

essential math for data science

essential math for data science is the cornerstone for anyone aspiring to excel in the dynamic and rapidly expanding field of data science. Whether you are building predictive models, interpreting complex datasets, or designing algorithms, a strong grasp of mathematical principles is indispensable. This article highlights the most important mathematical topics for data science, including statistics, probability, linear algebra, calculus, and discrete mathematics. You will learn how these concepts empower data scientists to solve real-world problems, optimize machine learning algorithms, and make data-driven decisions. The content is structured to provide clear explanations and practical insights for both beginners and professionals seeking to deepen their mathematical foundation. By exploring essential math for data science, readers will discover how mathematical reasoning enhances analytical skills and drives innovation in technology, business, and research. The following sections break down each key area, offering valuable context and actionable knowledge for mastering the math crucial to data science success.

- Importance of Essential Math in Data Science
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Importance of Essential Math in Data Science

Mathematics forms the foundation upon which all data science techniques are built. The ability to manipulate data, understand its structure, and extract meaningful insights relies heavily on mathematical concepts. Whether you are devising sophisticated machine learning models or conducting exploratory data analysis, a strong mathematical background enables you to interpret outcomes accurately and optimize processes efficiently. Mathematical proficiency ensures data scientists can identify correlations, measure uncertainty, and validate results. In a competitive industry where precision is vital, essential math for data science separates effective practitioners from the rest.

Core Branches of Mathematics for Data Science

Data science leverages multiple branches of mathematics to solve complex challenges and create value from data. The most significant areas include statistics, probability, linear algebra, calculus, and discrete mathematics. Understanding these core topics equips data scientists with the analytical tools needed for model development, data manipulation, and algorithm optimization. Each branch provides unique skills and perspectives that contribute to comprehensive data analysis and robust solution design.

- Statistics: Summarizing and analyzing data distributions
- Probability: Quantifying uncertainty and risk
- Linear Algebra: Handling data structures and computations
- Calculus: Optimizing functions and algorithms
- Discrete Mathematics: Logical reasoning and data structure design

Statistics: The Backbone of Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics are fundamental for summarizing and understanding the characteristics of datasets. Measures such as mean, median, mode, variance, and standard deviation help data scientists quickly grasp the central tendency and dispersion of data. Visualization tools like histograms and boxplots further assist in identifying patterns and anomalies, providing a solid starting point for deeper analysis.

Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics enable data scientists to draw conclusions about populations from sample data. Techniques such as hypothesis testing, confidence intervals, and regression analysis allow for statistical inference and prediction. Mastery of these concepts is essential for validating models, comparing groups, and making data-driven decisions in uncertain environments.

Probability Theory: Modeling Uncertainty

Basic Probability Concepts

Probability theory helps data scientists quantify and manage uncertainty inherent in data-driven problems. Understanding foundational ideas such as random variables, probability distributions, expected value, and events is crucial for modeling real-world scenarios. Probability provides the mathematical basis for risk assessment and the prediction of outcomes in data science projects.

Bayesian Methods and Conditional Probability

Bayesian probability is vital for updating beliefs based on new data, a common requirement in iterative machine learning processes. Concepts like conditional probability and Bayes' theorem enable the integration of prior knowledge into predictive models. These methods allow data scientists to refine predictions and incorporate evidence dynamically, improving model accuracy and reliability.

Linear Algebra: Foundations for Machine Learning

Vectors and Matrices

Linear algebra is at the heart of data science, powering everything from basic data transformations to advanced machine learning algorithms. Vectors represent data points, while matrices are used to organize datasets and perform computations efficiently. Operations such as matrix multiplication, transposition, and inversion are essential for manipulating data and training models.

Eigenvalues, Eigenvectors, and Dimensionality Reduction

Eigenvalues and eigenvectors play a critical role in many machine learning techniques, including principal component analysis (PCA) for dimensionality reduction. Understanding these concepts allows data scientists to compress information, extract meaningful patterns, and improve computational efficiency. Linear algebra also underpins neural network architectures and deep learning frameworks.

Calculus: Optimizing Models and Algorithms

Differentiation and Gradients

Calculus is essential for optimizing data science models, particularly in machine learning. Differentiation and gradient calculation are integral to algorithms such as gradient descent, which is used to minimize error functions and train predictive models. Knowledge of calculus helps data scientists fine-tune model parameters for improved accuracy and performance.

