



# Fast Outlier Detection in Oblique Subspace

Bowen Li

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# Publication & Authorship

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# Publication

- **Conference:** ACM CIKM 2025 (Nov. 10–14, 2025, Seoul, Korea)
- **Paper Title:** Fast Outlier Detection in Oblique Subspaces
- **Authors:** Bowen Li, Charu C. Aggarwal, Peixiang Zhao
- **Affiliations:** Florida State University, IBM T. J. Watson Research Center





# Authors

- **Name:** Bowen Li
  - A final-year PhD student, Computer Science
- **Advisor:** Prof. Peixiang Zhao
- **Research Interests:** Data mining, large-scale database systems, and learning–driven solutions to fundamental data problems.



# Co-Authors



- **Dr. Peixiang Zhao**
- Full professor
- Computer Science,  
Florida State University



- **Dr. Charu C. Aggarwal**
- Distinguished Research Staff Member
- IBM T. J. Watson Research Center



# Introduction

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# Problem Statement

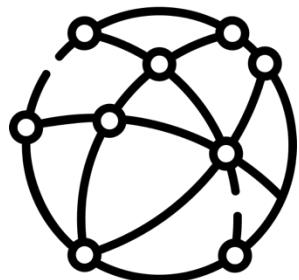
- **Problem:** outlier detection
- **Definition:**

In high-dimensional datasets, an **outlier** is a data object deviating significantly from the general patterns of underlying data, often appearing distant or unusual to other objects (a.k.a. **inliers**).

- **Reasons:**
  - Natural variation in the data
  - Mistakes or noise during data collection
  - Rare or unusual events that carry important insights

# Applications

- Intrusion identification
- Medical diagnosis
- Financial fraud detection
- Traffic management
- And so on ...





# Challenge

- Curse of dimensionality
- High computational cost (e.g.,  $O(n^2)$  or more).
- Dependence on predefined attributes or vector representations.



# Related Work

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# Categories

- Statistical methods
- Distance-based methods
- Density-based methods
- Pattern compression methods
- Spectral methods
- Subspace methods



# RS-Hash

- A subspace hashing method

$A_1 [ \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots ]$

$A_2 [ \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots ]$

$A_3 [ \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots ]$

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$A_n [ \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots \dots ]$

**Dataset  $D$**



# RS-Hash: Sampling

- Sampling  $m$  ( $m \leq n$ ) points randomly

$S_1$  [ ..... ]

$S_2$  [ ..... ]

$S_3$  [ ..... ]

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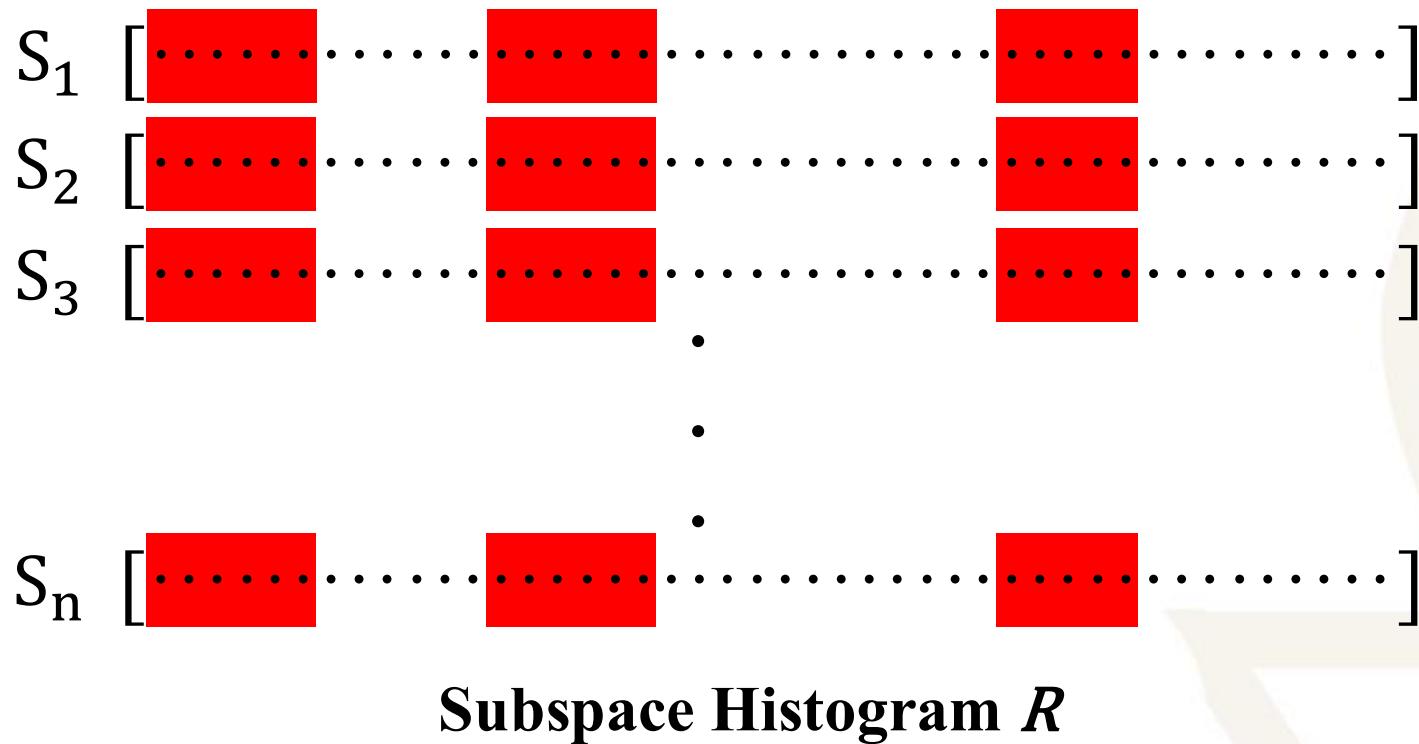
$S_m$  [ ..... ]

