RSAC 2026 Conference

POWER OF COMMUNITY.

LAB2-T09 - First Principles Risk Forecasting: From Theory to Practice

Rick Howard

Founder — First Principles Consulting
CEO — Cybersecurity Canon Project

Brandon Karpf

Global Security Leader — NTT, Inc.

Hands-On Workshop: Housekeeping

* Laptops Open
* Connect to the RSAC WiFi Network:
  - Network Name: To Be Determined
  - Password: To Be Determined
* Connect to the Workshop URL:

https://learnfirstprinciples.com/

Disclaimer

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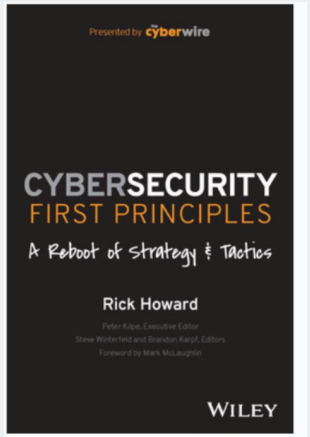
FIRST PRINCIPLES CONSULTING

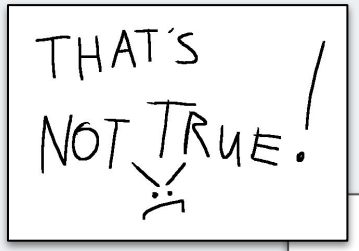
Why We are Here

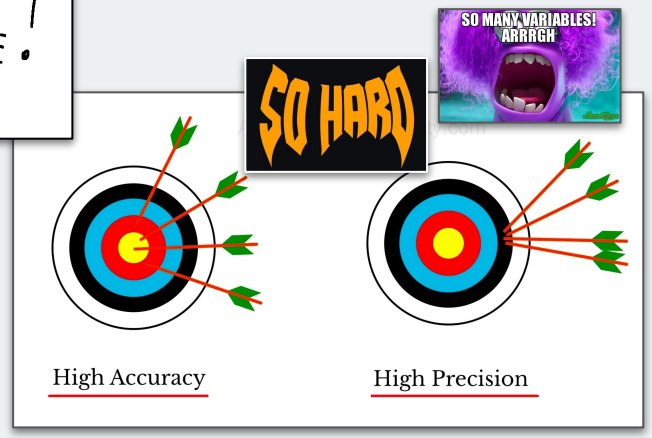


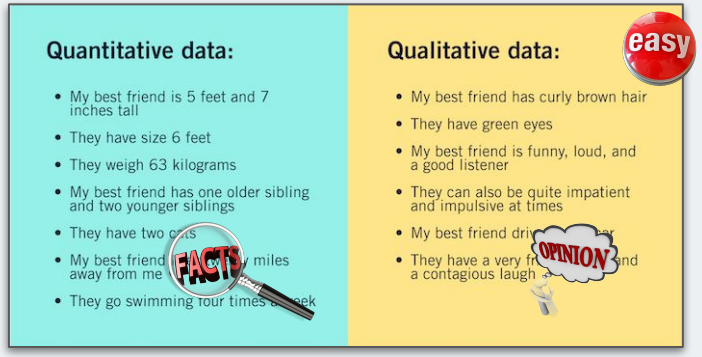
CyberCanon HALL OF FAME

Reduce the probability of a material cyber event within the next business cycle.

"[Heat Maps are] all Ouija boards for conjuring the lowest common denominator of corporate groupthink."
-- Richard Seiersen

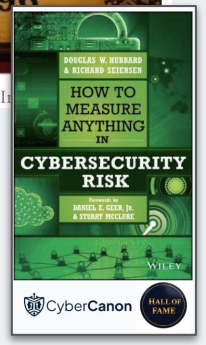






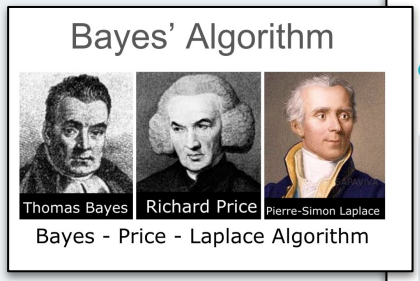
Heat Map

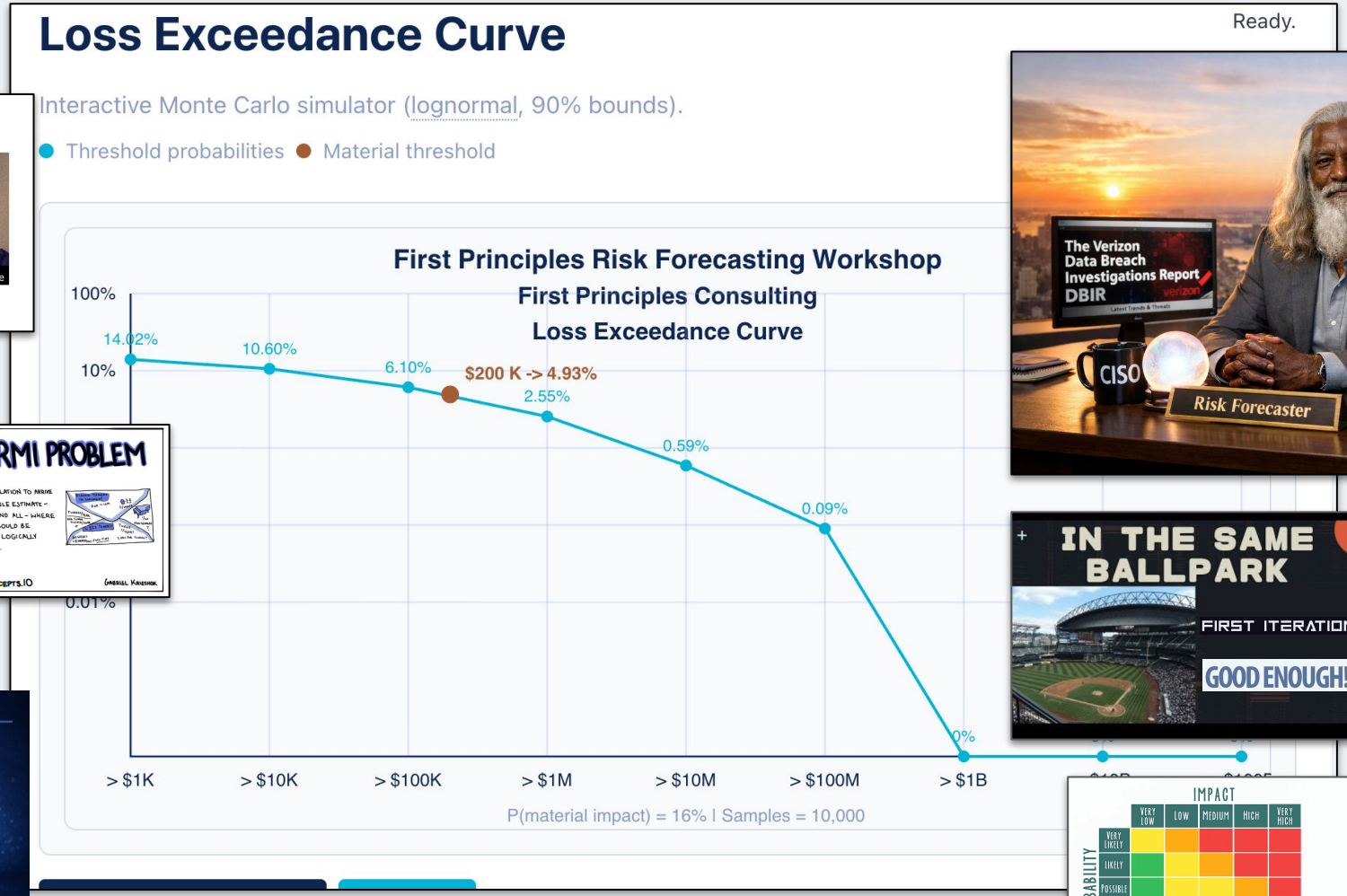
From Richard Seiersen's LinkedIn



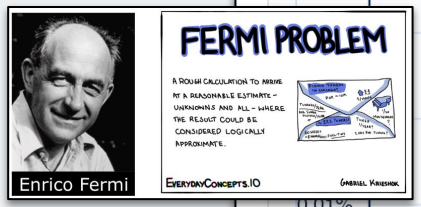
FIRST PRINCIPLES CONSULTING

The Promise

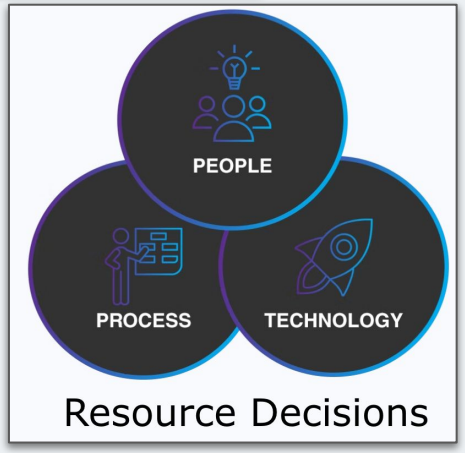

Bayes' Algorithm
Thomas Bayes
Richard Price
Pierre-Simon Laplace
Bayes - Price - Laplace Algorithm


