

# Bayesian smoothing with extended second order random walk model: An detailed overview and comparison

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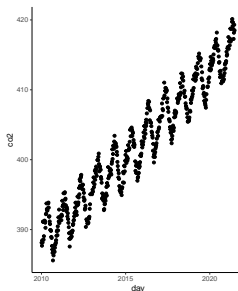
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  - ARIMA Prior
  - RW2 Prior
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Consider the atmospheric Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) concentrations data from an observatory in Hawaii. This dataset contains the observation of CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations from 1960 to 2021, with unequally spaced observation times.





## Model:

$$y_i = \mathbf{X}(t_i)\beta + f_{np}(t_i) + \epsilon_i$$

- $\epsilon_i \stackrel{iid}{\sim} N(0, \sigma^2)$
- $\mathbf{X}(t)$  is defined as  $[1, \cos(2\pi t), \sin(2\pi t), \cos(4\pi t), \sin(4\pi t)]$
- $f_{np}(t_i)$  is the non-parametric part.

**Question of interest:** Is CO2 concentration increasing rate getting slower post-COVID?

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## Fitting Smoothing Spline

Consider  $y_i = g(x_i) + \epsilon_i$  where  $\epsilon_i \stackrel{iid}{\sim} N(0, \sigma^2)$  and  $x_i \in [a, b]$ , then the (traditional) smoothing spline aims to solve:

$$\arg \min_{g \in C^2} \left\{ \sum_i \left( \frac{y_i - g(x_i)}{\sigma} \right)^2 + \lambda \int_a^b g''(x)^2 dx \right\} \quad (1)$$

The sum of square term on the left can be replaced by negative log likelihood, which is also called *penalized likelihood* method.

**Problem:** The variance parameter  $\sigma$  and smoothing parameter  $\lambda$  are unknown.

**One Solution:** Bayesian hierarchical model.

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Vectorize the equation 1 into the following:

$$\frac{1}{\sigma^2}(\mathbf{y}-\mathbf{g})^T(\mathbf{y}-\mathbf{g})+\lambda\mathbf{g}^TK\mathbf{g}, \quad (2)$$

This can be interpreted as:

$$\text{log-likelihood} + \text{prior for } \mathbf{g}. \quad (3)$$

The matrix  $K$  can be factorized as the following:

$$K = D^TR^{-1}D. \quad (4)$$

The  $(n-2) \times n$  matrix  $D$  is a second-order differencing matrix. The  $(n-2) \times (n-2)$  matrix  $R^{-1}$  corresponds to the precision matrix of a MA(1) process ([Brown and De Jong, 2001](#)).

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When covariates are unit spaced, we have the following expressions for  $D$  and  $R$ :

$$D = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & -2 & 1 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & -2 & 1 & \cdots & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \vdots & & & \ddots & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 1 & -2 & 1 \end{bmatrix}, \quad R = \begin{bmatrix} \frac{2}{3} & \frac{1}{3} & 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\ \frac{1}{3} & \frac{2}{3} & \frac{1}{3} & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\ \frac{1}{3} & \frac{1}{3} & \frac{2}{3} & \frac{1}{3} & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\ 0 & \frac{1}{3} & \frac{1}{3} & \frac{2}{3} & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & \frac{1}{6} & \frac{2}{3} \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & \frac{1}{6} & \frac{2}{3} \end{bmatrix} \quad (5)$$

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- **Problem** :  $R^{-1}$  is a dense matrix, and hence the precision matrix of  $\mathbf{g}$  is dense as well. Computation will be hard and not compatible with inference method such as Integrated Nested Laplace Approximation(INLA) ([Rue et al., 2009](#)).

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From result of [Wahba \(1978\)](#), there is a well known connection between smoothing spline and folded Wiener process prior:

- 1 Let  $W(t)$  denote the standard Wiener's process (Brownian motion), a SDE based prior is assigned to  $g(t)$  in the following way ( $\sigma_s = 1/\sqrt{\lambda}$ ):

$$\frac{d^2 g(t)}{dt^2} = \sigma_s \frac{dW(t)}{dt}.$$

- 2 The derivative of  $W(t)$  does not exist in ordinary definition, but can be defined as a generalized function, the *white noise* process.
- 3 If  $g(0)$  and  $g'(0)$  are given diffuse Gaussian prior, the limiting posterior mean of  $g$  will be the minimizer of the smoothing spline problem ([Wahba, 1978](#)).

