

unexpected wildness of random

just how random is the world?
raindrops and horse races

Understanding Statistics – MobileHCI 2020 – Alan Dix



a story



In the far off land of Gheisra there lies the plain of Nali. For one hundred miles in each direction it spreads, featureless and flat, no vegetation, no habitation; except, at its very centre, a pavement of 25 tiles of stone, each perfectly level with the others and with the surrounding land.

The origins of this pavement are unknown – whether it was set there by some ancient race for its own purposes, or whether it was there from the beginning of the world.

Rain falls but rarely on that barren plain, but when clouds are seen gathering over the plain of Nali, the monks of Gheisra journey on pilgrimage to this shrine of the ancients, to watch for the patterns of the raindrops on the tiles. Oftentimes the rain falls by chance, but sometimes the raindrops form patterns, giving omens of events afar off.

Some of the patterns recorded by the monks are shown on the following pages. Which are mere chance and which foretell great omens?

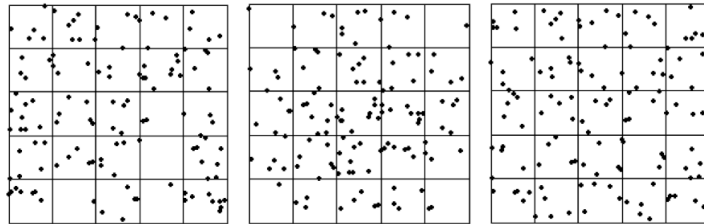
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your choice?

day 1

day 2

day 3



which are by chance ...
and which are unusual?

why?