Loss Exceedance Curve
Ready.
Interactive Monte Carlo simulator (lognormal, 90% bounds).
Threshold probabilities
Material threshold
First Principles Risk Forecasting Workshop
First Principles Consulting
Loss Exceedance Curve
100%
10%
0.01%
14.02%
10.60%
6.10%
$200 K -> 4.93%
2.55%
0.59%
0.09%
0%
> $1K
> $10K
> $100K
> $1M
> $10M
> $100M
> $1B
P(material impact) = 16% | Samples = 10,000

The Verizon Data Breach Investigations Report
DBIR
The Cyentia Information Risk Insight Study (IRIS)
Threat Intelligence & Risk Analysis
CISO
Risk Forecaster


Enrico Fermi
FERMI PROBLEM
A ROUGH CALCULATION TO ARRIVE AT A REASONABLE ESTIMATE - UNKNOWNS AND ALL - WHERE THE RESULT COULD BE CONSIDERED LOGICALLY APPROXIMATE.
EVERYDAYCONCEPTS.IO
GABRIEL KRIENEN

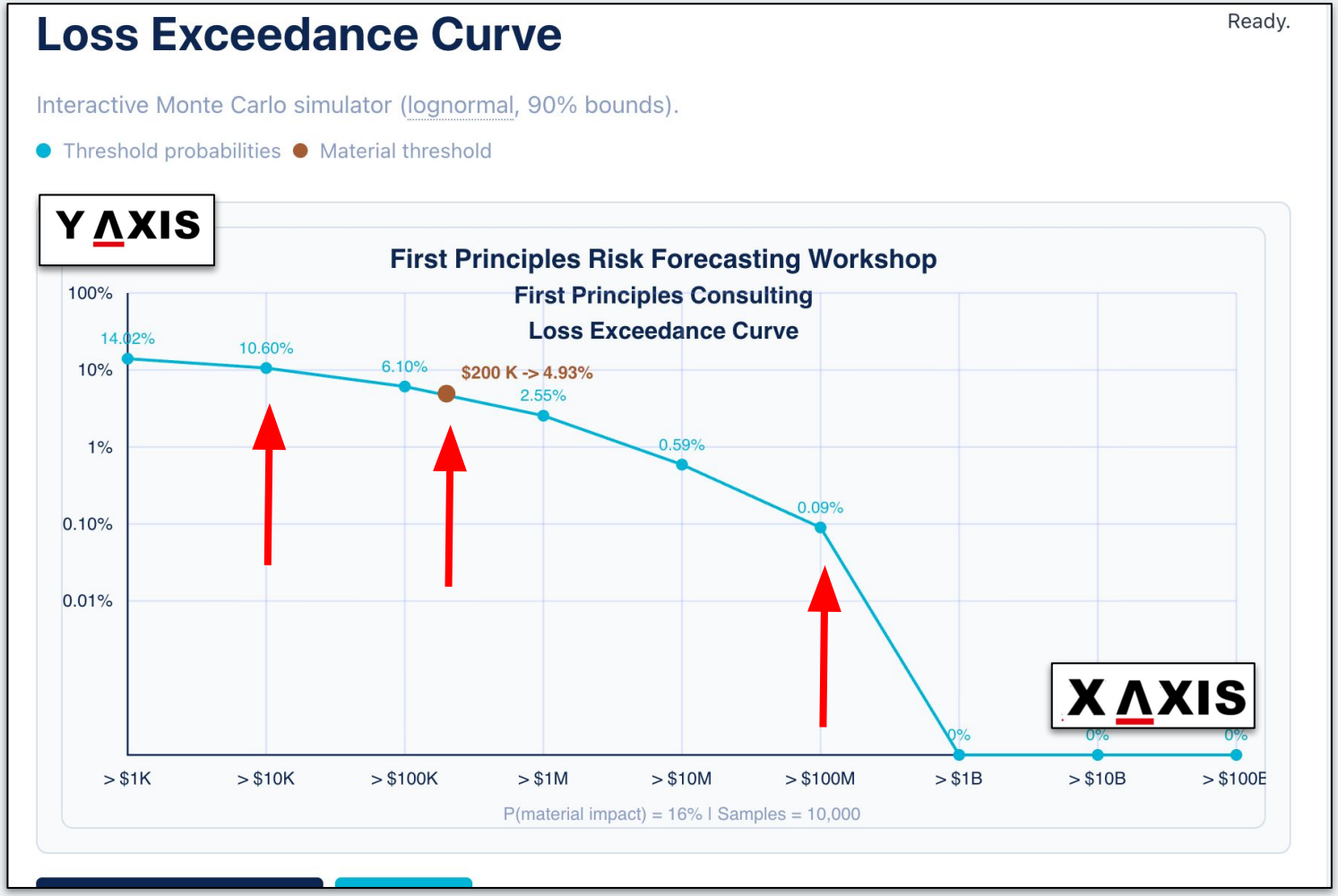
IN THE SAME BALLPARK
FIRST ITERATION
GOOD ENOUGH!


PEOPLE
PROCESS
TECHNOLOGY
Resource Decisions


HOW MONTE CARLO SIMULATIONS WORK
1 Design a Model.
2 Run the Model 10,000 Times & Collect the Answers.
3 Plot the Answers on a Lognormal Curve.
WHAT CAN HAPPEN? =
HOW LIKELY IS IT?

IMPACT
VERY LOW
LOW
MEDIUM
HIGH
VERY HIGH
PROBABILITY
VERY LIKELY
LIKELY
POSSIBLE
UNLIKELY
RARE
Typical Heat Map

The Promise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Timing

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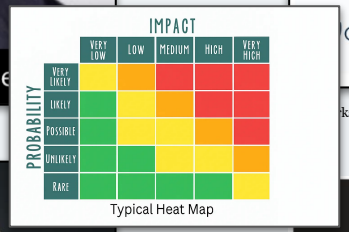
FIRST PRINCIPLES CONSULTING

RSAC 2026 Conference

Foundational Books Overview

POWER OF COMMUNITY.

Audience Poll



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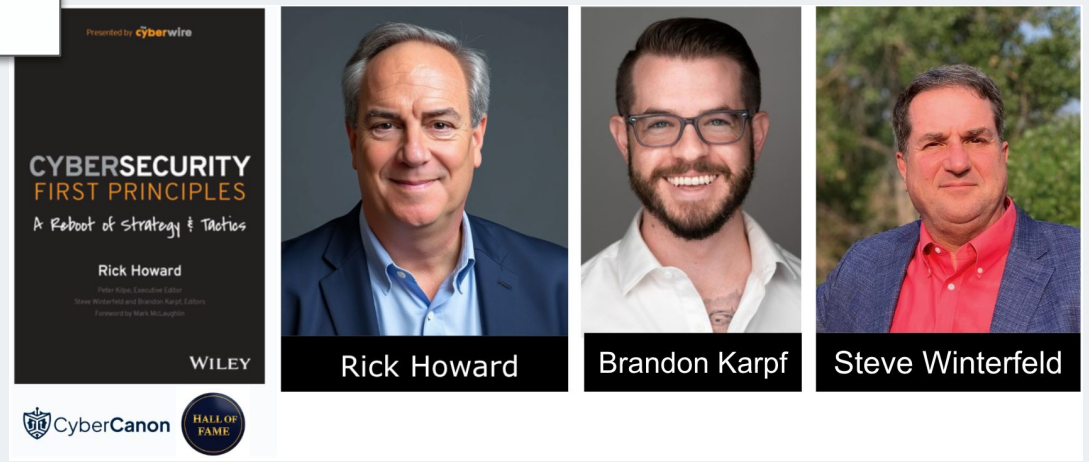
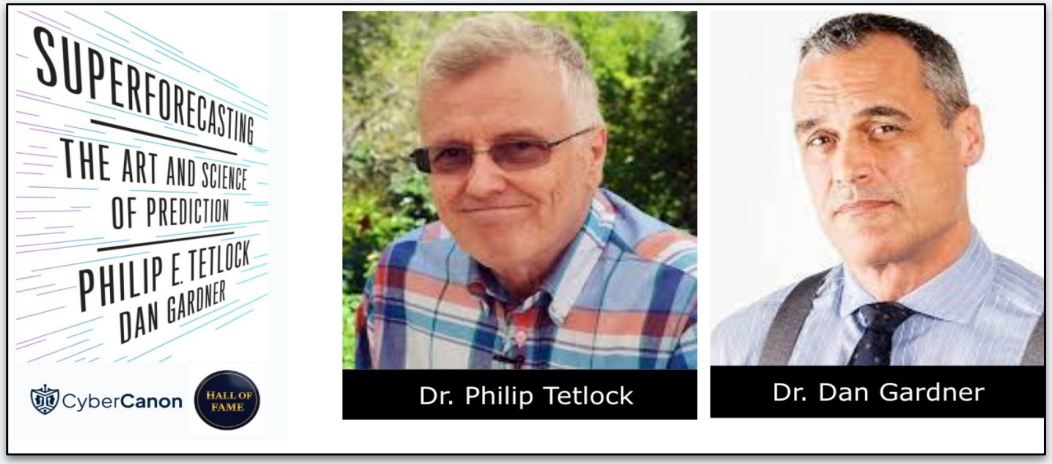