**Sample  $S$**



# RS-Hash: Subspace

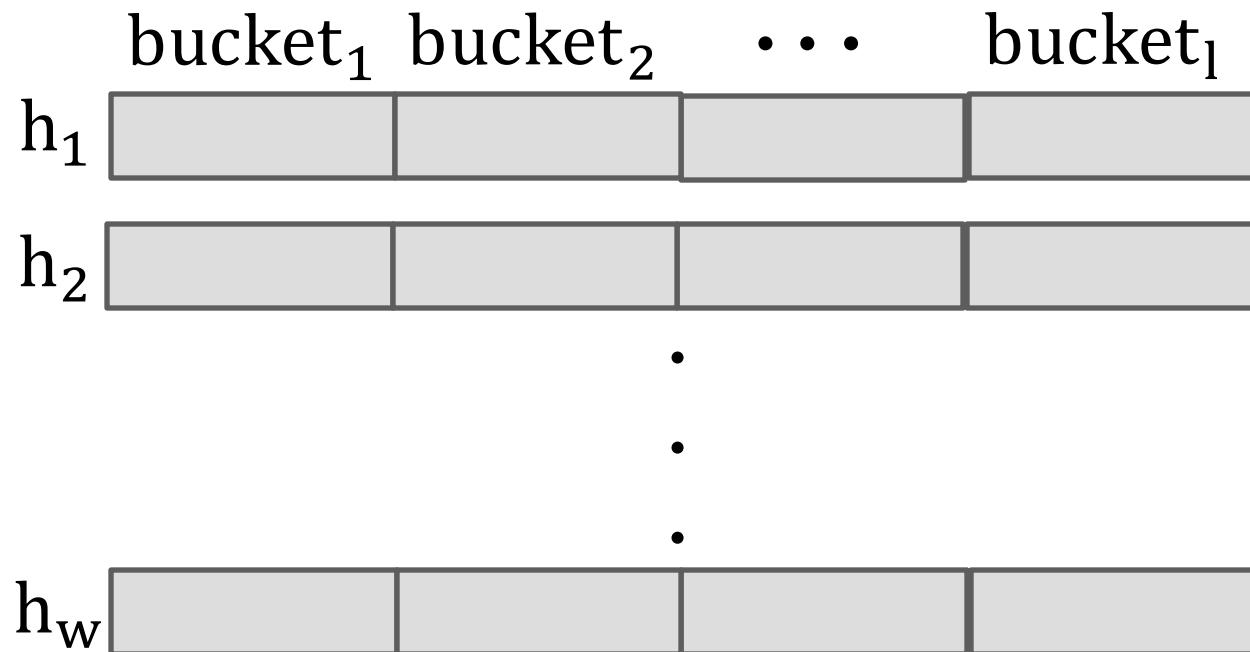
- Select  $r$  subspaces randomly





# RS-Hash: Hashing

- Train a **Count-Min Sketch**



**Count-Min Sketch  $H$**



# Limitation

- Designed for multidimensional data with *pre-defined dimensions or attributes*
- Limited to *axis-parallel subspaces*
- How about those *arbitrary-shaped or schema-less data* without explicit dimensions?



