



Optimal Learning (Wiley Series in Probability and Statistics)

Warren B. Powell, Ilya O. Ryzhov

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Learn the science of collecting information to make effective decisions

Everyday decisions are made without the benefit of accurate information. *Optimal Learning* develops the needed principles for gathering information to make decisions, especially when collecting information is time-consuming and expensive. Designed for readers with an elementary background in probability and statistics, the book presents effective and practical policies illustrated in a wide range of applications, from energy, homeland security, and transportation to engineering, health, and business.

This book covers the fundamental dimensions of a learning problem and presents a simple method for testing and comparing policies for learning. Special attention is given to the knowledge gradient policy and its use with a wide range of belief models, including lookup table and parametric and for online and offline problems. Three sections develop ideas with increasing levels of sophistication:

- **Fundamentals** explores fundamental topics, including adaptive learning, ranking and selection, the knowledge gradient, and bandit problems
- **Extensions and Applications** features coverage of linear belief models, subset selection models, scalar function optimization, optimal bidding, and stopping problems
- **Advanced Topics** explores complex methods including simulation optimization, active learning in mathematical programming, and optimal continuous measurements

Each chapter identifies a specific learning problem, presents the related, practical algorithms for implementation, and concludes with numerous exercises. A related website features additional applications and downloadable software, including MATLAB and the Optimal Learning Calculator, a spreadsheet-based package that provides an introduction to learning and a variety of policies for learning.

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