Foundational Books

2015
2023



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TLDR: It's Learnable

Foundational Books

2016

2017

TLDR:

- Heat Maps are bad science
- Loss Exceedance Curves are better
- Bayes Algorithm rules
- Normies can build Monte Carlo simulations
- Chapter 3 - 8: Models you might use

Foundational Books

2014

2017

TLDR:

- Jones invents FAIR (2000s)
- The Open Group formalized the stndard
- Jones creates the FAIR Institute in the 2010s (Community)
- Adoption has been slow

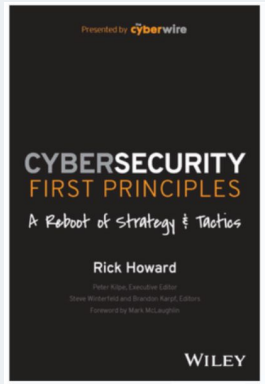
Foundational Books

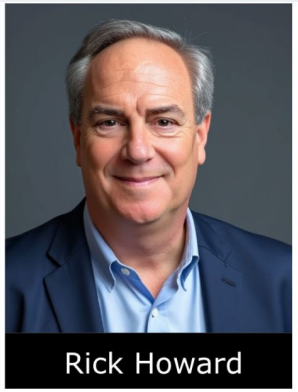
TLDR:

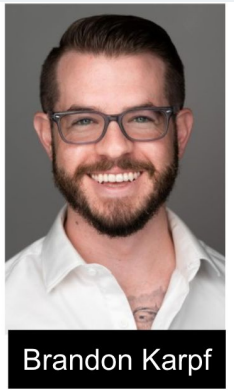
- Chapter 6: Practical How-to

2023

2026*







FIRST PRINCIPLES CONSULTING

RSAC 2026 Conference

Four Core Techniques to Master

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#RSAC

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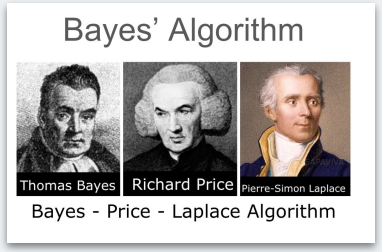
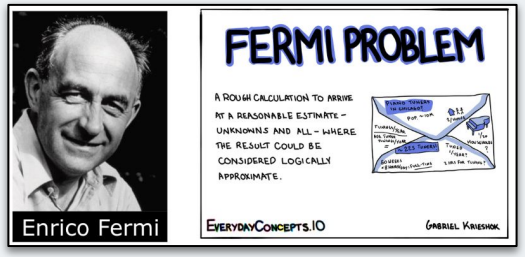
POWER OF COMMUNITY.

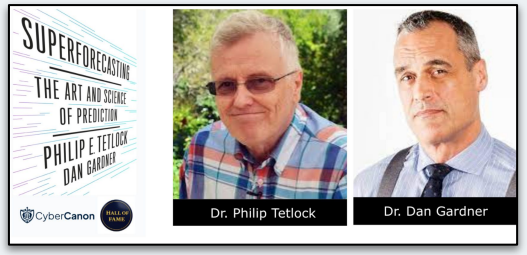
Four Core Techniques to Master



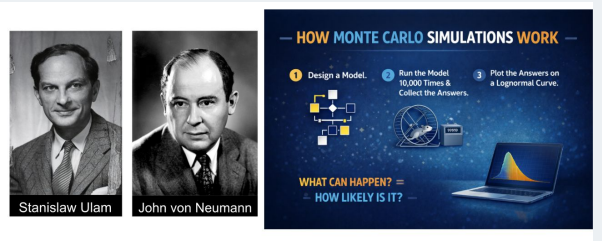
Bayes



Fermi



Applied Forecasting



Monte Carlo

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Bayes Algorithm Explainer

Timing

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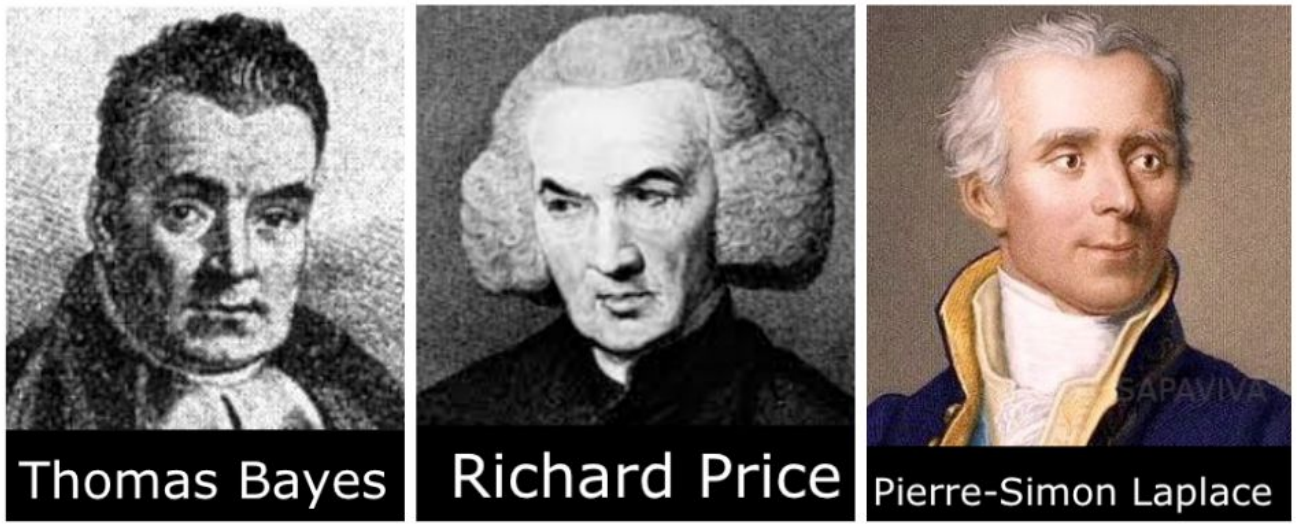
Core Technique: More Iterations; Better Forecasts