# Oblique Subspaces

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# Problem Setting

- A data collection  $O = \{O_1, O_2, \dots, O_n\}$ 
  - $n$  objects: multidimensional vectors, graphs, time series and, so on.
  - Similarity function:  $S_{ij} = s(O_i, O_j)$ 
    - Multidimensional vectors: L2 distance-based similarity
    - Time series: dynamic time wrapping (DTW)
    - Graphs: graph-kernel based similarity



# Oblique Vector Direction

- Consider a pair of objects  $(O_i, O_j)$  from  $\mathcal{O}$  to construct an **oblique** vector direction
- For the rest of the objects  $O_k$ , the projection on the oblique vector direction can be defined as:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{proj}(O_k) &= (\vec{X}_k - \vec{X}_i) \cdot (\vec{X}_j - \vec{X}_i) \\ &= \vec{X}_k \cdot \vec{X}_j - \vec{X}_k \cdot \vec{X}_i - \vec{X}_i \cdot \vec{X}_j + \vec{X}_i \cdot \vec{X}_i \quad (1) \\ &= s_{kj} - s_{ki} - s_{ij} + s_{ii}.\end{aligned}$$

- picking  $r$  pairs of objects  $\rightarrow$  an  $r$ -dimensional oblique subspace of  $\mathcal{O} \rightarrow$  create a histogram in this oblique subspace



# OS-Hash

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# OS-Hash

1. Parameter Selection
2. Oblique Subspace Identification
3. Sample Data Projection
4. Oblique Subspace Hashing
5. Outlier Score Evaluation



# Step 1: Parameter Selection

- **Sampling size s**
  - a small constant
  - $s = \min\{n, 1000\}$
- **Locality parameter f**
  - defines the bucket width as a fraction of the length along each oblique dimension
  - $f = (1/\sqrt{s}, 1 - 1/\sqrt{s})$
- **Oblique subspace dimensionality r**
  - $[1 + 0.5 \lceil \log_{\max\{2,1/f\}}(s) \rceil], \lceil \log_{\max\{2,1/f\}}(s) \rceil]$



## Step2: Oblique Subspace Identification

- Sample  $r$  pairs of objects at random from  $\mathcal{O}$  randomly
  - $i$ -th pair of objects,  $(\mathcal{O}_{a_i}, \mathcal{O}_{b_i})$
  - $i$ -th oblique dimension
- $r$ -dimensional oblique subspaces for  $\mathcal{O}$



## Step 3: Sample Data Projection

- Select a sample  $S \subseteq O$  of objects at random, where  $|S|=s$
- Project the objects of  $S$  along each of  $r$  oblique dimensions specified by  $(O_{a_i}, O_{b_i})$  according to Equation 1.
- Each sample object  $O_i \in S$  is represented as an  $r$ -dimensional vector in the oblique subspace
  - j-th oblique dimension:  $z_{ij}$



## Step 3: Cont'd

- normalize  $\mathbf{z}_{ij}$  to  $\mathbf{z}'_{ij}$

$$z'_{ij} \Leftarrow \frac{z_{ij} - \min_j}{\max_j - \min_j} \quad (2)$$

- a normalized  $r$ -dimensional vector of sampled object  
 $\mathbf{o}_i$

$$\vec{Z}'_i = (z'_{i1}, \dots, z'_{ir})$$



## Step 3: Cont'd

- Create for each  $\mathbf{O}_i$  a new  $r$ -dimensional discrete vector  $\vec{\mathbf{Y}}_i$ 
  - $y_{ij} = \lfloor (z'_{ij} + \alpha_j)/f \rfloor$ 
    - $\alpha_j$  is a shift parameter drawn uniformly at random from  $(0, f)$
    - address the edge effects in the first and last buckets of the histogram
  - the integer bucket values of  $\mathbf{O}_i$  using the fractional width  $f$  for each bucket
- Define a histogram representing all the  $r$  oblique dimensions.



