A Comparison of Supervised Learning Classifiers for Link Discovery

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ABSTRACT

The detection of links between resources is intrinsic to the vision of the Linked Data Web. Due to the mere size of current knowledge bases, this task is commonly addressed by using tools. In particular, manifold link discovery frameworks have been developed. These frameworks implement several different machine-learning approaches to discovering links. In this paper, we investigate which of the commonly used supervised machine-learning classifiers performs best on the link discovery task. To this end, we first present our evaluation pipeline. Then, we compare ten different approaches on three artificial and three real-world benchmark data sets. The classification outcomes are subsequently compared with several state-of-the-art frameworks. Our results suggest that while several algorithms perform well, multilayer perceptrons perform best on average. Moreover, logistic regression seems best suited for noisy data.

Categories and Subject Descriptors

M.0 [**Knowledge Management**]: Knowledge Acquisition; H.4 [**Information Systems Applications**]: Miscellaneous; I.2.6 [**Computing Methodologies**]: Learning

General Terms

Semantic Web, Linked Data, Link Discovery, Instance Matching, Machine Learning, Benchmarks

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last years, the development of tools to support the implementation of all Linked Data principles has been regarded as central for the uptake of Linked Data [1]. In particular, several tools have been developed to support the fourth Linked Data principle, i.e., the creation of links between datasets. Formally, the general aim of link discovery is to find the set of resource pairs $(s, t) \in S \times T$ such that $R(s, t)$ holds, where R is a given relation such as `owl:sameAs` or `dbp:near`[1] and S and T are sets of resources. Finding this set is a non-trivial task which is commonly approximated by finding the set $M \subseteq S \times T$ of resource pairs such that $\forall (s, t) \in M : sim(s, t) \geq \theta$, where $\theta \in [0, 1]$ is a similarity threshold and sim is a complex similarity function; sim consists of a combination of atomic similarity functions σ_i, each of which compares the property values p_i of s (denoted $s.p_i$) and q_i of t (denoted $t.q_i$).

Overall, two main categories of learning algorithms have been implemented so far to support the computation of the set M: *Supervised algorithms* for linking take two sets of resources (called the *source set* and the *target set*) as well as positive and negative examples for links as input. These algorithms then return a set of pairs of resources that they assume to be links. *Unsupervised algorithms* on the other hand only take two sets of resources (i.e., need no training data) and return links. To this end, most of the unsupervised approaches [20, 19] implement an objective function that they aim to optimize. While unsupervised approaches have been shown to perform well on datasets where 1-1 mappings exist between the source and the target sets, most of the current tools implement supervised approaches for link discovery. Still, the performance of the different supervised machine-learning paradigms for link discovery has not been systematically analyzed so far.

We address this research gap by comparing ten different supervised machine-learning paradigms on six different datasets. The goal of this evaluation is to determine the answer to the following questions:

- Q_1: Which of the paradigms achieves the average best F-measure?
- Q_2: Which of the paradigms is most robust against noise?
- Q_3: Which of the methods is the most time-efficient?

To this end, we use the well-known n-fold cross-validation experimental setting to evaluate commonly used machine-learning paradigms and present the precision, recall and F-measure they achieve. Moreover, we evaluate their time-efficiency by measuring their runtime over all six datasets. Surprisingly, our results suggest that multilayer perceptrons perform best on the link discovery tasks at hand. Although they have been already used for performing inductive semantic classification [7], to the best of our knowledge they have not been tested before on link discovery. From our

[1] We use the prefixes defined at `http://prefix.cc`

SEM '14 September 04 - 05 2014, Leipzig, AA, Germany

ACM 978-1-4503-2927-9/14/09 ...$15.00.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2660517.2660532

results, multilayer perceptrons perform best on average of clean data. Logistic regression on the other hand performs best on noisy data. The two approaches are followed by decision-table-based algorithms.

2. EVALUATION PIPELINE

We now show each step of the evaluation pipeline. Starting from a source and a target dataset containing individuals, we aim at comparing the performance of different classifiers on the link discovery task. First, the join set between the two dataset is created. Thereafter, the alignment among properties and the perfect mapping among the datasets are loaded to label each instance in the join set and to compute its similarity. Subsequently, a 10-fold cross-validation is applied. Ten supervised machine-learning classifiers are trained on the training sets. Finally, these classifiers are evaluated on the test sets and their scores averaged.