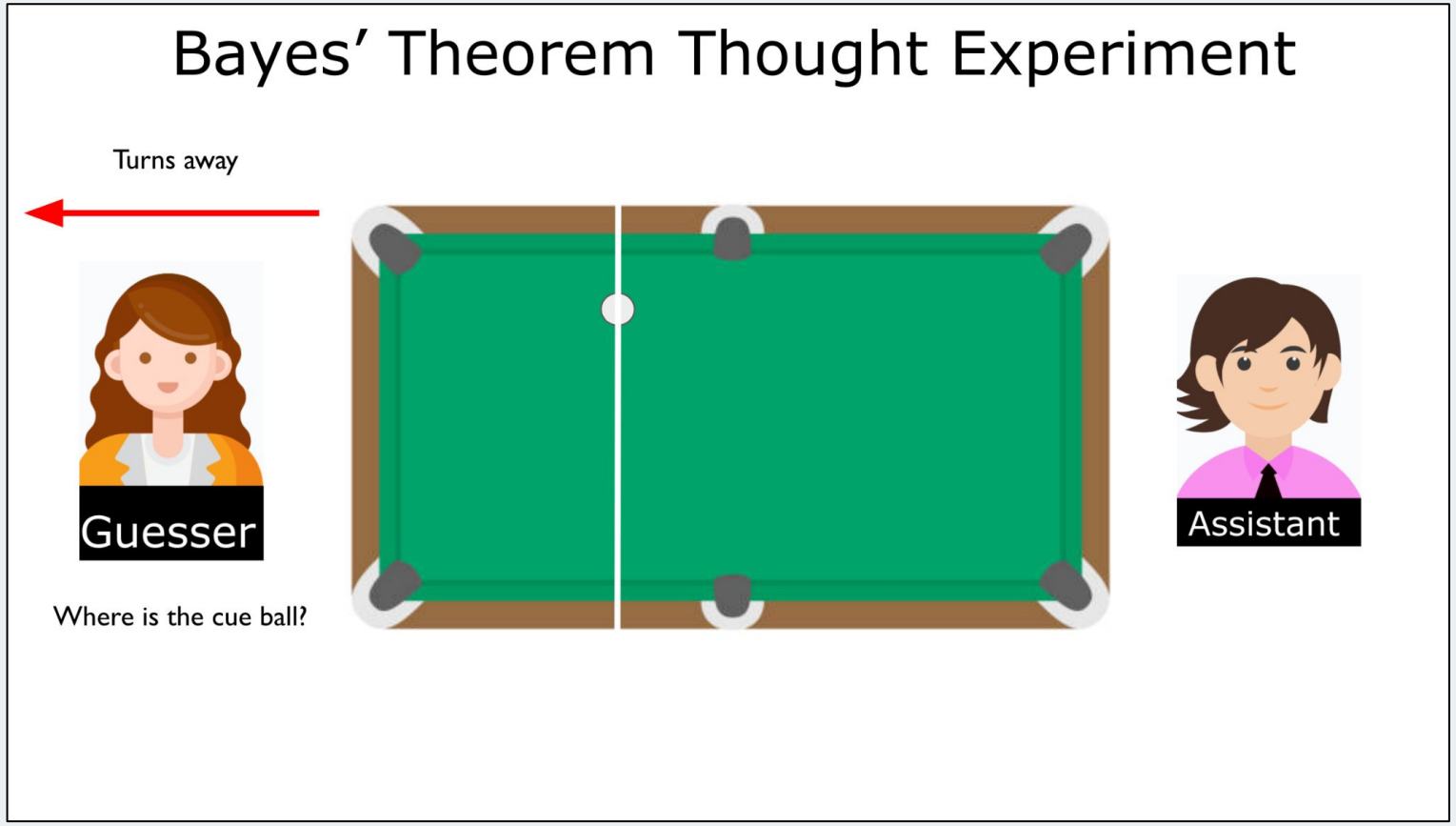
Bayes' Algorithm



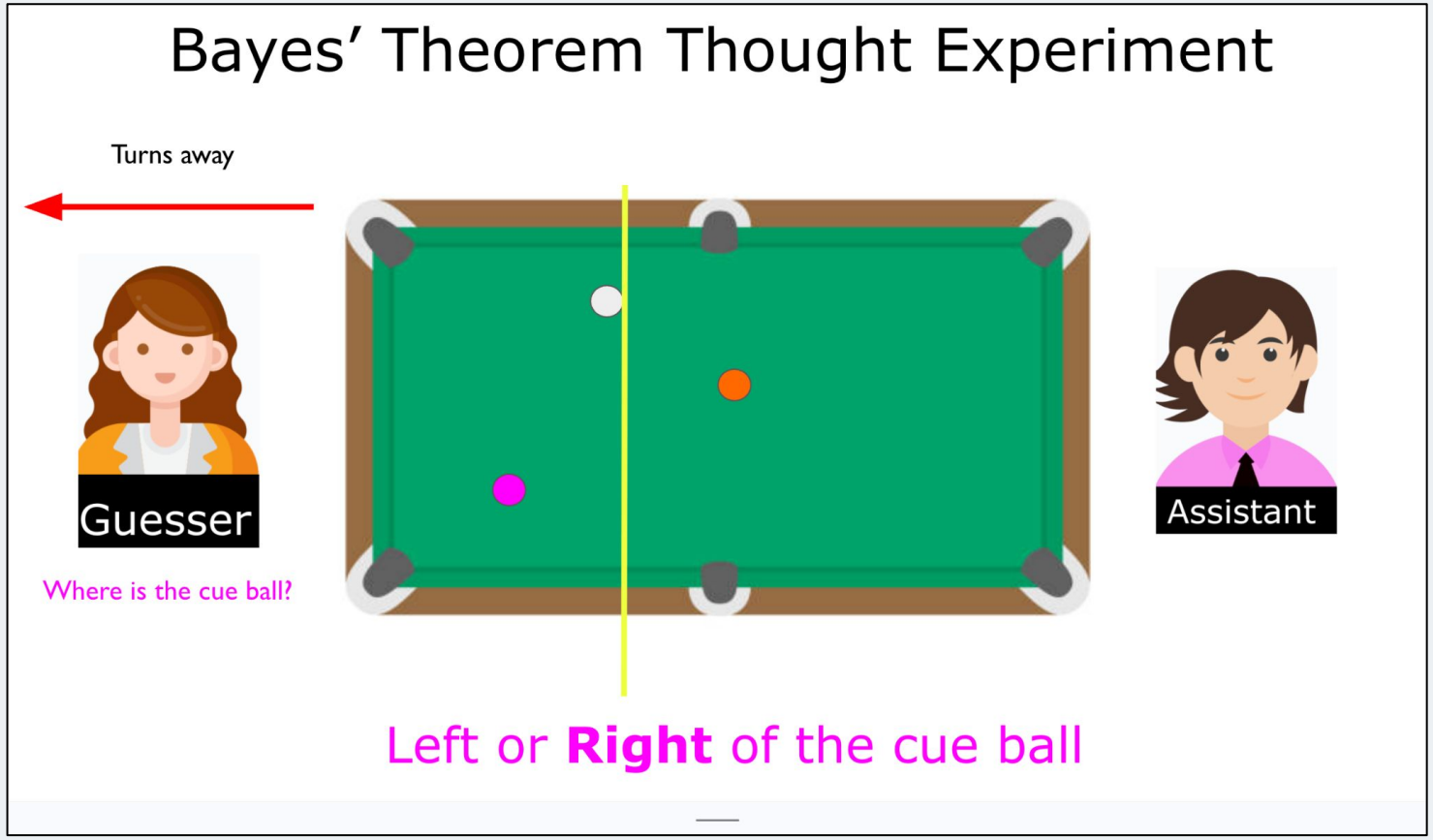
Bayes - Price - Laplace Algorithm

Prior belief + New evidence = Updated probability

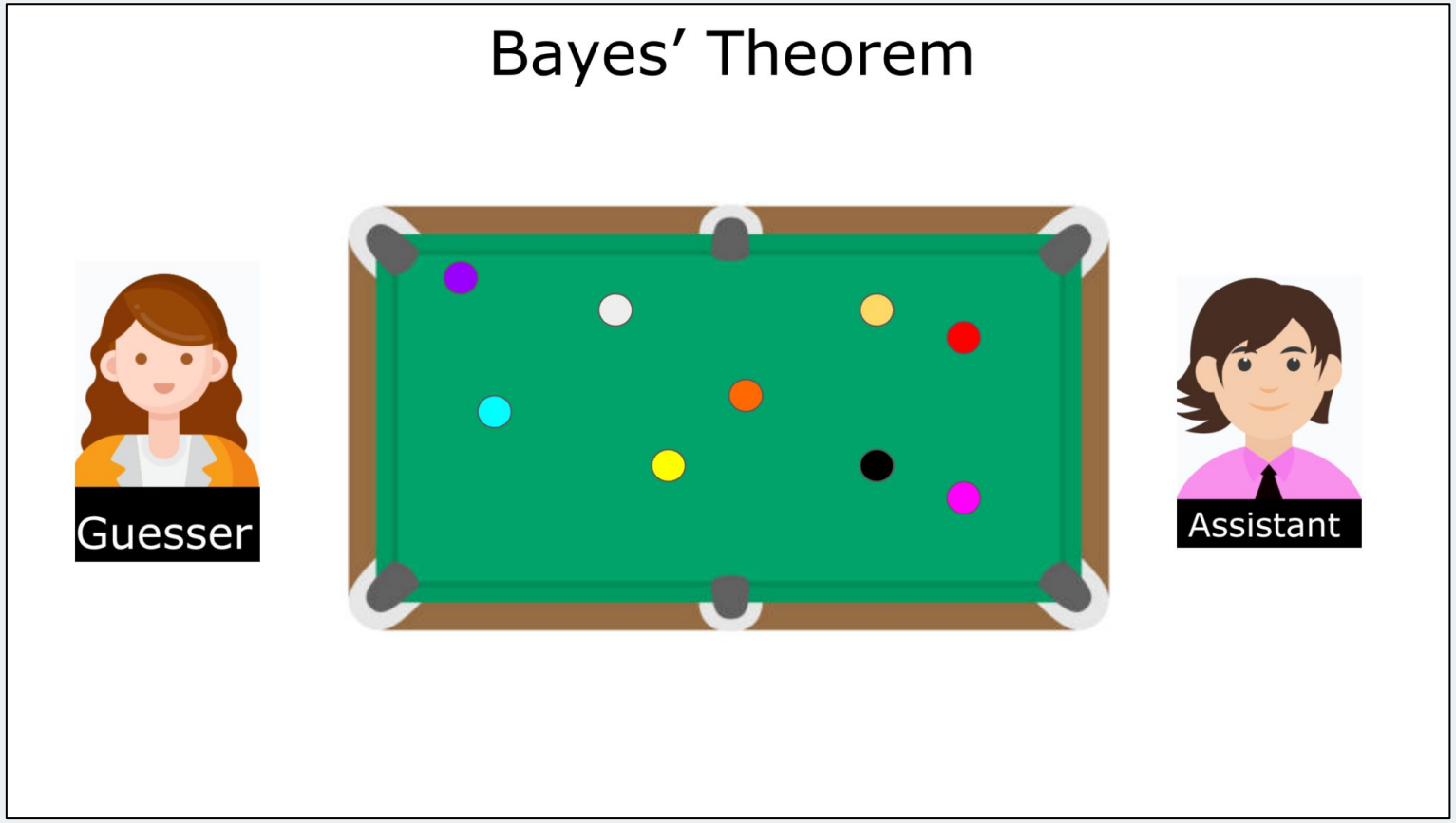
Core Technique: More Iterations; Better Forecasts



Core Technique: More Iterations; Better Forecasts



Core Technique: More Iterations; Better Forecasts



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Pool Table Thought Experiment

A Bayes Demonstration (Hands On #1)