# Step 4: Oblique Subspace Hashing

- Construct a Count-Min sketch  $H$ 
  - Width  $w$ :  $w$  hash tables implementing  $w$  pairwise independent hash functions
  - Length  $l$ : the number of elements of these hash tables
  - **Input:**  $r$ -dimensional bucket vector  $\vec{Y}_i$
  - **Output:** integer value in the range of  $(0, l-1)$
- Apply each hash function  $H_k$  upon  $\vec{Y}_i$ ,
  - increment the count value in  $H_k(\vec{Y}_i)$  – th bucket by 1



# Step 5: Outlier Score Evaluation

- Transform each object  $O_i \in O$  into its  $r$ -dimensional bucket representation  $\vec{Y}_i$ 
  - Approximation: The values of  $\min_j$  and  $\max_j$  are derived from the sample  $S$
- Insert  $\vec{Y}_i$  into the constructed Count-Min Sketch  $H$ 
  - $c_k$  : the value of the  $H_k(\vec{Y}_i)$  -th cell in the  $k$ -th hash table
    - $O_i \in S : score(O_i) = \log_2(\min\{c_1, \dots, c_w\})$
    - $O_i \notin S : score(O_i) = \log_2(\min\{c_1, \dots, c_w\} + 1)$



## Step 5: Cont'd

- A single-base detector of OS-Hash is too weak
- Repeat  $m$  times, once for each base detector of the ensemble
- Let  $os_j^i$  represent the outlier score of the  $i$ -th object from the  $j$ -th base detector

$$\text{OS-Hash}(O_i) = \frac{1}{m} \sum_{j=1}^m os_j^i \quad (3)$$



# Count-Min Sketch-Based Hashing

- Count-Min Sketch H
  - $w$  hash tables:  $w=4$
  - Hash value range  $l$ :  $l=10^s=10,000$
- For each hash table:
  - success probability of a single object:  $1/l$
  - No collision between  $s$  sampled objects:  $(1 - 1/l)^s$
- Collision within  $w$  hash tables:  $(1 - (1 - 1/l)^s)^w$
- No collisions arise in at least one of the  $w$  hash tables
$$[1 - (1 - (1 - 1/l)^s)^w] \approx 0.9999$$



# Complexity

- **Time Complexity:**  $O(nmT \log s)$ 
  - $O(T)$ : object similarity computation
  - $O(n \log s)$ : number of similarity computation  $O(nr)$ 
    - $O(r) \rightarrow O(\log s)$
  - $O(m)$ : number of base outlier detectors
  - Linear
- **Space Complexity:**  $O(w \cdot l)$ 
  - Constants



# OS-Hash in Data Stream

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# Challenge

- **Data streams:** a continuous and rapid flow of data objects arrives in real time
  - Processed in one pass
  - A large amount of data is coming quickly and continuously
  - Rapid changes of underlying patterns
- Real-time outlier detection is extremely challenging!



# Techniques in Data Stream

- **Sliding Window:** Incoming objects are automatically inserted into the sketch, and obsolete ones falling off from the sliding window are removed.
- **Time-decayed model:** an exponential function with a decay rate  $\lambda$  to quantify the time-varying weight of an object  $O_i$ 
  - $t$  objects have arrived after  $O_i$ , the weight of  $O_i$  is  $2^{-\lambda t}$



# Modifications

- Each base detector is created consecutively → Maintain all ensemble components in the same Count-Min sketch:
  - The values of  $\min_j$  and  $\max_j$ : estimated an initial sample of streaming data.
  - Sampling size  $s = \max\{1000, 1/(1 - 2^{-\lambda})\}$
  - Locality parameter  $f$ , dimensionality  $r$ , and shift parameters  $\alpha$  : calculated in the initial step at one time



# Lazy Weighting Strategy

- In each Count-Min Sketch cell
  - Count
  - $t_l$  : last time it is updated
- When a new object is streaming in
  - $t_c$  : the current time stamp
  - Updated count:  $c * 2^{-\lambda(t_c-t_l)} + 1$



# OS-Stream

For the streaming object  $\mathcal{O}$ , we compute its score

1. For each base detector  $i \in \{1, \dots, m\}$ , calculate the  $r$ -dimensional bucket representation  $\vec{Y}_i$
2. For each hash function  $H_k$ , compute the  $H_k(\vec{Y}_i)$  to get the weighted count  $c_k^i$
3. The score of  $i$ -th based detector is  $\log(1 + \min\{c_1^i, \dots, c_w^i\})$ , sum them and calculate the average
4. Update both the counts and time-stamps