Integration and Area Under Curves

Integration is useful for computing probabilities, expectations, and areas under curves, which are critical for evaluating model performance. Concepts like definite and indefinite integrals assist in understanding cumulative distributions and quantifying overall effects. Calculus empowers data scientists to interpret and optimize complex systems efficiently.

Discrete Mathematics: Structure and Logic in Data Science

Graph Theory and Networks

Discrete mathematics provides tools for analyzing structures such as graphs and networks, which are prevalent in social media, communications, and biological datasets. Graph theory enables data scientists to model relationships, track connections, and solve problems involving networks, such as shortest path and clustering.

Combinatorics and Logic

Combinatorics allows data scientists to count, arrange, and select items efficiently in large datasets. Logical reasoning is critical for algorithm design, data structure optimization, and decision-making processes. Discrete mathematics lays the foundation for computational thinking and problem-solving in data science.

Practical Applications of Math in Data Science

Machine Learning and Predictive Modeling

Essential math for data science drives the development and optimization of machine learning algorithms. Techniques such as regression, classification, clustering, and neural networks all rely heavily on mathematical principles. Proficiency in statistics, linear algebra, and calculus enables data scientists to build models that generalize well and deliver actionable insights.

Data Visualization and Interpretation

Mathematics supports the creation of effective data visualizations, which help communicate findings to diverse audiences. Understanding statistical distributions, trends, and correlations is vital for designing clear, accurate charts and graphs. Math also enables the interpretation of visual patterns, facilitating informed decision-making.

Recommended Resources for Learning Essential Math

Aspiring data scientists can deepen their mathematical knowledge through a variety of resources. Textbooks, online courses, and interactive tutorials provide comprehensive coverage of key topics. Practice problems and real-world case studies offer opportunities to apply mathematical concepts in practical contexts. Engaging with math-focused communities and forums accelerates learning and promotes professional growth.

1. Textbooks: "Introduction to Statistical Learning," "Linear Algebra and Its Applications," "Probability and Statistics for Engineering and the Sciences"
2. Online Courses: Specialized mathematics for data science tracks offered by major platforms
3. Tutorials: Interactive modules covering statistics, probability, and linear algebra
4. Practice Problems: Applied exercises and challenges for hands-on learning
5. Communities: Data science and math forums for peer support and expert guidance

Q: Why is essential math important for data science?

A: Essential math provides the theoretical foundation for data analysis, machine learning, and algorithm development, allowing data scientists to interpret results accurately, optimize models, and make informed decisions.

Q: Which math topics are most critical for data science?

A: The most important math topics include statistics, probability, linear algebra, calculus, and discrete mathematics, each offering unique tools for data manipulation, analysis, and model building.

Q: How does linear algebra contribute to machine learning?

A: Linear algebra underpins many machine learning algorithms by enabling efficient data representation, transformation, and computation, especially with vectors, matrices, eigenvalues, and eigenvectors.

Q: What role does calculus play in data science?

A: Calculus is crucial for optimizing machine learning models, particularly through differentiation and gradient-based algorithms like gradient descent, which help minimize error and improve performance.

Q: How can statistics improve data-driven decision making?

A: Statistics allows data scientists to summarize, analyze, and infer patterns from data, supporting evidence-based decision making through hypothesis testing, regression, and predictive modeling.

Q: Are probability and statistics the same in data science?

A: No, probability focuses on modeling uncertainty and predicting future events, while statistics involves analyzing and interpreting collected data to draw conclusions and make predictions.

Q: What is the significance of discrete mathematics in data science?

A: Discrete mathematics is essential for understanding structures like graphs and networks, logical reasoning, and designing algorithms, all of which are fundamental in data science applications.

Q: Where can beginners learn essential math for data science?

A: Beginners can start with textbooks, online courses, interactive tutorials, and practice problems tailored to statistics, linear algebra, probability, calculus, and discrete math within the data science context.

Q: How do data scientists use math in real-world projects?

A: Data scientists apply math to build predictive models, optimize algorithms, visualize data, interpret results, and solve complex problems across industries such as finance, healthcare, and technology.

