Many authors get fan mail, but it must be a rare experience for those who write statistics textbooks. For publishing phenomenon Andy Field, however, it’s pretty much par for the course, from musical tributes on YouTube to online accolades proclaiming him a “legend” and a “rock star”.

“Statistical Package for the Social Sciences” and a “Rock Star”

Statistical Package for the Social computer program called the bestseller (even for those who SPSS is field-trained.”

You nasty exams. This candidate the volume the closest thing to Harry Potter for the UK arm of SAGE Publications. It also won the British Psychological Society’s annual book award in 2007. Field, however, seems astonished to have received floods of “purely gushing endorsements.”

He was completely serendipitous, really,” Field says. “I was doing some teaching when I was a PhD student and made some handouts with wacky examples that seemed to work.”

Why not base an example around the claim that Coca-Cola is an effective contraceptive? One can always invent a scientist called Dr Jack Q. Late to investigate it.

“In the latest version of the book’s chapter on logistic regression, Field says, “I changed the main example from one about theory of mind (which is now an end-of-chapter task) to one about putting eggs up your anus to cure constipation (based on a true story). Does this help you understand logistic regression?”

Probably not, but it really kept me entertained.”

In another unusual move (which few publishers would have dared suggest), Field opted to give his textbook the personal touch. In the new edition, for a bit of a laugh, I wanted to have a non-statistical tale running through it, and I decided to weave in stories from my life, very tenuously related to the topic of the chapter. Each chapter is bookended by such material. I think students are curious about the people who write these books.”

Figure 1.1, for example, shows from one about theory of mind to one about putting eggs up your anus to cure constipation (based on a true story)

Field as a baby in 1973 with the caption “When I grow up, please don’t let me be a statistics lecturer.”

Statistics Hellboy I changed an example

Why not base an example around the claim that Coca-Cola is an effective contraceptive? One can always invent a scientist called Dr Jack Q. Late to investigate it.

to go down well with the students. I got talking about them to someone who was an academic writing a book for SAGE, and who had been asked to look out for new authors.”

When he teaches clinical psychology, Field is obviously constrained by the need to set out the current state of knowledge and to deal with some very serious material. Statistics, by contrast, is an area where you can use your imagination. To illustrate data or analysis, you can pick examples out of your head and make them as weird and wacky as you like.”

Many textbook writers fall back on dull and obvious examples, such as the proportion of faulty widgets coming off a production line. Instead, Field has said he deliberately draws on “topics that play on the minds of the average student (e.g., sex, drugs, rock’n’roll, celebrity, people doing crazy stuff...).” By the end, for better or worse, I think you will have some idea of what goes on in my head on a daily basis”.

There is plenty of amusingly daft research around, where solid statistical methods are used to test ridiculous theories. Why not base an example around the claim that Coca-Cola is an effective contraceptive? One can always invent a scientist called Dr Jack Q. Late to investigate it.

In the latest version of the book’s chapter on logistic regression, Field says, “I changed the main example from one about theory of mind (which is now an end-of-chapter task) to one about putting eggs up your anus to cure constipation (based on a true story). Does this help you understand logistic regression?”

Probably not, but it really kept me entertained.”

In another unusual move (which few publishers would have dared suggest), Field opted to give his textbook the personal touch. In the new edition, for a bit of a laugh, I wanted to have a non-statistical tale running through it, and I decided to weave in stories from my life, very tenuously related to the topic of the chapter. Each chapter is bookended by such material. I think students are curious about the people who write these books.”

Figure 1.1, for example, shows from one about theory of mind to one about putting eggs up your anus to cure constipation (based on a true story)

Field as a baby in 1973 with the caption “When I grow up, please don’t let me be a statistics lecturer.”

Statistics Hellboy I changed an example

Why not base an example around the claim that Coca-Cola is an effective contraceptive? One can always invent a scientist called Dr Jack Q. Late to investigate it.

to go down well with the students. I got talking about them to someone who was an academic writing a book for SAGE, and who had been asked to look out for new authors.”

When he teaches clinical psychology, Field is obviously constrained by the need to set out the current state of knowledge and to deal with some very serious material. Statistics, by contrast, is an area where you can use your imagination. To illustrate data or analysis, you can pick examples out of your head and make them as weird and wacky as you like.”

Many textbook writers fall back on dull and obvious examples, such as the proportion of faulty widgets coming off a production line. Instead, Field has said he deliberately draws on “topics that play on the minds of the average student (e.g., sex, drugs, rock’n’roll, celebrity, people doing crazy stuff...).” By the end, for better or worse, I think you will have some idea of what goes on in my head on a daily basis”.

There is plenty of amusingly daft research around, where solid statistical methods are used to test ridiculous theories. Why not base an example around the claim that Coca-Cola is an effective contraceptive? One can always invent a scientist called Dr Jack Q. Late to investigate it.

