



BAMA 6

School Year 2009–2010
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Ted Hill

The First-Digit Phenomenon, or Benford's Law

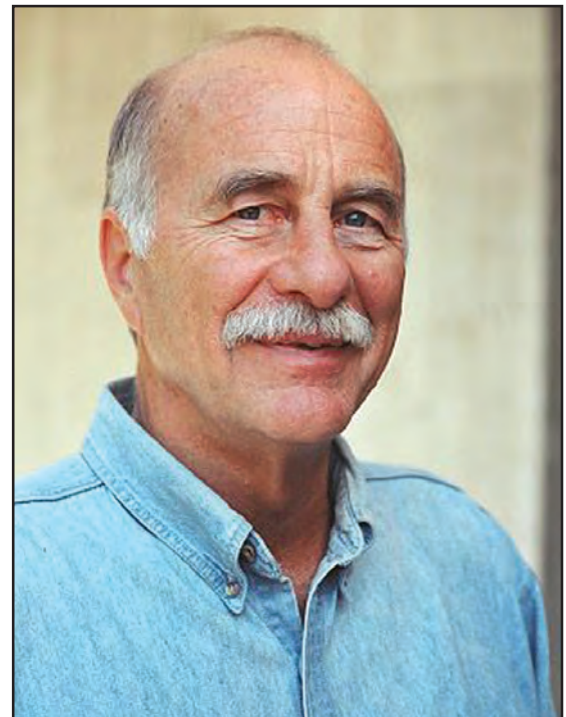


San Jose State University*
Engineering Auditorium, Rm. 189

7:30 pm
Wednesday, March 10

What do census data, powers of two, numbers in newspapers, physics constants, Fibonacci numbers, and the stock market have in common? Surprisingly, their leading digits are NOT equally likely to be a 1, a 2, a 3, etc., but rather follow a century-old logarithmic statistical pattern called Benford's Law. This talk will describe the colorful history of this phenomenon, recent mathematical discoveries that help explain its ubiquity, and how the IRS is using it to detect tax fraud.

Ted Hill is Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at Georgia Tech, and has held visiting appointments in Costa Rica, Germany (Gauss Professor), Holland (NATO Fellow), Israel, Italy, and Mexico. He studied at West Point (BS), Stanford (MS), Göttingen (Fulbright Scholar) and Berkeley (MA, PhD), and his primary research interests are in mathematical probability, especially optimal-stopping theory, fair-division problems, and Benford's Law.



* See back for map and directions.

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