

ARTEFACTUAL FIELD EXPERIMENTS 2021 SUMMARY ON FIELDEXPERIMENTS.COM

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Abstract

In 2019, I put together a summary of data from my field experiments website that pertained to artefactual field experiments. Several people have asked me if I have an update. In this document I update all figures and numbers to show the details for 2021. I also include the description from the 2019 paper below.

Back in January of this year I provided some data on all field experiments that were published on a website that I started nearly 20 years ago. Back then, I was trying to provide a service in the spirit of what Charlie Holt did for laboratory experiments. Charlie's site compelled me to create my own bibliographical site <http://www.fieldexperiments.com>, which lists publications and discussion papers in experimental economics that make use of the "field" in some manner. The site remains quite active, with an open source that allows scholars to post their own work, and to download hundreds of field experimental papers.

In my own work I have reserved the term "field experiment" for those cases where I observed subjects in their naturally occurring environments. I explicitly, therefore, discriminated between explorations in this environment and laboratory studies that used non-standard subject pools. In a JEL paper (Harrison and List, 2004), such important differences are accounted for via qualifiers.

I followed this nomenclature on the site by placing studies into three groups: 1. Artefactual field experiments, which are the same as conventional lab experiments but with a non-standard subject pool (i.e., non-students). Running Peruvian borrowers through lab games (Karlán, 2005 AER) would be an example of an artefactual field experiment. 2. Framed field experiments, which are identical to artefactual field experiments but with field context in either the commodity, task, or information set that the subjects use. An example would be work that elicits valuations for public goods that occur naturally in the environment of the subjects (see some of Böhm's work). 3. Natural field experiments, which are identical to framed field experiments except that the subjects do not know that they are participants in an experiment. An example could be found

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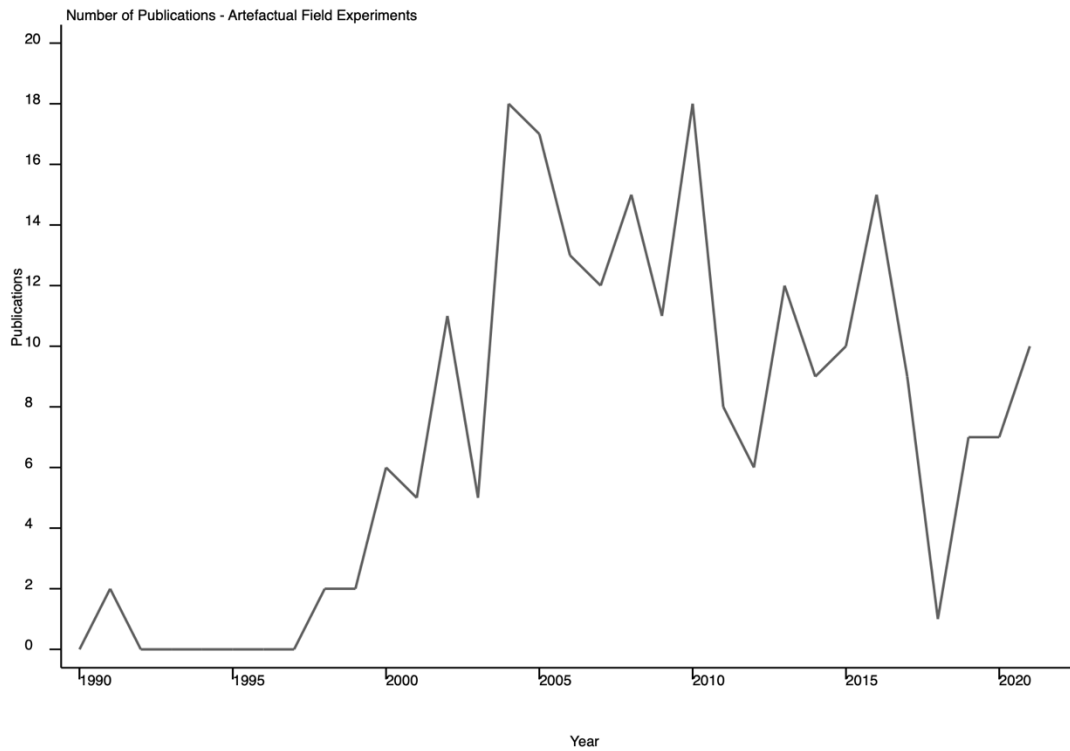
among the recent surge in fundraising experiments (see, e.g., List and Lucking-Reiley, 2002, JPE).

