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Ensemble Forecast Products- Optimal Use for the Market? Response from social science



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EMS Annual Meeting,
Berlin

14th of September 2011

www.kcl.ac.uk

EPS changes relationship between forecasters and recipients

Shifts responsibility for coping with forecast uncertainty onto forecast recipients

“You're putting the onus on the people that receive that probabilistic warning to make a decision what to do with it themselves.” (FF, United Kingdom)

“EPS also means **dumping responsibility onto forecast users**. By forcing forecasters to provide deterministic predictions, the accountability remains entirely on the shoulders of forecasters. If a forecaster provides a probabilistic forecast, they give the import for the decision to forecasts users. ... Asking for a deterministic prediction is also a way for the person in charge of taking a decision to avoid **decisional problems and blame**.” (FF, France)

Is EPS more honest or an abdication of professional responsibility?

Professional competences and public safety



*“we are the hydrologists and **we are the ones that are responsible for this** forecast ...[EPS] is not so good... because this is like putting the responsibility down to them and saying we have no idea, make what you want of the spaghetti plots. This shouldn't happen I think.” (FF, Germany)*

Page 16 Daily Mail, Friday, July 27, 2007



We can't always stop rivers flooding, but we can warn you in advance.

Severe Flood Warning 

The Environment Agency's free Floodline Warnings Direct Service can give you vital hours to protect your home and belongings.

In the last week our Floodline Warnings Direct Service issued over 120,000 messages by phone, SMS, fax and pager.
Only 40% of homes eligible for this free service have registered.
If you haven't registered call us now.

Call Floodline now on 0845 988 1188
to find out if this service is available in your area.

For more information, go to www.environment-agency.gov.uk/floodline

*“The Environment Agency is primarily concerned with issuing short-notice flood warnings, you know 2 hours, with as a high level of certainty about that as they can manage... so normally, **unless they are absolutely certain** that there is going to be a flood, there are not going to issue a warning, even if there is a fair chance of flooding. And this is because their primary customer for flood warnings is the general public. So they think that's what they have to do...” (Meteorologist, United Kingdom)*

Blame management and the institutional appeals of ensembles

Daily Mail

THURSDAY, JULY 30, 2009

www.dailymail.co.uk

50p



A mother of three and a brilliant lawyer ... what does this woman's suicide tell us about Britain today?
SEE PAGE 14

WHAT A SHOWER!

As millions of Britons holiday at home after promise of a 'barbecue summer', how did the Met Office get its forecast so wrong?



A boating holiday in the Lakes: Seven-year-old Max Preston, from Merseyside, paddles his kayak around the tents on a campsite near Keswick

THE campers paddling between flooded tents didn't need to be told. Neither did the families heading for shelter beside deserted beaches. But yesterday the weathermen officially admitted that their prediction of a 'barbecue summer' had been hopelessly wrong. And the bad news for millions of holidaymakers, many of whom had opted to stay in Britain on the strength of the optimistic forecast, is that after a soggy July, August will be no better.

As the Met Office rather sheepishly announced that it had 'revised' its seasonal forecast, the tourism industry was asking how the experts got things so badly wrong. There were even fears that disappointment over the third wet summer in a row could put some families off British holidays for good.

It was in April that the Met Office pro-

claimed the chances were 'odds-on for a barbecue summer'. Rather like Michael Fish in October 1987, after he mockingly dismissed claims that a hurricane was on its way, the aptly-renamed 'Met Office' Turn to Page 6

“Before now we said yes or no, you are going to flood or not. If you say yes, they're going to do something about it. If we say 40% chance, then it's up to them what they do with it. To me, that's where the Met Office have always coped better with things. In the Met Office, all their weather warnings always come out as probabilistic. So when it doesn't happen, they **never have any complaints** because they always say we only said it was a 60% chance and so it hasn't happened. In the Agency, our flood warning services have been built on yes, no and if we get it wrong, then that's got higher consequences of the Met Office getting it wrong in producing a probabilistic forecast. So I think for our own reputation as well, to go to probabilistic forecasting would be quite useful because it almost gives us, not an excuse exactly, but it gives us a reason, it quantifies our uncertainty and it means **we won't necessarily get criticised as much.**” (FF, United Kingdom)