

A lifetime response to new data, new technology, new research environments

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I was a perplexed, rather than angry, young man. I remain perplexed but it seems that I am getting increasingly grumpy. What I read in the books did not, and remains, little related to the kinds of data with which I was faced. The books were not wrong, just irrelevant. I have spent more than 60 years trying to understand things better. There are several roots to my problems: (i) computers (we cannot do without them but they are often misused); (ii) types of data and data-structures and how they are made manifest in models; (iii) quality of data (accuracy and precision); (iv) types of sample (randomly selected, systematically selected, one-off); (v) the roles of identification and substantive constraints in models; (vi) the funding of research (publish or perish). I shall give an account of my experience of these issues.