Q: What is Bayesian probability and why is it important in data science?

A: Bayesian probability is a method for updating beliefs based on new evidence, crucial for iterative data analysis and machine learning, allowing data scientists to refine predictions and improve model accuracy.

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Essential Math for Data Science: A Comprehensive Guide

Data science is booming, attracting professionals from diverse backgrounds. But regardless of your initial field, a solid foundation in certain mathematical concepts is crucial for success. This comprehensive guide dives deep into the essential math for data science, equipping you with the knowledge you need to tackle complex problems and unlock the power of data. We'll explore key areas, providing clear explanations and practical examples to make your learning journey smoother and more effective. Get ready to build your mathematical muscle for a rewarding data science career!

1. Linear Algebra: The Foundation of Data Manipulation

Linear algebra forms the bedrock of many data science techniques. Understanding vectors, matrices, and their operations is paramount.

1.1 Vectors and Matrices: More Than Just Numbers

Vectors represent data points in multi-dimensional space, while matrices organize and manipulate these data points efficiently. Understanding vector addition, scalar multiplication, and matrix multiplication is key to performing operations like data transformations and feature scaling.

1.2 Eigenvalues and Eigenvectors: Unveiling Data Structure

Eigenvalues and eigenvectors reveal crucial information about the underlying structure of your data. They're vital in dimensionality reduction techniques like Principal Component Analysis (PCA), helping you simplify complex datasets while retaining essential information. Understanding how to calculate and interpret these values is a significant advantage.

1.3 Linear Transformations: Reshaping Your Data

Linear transformations allow you to manipulate data in systematic ways, for example, rotating data points or scaling features. This is crucial for preparing data for machine learning algorithms. Mastering linear transformations empowers you to control and optimize your data preprocessing

steps.

2. Calculus: Understanding Change and Optimization

Calculus, the study of change, is essential for understanding and optimizing machine learning algorithms.

2.1 Derivatives: Measuring the Rate of Change

Derivatives help you understand how a function changes with respect to its input. This is fundamental in gradient descent, an optimization algorithm used to train many machine learning models. Understanding derivatives allows you to pinpoint the optimal settings for your models.

2.2 Integrals: Accumulating Change

Integrals, the opposite of derivatives, measure the accumulation of change over an interval. They appear in probability distributions and are essential for calculating areas under curves, which has applications in statistical analysis and model evaluation.

2.3 Gradient Descent: Finding the Best Fit

Gradient descent leverages derivatives to iteratively adjust model parameters, minimizing the error and finding the best possible fit to the data. A strong grasp of derivatives is absolutely crucial for understanding and implementing this core machine learning technique.

3. Probability and Statistics: Making Sense of Uncertainty

Probability and statistics are indispensable tools for data analysis and interpretation.

3.1 Probability Distributions: Modeling Randomness

Understanding different probability distributions (e.g., normal, binomial, Poisson) is critical for modeling data and making inferences. Knowing which distribution best represents your data is essential for accurate analysis.

3.2 Hypothesis Testing: Drawing Valid Conclusions

Hypothesis testing allows you to draw conclusions from data, assessing the likelihood of observing certain results given a specific hypothesis. This is crucial for making data-driven decisions and validating research findings.

3.3 Statistical Inference: Estimating and Predicting

Statistical inference allows you to make estimations and predictions about populations based on sample data. Confidence intervals and p-values are key concepts in this area, enabling you to quantify the uncertainty associated with your inferences.

4. Discrete Mathematics: The Logic Behind Algorithms

While not as frequently used as linear algebra or calculus, discrete mathematics plays a crucial role in understanding the logic behind algorithms and data structures.

4.1 Graph Theory: Analyzing Relationships

Graph theory provides tools for analyzing relationships between data points, which is essential in social network analysis, recommendation systems, and many other applications. Understanding concepts like paths, cycles, and connectivity is beneficial.

4.2 Set Theory: Working with Collections of Data

Set theory provides a formal framework for working with collections of data, enabling you to perform operations like union, intersection, and difference, which are fundamental in data

manipulation and analysis.

Conclusion

Mastering the essential math for data science is an ongoing journey, but the rewards are significant. By building a strong foundation in linear algebra, calculus, probability and statistics, and elements of discrete mathematics, you'll unlock the power of data and position yourself for success in this rapidly evolving field. Consistent learning and practice are key to solidifying your understanding and applying these concepts effectively.

