

# Contents

1. Representing Response Times as Random Variables	1
1.1. The Study of Response Times	1
1.1.1 Why?	1
1.1.2 How?	2
1.1.3 Organization	4
1.2 Random Variables	7
1.2.1 Distribution and Density Functions	8
*1.2.2 A Somewhat More General Treatment of Random Variables	11
1.2.3 Hazard Functions	13
1.2.4 On Contemplating Distributions	17
1.3 Several Random Variables	20
1.3.1 Joint and Conditional Distributions	20
1.3.2 Bayes' Theorem	21
1.3.3 Independence	22
1.3.4 Expectation and Variance	25
1.3.5 Random Samples	26
*1.3.6 Random Samples of Random Size	29
1.4 Generating Functions	30
1.4.1 Convolution	30
1.4.2 The Moment Generating Function	32
1.4.3 Three Examples: Exponential, Gaussian, and Ex-Gaussian	34
1.4.4 The Characteristic Function	36
1.4.5 Cumulants	37
1.4.6 Discrete Generating Functions	38
1.4.7 Three Examples: Binomial, Poisson, and Geometric	39
1.5 Elementary Concepts of Stochastic Processes	41
1.5.1 Basic Definitions	41
1.5.2 Some Important Constraints	42
Part I. DETECTION PARADIGMS	47
2. Simple Reaction Times: Basic Data	49
2.1 The Problem	49
2.2 The Simple Reaction-Time Paradigm	51
2.2.1 Reaction Signals	51
2.2.2 Trials and Reaction Time	52
2.2.3 Warning Signals and Foreperiods	53
2.2.4 Random Foreperiods	54
2.2.5 Constant Foreperiods and Catch Trials	55
2.2.6 Anticipations and False Alarms	55
2.2.7 Speed-Accuracy Tradeoff	56
2.2.8 Information Feedback and Payoffs	57

2.3	Effect of Signal Properties on Reaction Time	58
2.3.1	Intensity and the Mean Time	58
2.3.2	Intensity and the Standard Deviation of Time	64
2.3.3	Duration and the Mean Time	65
2.3.4	Subjective Intensity and the Mean Time	68
2.4	Effect of Foreperiod on Reaction Time	71
2.4.1	Constant Foreperiods	72
2.4.2	Equally Likely Foreperiods	73
2.4.3	Exponentially Distributed Foreperiods	75
2.4.4	Interaction of Foreperiod, Intensity, and Presentation Probability	80
2.5	Speed-Accuracy Tradeoff	81
2.5.1	The Phenomenon in Simple Reactions	81
2.5.2	A Representation of Criterion Effects	82
2.5.3	Payoffs and Reaction Time	87
2.6	The Response and Reaction Time	90
2.7	What Faces a Model Builder?	94
3.	Decomposition into Decision and Residual Latencies	96
3.1	Independent, Additive Stage Latencies	96
3.2	Specific Assumptions	99
3.2.1	One Variable Gaussian, the Other Exponential	99
3.2.2	One Variable Bounded, the Other Exponential in the Tail	103
3.2.3	One Variable Gamma	105
*3.2.4	Responding to the First Spike: A Successful Analysis of an Unsuccessful Model	105
3.2.5	Spline Approximations	113
3.3	Manipulation of Stages	114
3.3.1	Negligible Decision Latencies to Intense Signals	114
3.3.2	Is the Residual Latency Affected by Signal Intensity?	118
3.3.3	Is the Residual Latency Affected by Foreperiod Duration?	118
3.3.4	Independent Manipulation of the Stages	119
3.4	Conclusions	121
4.	Distributions of Simple Decision Latencies	122
4.1	Empirical Distributions	122
4.1.1	Estimating Hazard Functions	122
4.1.2	Signals Well Above Threshold	124
4.1.3	Signals Near Threshold	131
4.2	Discrete-Time, Information-Accumulation Detectors	139
4.2.1	The General Schema	139
4.2.2	Binary Sampling and Fixed Criterion: Recruitment Model	141
*4.2.3	Binary Events at Almost Periodic Times	142
4.2.4	Variable Accumulation and Fixed Criterion: Random Walk Model	144
4.2.5	Variable Accumulation and Fixed Probability Boundary	147
4.3	Continuous-Time, Information-Accumulation Detectors	149
4.3.1	Deterministic Accumulation and Variable Criterion	149
4.3.2	Deterministic, Aggregated Accumulation: Cascade Model	152
4.3.3	Stochastic Accumulation: Linear, Dynamic, Stochastic Model	154
4.3.4	Binary Accumulation and Fixed Criterion: Counting Processes	155
4.3.5	Binary Decisions with Separable Hazard Functions	156
4.3.6	Binary Increments and Decrements and Fixed Criterion: Differences of Counting Processes	158

