

SOCIology 201:
Social Research Design



24. Evaluation Research I

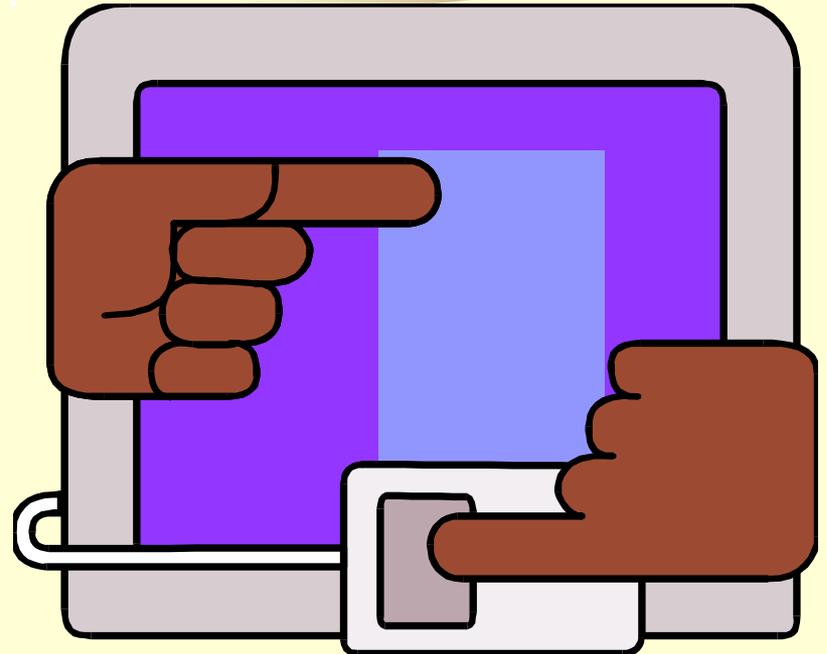
Preview



- *Workbook assignments due:* 12.1(15 pts), 12.3(10 pts),
- The Logic of evaluation research
- Examples
- Group discussion

Logic of evaluation research

- We perceive a problem
- We create an intervention to solve it
- We should follow up with research to determine whether we were successful

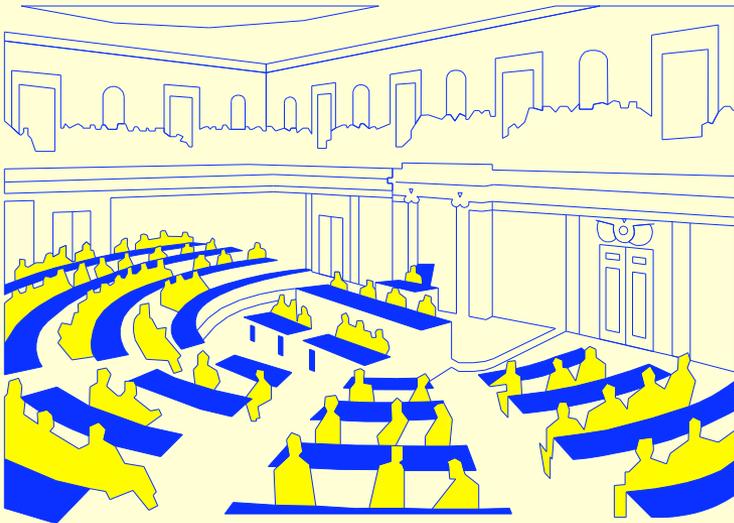


Much social intervention

- Breakup of AT&T
- Lowered voting age
- Raised drinking age
- Tax reform
- Seat belt laws
- Lowered speed limit to 55
- Child-proof caps
- Revising Sociology curriculum at Chapman



Goals and purposes



- What exactly are we trying to achieve?
 - This is often unclear
- Were we successful?
 - This is often not tested

Example: NHTSA study of driver training

Overall, driver training students have fewer accidents



However...

- Self-selection is at work
 - "Good" students less likely to have accidents and violations
 - "Good" students also more likely to take driver training
 - Controlling for kind of kid cancels out the apparent effect
- Program may actually cause *more* accidents
 - Encourages students to get licenses earlier

Operationalizing success/failure



- Let's create an example together
- What's the problem?
- Create an intervention
- Specify success/

Cost of Living Index Research

- Problem: some places more expensive than others
- Want comparable pay for federal employees
- Measure the price of things
- Illustrates the importance of definitions and careful field work
- I was asked to evaluate the Civil Service Commission's measurement of cost of living on Maui
- I was evaluating an evaluation
- Keep this in mind when you hear cost of living statistics



Cost of Living Logic

- Various consumer items
- Weighted by importance
- DC = 100, Maui = 108, Honolulu = 118.3 (1976)
- Yet commodities had to be shipped from Honolulu to Maui
- How could things be cheaper on Maui?