FAQs

1. Do I need to be a math genius to become a data scientist? No, you don't need to be a math genius. A solid understanding of the core concepts discussed here is sufficient for most data science roles. Practical application and coding skills are equally important.
2. What are the best resources for learning this math? Online courses (Coursera, edX, Udacity), textbooks, and YouTube tutorials are excellent resources. Choose resources tailored to your learning style and pace.
3. Can I learn this math without a formal background in mathematics? Absolutely! Many online resources cater to learners with little or no prior math experience. Start with introductory materials and gradually build your understanding.
4. Which mathematical area is most important for data science? Linear algebra is arguably the most fundamental, followed closely by probability and statistics. However, all the areas mentioned contribute significantly to your overall skill set.
5. How can I apply this math in a real-world data science project? Start by choosing a project that interests you. Then, identify the mathematical concepts needed to solve the problem, and practice applying them through coding and analysis. This hands-on experience is crucial for solidifying your knowledge.

essential math for data science: *Essential Math for Data Science* Thomas Nield, 2022-05-26
Master the math needed to excel in data science, machine learning, and statistics. In this book author Thomas Nield guides you through areas like calculus, probability, linear algebra, and statistics and how they apply to techniques like linear regression, logistic regression, and neural networks. Along the way you'll also gain practical insights into the state of data science and how to use those insights to maximize your career. Learn how to: Use Python code and libraries like SymPy, NumPy, and scikit-learn to explore essential mathematical concepts like calculus, linear algebra, statistics, and machine learning Understand techniques like linear regression, logistic regression,

and neural networks in plain English, with minimal mathematical notation and jargon Perform descriptive statistics and hypothesis testing on a dataset to interpret p-values and statistical significance Manipulate vectors and matrices and perform matrix decomposition Integrate and build upon incremental knowledge of calculus, probability, statistics, and linear algebra, and apply it to regression models including neural networks Navigate practically through a data science career and avoid common pitfalls, assumptions, and biases while tuning your skill set to stand out in the job market

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Ćurčić-Blake, 2017-08-26 This book reviews math topics relevant to non-mathematics students and scientists, but which they may not have seen or studied for a while. These math issues can range from reading mathematical symbols, to using complex numbers, dealing with equations involved in calculating medication equivalents, the General Linear Model (GLM) used in e.g. neuroimaging analysis, finding the minimum of a function, independent component analysis, or filtering approaches. Almost every student or scientist, will at some point run into mathematical formulas or ideas in scientific papers that may be hard to understand, given that formal math education may be some years ago. In this book we will explain the theory behind many of these mathematical ideas and expressions and provide readers with the tools to better understand them. We will revisit high school mathematics and extend and relate this to the mathematics you need to understand the math you may encounter in the course of your research. This book will help you understand the math and formulas in the scientific papers you read. To achieve this goal, each chapter mixes theory with practical pen-and-paper exercises such that you (re)gain experience with solving math problems yourself. Mnemonics will be taught whenever possible. To clarify the math and help readers apply it, each chapter provides real-world and scientific examples.

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optimally. Finally, you'll become well versed in techniques that enable parallel processing, giving you the ability to use these algorithms for compute-intensive tasks. By the end of this book, you'll have become adept at solving real-world computational problems by using a wide range of algorithms. What you will learn

- Explore existing data structures and algorithms found in Python libraries
- Implement graph algorithms for fraud detection using network analysis
- Work with machine learning algorithms to cluster similar tweets and process Twitter data in real time
- Predict the weather using supervised learning algorithms
- Use neural networks for object detection
- Create a recommendation engine that suggests relevant movies to subscribers
- Implement foolproof security using symmetric and asymmetric encryption on Google Cloud Platform (GCP)

Who this book is for
This book is for programmers or developers who want to understand the use of algorithms for problem-solving and writing efficient code. Whether you are a beginner looking to learn the most commonly used algorithms in a clear and concise way or an experienced programmer looking to explore cutting-edge algorithms in data science, machine learning, and cryptography, you'll find this book useful. Although Python programming experience is a must, knowledge of data science will be helpful but not necessary.