4.4	Race Between Level and Change Detectors	159
4.4.1	Change and Level Detectors	159
4.4.2	The Hazard Function for Noise	164
4.4.3	Level Detection as Comparison of an Estimated Local Rate with a Criterion	165
4.4.4	Change Detection as Comparison of Two Estimated Local Rates	167
4.4.5	Change Detection as Neural Post Inhibitory Rebound	167
4.4.6	Why Two Types of Detector?	172
4.5	Conclusions	173
5.	Detection of Signals Presented at Irregular Times	175
5.1	Introduction	175
5.2	Vigilance at Low Signal Rates	176
5.3	Vigilance at High Signal Rates	178
5.3.1	Pseudo-Random Presentations and Pseudo-Hazard Functions	178
5.3.2	Signal-Queuing Model for Random Presentations	180
5.4	Interaction of Two Signals in Close Succession	185
5.4.1	The Major Phenomenon: Psychological Refractoriness	185
5.4.2	Signal Queuing: The Single-Channel Hypothesis	188
5.4.3	Data Relevant to the Single-Channel Model	191
5.4.4	Signal Grouping	195
5.4.5	Quantized Perception	196
5.4.6	Perceptual and/or Response Preparation	197
5.4.7	Capacity Sharing	198
5.5	Conclusions	200

## Part II. IDENTIFICATION PARADIGMS 203

6.	Two-Choice Reaction Times: Basic Ideas and Data	205
6.1	General Considerations	205
6.1.1	Experimental Design	205
6.1.2	Response Measures	207
6.2	Relations to Simple Reaction Times	208
6.2.1	Means and Standard Deviations	208
6.2.2	Donders' Subtraction Idea	212
6.2.3	Subtraction with Independence	214
6.2.4	Varying Signal Intensity	217
6.3	A Conceptual Scheme for Tradeoffs	218
6.3.1	Types of Parameters	218
6.3.2	Formal Statement	220
6.3.3	An Example: The Fast Guess Model	221
6.3.4	Discrimination of Color by Pigeons	223
6.4	Discriminability and Accuracy	224
6.4.1	Varying the Response Criterion: Various ROC Curves	224
6.4.2	Varying the Discriminability of the Signals	229
6.4.3	Are Errors Faster, the Same as, or Slower than the Corresponding Correct Responses?	233
6.5	Speed-Accuracy Tradeoff	236
6.5.1	General Concept of a Speed-Accuracy Tradeoff Function (SATF)	236
6.5.2	Use of the SATF	240
6.5.3	Empirical Representations of SATFs	241