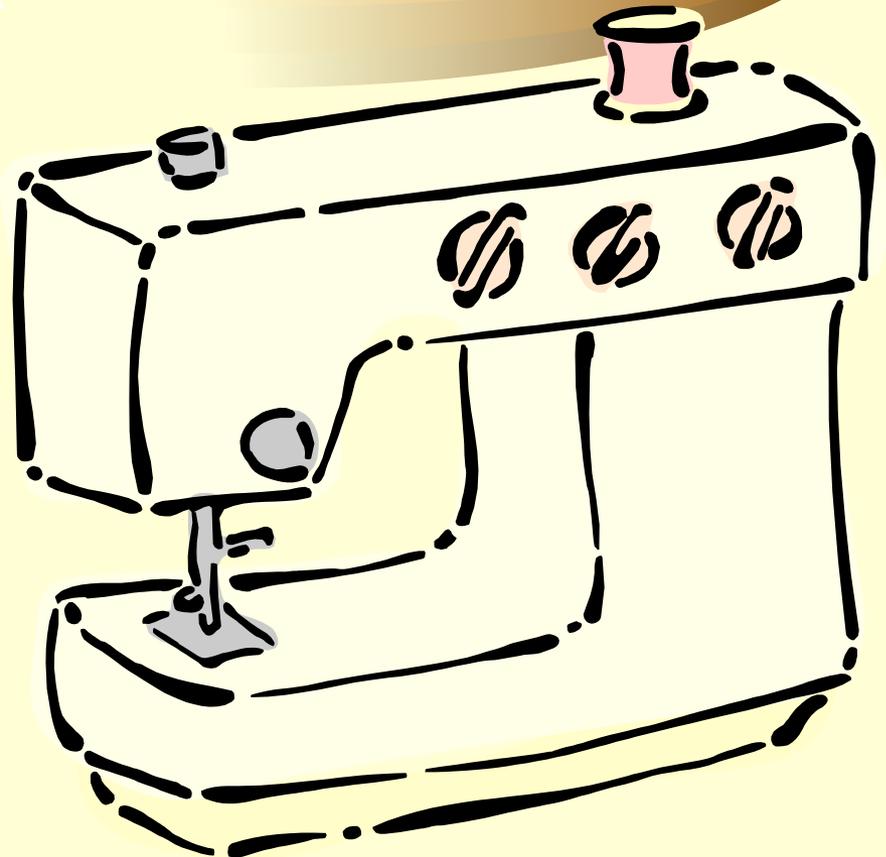
The Explanation lay in Research Errors



Total = 20 slides

Sewing Machines

- Prices: DC = \$298.17, Maui = \$157.73
- Early studies: Sears (Maui) vs Singer (DC)
- 1978 & 1979: Maui priced Singers, too
- Top = \$979.95 (1978) \$1035 (1979)
- Got worksheets from Washington
- They added top-of-line for \$950 (v 1035)
- However, they divided seven