# Experiment

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# Datasets

- **Multidimensional Datasets**
  - *Static*: LYMPHOGRAPHY, CARDIO, MUSK, WAVEFORM, KDDCUP99
  - *Stream*: ACTIVITY, KDDCUP99-T,
- **Time Series Datasets**
  - *Static*: PICKUP, PEBBLE, POWER, ECG5000, CROP
  - *Stream*: ACTIVITY-T, CROP-T
- **Graph Datasets**
  - *Static*: MUTAG, FINGER, AIDS, MUTAGEN, TOX21
  - *Stream*: TOX21-AR-T, MCF-7-T



# Statistics of datasets

Dataset	#Objs	#Dims	Outliers (%)
<b>Static Datasets</b>			
LYMPHOGRAPHY	148	18	3.4
CARDIO	1,831	21	9.6
MUSK	3,062	166	3.1
WAVEFORM	3,509	21	4.7
KDDCUP99	25,000	41	0.7
<b>Streaming Datasets</b>			
ACTIVITY	21,383	51	10.0
KDDCUP99-T	25,000	41	0.7

**Table 1: Multidimensional Datasets**



# Statistics of datasets

Dataset	#Objs	Outliers (%)
<b>Static Datasets</b>		
PICKUP	45	14.29
PEBBLE	120	12.50
POWER	600	14.00
ECG5000	3,039	3.94
CROP	16,500	2.42
<b>Streaming Datasets</b>		
ACTIVITY-T	21,383	10.0
CROP-T	16,500	2.42

**Table 2: Time Series Datasets**



# Statistics of datasets

Dataset	Graphs	Avg.  V	Avg.  E	Outliers (%)
<b>Static Datasets</b>				
MUTAG	135	19.24	21.76	7.4
FINGER	534	5.84	4.72	3.18
AIDS	1,800	13.11	13.37	11.11
MUTAGEN	2,500	29.66	30.54	3.96
TOX21	10,000	18.41	18.87	3.89
<b>Streaming Datasets</b>				
TOX21-AR-T	10,000	18.41	18.87	3.89
MCF-7-T	20,000	27.43	29.68	10.00

**Table 3: Graph Datasets**



# Evaluation Metrics

- **Effectiveness**
  - Area Under the Curve (AUC) Score
  - *Static*: Receiver Operating Characteristics (ROC) Curve
- **Efficiency**
  - *Static*: overall runtime (in seconds)
  - *Stream*: the number of objects processed per second



# Baselines

- **Multidimensional Datasets**
  - *Static*: AvgKNN, FastABOD, iForest, HiCS, LOF, and RS-Hash
  - *Stream*: RS-Stream, LOF-Stream, and AvgKNN-Stream
- **Time Series and Graph Datasets**
  - *Static*: AvgKNN, LOF, COF, LoOP
  - *Stream*: LOF-Stream and AvgKNN-Stream



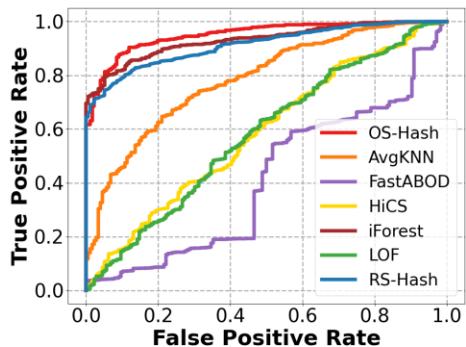
# Static: Multidimensional Datasets

Dataset	OS-Hash	RS-Hash	AvgKNN	LOF	iForest	HiCS	FastABOD
LYMPHOGRAPHY	97.28	<b>99.92</b>	97.89	97.41	99.30	95.85	46.36
CARDIO	<b>94.98</b>	91.19	78.53	58.00	93.07	58.27	41.16
MUSK	<b>100.00</b>	100.00	24.10	39.17	100.00	39.50	48.78
WAVEFORM	<b>91.23</b>	72.97	73.83	65.03	66.20	65.23	53.68
KDDCUP99	92.91	<b>99.96</b>	14.35	44.69	99.94	52.19	38.27