A join between two datasets is basically composed by their Cartesian product, i.e. by all pairs $(s,t) \in S \times T$, where $s \in S$ and $t \in T$. As previously mentioned, each pair in the join represents the input for the similarity function *sim*. After the join creation, which is a preprocessing phase, property alignments and the perfect mapping are imported. Being $P = \{p_i, \dots p_n\}$ a set of source properties and $Q = \{q_i, \dots q_m\}$ a set of target properties, a property alignment set is an ordered set $A \subseteq P \times Q$. In other words, a source property can be aligned to an arbitrary number of target properties, and vice-versa. For instance, given the property alignments $\{(p_1, q_1), (p_1, q_2)\}$, the overall atomic similarity value is the mean value of atomic similarities $\sigma(s.p_1, t.q_1)$ and $\sigma(s.p_1, t.q_2)$. Property alignments are usually carried out by domain experts, as well as the perfect mapping. For each example (s,t), we evaluate the atomic similarities among datatype values $(s.p, t.q)$ for all $(p,q) \in A$. In case properties (p,q) are object properties, the alignment holds among the properties connected to the respective object nodes. String values were compared using weighted trigram and cosine similarity, as well as weighted edit distance. In this paper, we refer to the definition of weighted edit distance proposed in [24] using error probabilities on confusion matrices as weights (see [25]). Numerical values were compared using a logarithm-based similarity. After being computed, all similarity values are normalized into the interval $[0, 1]$.

3. EVALUATION

3.1 Experimental Setup

We evaluated ten machine learning techniques against six different datasets. Four classifiers belong to the linear non-probabilistic class (*linear* and *polynomial support vector machines*, with and without *sequential minimal optimization (SMO)* and *linear regression*), four of them rely on probability theory (*logistic regression*, *naïve Bayes*, *random tree* and *J48*), one of them is based on neural networks (*multilayer perceptron*) and one is rule-based (*decision table*). The first three datasets `D1`, `D2` and `D3` belong to the Ontology Alignment Evaluation Initiative (OAEI) 2010 Benchmark[2] and are synthetic in nature. In order to verify the scalability of the algorithms as well as their performance on real data, we evaluated them on three larger datasets which contained real data. Dataset `D4`, which contains over 6 million joins, belongs to the bibliographic domain, while `D5` and `D6` belong to the e-commerce domain. The datasets `D4, D5` and `D6` are part of the Benchmark for Entity Resolution[3] [11]. The link discovery community relies on the information retrieval concepts of precision, recall and F_1-measure. We will thus report the *F_1-measure* (or *F-score*) in the following.

The Java source code used within this evaluation is available online[4]. Among others, we utilized LibSVM[5] for the linear and polynomial support vector machines and the Weka Java APIs[6] for the remaining eight machine learning techniques. For SVMs, we found the following values using a grid search: $C = 10^6$ for `D1:D4`, $C = 10^3$ for `D5:D6`, $\epsilon = 10^{-3}$, $\gamma = 1$. Moreover, we chose a third-degree polynomial kernel ($d = 3$). We used a 10-fold cross-validation across all experiments and set the test significance level to .05. All experiments were carried out on a 64-bit Ubuntu Linux machine with 8GB of RAM and a 2.5 GHz CPU.

3.2 Experimental Results

The F-measures achieved by all approaches at hand are shown in Table 1.[7] As seen, all classifiers performed excellently on dataset `D1`, achieving high F-scores above 97%. All classifiers except naïve Bayes (∼35%) performed well on dataset `D2`. Noteworthy is the perfect classification (100%) carried out by Linear SMO on `D1` and the decision table algorithm on `D2`. The same excellent result has been achieved on dataset `D3` by multilayer perceptrons, linear regression and decision tables. Here, only the random tree classifier remains below 90% F-score. Dataset `D4` reflects the results obtained on `D2`: While the naïve Bayes classifier plays as lonely outlier (∼29%), all other classifiers reach an F-score between 92% and 98%. Results on both e-commerce datasets (`D5` and `D6`), allow to analyse the behaviour of the algorithms considered herein on noisy datasets that are very hard to learn [11, 24]. The fifth dataset highlights a drawback on the classification task for naïve Bayes classifiers (∼3%). Interestingly, while basic linear SVMs perform poorly (∼27%), SVMs with SMO outperform the other classifiers. Being SVM and SMO two approaches to the same problem, we consider the different implementation from the respective libraries as the reason of this result. The last dataset follows the average trend, except for the decision table classifier, which ranks second-last with less than 30% F-score. Multilayer perceptron sets the highest performance result with ∼43%, tailed by logistic regression (∼42%) and random tree (∼41%). The difficulty to linearly separate few and sparse positives among a much higher number of negatives led many classifiers to fail on `D5-D6`.