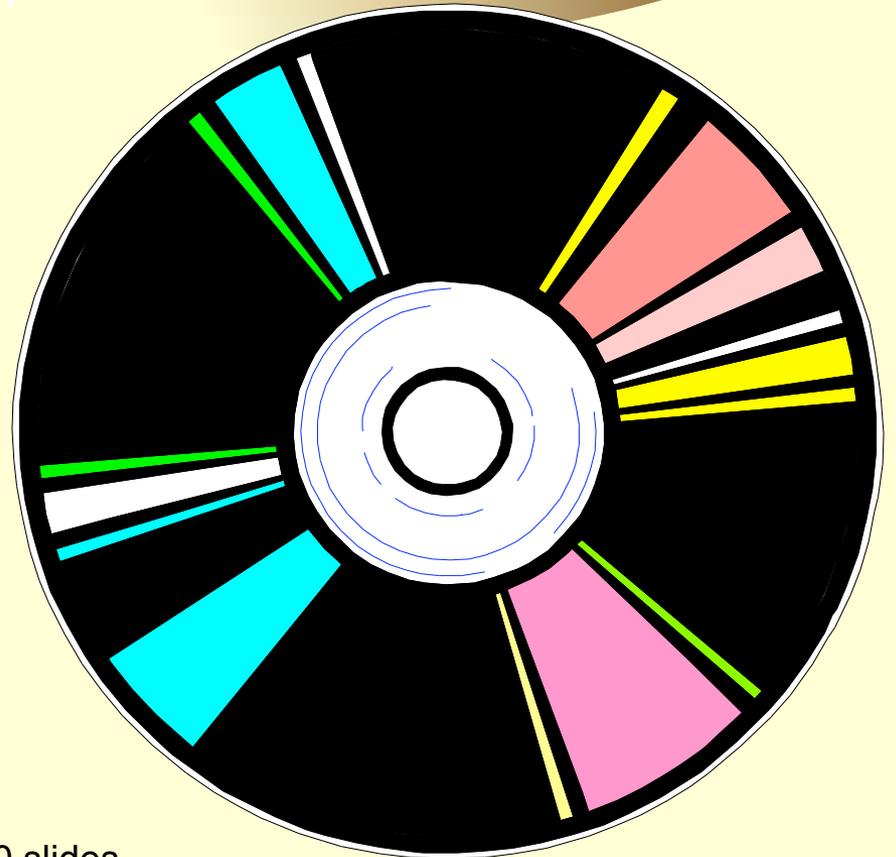
Bicycles



- Instructions called for 3-speed bikes
- These were hard to find anywhere
- Washington priced almost all 10-speed bikes
- Maui tracked down

Phonograph records

- 1976: DC=5.06,
Maui=5.06,
Hon=6.11
- Worksheets showed
the researcher priced
phonographs, not
records (\$100+)
- Commission simply
substituted DC price



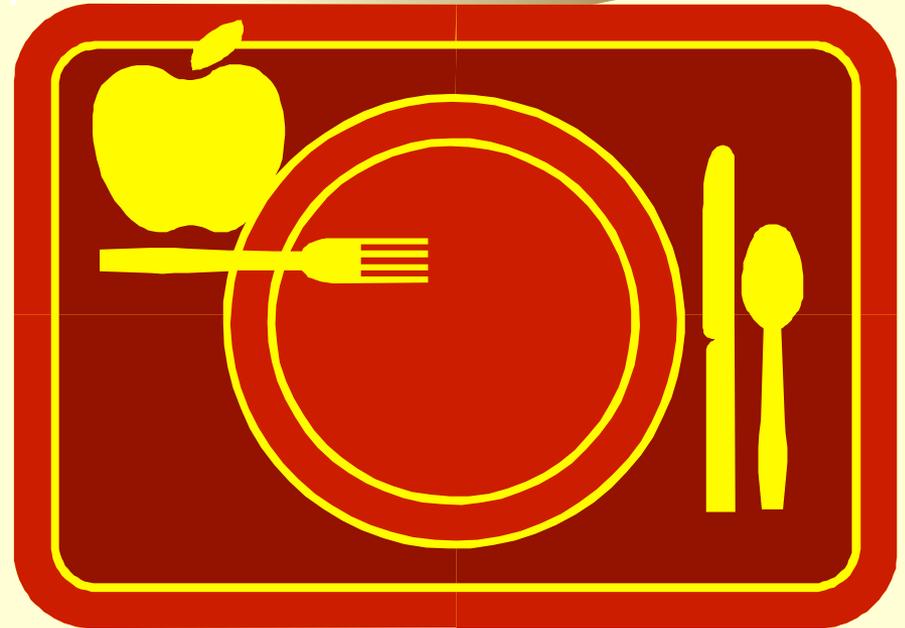
Books



- Instructions: price 150-200 page books
- DC=\$1.47, Maui=\$1.24
- Maui could only find children's book that length
 - Averaged 186 pages
- DC priced best-sellers,

Restaurants

- DC=\$9.29,
Maui=3.34 for
dinner
- DC: mainline hotel
and popular roast-
beef place
- Maui: Chinese
restaurant