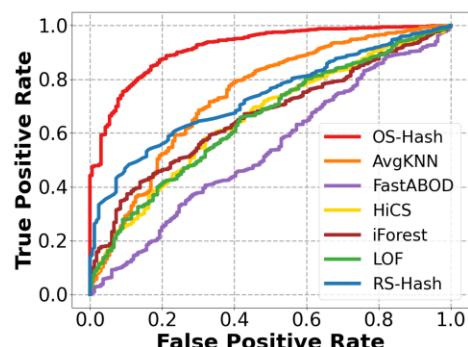
**Table 4: AUC results for multidimensional datasets**



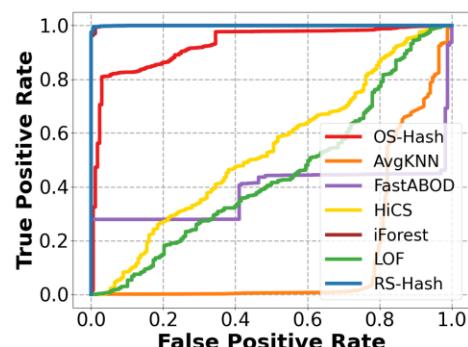
# Static: Multidimensional Datasets



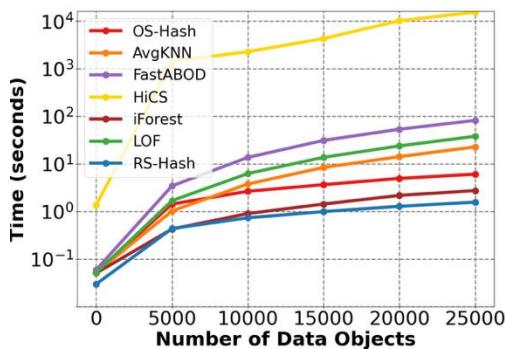
CARDIO



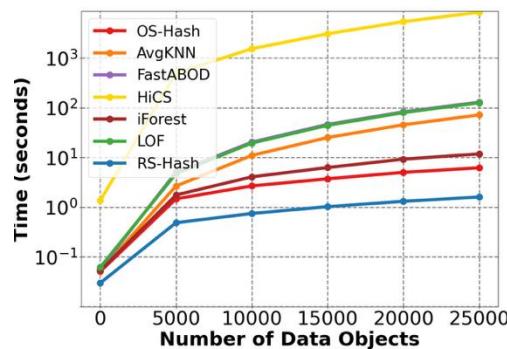
WAVEFORM



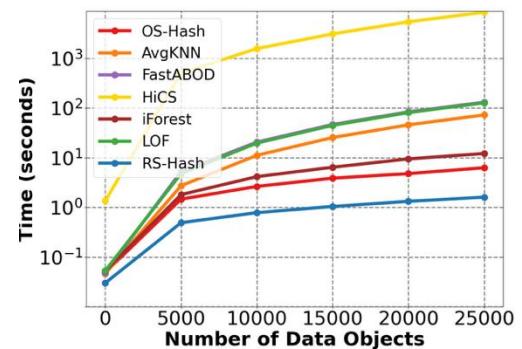
KDDCUP99



KDDCUP99



NORMAL(0,1)



UNIFORM(0,1)



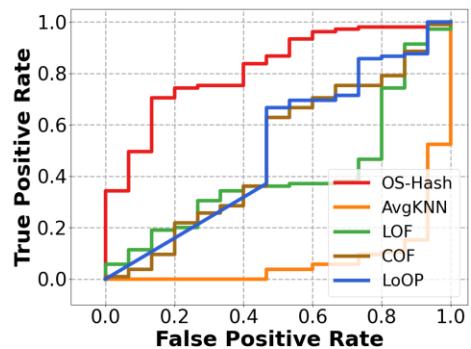
# Static: Time Series Datasets

Dataset	OS-Hash	AvgKNN	LOF	COF	LoOP
PICKUP	<b>75.00</b>	74.50	73.00	68.50	63.75
PEBBLE	<b>79.17</b>	77.11	41.02	49.59	51.14
POWER	<b>66.03</b>	52.10	37.43	40.82	38.89
ECG5000	<b>92.17</b>	74.41	72.14	69.26	69.35
CROP	<b>83.96</b>	66.82	35.68	38.32	36.78