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The extended RW2 method of [Lindgren and Rue \(2008\)](#) can be derived from the following procedures:

- 1 Assign the SDE based prior on  $g$ .
- 2 Discretize the SDE into a finite dimensional problem using finite element method. Resulting in precision matrix being:

$$H^T B^{-1} H.$$

- 3 Apply a diagonal approximation to the tri-diagonal matrix  $B$ . Resulting in precision matrix being:

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When covariates are unit spaced, we have the following expressions for  $H$ ,  $B$  and  $A$ :

$$H = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\ 1 & -2 & 1 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & -2 & 1 & \cdots & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \vdots & & & \ddots & & \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 1 & -2 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 \end{bmatrix}, B = \begin{bmatrix} \frac{1}{3} & \frac{1}{6} & 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & 0 \\ \frac{1}{6} & \frac{1}{3} & \frac{1}{6} & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \frac{1}{6} & \frac{1}{3} & \frac{1}{6} & 0 & \cdots & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \frac{1}{6} & \frac{1}{3} & \frac{1}{6} & \cdots & 0 & 0 \\ & & & & \ddots & & & \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & \frac{1}{6} & \frac{2}{3} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & \frac{1}{6} & \frac{2}{3} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & 0 & \frac{1}{6} & \frac{1}{3} \end{bmatrix}, \quad (6)$$

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} \frac{1}{2} & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & 0 \\ & & & & \ddots & & & \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & 0 & 0 & \frac{1}{2} \end{bmatrix}. \quad (7)$$

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$$H = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\ 1 & -2 & 1 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & -2 & 1 & \cdots & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \vdots & & & \ddots & & \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 1 & -2 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 \end{bmatrix}, B = \begin{bmatrix} \frac{1}{3} & \frac{1}{6} & 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & 0 \\ \frac{1}{6} & \frac{1}{3} & \frac{1}{6} & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \frac{1}{6} & \frac{1}{3} & \frac{1}{6} & 0 & \cdots & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \frac{1}{6} & \frac{1}{3} & \frac{1}{6} & \cdots & 0 & 0 \\ & & & & & \ddots & & \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & \frac{1}{6} & \frac{2}{3} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & \frac{1}{6} & \frac{2}{3} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & 0 & \frac{1}{6} & \frac{1}{3} \end{bmatrix}, \quad (6)$$

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- Re-parametrizing the smoothing parameter  $\sigma_s^2$  as  $\theta = -2 \log \sigma_s$ , and let  $Q_\theta$  denotes the precision matrix corresponding to the evaluation vector  $\mathbf{g}$ .
- Gaussian approximation:

$$\tilde{\pi}_G(\mathbf{g}|\mathbf{y}, \theta) \propto \exp \left\{ -\frac{1}{2} \left( \mathbf{g} - \hat{\mathbf{g}}_\theta \right)^T H_\theta(\hat{\mathbf{g}}_\theta) \left( \mathbf{g} - \hat{\mathbf{g}}_\theta \right) \right\}, \quad (8)$$

the quantity  $\hat{\mathbf{g}}_\theta$  denotes  $\operatorname{argmax}_{\mathbf{g}} \log \pi(\mathbf{g}|\theta, \mathbf{y})$  and  $H_\theta(\mathbf{g})$  denotes  $-\frac{d^2}{d\mathbf{g}d\mathbf{g}^T} \log \pi(\mathbf{g}|\theta, \mathbf{y})$ .