6.5.4	Conditional Accuracy Function (CAF)	245
6.5.5	Use of the CAF	247
6.5.6	Can CAFs Be Pieced Together to Get the SATF?	248
6.5.7	Conclusions about SATFs	252
6.6	Sequential Effects	253
6.6.1	Stimulus Controlled Effects on the Mean	254
6.6.2	Facilitation and Expectancy	262
6.6.3	Stimulus-Response Controlled Events	264
6.6.4	Are the Sequential Effects a Speed-Accuracy Tradeoff?	266
6.6.5	Two Types of Decision Strategy	269
6.7	Conclusions	271
7.	Mixture Models	273
7.1	Two-State Mixtures	274
7.1.1	Linear Functions	275
7.1.2	Fixed Points	276
*7.1.3	Statistical Test	277
7.2	A Linear Operator Model for Sequential Effects	278
7.2.1	The Model	278
7.2.2	Parameter Estimation	279
7.3	Data With Few Response Errors	281
7.3.1	Linear Functions	281
7.3.2	Fixed Points	283
7.3.3	Estimation of Parameters and Fitting Sequential Data	285
7.4	The Fast Guess Account of Errors	286
7.4.1	The Simple Fast-Guess Model	286
7.4.2	Two Predictions	289
7.4.3	Estimation of the Mean Identification Time	291
7.4.4	Generalized Fast-Guess Model	292
7.4.5	Sequential Effects	292
7.4.6	A Donderian Assumption	293
7.5	A Three-State, Fast-Guess, Memory Model	294
7.5.1	Memory Transitions	294
7.5.2	Responses and Response Times	297
7.5.3	A Strategy for Data Analysis	297
7.6	Data With Response Errors: Highly Discriminable Signals	299
7.6.1	Identification of Color, Auditory Frequency, and Auditory Intensity	299
7.6.2	Identification of Length, Orientation, and Digits	302
7.6.3	Persistent Strategies in the Location of a Light	304
7.6.4	Sequential Effects in the Identification of Orientation	306
7.7	Data With Response Errors: Confusable Signals	308
7.7.1	Identification of Auditory Frequency	308
7.7.2	Detection of Auditory Intensity	309
7.7.3	Persistent Strategies in the Identification of Orientation	311
7.8	Conclusions	316
8.	Stochastic Accumulation of Information in Discrete Time	319
8.1	Accumulator Models	320
8.1.1	The Simple Accumulator	320
8.1.2	The Runs Model	322
8.1.3	The Strength Accumulator	325

8.2	Random Walks With Boundaries	326
8.2.1	The Model	327
8.2.2	The Assumption of Small Steps and Wald's Identity	328
8.2.3	Response Probabilities and Mean Decision Latencies	329
8.2.4	Gaussian Steps	331
8.2.5	Distributions of Decision Latencies	333
*8.2.6	Proofs	335
8.3	Restrictions on the Random Walk Model	340
8.3.1	The Classical Optimum Model: Sequential Probability Ratio Test (SPRT)	340
8.3.2	On Testing SPRT	341
8.3.3	Symmetric Stimulus Representation (SSR)	342
8.3.4	On Testing SSR	344
8.3.5	Restrictions on Boundaries	346
*8.3.6	Proofs	348
8.4	Modifications of the Random Walk	349
8.4.1	Linear Boundary Changes: Biased SPRT Model	350
8.4.2	Premature Sampling	351
8.5	Data	352
8.5.1	Attempts to Vary Accumulation of Information	353
8.5.2	Accumulator Model Analyses of Attempts to Manipulate the Response Parameters	357
8.5.3	SPRT Analysis of Attempts to Manipulate the Response Parameters	357
8.5.4	SSR Analysis with Signal-Dependent Residuals	359
8.5.5	SSR Analysis with Response-Dependent Residuals	363
8.5.6	A Gaussian Analysis	365
8.6	Conclusions	366
9.	Stochastic Accumulation of Information in Continuous Time	367
9.1	Introduction	367
9.2	Additive Processes	368
9.2.1	Diffusion Processes	369
9.2.2	An Alternative Derivation	370
9.2.3	Generalizations	373
9.2.4	Poisson Processes	374
9.2.5	Diffusion Boundaries and Poisson Accumulation	375
9.2.6	A Flash-Rate Experiment	376
9.3	Renewal Processes	379
9.3.1	A Counting Model	381
9.3.2	A Timing Model	382
9.3.3	Flash-Rate Data	384
9.3.4	Deadline Data	384
9.4	Conclusions	388
10.	Absolute Identification of More Than Two Signals	389
10.1	Types of Designs with More than Two Signals	389
10.2	Experiments with Few Errors: Mean Times	390
10.2.1	The Stimulus Information Hypothesis	390
10.2.2	Alternative Accounts of Hick's Logarithmic Relation	393
10.2.3	Practice and Stimulus-Response Compatibility	395
10.3	Experiments with Few Errors: Sequential Effects	399
10.3.1	First-Order Stimulus Effects	399

10.3.2	Higher-Order Stimulus Effects	407
10.3.3	First-Order Response Effects	408
10.4	Experiments With Errors	410
10.4.1	Empirical Speed-Accuracy Tradeoff Functions	410
10.4.2	A Response Discard Model	412
10.4.3	A Generalization of SPRT	418
10.4.4	Accelerating Cycle Model	419
10.5	Conclusions	421