Linear and polynomial SVM appeared to be one order of magnitude faster than the other approaches on `D1-D2`. The same performance was achieved by random trees and linear SVM on `D4` and by J48 on `D5`, while polynomial SVM was found to be significantly slower than the average trend on

[2] `http://oaei.ontologymatching.org/2010/benchmarks`

[3] `http://goo.gl/bvWBjA`

[4] `https://github.com/mommi84/BALLAD`

[5] `http://www.csie.ntu.edu.tw/~cjlin/libsvm`

[6] `http://www.cs.waikato.ac.nz/ml/weka`

[7] Further results were collected and inserted into a technical report at `http://mommi84.github.io/BALLAD`

Table 1: F_1-scores for ten different classifiers on six test datasets are shown, ranked by average F_1-score.

Rank	Classifier	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	Average
1.	Multilayer Perceptron	99.50%	99.50%	**100.00%**	97.43%	35.58%	**43.49%**	**79.25%**
2.	Logistic Regression	99.90%	98.12%	96.67%	97.71%	40.64%	41.92%	79.16%
3.	Linear SMO	**100.00%**	98.73%	**100.00%**	92.58%	**46.63%**	31.39%	78.22%
4.	Decision Table	97.98%	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	97.66%	42.44%	29.66%	77.96%
5.	J48	99.50%	95.56%	98.29%	97.66%	44.28%	31.53%	77.80%
6.	Linear Regression	99.30%	96.92%	**100.00%**	96.36%	37.06%	36.84%	77.75%
7.	Random Tree	97.45%	99.24%	89.89%	96.82%	39.38%	41.03%	77.30%
8.	Linear SVM	99.40%	98.99%	97.75%	**97.81%**	27.06%	39.18%	76.70%
9.	Polynomial-3 SVM	99.40%	93.76%	98.29%	97.67%	37.28%	31.69%	76.35%
10.	Naïve Bayes	97.75%	35.05%	95.19%	29.47%	2.92%	11.90%	45.38%

D5-D6. The computation runtime for the fastest classifier obtained an order of magnitude of $1s$ (D3), $10s$ (D1-D2-D6) and $100s$ (D4-D5) respectively. A detailed runtime table is shown in the technical report stated above.

Table 1 is sorted by average F-score, which can be seen in the last column. Multilayer perceptrons performed best among all, reaching the top place both including (79.25%) and excluding (99.11%) the noisier datasets D5 and D6. Again excluding these datasets, decision tables ranked second (98.91%). However, logistic regression outperformed decision tables on overall average (79.16% against 77.96%), as well as linear SMO (78.22%). Linear regression obtained almost the same results as linear SMO, decision tables and random trees, although random trees achieved 3% less if we exclude noisy datasets. On average, linear SVM (76.70%) carried out a better classification than polynomial SVM (76.35%). Naïve Bayes had the worst results in both cases, reaching only an average F-score of 45.38%. The dependence among property values is likely one of the reasons of such failure, especially on real datasets. In fact, a Naïve Bayes classifier considers all features as independent from each other.

Overall, our results hint that while some average trends for machine-learning-based link discovery can be suggested, no algorithm outperforms all other significantly. The results on the non-noisy datasets suggest that multilayer perceptrons should be used as default learning approach for most datasets. Should they fail, we suggest using linear SVM and then decision tables. This answers Q_1. The results on the noisy datasets suggest that random trees and multilayer perceptrons are most robust against noise and answer Q_2. Thus, we suggest using these two approaches first when confronted with noise before contemplating other approaches. Finally, while all approaches scale well and random trees are fastest on 3 of the datasets we considered, we still suggest using multilayer perceptrons as they achieve acceptable runtimes overall. This answers Q_3.