Timing

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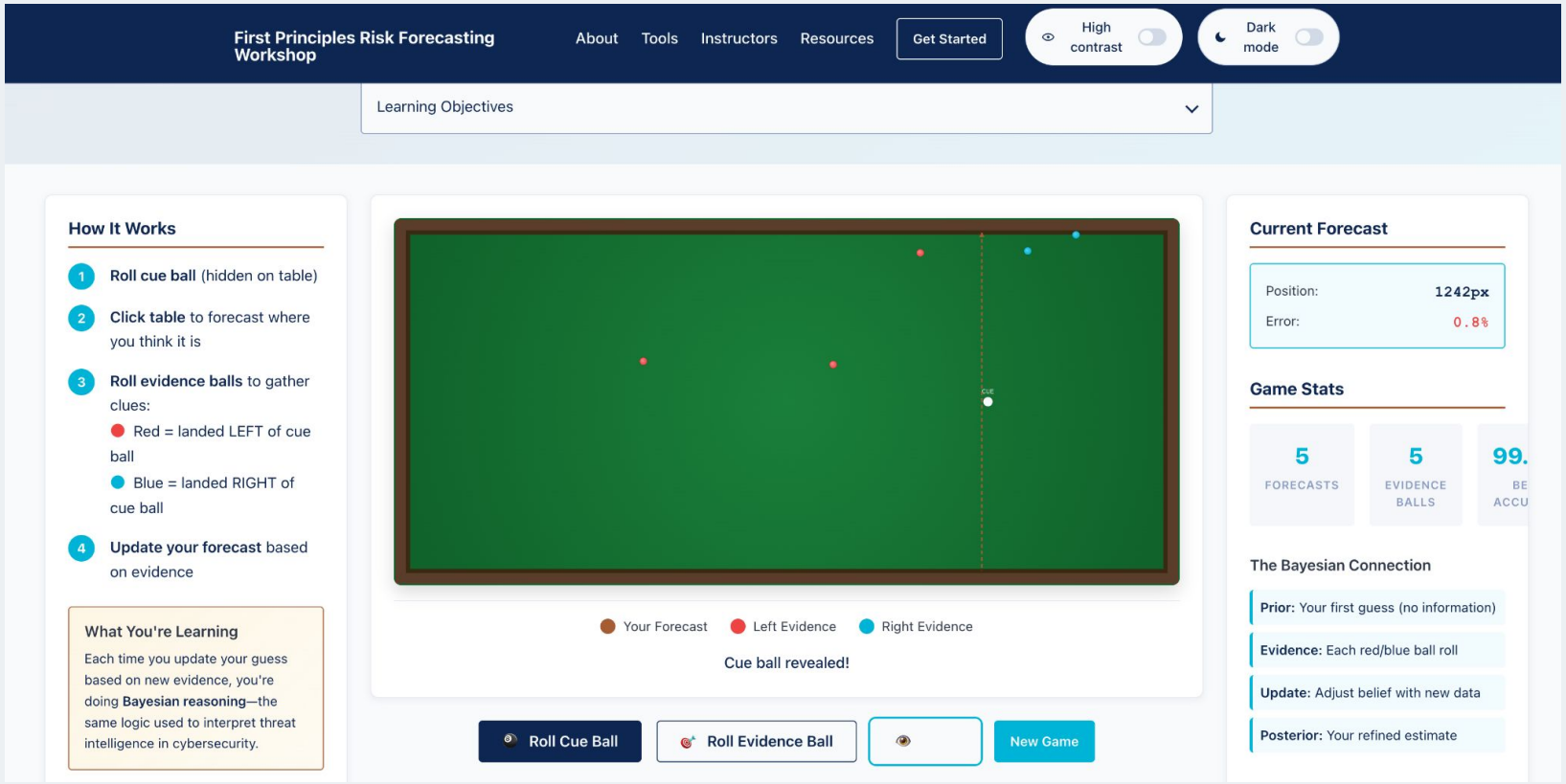
POWER OF COMMUNITY.

Pool Table Simulation - Hands on #1



https://learnfirstprinciples.com/bayes

Bayes Algorithm Takeaways

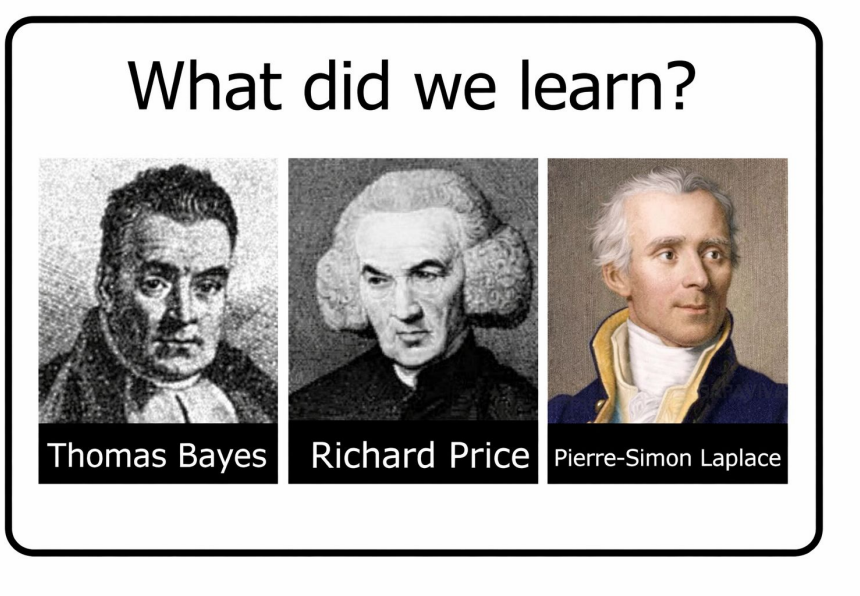
* The more evidence you collect, the better the forecast.
* The more adjustment iterations, the better the forecast.

But

* There is a point of diminishing returns

And

* Not all evidence gets you closer



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Fermi Explainer

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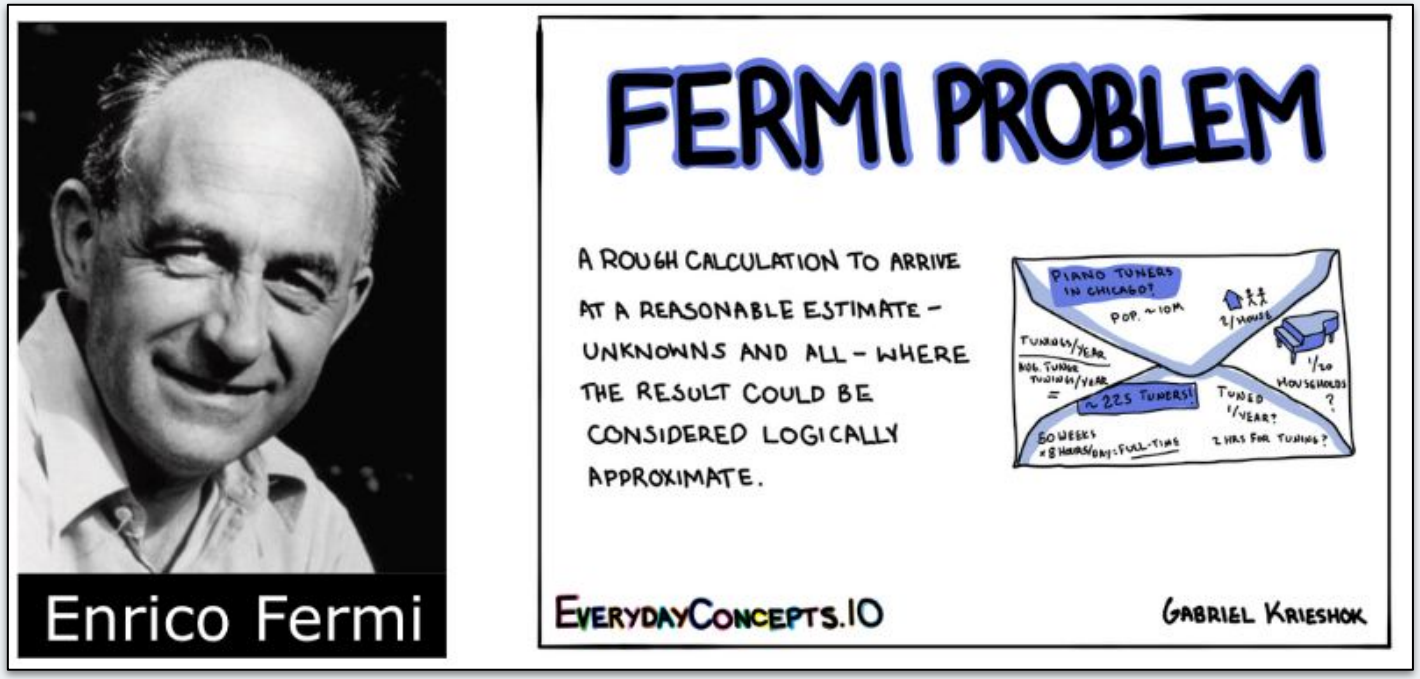
Core Technique: Back of the Envelope Calculations are Good Enough Most of the Time