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- Obtain the Laplace approximation as Tierney and Kadane (1986):

$$\tilde{\pi}_{\text{LA}}(\theta|\mathbf{y}) \propto \pi(\theta) \left\{ \frac{|Q_\theta|}{|H_\theta(\hat{\mathbf{g}}_\theta)|} \right\}^{1/2} \exp \left\{ -\frac{1}{2} \hat{\mathbf{g}}_\theta^T Q_\theta \hat{\mathbf{g}}_\theta + l(\mathbf{y}; \hat{\mathbf{g}}_\theta) \right\}. \quad (9)$$

- Numerical Integration:

$$\tilde{\pi}(\mathbf{g}|\mathbf{y}) = \sum_{k=1}^K \tilde{\pi}_G(\mathbf{g}|\mathbf{y}, \theta_k) \tilde{\pi}_{\text{LA}}(\theta_k|\mathbf{y}) \delta_k, \quad (10)$$

where  $\{\theta_k, \delta_k\}_{k=1}^K$  is a set of  $K$  nodes and weights selected using Adaptive Gauss-Hermite Quadrature (AGHQ) rule (Stringer, 2021).

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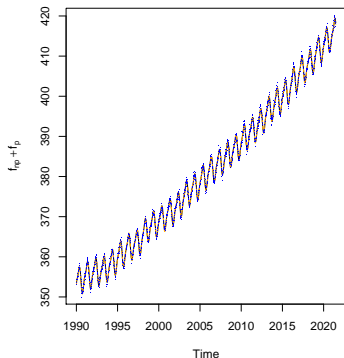
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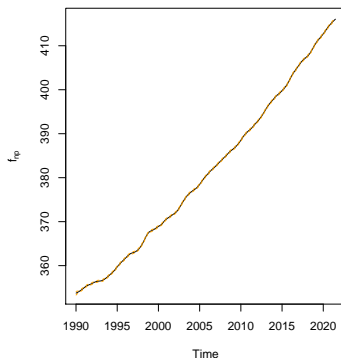
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## Going back to the CO2 Example with RW2 method:



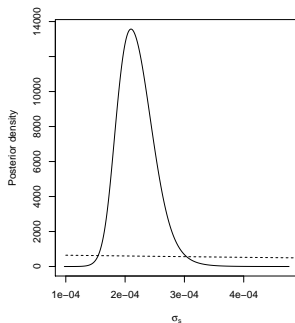
(a) Overall effect  $f$



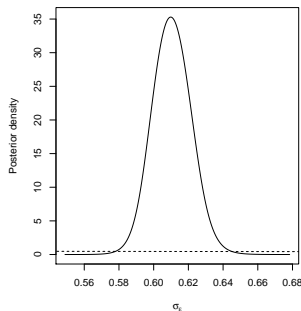
(b) Random effect  $f_{np}$

**Figure:** Inference for CO2 dataset using RW2, for observations after 1990 (Blue points: actual observations; Black line: posterior mean; Orange line: 95 percent credible interval).

## Looking at the variance and smoothing parameters:



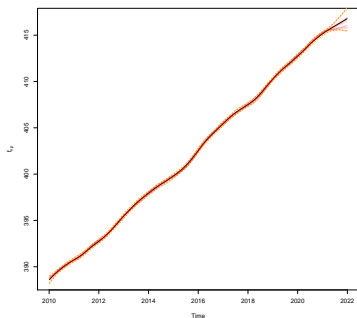
(a) Posterior for the smoothing parameter  $\sigma_s$



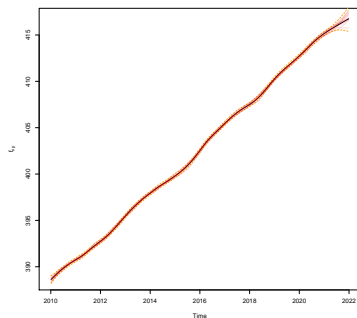
(b) Posterior for the variance parameter  $\sigma$

**Figure:** Inference for smoothing/variance parameters with PC prior ([Simpson et al., 2017](#)) with median 2 (Solid line: Posterior; Dashed line: Prior).