## Part III. MATCHING PARADIGMS 423

### 11. Memory Scanning, Visual Search, and Same-Difference Designs 425

11.1	Memory Scanning and Visual Search	425
11.1.1	The Experimental Designs	425
11.1.2	Typical Memory Scanning Data	426
11.2	The Serial, Exhaustive Search Model	427
11.2.1	The Model	427
11.2.2	Reactions to the SES Model	429
11.2.3	Failures of Prediction	429
11.3	Alternative Models	431
11.3.1	A Serial, Self-Terminating Search Model: Push-Down Stack	432
11.3.2	Comparison of Serial-Exhaustive and Self-Terminating Models	432
11.3.3	A Parallel, Exhaustive Search, Capacity Reallocation Model	435
11.3.4	An Optimal, Capacity-Reallocation Model	435
*11.3.5	Proof of Eq. 11.46	437
11.3.6	A Parallel, Self-Terminating Search Model Based on a Continuous Random Walk	438
11.3.7	Distributive Memory Model	440
11.4	Same-Different experiments	445
11.4.1	The Basic Data	445
11.4.2	Modified Error-Free Stage Models	447
11.4.3	Serial, Exhaustive, Imperfect Search	448
11.4.4	A Continuous Random Walk Model	451
11.5	Conclusions	454

### 12. Processing Stages and Strategies 456

12.1	Introduction	456
12.2	Serial-Parallel Equivalences	457
12.2.1	General Nomenclature	457
12.2.2	Mimicking Overall Decision Times	458
12.2.3	Mimicking Intercompletion Times by Serial and Parallel Exhaustive Searches	459
12.2.4	Mimicking Intercompletion Times and Order by Serial and Parallel Exhaustive Searches	459
12.2.5	Mimicking Intercompletion Times and Order by Physically Realizable Searches	460
12.2.6	Subconclusion	464
12.3	Simultaneous Accounts of Several Experiments	464
12.3.1	A Serial or Parallel, Exhaustive or Self-Terminating Testing Paradigm	464
12.3.2	How Distinct are the Predictions?	466

12.3.3	An Experiment	467
12.3.4	A Variant on the Paradigm	469
12.4	Selective Manipulation of Stages	472
12.4.1	The Additive-Factors Method	473
12.4.2	Illustrative Applications of the Model	477
12.4.3	Can a Parallel System Mimic the Means of a Serial System?	480
12.4.4	Cautions and Concerns	481
12.4.5	Speed-Accuracy Tradeoff	483
12.4.6	Critical Path Generalization of the Additive-Factors Method	485
12.4.7	An Application of the Critical Path Method	488
12.4.8	Inferring the Processing Network from Comparability Data	489
12.5	Conclusions	490

## APPENDIXES 493

A.	Asymptotic Results for Independent Random Variables	495
A.1	Serial Models: Sum of Random Variables	495
A.1.1	Identical Random Variables	495
A.1.2	Distribution of Counts in a Renewal Process	497
A.1.3	Nearly Identical Random Variables	499
A.1.4	Identical Gaussians	500
A.1.5	Identical Exponentials	500
A.2	Parallel Models: Maxima of Identical Random Variables	502
A.2.1	Form of Asymptotic Distributions	502
A.2.2	Conditions on Distributions Leading to Each Asymptotic Distribution	504
B.	Properties of Continuous Distributions for Simple Reaction Times	507
B.1	Theoretically Based Distributions	507
B.2	<i>Ad Hoc</i> Distributions	510
C.	Experimental Data	512
C.1	Yellott (1971), Experiment 3 Data	512
C.2	Ollman (1970), Experiment 2 Data	514
C.3	Laming (1968), Experiment 2 Data	515
C.4	Link (1975) Data	515
C.5	Carterette, Friedman, and Cosmides (1965) Data	516
C.6	Green and Luce (1973) Data	517
C.7	Green, Smith, and von Gierke (1983) Data	519
C.8	Laming (1968), Experiment 6 Data	520

References	521
Author Index	547
Subject Index	554