

**The UCLA Statistics Server &
Textbook**

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The UCLA Statistics Server, located at

<http://www.stat.ucla.edu/>

serves many purposes. It

- describes the new department,
- gives access to the homepages of faculty, staff, and students,
- provides copies of UCLA Statistics theses, preprints, and seminars,
- provides access to UCLA Statistical Consulting,
- provides information on journals and book series
- and makes links to other statistics resources all over the world.

We concentrate here on services related to teaching. These are:

- an archive of data sets, from various sources
- an archive of case studies, with data, analyses, hints, suggestions,
- individual course information (handouts, homework, syllabi, additional reading, exams, chatrooms),
- the UCLA Electronic Textbook:

<http://www.stat.ucla.edu/textbook/>

From the point of view of **content**, the textbook is open-ended. It has materials for lower-division, upper division, and graduate levels. Since it is not limited in size, it can cover all this ground. The question is merely if it is efficiently browsable.

From the point of view of **availability**, the textbook is free and available to anybody on the net (with suitable hardware and software).

Specifically, this means that you have to have an internet connection, a WWW browser (preferably graphic, preferably Netscape), and the necessary helpers on your client machine (in particular, Xlisp-Stat).

The Textbook is meant both for self-study and for support of existing courses. It also provides calculators (formerly known as statistical tables) which can be used for research. It also has a glossary, a formula archive, and so on. The existing case studies will be integrated into the textbook – so will the existing Xlisp-Stat demos.

From the **technical** point of view, the textbook uses HTML, `pphtml` for preprocessing, CGI programs and scripts in both `perl` and `C` for calculators, imagemaps, and forms, `JavaScript` for calculators and forms, `Java` for applets, `libgd.a` for generating gifs on the fly, `nph-animation` for animating with sequences of gifs.

The basic considerations here are:

- in how far do we assume graphics browsers,
- in how far do we assume Netscape,
- what is (currently) the best tool for a given demo,
- what should be on the server, what on the client,
- what should be assumed about helpers.

Given these considerations, we have to do the following:

- move more to Java, if support increases,
- move more to the client-side (imagemaps),
- avoid Netscapisms, unless necessary,
- move from CGI to JavaScript/Java,
- move away from external helpers such as Xlisp-Stat.

Given the enormous investment of resources that is required, the Textbook is also open-ended in time. It will for ever be “under construction”.

How quickly it proceeds will depend on support, and on the stability of tools and languages on the WWW. One thing has not changed: the major problem is still the writing of (browsable) text, plain words, and the unifying ideas and constructs behind the project.