



Proofiness: How You're Being Fooled by the Numbers

Charles Seife

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The bestselling author of *Zero* shows how mathematical misinformation pervades-and shapes-our daily lives.

According to MSNBC, having a child makes you stupid. You actually lose IQ points. *Good Morning America* has announced that natural blondes will be extinct within two hundred years. Pundits estimated that there were more than a million demonstrators at a tea party rally in Washington, D.C., even though roughly sixty thousand were there. Numbers have peculiar powers-they can disarm skeptics, befuddle journalists, and hoodwink the public into believing almost anything.

"Proofiness," as Charles Seife explains in this eye-opening book, is the art of using pure mathematics for impure ends, and he reminds readers that bad mathematics has a dark side. It is used to bring down beloved government officials and to appoint undeserving ones (both Democratic and Republican), to convict the innocent and acquit the guilty, to ruin our economy, and to fix the outcomes of future elections. This penetrating look at the intersection of math and society will appeal to readers of *Freakonomics* and the books of Malcolm Gladwell.



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