

I was recently paging through the new 2011-2012 [*Statistical Abstract of the United States*](#) (strange folk, we professors), and came up with some intriguing tidbits that I wanted to pass on:

- In the past fifty years, total water withdrawals have increased by 150%
- Carbon monoxide, ozone, sulfur dioxide, particulates and nitrogen dioxide all declined from 2001-2007.
- The states with the highest toxic chemical releases in 2008 were Alaska (1st by a big margin), Indiana, Ohio, Nevada, Texas and Utah.
- Although the number of nuclear power plants has decline slightly over the past twenty years, the amount of generation has increased substantially due to greater use of capacity.
- World population was 4.4 billion when Ronald Reagan was elected, with another 2.3 billion added by the time of Obama's election. By 2050, it is predicted that the world population will have doubled since Reagan took office.
- Road fatalities per million people have declined about 33% since 1980 in the U.S., but are still almost twice as high as Australia's.
- German and U.S. life expectancy for women were essentially tied in 1990, but by 2007 the Germans were ahead by two years. Male life expectancy was a year higher in Germany in 1990 but is now two years higher. Perhaps not coincidentally, 34% of Americans were obese but only 14% of Germans.

Lots of food for thought in the these numbers!