3.3 Comparison with existing frameworks

We compared our results with state-of-the-art frameworks which have been run on the six test datasets. The first three evaluation results belong to the OAEI2010 initiative, wherein the instance-matching implementation of the re-falign [22] framework won the *benchmark* contest carrying out a perfect matching on the synthetic datasets D1:D3. ASMOV [9] and AgreementMaker [5] achieved excellent results (100%; 99%) on D1 and good results (94%; 89%) on D2, however the latter had a poor accuracy on the third dataset (70%). The unsupervised version of the EAGLE approach [18] yields state-of-the-art results on the synthetic datasets and performs best on D4. MARLIN [2] yielded better results using SVM than using AD-Tree on all real datasets. Although their scores are satisfiable, none of these approaches achieved state-of-the-art accuracies. ACIDS [24], COSY (an undisclosed commercial system for entity resolution), and FEBRL SVM [3] currently represent the state of the art for D4, D5, and D6 respectively. Our results showed that even using simple settings, some classifiers presented in this paper achieved state-of-the-art results on D1:D4. Moreover, while single machine-learning approaches perform well on single tasks, the combination of several classifiers, kernels and techniques can achieve optimized results and better accuracies.

4. RELATED WORK

Overall, two main problems need to be tackled to address the tool support of link discovery. First, naïve implementations of link discovery approaches have a quadratic *time complexity*. This problem has been addressed in manifold ways: An extensive amount of literature has been published by the database community (see [10, 6] for surveys). In particular, time-efficient deduplication algorithms such as PPJoin+ [28], EDJoin [27], PassJoin [12] and TrieJoin [26] were developed over the last years. Several of these were then integrated into the hybrid link discovery framework LIMES [15]. Moreover, dedicated time-efficient approaches were developed for link discovery. For example, RDF-AI [23] implements a five-step approach that comprises the preprocessing, matching, fusion, interlink and post-processing of data sets. [16] presents an approach based on the Cauchy-Schwarz inequality that allows discarding a large number of unnecessary computations. The approaches HYPPO [13] and $\mathcal{HR}^3$ [14] rely on space tiling in spaces with measures that can be split into independent measures across the dimensions of the problem at hand. Standard blocking approaches were implemented in the first versions of SILK and later replaced with MultiBlock [8], a lossless multi-dimensional blocking technique. KnoFuss [20] also implements blocking techniques to achieve acceptable runtimes.

In addition to addressing the runtime of link discovery, several machine-learning approaches have been developed to learn link specifications (also called linkage rules) for link discovery. For example, machine-learning frameworks such as FEBRL [3] and MARLIN [2] rely on models such as Support Vector Machines [4] and decision trees [21] to detect classifiers for record linkage. RAVEN [17] combines active learning version and perceptron learning to detect linear or Boolean classifiers. The EAGLE approach [18] combines ac-

tive learning and genetic programming to detect link specifications. KnoFuss [20] goes a step further and presents an unsupervised approach based on genetic programming for finding accurate link specifications.

5. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we presented a systematic evaluation of ten different classifiers for supervised learning on the link discovery task. We use three real and three artificial datasets to compare the approaches. On average, all approaches apart from Naïve Bayes perform well. Still, the results show that multilayer perceptrons are best on average. This result is interesting because to the best of our knowledge, multilayer perceptrons have not been used for link discovery so far. We will thus integrate them into the LIMES framework and make them available via the SAIM interface. Moreover, the performance on linear regression on real datasets make it a viable alternative to multilayer perceptrons when dealing with real-life problems. Interestingly, the behavior of the different approaches on the datasets used in our evaluation suggests that they are complementary. Thus, in order to achieve even better accuracy, we aim to combine them by using ensemble learning techniques. We will investigate how good the same techniques perform in case of small training sets, eventually utilizing a larger amount of similarity measures. Finally, an avenue of interest would be to incorporate a component based on Statistical Relational Learning to exploit information about the RDF graph structure while linking.

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