

October 2003: Web Resources (Rule 8.11)

Rules of the month are numbered in accordance with the numbering in the book. Thus, Rule 1.1 refers to the first rule in Chapter 1. And so on. These comments do not repeat the material in the book but highlights and amplifies it. A rule is stated as found in the book and then discussed.

“Use the WEB for reference, resource, and education—for consultants and investigators. But use it with discernment.” (Rule 8.11)

Further Comments on the Rule

Since the time this rule was written, the web has come to play an even more important role in referencing. Search engines are becoming more efficient and more specific questions can be asked. Statistical resources on the web are steadily increasing. Jessica Utts wrote a very interesting article about what an educated person should know about statistics (Utts, 2003). In her paper she mentions a very useful statistical resource:

<http://members.aol.com/johnp71/javastat.html>

This website is maintained by John PezSzullo, an emeritus faculty member of Georgetown University, now living in Florida. The number of links in this website are mind boggling. In fact, knowing which site to pick will take some trial and error. I looked for a calculation of Fisher’s exact test. It took a couple of tries to find a great site that did what I was interested in:

<http://home.clara.net/sisa/fiveby2.htm>

This site will calculate a Fisher’s exact test for up to a 2x5 table. This can be very useful for small frequencies.

One of the problems is that a website, like a town, has a finite life span. The web world has its share of ghost towns. It is difficult for some one to visit all the sites in order to determine whether there still is life. The Pezzullo site is fascinating. It is tempting to wander around in it and see what is available. It definitely is not a ghost town, more like downtown New York with never a dull moment or location.

The May issue of *The American Statistician* in which the Utts article appears has a series of papers on statistical literacy. All of them are worth reading.

References

Utts, J. What educated citizens should know about statistics and probability. *The American Statistician*, **57**: 74-79.