RSAC 2026 Conference

Fermi Estimates

Hands On #2

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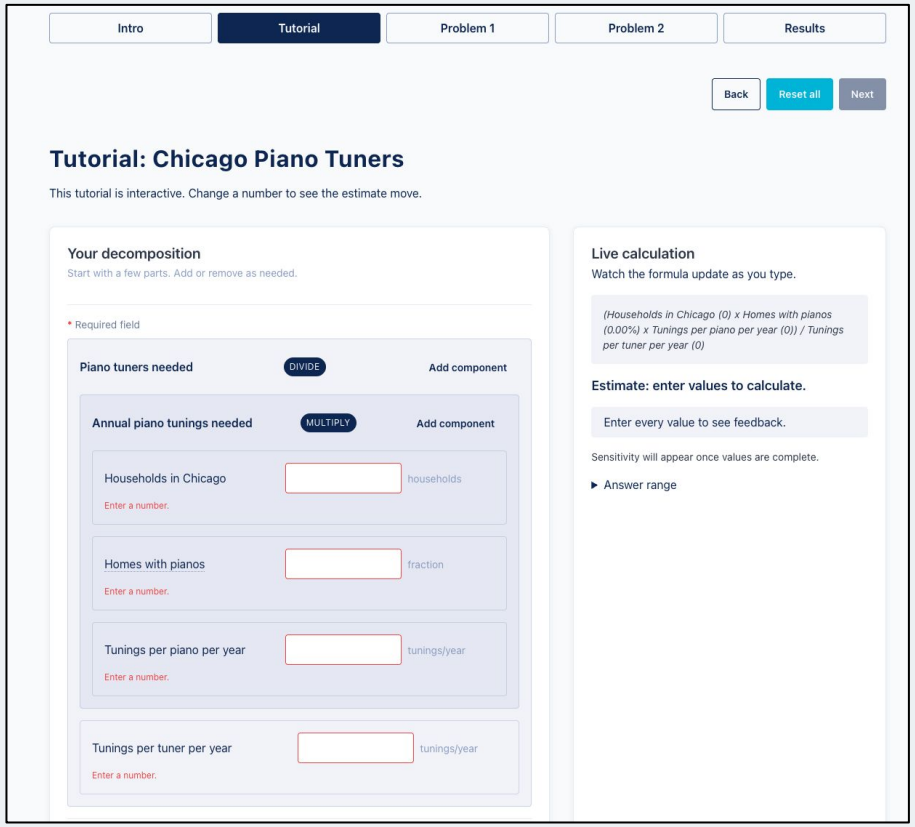
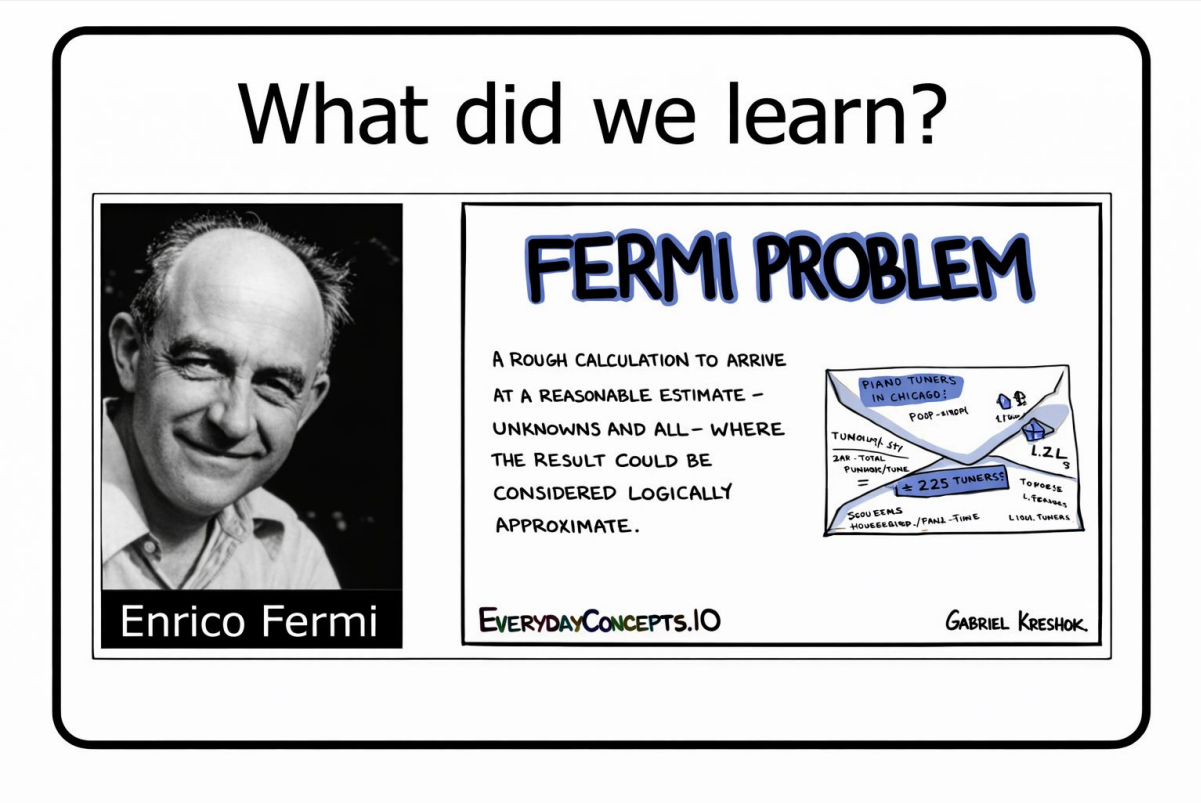
Fermi Exercises - Hands on #3



https://learnfirstprinciples.com/fermi

Fermi Estimate Practice Takeaway

Ballpark forecasts are probably good enough in many cases



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Applied Forecasting Explainer

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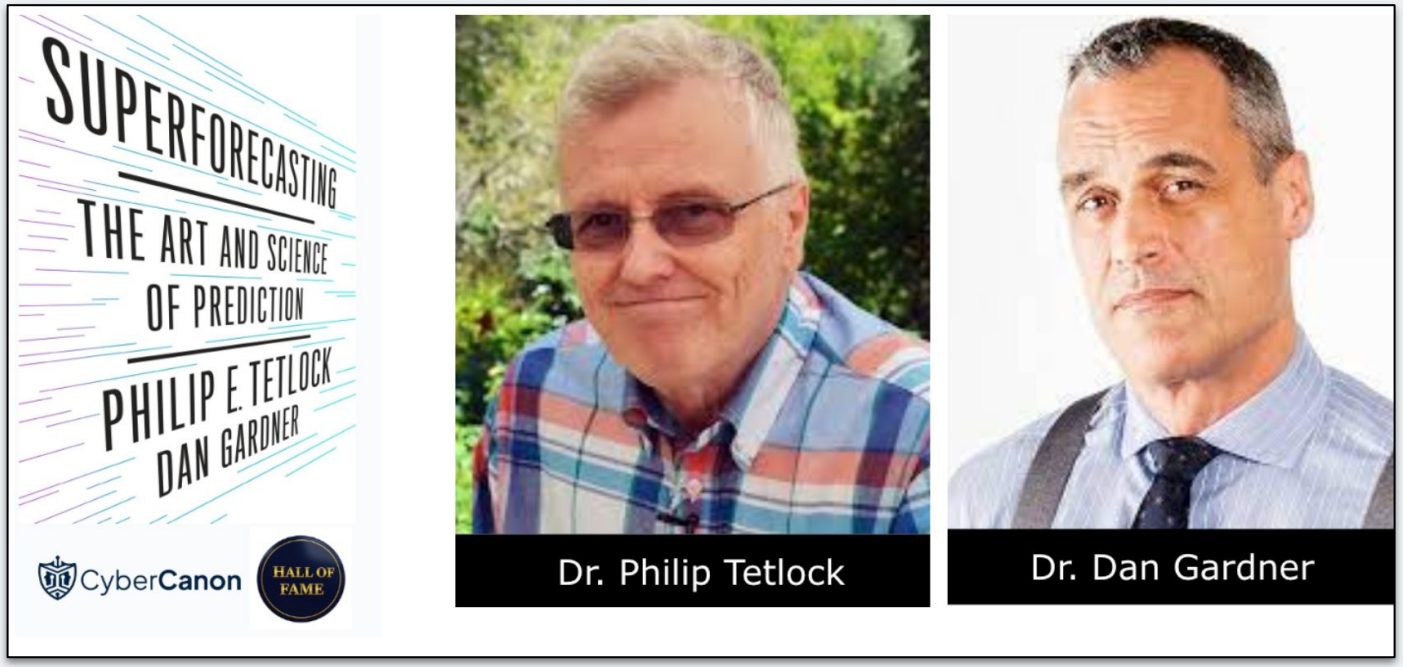


Applied Forecasting Rules of Thumb

Six Forecasting Rules

1: Quantitative not qualitative

2: Get rid of heat maps

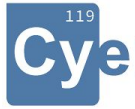
3: Practice

4: Embrace Fermi Estimates

5: Check your assumptions

6: Use dragonfly eyes

7: Forecast at a 90 percent confidence level:



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Applied Forecasting Estimates

Hands On #3

Timing

#RSAC

Hour 1

- **0:00 to 0:10 (10 mins)**: Intro
  - HouseKeeping
  - Discla
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  - The Promise
  - Intro to Loss Exceedance Curves
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Hour 2

- **1:00 to 1:05 (5 mins)**: Applied Forecasting Explainer
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- **1:55 to 2:00 (5 mins)**: Wrap it up: Learning Points