Of course, not all studies will fit neatly into one of these three categories. I hope, however, that the categories provide a useful way to think about the factors outside of a traditional laboratory experiment that are potentially important.

Over the years, I have increasingly received questions about which papers are included on the site and their impact. Instead of sending out several emails per week answering such questions, in January I decided to put together a brief account of the studies and their impact. I focused on all field experimental studies and after making public that working paper I received several emails asking me to break down the areas even further in separate notes. This note describes one such breakdown of artefactual field experiments. I use RePEc's data to provide a few (incomplete) glimpses of AFE's impact.

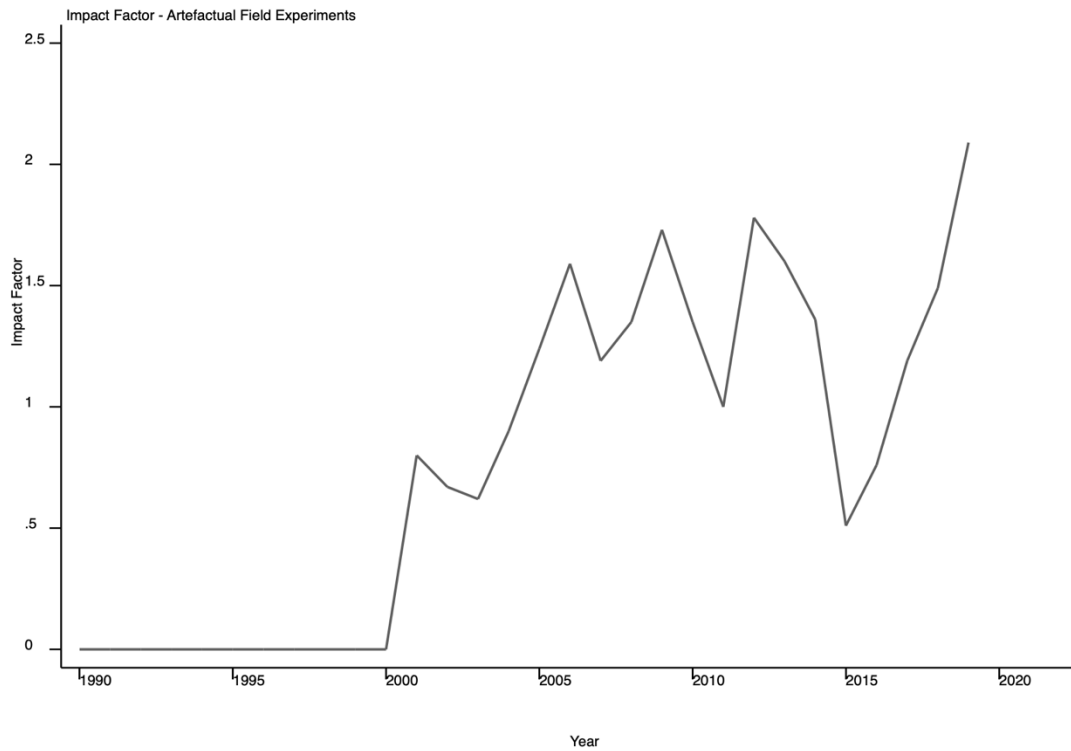
Figure 1 summarizes all of the artefactual field experimental (AFE) papers published from 1990 to 2021 on my website (see, e.g., Al-Ubaydli et al., 2015; 2017; 2019; 2020; 2021). The growth that one would expect is evident, but the heterogeneity from year to year was unexpected. This gives an indication that I am only partly capturing this market on my website, and one should be cautious when interpreting much from these data.

Figure 1: Time-Series of AFE papers published annually on fieldexperiments.com



Next, I provide a rough glimpse of the AFE impact. In Figure 2, I provide a time-series of RePEc's impact factor scores from 1990-2019. The impact factor is computed as the number of citations to articles published in y-1 until y-5 divided number of articles published in y-1 until y-5 in series. Observations are annual. An interesting trend here is that the impact factor of AFEs increases steadily over time starting in 2000. This is a good sign for the field experimental market for this type of approach.

