 models, giving the brand, cost, size (cu ft), type (such as top freezer), estimated annual energy cost, an overall rating (good, excellent, etc.), and the repair history for that brand (percentage requiring repairs over the past 5 years).

Who?

What?

When/Where?

Why?

How?

By Whom?

Walking in circles. People who get lost in the desert, mountains, or woods often seem to wander in circles rather than walk in straight lines. To see whether people naturally walk in circles in the absence of visual clues, researcher Andrea Axtell tested 32 people on a football field. One at a time, they stood at the center of one goal line, were blindfolded, and then tried to walk to the other goal line. She recorded each individual's sex, height, handedness, the number of yards each was able to walk before going out of bounds, and whether each wandered off course to the left or the right. No one made it all the way to the far end of the field without crossing one of the sidelines. [STATS No. 39, Winter 2004]

Who?

What?

When/Where?

Why?

How?

By Whom?

Babies. Medical researchers at a large city hospital investigating the impact of prenatal care on newborn health collected data from 882 births during 1998–2000. They kept track of the mother's age, the number of weeks the pregnancy lasted, the type of birth (cesarean, induced, natural), the level of prenatal care the mother had (none, minimal, adequate), the birth weight and sex of the baby, and whether the baby exhibited health problems (none, minor, major).

Who?

What?

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By Whom?

Age and party. The Gallup Poll conducted a representative telephone survey of 1180 American voters during the first quarter of 2009. Among the reported results were the voter's region (Northeast, South, etc.), age, party affiliation, and whether or not the person had voted in the 2008 presidential election.

Who?

What?

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Why?

How?

By Whom?