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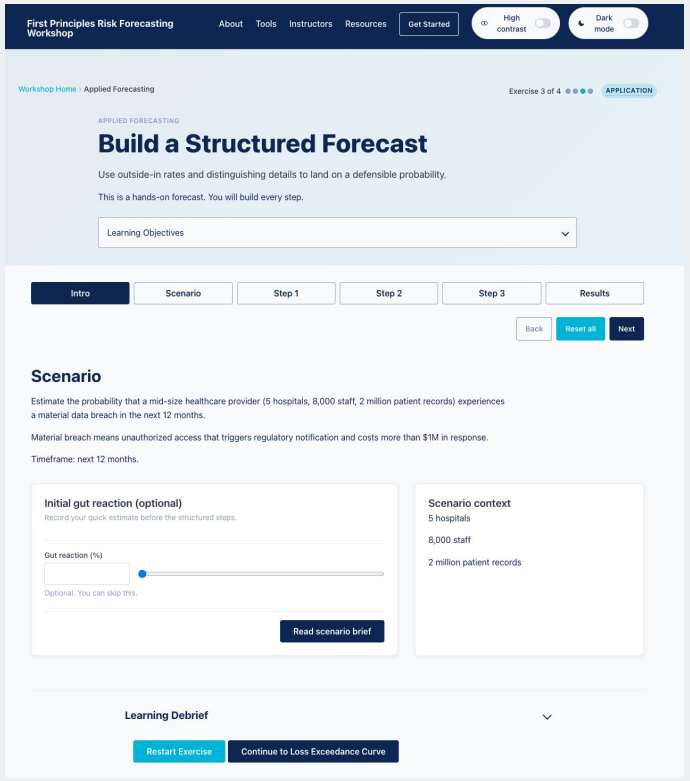
Forecasting Rules of Thumb Exercise - Hands on #4



https://learnfirstprinciples.com/forecasting/

Applied Forecasting Takeaways

Not high end math

Willing to adjust your forecast with new evidence

Take advantage of Bayes' Algorithm

Use Fermi Estimates

From Applied Forecasting to Loss Exceedance Curves

1: **Outside In Forecast**: What is the probability that any organization like yours will have a material cyber event?
2: **Inside Out Forecast**: What risk reduction do you get with your deployed strategies and tactics?
3: What is the **range of dollar losses** typical for your industry?
4: What does your organization consider to be a **material loss**?
5: What **model** will you use for your Monte Carlo Simulation
6: Build your **Loss Exceedance Curve**

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Monte Carlo Explainer

Timing

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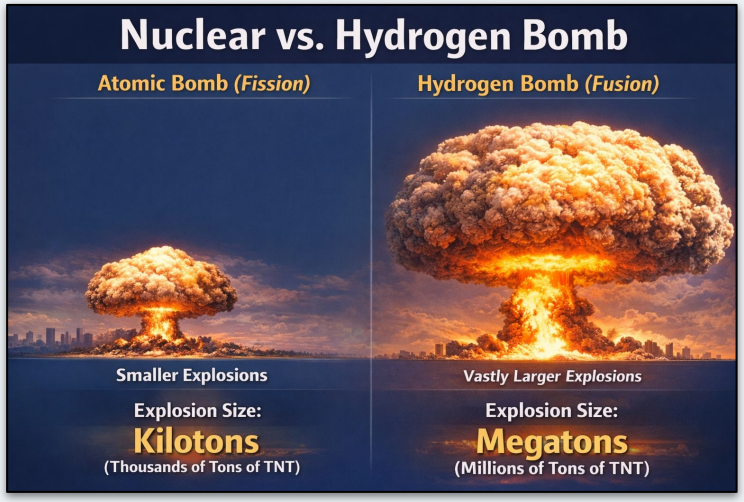
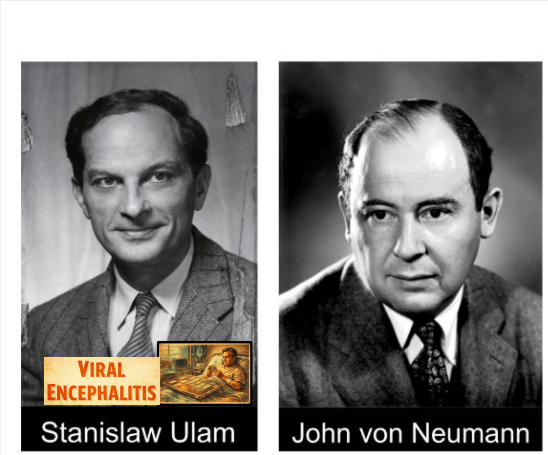
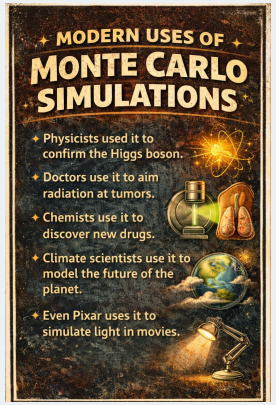
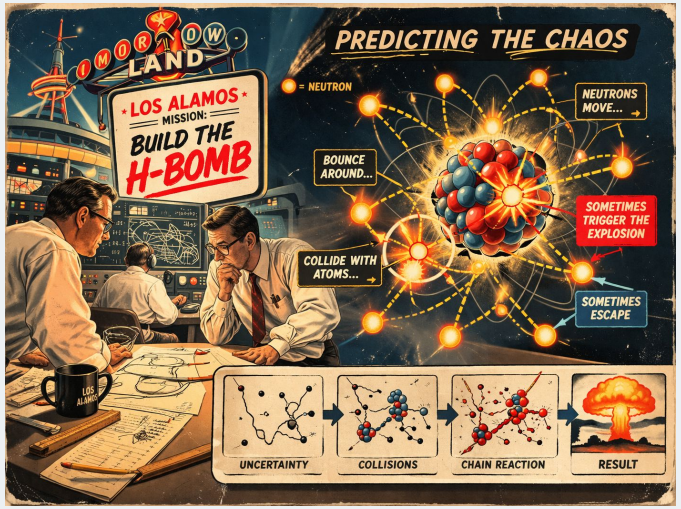
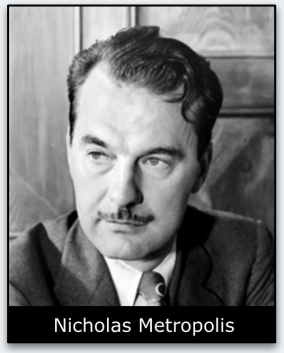
Core Technique: Monte Carlo Simulations

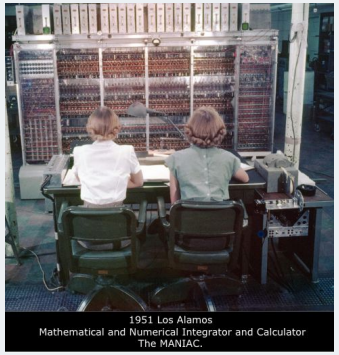












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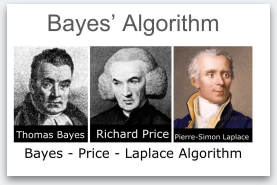
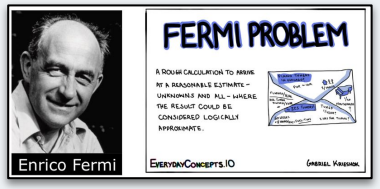
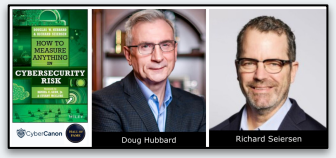
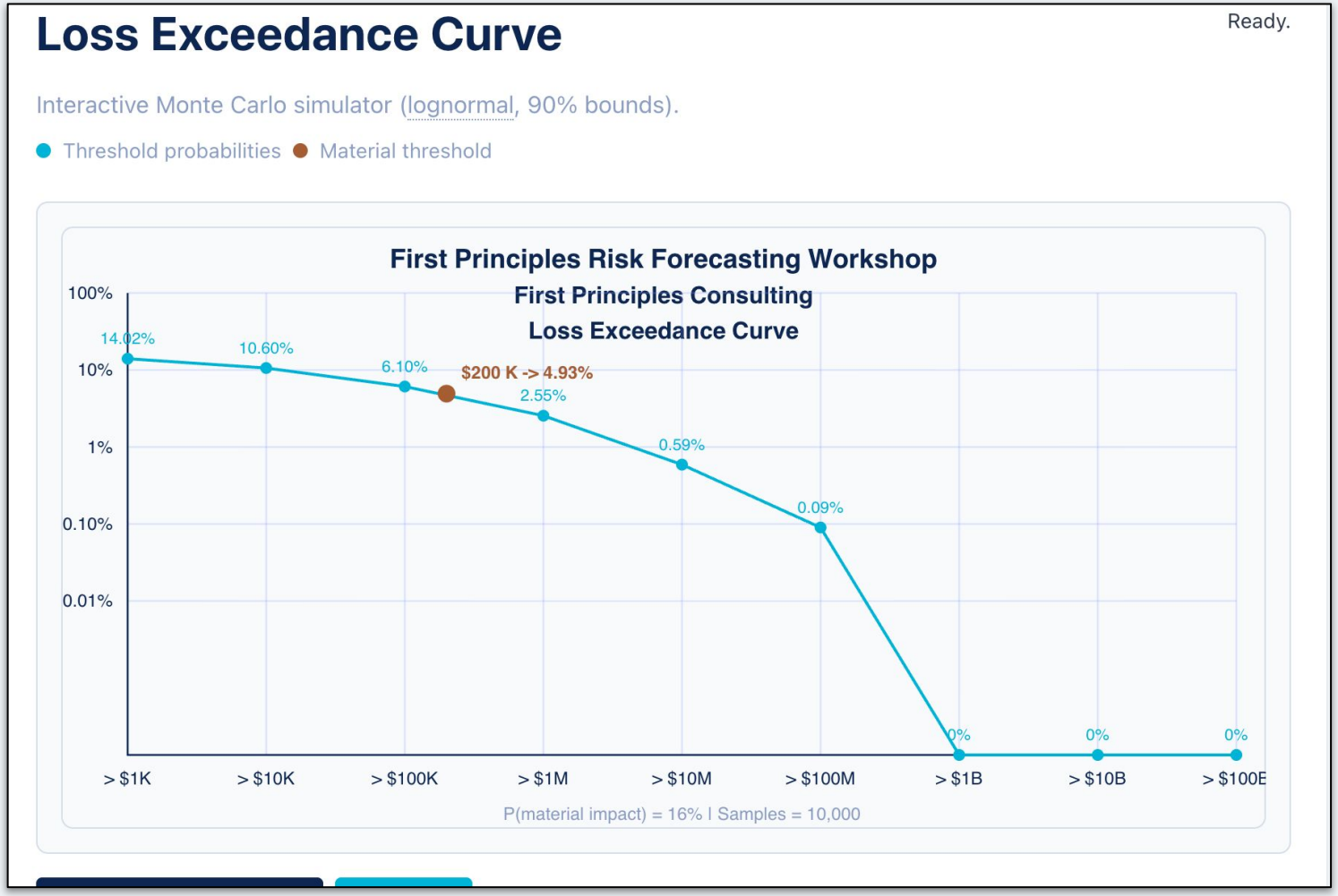
Constructing Your First Loss Exceedance Curve