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essential math for data science: An Introduction to Statistical Learning Gareth James, Daniela Witten, Trevor Hastie, Robert Tibshirani, Jonathan Taylor, 2023-08-01 An Introduction to Statistical Learning provides an accessible overview of the field of statistical learning, an essential toolset for making sense of the vast and complex data sets that have emerged in fields ranging from biology to finance, marketing, and astrophysics in the past twenty years. This book presents some of the most important modeling and prediction techniques, along with relevant applications. Topics include linear regression, classification, resampling methods, shrinkage approaches, tree-based methods, support vector machines, clustering, deep learning, survival analysis, multiple testing, and more. Color graphics and real-world examples are used to illustrate the methods presented. This book is targeted at statisticians and non-statisticians alike, who wish to use cutting-edge statistical learning techniques to analyze their data. Four of the authors co-wrote *An Introduction to Statistical Learning, With Applications in R (ISLR)*, which has become a mainstay of undergraduate and graduate classrooms worldwide, as well as an important reference book for data scientists. One of the keys to its success was that each chapter contains a tutorial on implementing the analyses and methods presented in the R scientific computing environment. However, in recent years Python has become a popular language for data science, and there has been increasing demand for a Python-based alternative to ISLR. Hence, this book (ISLP) covers the same materials as ISLR but with labs implemented in Python. These labs will be useful both for Python novices, as well as experienced users.

essential math for data science: *Tiny Python Projects* Ken Youens-Clark, 2020-07-21 "Tiny Python Projects is a gentle and amusing introduction to Python that will firm up key programming concepts while also making you giggle."—Amanda Debler, Schaeffler Key Features Learn new programming concepts through 21-bitesize programs Build an insult generator, a Tic-Tac-Toe AI, a talk-like-a-pirate program, and more Discover testing techniques that will make you a better programmer Code-along with free accompanying videos on YouTube Purchase of the print book includes a free eBook in PDF, Kindle, and ePub formats from Manning Publications. About The Book

The 21 fun-but-powerful activities in *Tiny Python Projects* teach Python fundamentals through puzzles and games. You'll be engaged and entertained with every exercise, as you learn about text manipulation, basic algorithms, and lists and dictionaries, and other foundational programming skills. Gain confidence and experience while you create each satisfying project. Instead of going quickly through a wide range of concepts, this book concentrates on the most useful skills, like text manipulation, data structures, collections, and program logic with projects that include a password creator, a word rhymers, and a Shakespearean insult generator. Author Ken Youens-Clark also teaches you good programming practice, including writing tests for your code as you go. What You Will Learn Write command-line Python programs Manipulate Python data structures Use and control randomness Write and run tests for programs and functions Download testing suites for each project This Book Is Written For For readers familiar with the basics of Python programming. About The Author Ken Youens-Clark is a Senior Scientific Programmer at the University of Arizona. He has an MS in Biosystems Engineering and has been programming for over 20 years. Table of Contents 1 How to write and test a Python program 2 The crow's nest: Working with strings 3 Going on a picnic: Working with lists 4 Jump the Five: Working with dictionaries 5 Howler: Working with files and STDOUT 6 Words count: Reading files and STDIN, iterating lists, formatting strings 7 Gashlycrumb: Looking items up in a dictionary 8 Apples and Bananas: Find and replace 9 Dial-a-Curse: Generating random insults from lists of words 10 Telephone: Randomly mutating strings 11 Bottles of Beer Song: Writing and testing functions 12 Ransom: Randomly capitalizing text 13 Twelve Days of Christmas: Algorithm design 14 Rhymers: Using regular expressions to create rhyming words 15 The Kentucky Friar: More regular expressions 16 The Scrambler: Randomly reordering the middles of words 17 Mad Libs: Using regular expressions 18 Gematria: Numeric encoding of text using ASCII values 19 Workout of the Day: Parsing CSV files, creating text table output 20 Password strength: Generating a secure and memorable password 21 Tic-Tac-Toe: Exploring state 22 Tic-Tac-Toe redux: An interactive version with type hints

