

Discrete Random variable

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1 Random Variable

A random variable is a quantity “X ” resulting from an experiment, by chance, that can assume different values.

A random variable is a variable “X” that has a single numerical value determined by chance, for each outcome of a procedure.

If a sample space S is discrete, then every R.V. defined on S is also discrete, i.e., its range is countable (think of random counts for examples).

2 Discrete Random Variable

A Discrete Random Variable is a variable that can assume only certain clearly separated values.

A Discrete Random Variable has either a finite or countable number of values, where “countable” refers to the fact that there might be infinitely many values, but they can be associated with a counting process.

2.1 Examples of Discrete Random Variables

- The outcome of rolling a single die.
- The number of boys in a family with three children.
- The number of heads that appear when a coin is flipped nine times.
- The sum of the numbers on the dice, when k dice are rolled.
- The number of bits received in error when n bits are received.
- The number of bits received until the r-th error.

3 Discrete Probability Distributions

A discrete probability distribution is a listing of all possible values of a random variable along with their probabilities.

$$\frac{X}{P(X)} \frac{|x_1|}{|p_1|} \frac{|x_2|}{|p_2|} \frac{|x_2|}{|p_2|} \frac{|\dots|}{|\dots|} \frac{|x_k|}{|p_k|}; \quad \sum_{k \geq 1} p_k = 1. \quad (1)$$

1. The sum of all probabilities must be 1 in any probability distribution
2. All probability values must be in $[0,1]$

Example 3.1. $x \Rightarrow$ The number of heads appearing when a coin is flipped three times.

X	0	1	2	3
P(X)	1/8	3/8	3/8	1/8

3.1 Bernoulli

A Bernoulli trial is an experiment with only two outcomes Success and Failure

1. $P(S) = p =$ Probability of a success
2. $P(F) = q = 1 - p =$ Probability of a failure

If a Bernoulli random variable, X , denotes No. of successes, then

1. $X = 1$ if the outcome is success
2. $X = 0$ if the outcome is failure

Example 3.2. A bit is transmitted, it is received in error with probability “0.1”. Assume that 8 bits are transmitted independently.

1. How many bits can be received in error?

$8P_2$

2. What is the probability that 2 bits are received in error

$$P(X = 2) = {}^8P_2 \times (0.1)^2(0.9)^6$$

3.2 Binomial Distribution

In general, let X stand for the number of bits received in error, when n bits are transmitted, with the probability of a single bit in error being p

$$P(X = k) = {}^nC_k \times p^k \times (1 - p)^{n-k} \quad (2)$$

$$\sum_{k=0}^n p_k = {}^nC_k \times p^k \times (1 - p)^{n-k} = [(p) + (1 - p)]^n = 1^n = 1 \quad (3)$$

Example 3.3. A fair coin is tossed 10 times, what is the probability of getting:

1. Exactly 6 heads.

$$n = 10; \quad p = 0.5; q = 0.5$$

$$P(X = 6) = {}^{10}C_6 \times (0.5)^6 \times (0.5)^4$$

2. At least 6 heads.

$$P(X \geq 6) = P(X = 6) + P(X = 7) + P(X = 8) + P(X = 9) + P(X = 10)$$

3.3 Geometric Distribution

A bit is transmitted, it is received in error with probability “0.1”.

Assume that bits are transmitted independently, until the first bit is received in error.

1. How many bits can be received?

Infinity many many

2. What is the probability that the 5-th bit is received in error?

$$P(X = 5) = 0.1 \times 0.9^4$$

3. What is the probability that at least 5 (i.e. 5 or more) bits are received until the first error

$$P(X \geq 5) = P(X = 5) + P(X = 6) + \dots =$$

$$\sum_{k=5}^{\infty} P(X = K) = \sum_{k=5}^{\infty} (0.1)(0.9)^{k-1} = 0.656$$

So The General case is

$$P(X = k) = p \times (1 - p)^{k-1}; \quad k \geq 1 \tag{4}$$

$$\sum_{k=1}^{\infty} P(X = k) = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} p \times (1 - p)^{k-1} = p \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} (1 - p)^{k-1} = p \times \frac{1}{p} = 1 \tag{5}$$