Figure 2: Time-Series of RePEc's impact factor for NFE's, which is the number of citations in to articles published in y-1 until y-5 divided number of articles published in y-1 until y-5 in series. Observations are annual for all NFEs on fieldexperiments.com



To complement the impact factor summary, I create two “usage” summaries in Figures 3 and 4. Here, I provide a time-Series of the number of abstract views and downloads taken from RePEc. Observations are yearly for all AFEs on fieldexperiments.com. Here the data suggest a steady number of downloads, with a blip in 2017. This blip was caused by one study that add a large number of downloads due to Benjamin et al. (2017).

Figure 3. Time-series of the number of abstract views from RePEc. Observations are annual for all artefactual field experiments on fieldexperiments.com.

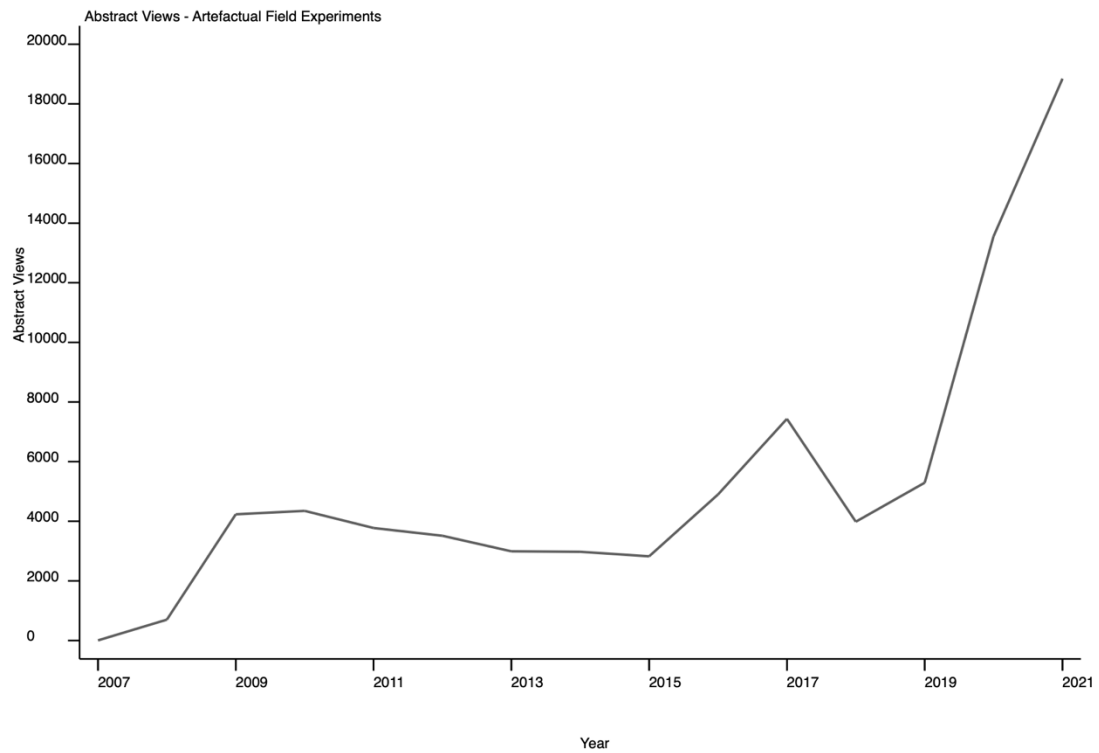
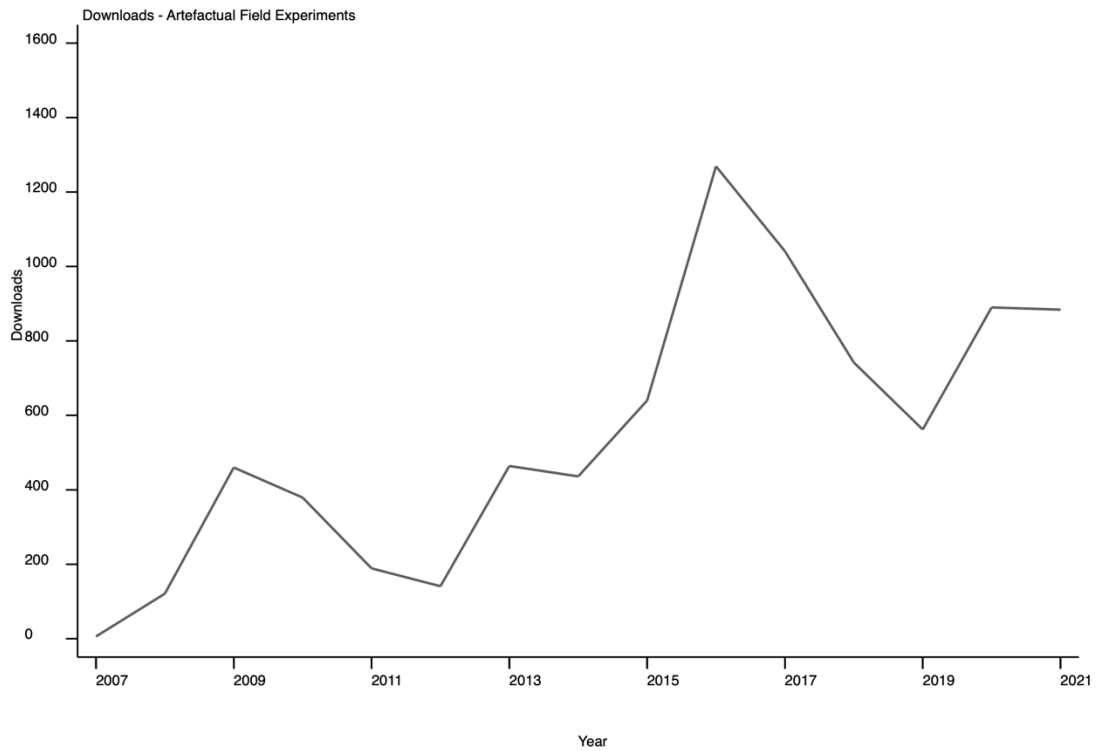


