

Consider these two games

Would you be willing to play these games?

Game 1: I will flip a fair coin; if it's heads, I pay you \$1. If it's tails, you pay me \$1. Let X_1 be your profit if you play game 1

Game 2: I will flip a fair coin; if it's heads, I pay you \$10,000. If it's tails, you pay me \$10,000. Let X_2 be your profit if you play game 2.

Both games are "fair" ($\mathbb{E}[X_1] = \mathbb{E}[X_2] = 0$)

5

Variance

Variance

The variance of a random variable X is

$$\text{Var}(X) = \sum_{\omega} \mathbb{P}(\omega) \cdot (X(\omega) - \mathbb{E}[X])^2 = \mathbb{E}[(X - \mathbb{E}[X])^2] = \mathbb{E}[X^2] - \mathbb{E}[X]^2$$

The first two forms are the definition. The last one is an algebra trick.

If X and Y are independent, then
 $\text{Var}(X + Y) = \text{Var}(X) + \text{Var}(Y)$

19