Prediction in Research

Astronomy and Prediction in Research

The Rise of Predictive Science

With the millions of dollars invested by governments, or by oil companies using the predictions of their employees, many have become interested in the field of prediction. Predictive science has become more detailed and accurate models. These are of great use in predicting the weather or the movements of planets. Predictions can have wide-ranging effects and direct whole scientific disciplines.

Some of the biggest proponents of prediction in research are the theoretical physicists, such as Einstein and Hawking. They use sweeping and elegant mathematical theories to predict how that they think the universe behaves. Their predictions actually guide the direction of research.

One of the earliest examples of this was the Muslim scholar, Al-Razi. He was asked to find the location of a particular star. He compiled a list of candidates and then predicted the location of the star. He was correct.

Two astronomers found the planet, Urbain Le Verrier, in Paris, and John Couch Adams, in Cambridge. Le Verrier takes the credit as he was the first to announce the discovery, but both astronomers used their methods there, eventually publishing a book of his findings. Le Verrier derived an equation that would give geographical clues and measurements that would allow him to find the site of Priam's Troy. It turned out to be accurate.

As part of humanity's quest to understand nature, predictive science is much more important now than ever. The other factor driving this growth of predictions in research is politics and economics. Scientists located the planet through experiments by making predictions. They predicted that they would find evidence to support or deny it. One of the greatest examples of this was the discovery of the planet Neptune, which stands as a testament to the skill of the astronomers. With the millions of dollars invested by governments, or by oil companies using the predictions of their employees, many have become interested in the field of prediction. Predictive science has become more detailed and accurate models. These are of great use in predicting the weather or the movements of planets. Predictions can have wide-ranging effects and direct whole scientific disciplines.

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Astronomy has thrown up some great examples of prediction in science, largely built upon the work of Newton. Le Verrier and Adams predicted that the only possible explanation for the anomaly in the planet's orbit was that there was another planet further out. Of course, physicists also work at the other end of the scale and make the huge predictions that are at the whim of paymasters, whether in government or the private sector. This will always compromise the integrity of the scientists, for prediction driven and, as the current economic crisis shows, incorrect predictions can be deadly.

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