

Confessions of a Data User

Stan Meiburg, Director
Graduate Studies in Sustainability



WAKE FOREST
UNIVERSITY

NEMC, August 5, 2020



WAKE FOREST
UNIVERSITY

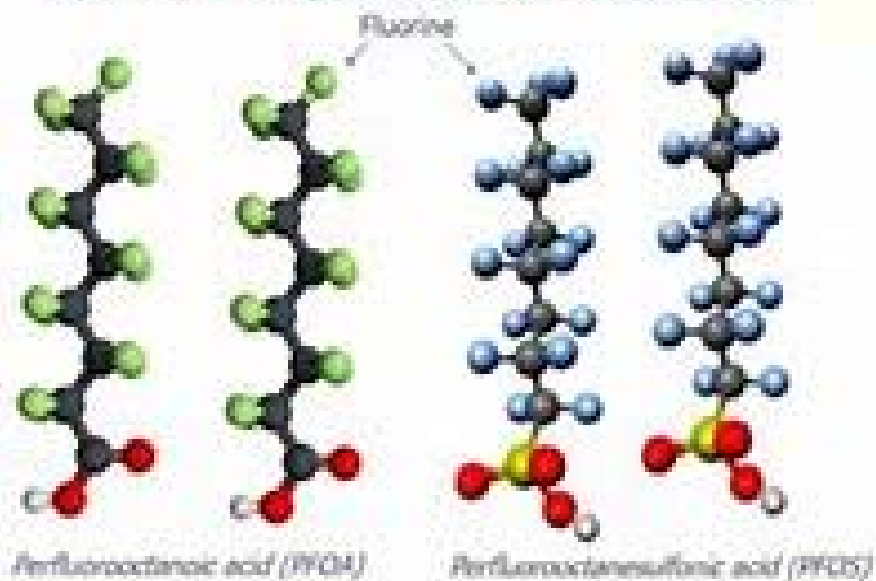




WAKE FOREST
UNIVERSITY



Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances









Herbert Simon



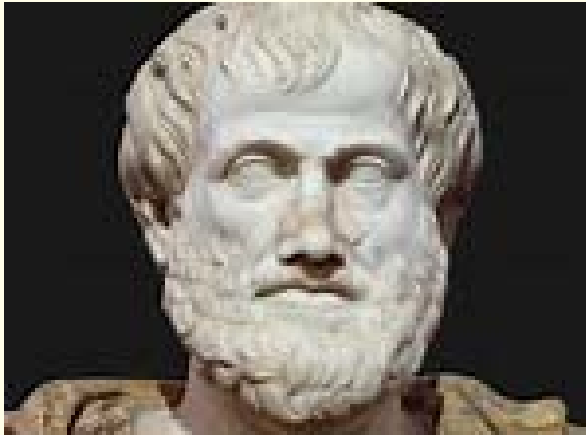
What About Information We Aren't Measuring?

“A cynic is a man who knows
the price of everything and
the value of nothing”

Oscar Wilde, “Lady Windermere's Fan”



- **When decision criteria are:**
 - Established
 - Widely accepted
 - **When information is available timely**
 - Fast and approximate vs. slower and in depth
 - **When you can adjust prior decisions (adaptive management)**
 - **When precision is appropriate to the decision**
-



“. . .precision is not to be sought for alike in all discussions . . . it is the mark of an educated man to look for precision in each class of things just so far as the nature of the subject admits”

--Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics

- **Loss of time to act**
 - **Distraction by lower risks**
 - **Misallocation of scarce resources**
 - **Dismissal of that which can't be measured**
 - **False confidence in results**
 - **Neglect of critical assumptions**
-

- 1. Know Your Audience**
 - 2. Remember You Aren't Them**
 - 3. Tell Them What They Need To Know, Not What You Need To Tell Them**
 - 4. If You Are Them, Communicate What You Need To Know And By When**
-



WAKE FOREST
UNIVERSITY



**“You Don’t Need To Be A Weatherman To Know Which
Way The Wind Blows”**

Bob Dylan, “Subterranean Homesick Blues, 1965



WAKE FOREST
UNIVERSITY

Thank you!!
Questions??