In the latest version of the book’s chapter on logistic regression, Field says, “I changed the main example from one about theory of mind (which is now an end-of-chapter task) to one about putting eggs up your anus to cure constipation (based on a true story). Does this help you understand logistic regression?”

Probably not, but it really kept me entertained.”

In another unusual move (which few publishers would have dared suggest), Field opted to give his textbook the personal touch. In the new edition, for a bit of a laugh, I wanted to have a non-statistical tale running through it, and I decided to weave in stories from my life, very tenuously related to the topic of the chapter. Each chapter is bookended by such material. I think students are curious about the people who write these books.”

Figure 1.1, for example, shows from one about theory of mind to one about putting eggs up your anus to cure constipation (based on a true story)

Field as a baby in 1973 with the caption “When I grow up, please don’t let me be a statistics lecturer.”

Statistics Hellboy I changed an example

Why not base an example around the claim that Coca-Cola is an effective contraceptive? One can always invent a scientist called Dr Jack Q. Late to investigate it.

to go down well with the students. I got talking about them to someone who was an academic writing a book for SAGE, and who had been asked to look out for new authors.”

When he teaches clinical psychology, Field is obviously constrained by the need to set out the current state of knowledge and to deal with some very serious material. Statistics, by contrast, is an area where you can use your imagination. To illustrate data or analysis, you can pick examples out of your head and make them as weird and wacky as you like.”

Many textbook writers fall back on dull and obvious examples, such as the proportion of faulty widgets coming off a production line. Instead, Field has said he deliberately draws on “topics that play on the minds of the average student (e.g., sex, drugs, rock’n’roll, celebrity, people doing crazy stuff...).” By the end, for better or worse, I think you will have some idea of what goes on in my head on a daily basis”.

There is plenty of amusingly daft research around, where solid statistical methods are used to test ridiculous theories. Why not base an example around the claim that Coca-Cola is an effective contraceptive? One can always invent a scientist called Dr Jack Q. Late to investigate it.

In the latest version of the book’s chapter on logistic regression, Field says, “I changed the main example from one about theory of mind (which is now an end-of-chapter task) to one about putting eggs up your anus to cure constipation (based on a true story). Does this help you understand logistic regression?”

Probably not, but it really kept me entertained.”

In another unusual move (which few publishers would have dared suggest), Field opted to give his textbook the personal touch. In the new edition, for a bit of a laugh, I wanted to have a non-statistical tale running through it, and I decided to weave in stories from my life, very tenuously related to the topic of the chapter. Each chapter is bookended by such material. I think students are curious about the people who write these books.”

Figure 1.1, for example, shows from one about theory of mind to one about putting eggs up your anus to cure constipation (based on a true story)

Field as a baby in 1973 with the caption “When I grow up, please don’t let me be a statistics lecturer.”

Statistics Hellboy I changed an example

Why not base an example around the claim that Coca-Cola is an effective contraceptive? One can always invent a scientist called Dr Jack Q. Late to investigate it.

to go down well with the students. I got talking about them to someone who was an academic writing a book for SAGE, and who had been asked to look out for new authors.”

When he teaches clinical psychology, Field is obviously constrained by the need to set out the current state of knowledge and to deal with some very serious material. Statistics, by contrast, is an area where you can use your imagination. To illustrate data or analysis, you can pick examples out of your head and make them as weird and wacky as you like.”

Many textbook writers fall back on dull and obvious examples, such as the proportion of faulty widgets coming off a production line. Instead, Field has said he deliberately draws on “topics that play on the minds of the average student (e.g., sex, drugs, rock’n’roll, celebrity, people doing crazy stuff...).” By the end, for better or worse, I think you will have some idea of what goes on in my head on a daily basis”.

There is plenty of amusingly daft research around, where solid statistical methods are used to test ridiculous theories. Why not base an example around the claim that Coca-Cola is an effective contraceptive? One can always invent a scientist called Dr Jack Q. Late to investigate it.

In the latest version of the book’s chapter on logistic regression, Field says, “I changed the main example from one about theory of mind (which is now an end-of-chapter task) to one about putting eggs up your anus to cure constipation (based on a true story). Does this help you understand logistic regression?”

Probably not, but it really kept me entertained.”

In another unusual move (which few publishers would have dared suggest), Field opted to give his textbook the personal touch. In the new edition, for a bit of a laugh, I wanted to have a non-statistical tale running through it, and I decided to weave in stories from my life, very tenuously related to the topic of the chapter. Each chapter is bookended by such material. I think students are curious about the people who write these books.”

Figure 1.1, for example, shows from one about theory of mind to one about putting eggs up your anus to cure constipation (based on a true story)}