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Build a Loss Exceedance Curve

Hands On #4

Timing

#RSAC

Hour 1

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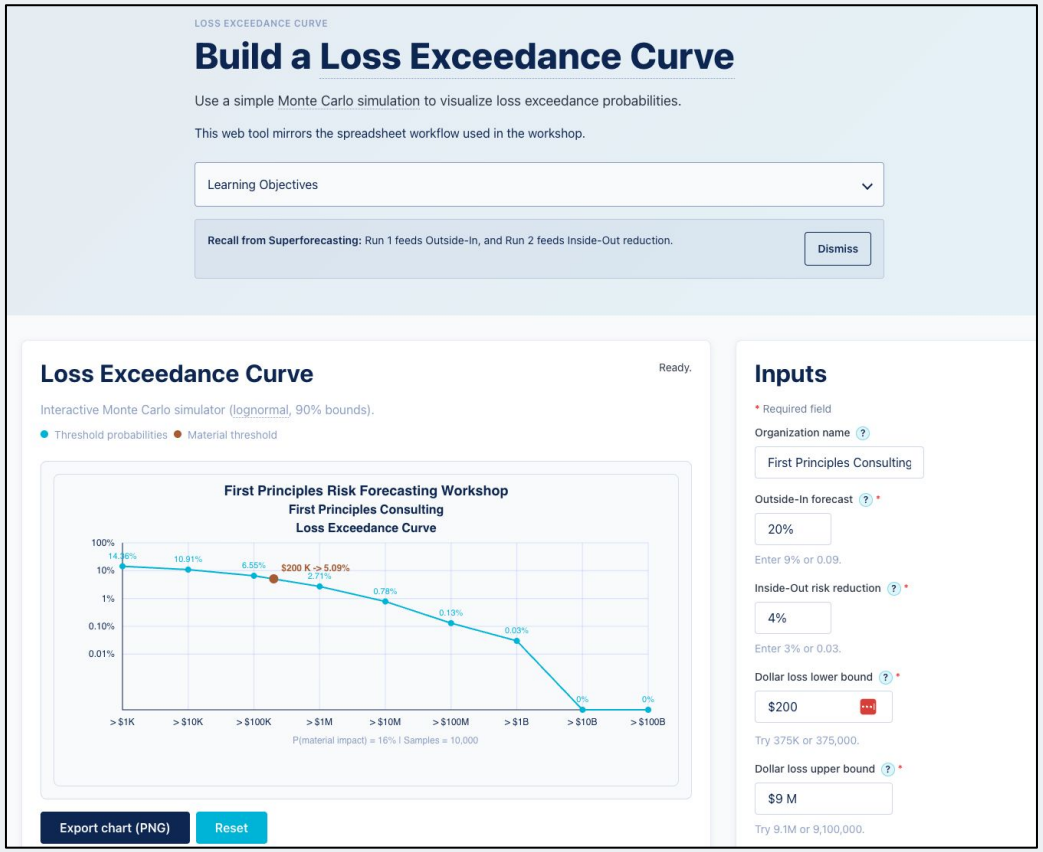
Applied Forecasting: Six Variables

1: Outside In Probability
2: Inside Out Probability
3: Dollar Loss Upper Bound
4: Dollar Loss Lower Bound
5: Materiality Risk Dollar Threshold
6: Number of Monte Carlo Simulation Iterations

Building Your LEC - Hands on #5



https://learnfirstprinciples.com/lec

Loss Exceedance Curve Takeaways

Outside In Forecasts

then Inside Out

Dollar Loss Range

What is material for your business?

Monte Carlo Simulations are your friends

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Wrap It Up: Learning Points

Timing

#RSAC

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Key Learning Points

- Heat Maps are bad science (Qualitative Risk Forecasting)
- Precise and accurate Quantitative Risk Forecasting is not as hard as you think
- Replace heat maps with Loss Exceedance Curves
- More iterations means better forecasts (Bayes)
- Ballpark estimates work most of the time (Fermi)
- Some things you can’t count, but you can simulate (Monte Carlo)
- Five variables are all you need to build a loss exceedance curve.
- Even you can be a superforecaster

Apply What You've Learned

* Next week you should:
  - Start reading the four books
* In the next three months:
  - Run this workshop with your team
* In the next six months:
  - Talk to each member of your senior executive team to get their feedback
* Within a year you should:
  - Talk to each member of your board to get their feedback

References

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- Amazon Affiliate Link: https://amzn.to/4pgaiv8

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- Amazon Affiliate Link: https://amzn.to/4mI7QMU

Contact Information

Resources

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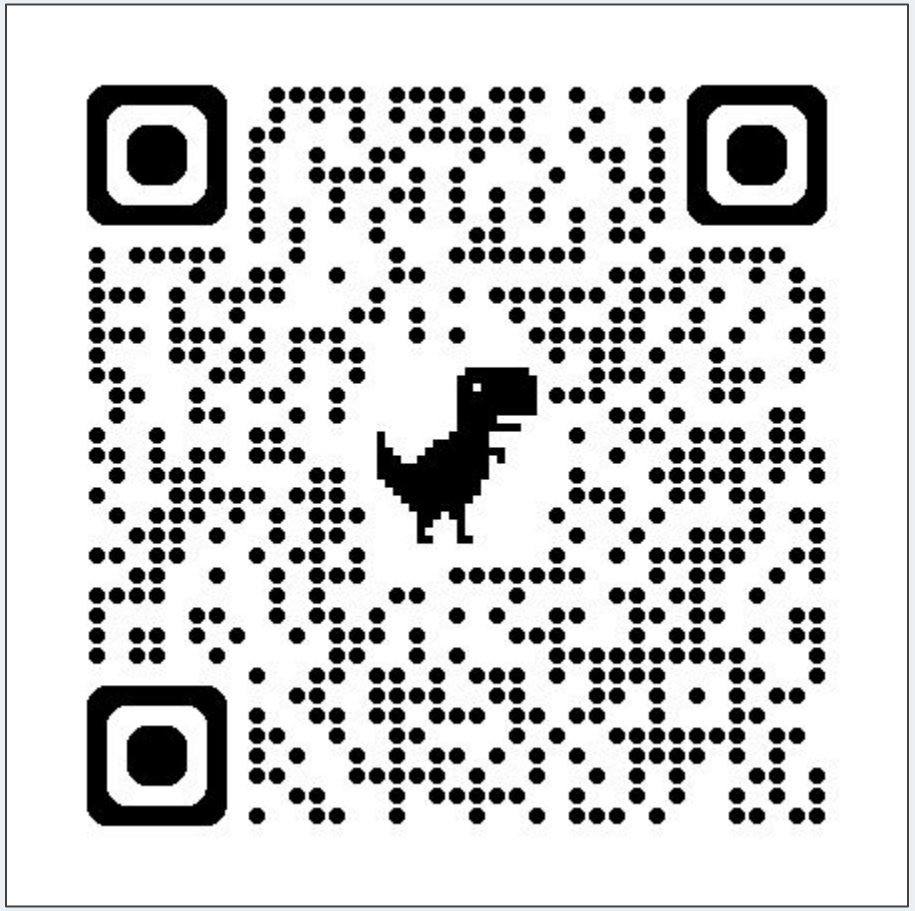

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Thank You

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