Figure 4: Time-series of downloads from RePEc. Observations are annual for all artefactual field experiments on fieldexperiments.com.



In Figure 5 I present the annual number of unique authors of artefactual field experimental papers. In Figure 6, I provide information on the cumulative number of unique authors of artefactual field experimental papers. From the graph we can see that the growth of the number of authors entering the field, that started in the early 2000s, has not come to a stop yet. Both figures highlight the breadth of AFEs in the experimental literature, with more than 250 different authors now having published an AFE on the site.

Figure 5: Time-series of the unique number of authors of artefactual field experimental papers. Observations are annual for all artefactual field experiments on fieldexperiments.com

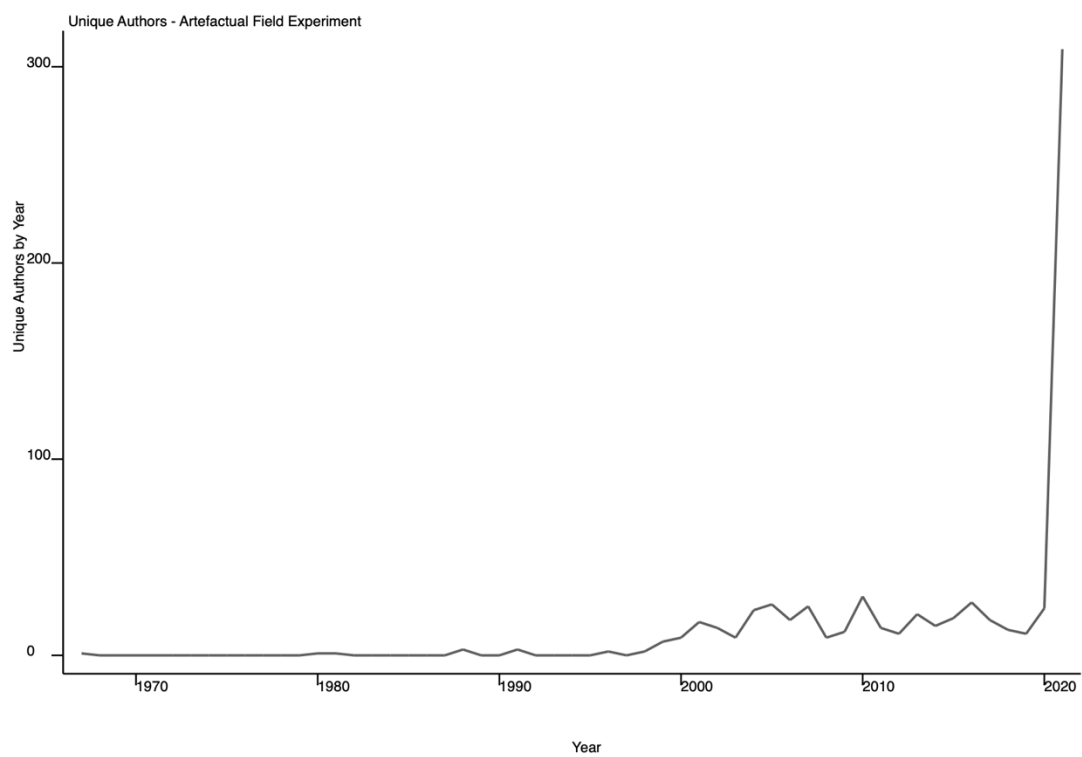
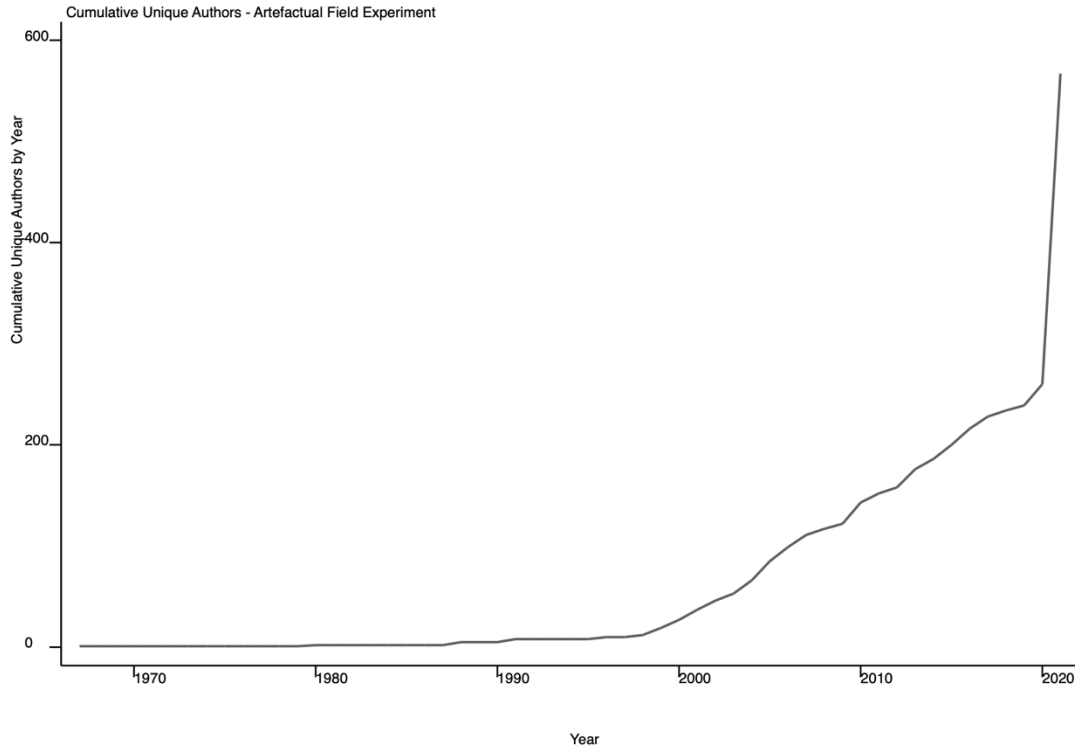


Figure 6: Time-Series of the cumulative number of unique authors for field experimental papers published for artefactual field experiments. Observations are annual for all artefactual field experiments on fieldexperiments.com.



Finally, in the references section I provide the list of the papers that have been posted on fieldexperiments.com to answer the query which papers are published on the site (see, e.g., List, 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007).

In closing, thanks for using the site and if you should have any comments or questions please let me know.

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