## Comparing RW2 with ARIMA



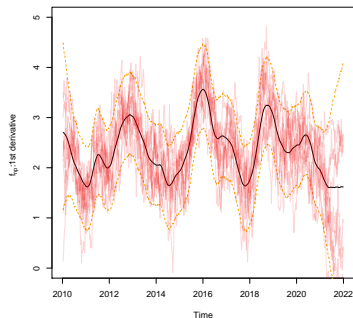
(a)  $f_{np}$  using RW2



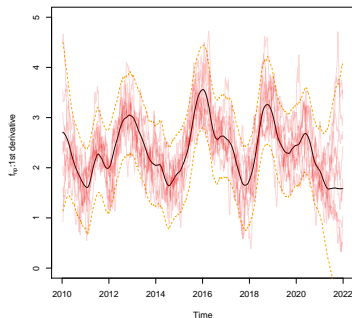
(b)  $f_{np}$  using ARIMA

**Figure:** Inferences for  $f_{np}$  obtained using each method (Black line: posterior mean; Orange line: 95 percent credible interval; Pink lines: Posterior sample paths).

## What about the derivatives?



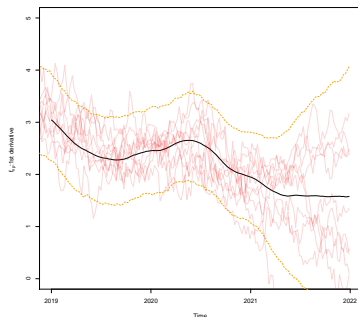
(a)  $f'_{np}$  using RW2



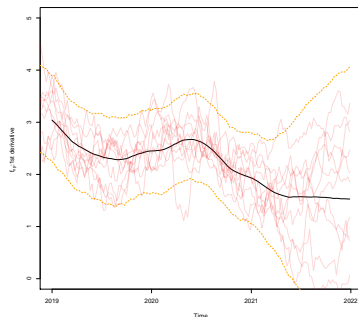
(b)  $f'_{np}$  using ARIMA

**Figure:** Inferences for  $f'_{np}$  obtained using each method (Black line: posterior mean; Orange line: 95 percent credible interval; Pink lines: Posterior sample paths).

## Zoom in a bit more:



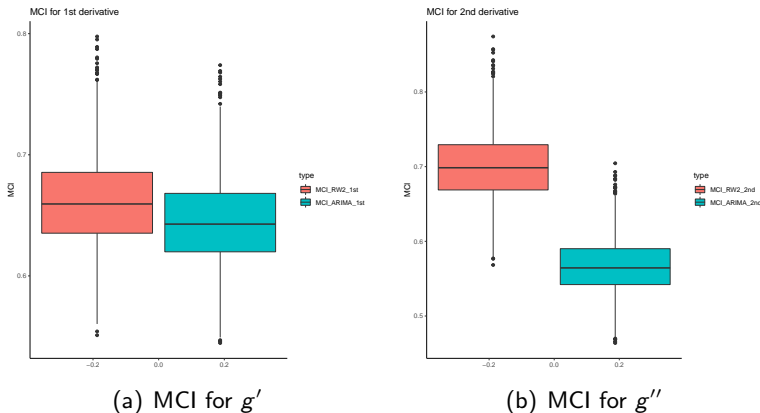
(a)  $f'_{np}$  using RW2



(b)  $f'_{np}$  using ARIMA

**Figure:** Inferences for  $f'_{np}$  obtained using each method (Black line: posterior mean; Orange line: 95 percent credible interval; Pink lines: Posterior sample paths).

## A Simulation Study with 1000 independent replications:



**Figure:** Mean width of 90 percent credible interval (MCI) for  $g'$ ,  $g''$  using RW2 or ARIMA, replicated for 1000 independent data sets.



- We provide an overview of the extended second order random walk method ([Lindgren and Rue, 2008](#)), as well as its connection with the smoothing spline ([Wahba, 1978](#)) and the ARIMA prior.
- The RW2 method gives similar result in terms of inference for  $g$  as the ARIMA method, but less smooth inference for higher order derivatives of  $g$  compared to ARIMA method.
- We illustrate that It is possible to implement the exact ARIMA method with dense precision matrix. But which method is better should depend on the question of interest.

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