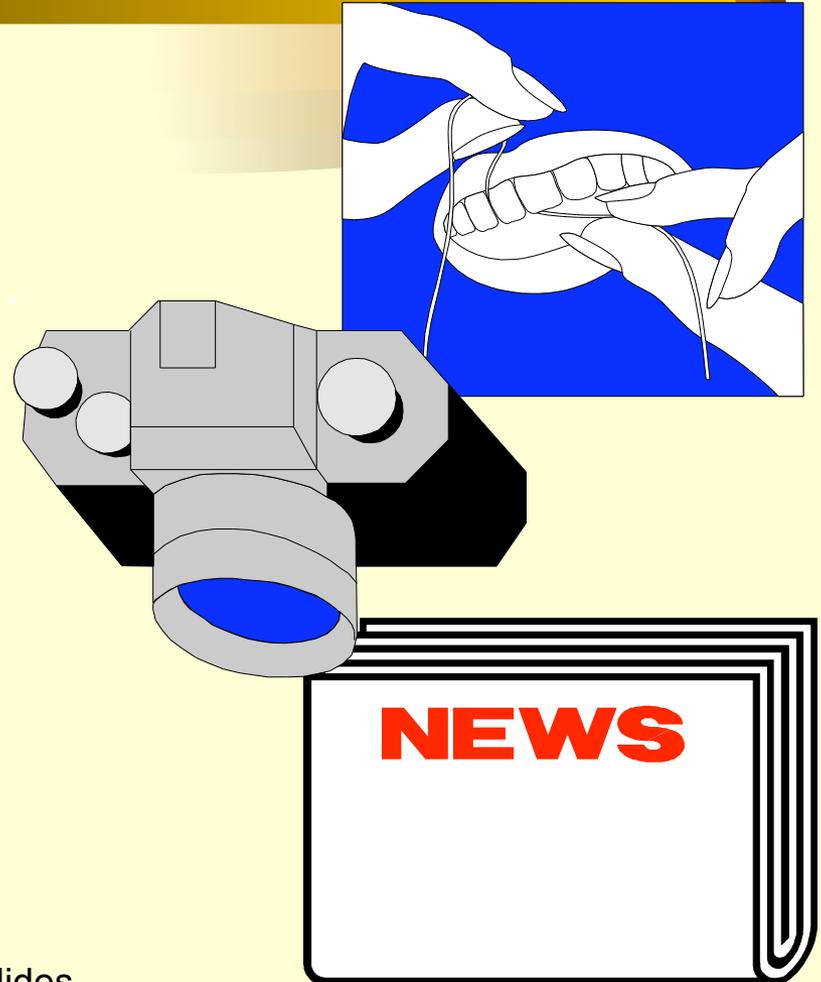
Rice



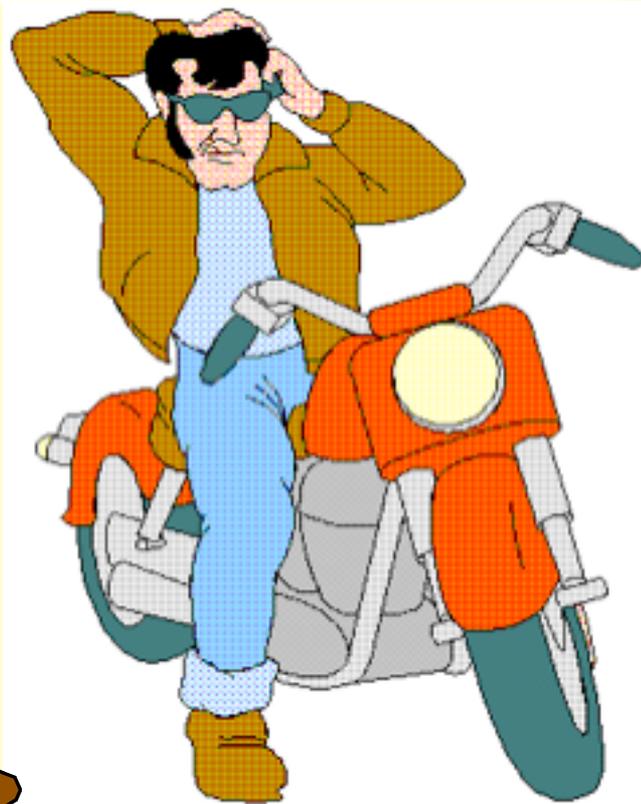
- DC=.42 cents/lb,
Maui=.24
- “Price 1 pound
container”
- Maui priced 25-lb
and divided
- Called the large
“economy” size

