This Week's Citation Classic

Draper N R & Smith H. Applied regression analysis. New York: Wiley, 1966. 407 p.
[University of Wisconsin, WI and Proctor & Gamble Company]

This book provides a complete course on regression analysis, both linear and nonlinear, for the practitioner. While down-to-earth and practical, it also presents the necessary theory in such a way that readers without matrix knowledge can learn it en route. [The Science Citation Index® (SCI®) and the Social Sciences Citation Index® (SSCI™) indicate that this book has been cited over 2,760 times since 1966.]

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"In 1962, the chemical division of the American Society for Quality Control asked Harry Smith (then with Proctor and Gamble, Cincinnati, and now at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York City) to prepare a short course on applied regression analysis with another instructor, chosen from a university. After making enquiries behind the scenes, Harry asked me to do it with him when we met at a research conference that summer. We had actually never met before, but knew much about each other through mutual contacts and the 'old boy' network consisting of North Carolina graduates. (Harry's 1954 PhD is from North Carolina State, Raleigh, and my 1958 PhD is from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.)

"We hit it off immediately. Early correspondence shows that we originally intended to use an existing text but found none fully satisfactory, so we were soon writing up notes to hand out instead. Our first two-day industrial course was given in Rochester, New York, on October 18 and 19, 1964. By that time, the course notes were extensive and Andy Ford, a Wiley editor, was assuring us that the manuscript would make 'an eminently attractive book for our Wiley Statistics Series.' Our manuscript was submitted in February 1965 and, after the usual review process followed by revisions, was published in August 1966.

"I felt reluctant to use the book as a statistics department course text at Wisconsin, at first. However, when another department put forward a course proposal based on it, there was no alternative! The course (Statistics 333: Applied Regression Analysis) has proved popular among PhD students in other departments who wish to use regression analysis on data obtained as part of their thesis work. At one time, this was rare. However, with the advent of powerful computers, more and more regression analyses are being performed routinely in theses.

"A second edition has been in preparation for some time; it will be published in February 1981 [1] The first edition had 407 pages; the new edition has much new material and many additional exercises and has over 700 pages.

"The success of the first edition and the reason it is widely cited is (we have been told) due to the commonsense and down-to-earth presentation coupled with our personal opinions (clearly designated as such) of what to do in cases of doubt. We have tried to maintain those features in the second edition. We hope the book will continue to prove useful to those who must work with regression data."

1. Draper N R & Smith H. Applied regression analysis. New York: Wiley, 1981. In press.