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designed as a textbook for a one- or two-term introduction to mathematical statistics for students training to become data scientists. It is an in-depth presentation of the topics in statistical science with which any data scientist should be familiar, including probability distributions, descriptive and inferential statistical methods, and linear modeling. The book assumes knowledge of basic calculus, so the presentation can focus on why it works as well as how to do it. Compared to traditional mathematical statistics textbooks, however, the book has less emphasis on probability theory and more emphasis on using software to implement statistical methods and to conduct simulations to illustrate key concepts. All statistical analyses in the book use R software, with an appendix showing the same analyses with Python. The book also introduces modern topics that do not normally appear in mathematical statistics texts but are highly relevant for data scientists, such as Bayesian inference, generalized linear models for non-normal responses (e.g., logistic regression and Poisson loglinear models), and regularized model fitting. The nearly 500 exercises are grouped into Data Analysis and Applications and Methods and Concepts. Appendices introduce R and Python and contain solutions for odd-numbered exercises. The book's website has expanded R, Python, and Matlab appendices and all data sets from the examples and exercises.

essential math for data science: Build a Career in Data Science Emily Robinson, Jacqueline Nolis, 2020-03-24 Summary You are going to need more than technical knowledge to succeed as a data scientist. Build a Career in Data Science teaches you what school leaves out, from how to land your first job to the lifecycle of a data science project, and even how to become a manager. Purchase of the print book includes a free eBook in PDF, Kindle, and ePub formats from Manning Publications. About the technology What are the keys to a data scientist's long-term success? Blending your technical know-how with the right "soft skills" turns out to be a central ingredient of a rewarding career. About the book Build a Career in Data Science is your guide to landing your first data science job and developing into a valued senior employee. By following clear and simple instructions, you'll learn to craft an amazing resume and ace your interviews. In this demanding, rapidly changing field, it can be challenging to keep projects on track, adapt to company needs, and manage tricky stakeholders. You'll love the insights on how to handle expectations, deal with failures, and plan your career path in the stories from seasoned data scientists included in the book. What's inside Creating a portfolio of data science projects Assessing and negotiating an offer Leaving gracefully and moving up the ladder Interviews with professional data scientists About the reader For readers who want to begin or advance a data science career. About the author Emily Robinson is a data scientist at Warby Parker. Jacqueline Nolis is a data science consultant and mentor. Table of Contents: PART 1 - GETTING STARTED WITH DATA SCIENCE 1. What is data science? 2. Data science companies 3. Getting the skills 4. Building a portfolio PART 2 - FINDING YOUR DATA SCIENCE JOB 5. The search: Identifying the right job for you 6. The application: Résumés and cover letters 7. The interview: What to expect and how to handle it 8. The offer: Knowing what to accept PART 3 - SETTLING INTO DATA SCIENCE 9. The first months on the job 10. Making an effective analysis 11. Deploying a model into production 12. Working with stakeholders PART 4 - GROWING IN YOUR DATA SCIENCE ROLE 13. When your data science project fails 14. Joining the data science community 15. Leaving your job gracefully 16. Moving up the ladder

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you a step-by-step approach to solving real-world data-centric problems. By breaking down carefully crafted examples, you'll learn to combine analytic, programming, and business perspectives into a repeatable process for extracting real knowledge from data. As you read, you'll discover (or remember) valuable statistical techniques and explore powerful data science software. More importantly, you'll put this knowledge together using a structured process for data science. When you've finished, you'll have a strong foundation for a lifetime of data science learning and practice.

What's Inside The data science process, step-by-step How to anticipate problems Dealing with uncertainty Best practices in software and scientific thinking About the Reader Readers need beginner programming skills and knowledge of basic statistics. About the Author Brian Godsey has worked in software, academia, finance, and defense and has launched several data-centric start-ups.

Table of Contents PART 1 - PREPARING AND GATHERING DATA AND KNOWLEDGE Philosophies of data science Setting goals by asking good questions Data all around us: the virtual wilderness Data wrangling: from capture to domestication Data assessment: poking and prodding PART 2 - BUILDING A PRODUCT WITH SOFTWARE AND STATISTICS Developing a plan Statistics and modeling: concepts and foundations Software: statistics in action Supplementary software: bigger, faster, more efficient Plan execution: putting it all together PART 3 - FINISHING OFF THE PRODUCT AND WRAPPING UP Delivering a product After product delivery: problems and revisions Wrapping up: putting the project away

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