Same problem with other commodities

- 3.5-ounce tube of toothpaste
 - DC=67, Maui=.55
 - DC priced 3, 3.5, and 7 oz tubes
 - Maui priced 7 and 10 oz tubes
 - 7-oz tube in Maui=1.09, DC=.59
- Maui priced 20-exposure rather than 36-exposure film
- Newspapers: local and out-of-town
 - Honolulu: Advertiser = local



Haircuts



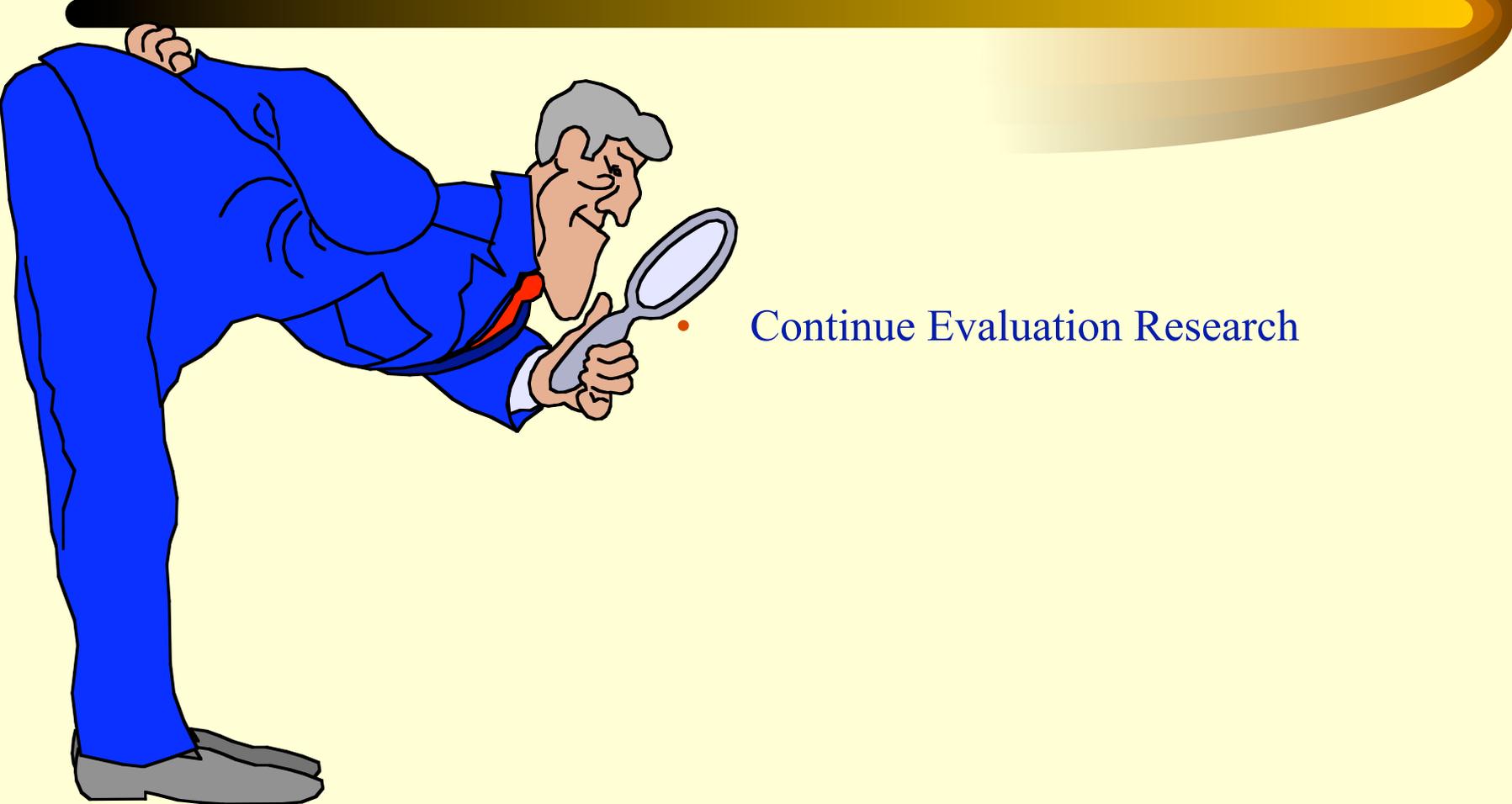
Total - 20 slides

- Maui didn't include tip because he didn't think it was appropriate

Comment on Expert Testimony



Next Time



- Continue Evaluation Research