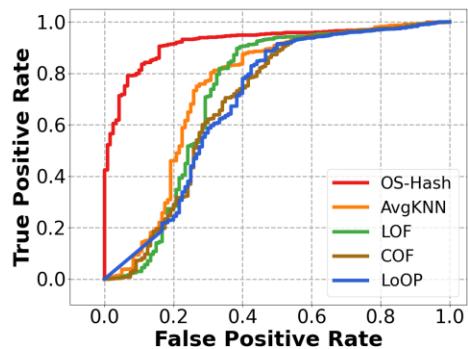
**Table 5:** AUC results for time series datasets



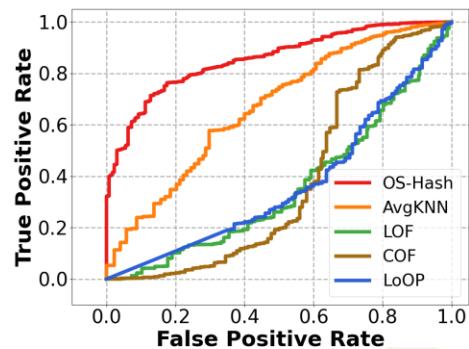
# Static: Time Series Datasets



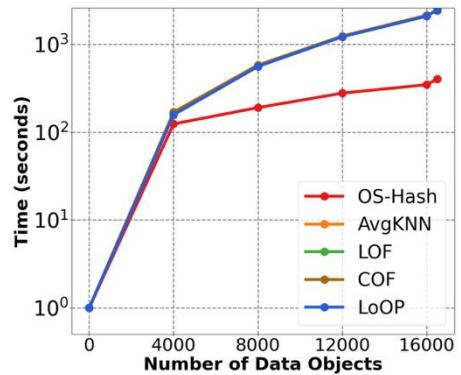
PEBBLE



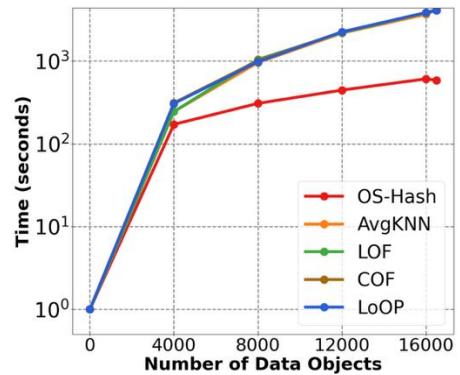
ECG5000



CROP



CROP



UNIFORM(0,1)



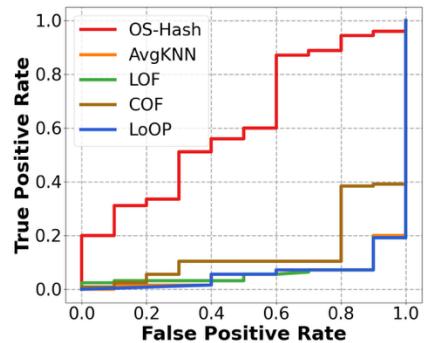
# Static: Graph Datasets

Dataset	OS-Hash	AvgKNN	LOF	COF	LoOP
MUTAG	<b>61.62</b>	5.76	6.04	13.84	5.52
FINGER	<b>55.03</b>	51.59	41.38	48.43	51.59
AIDS	<b>97.51</b>	64.43	64.22	48.09	49.75
MUTAGEN	<b>63.52</b>	56.51	55.14	60.40	58.05
TOX21	<b>71.97</b>	49.58	49.67	50.51	50.00

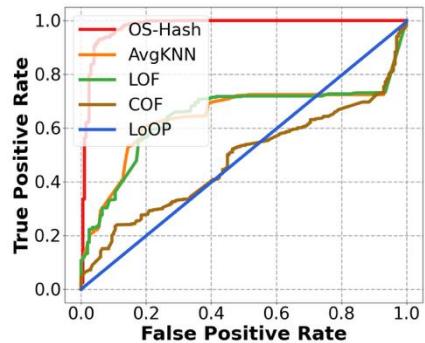
**Table 6: AUC results for graph datasets**



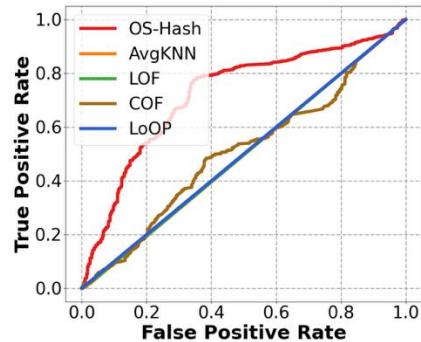
# Static: Multidimensional Dataset



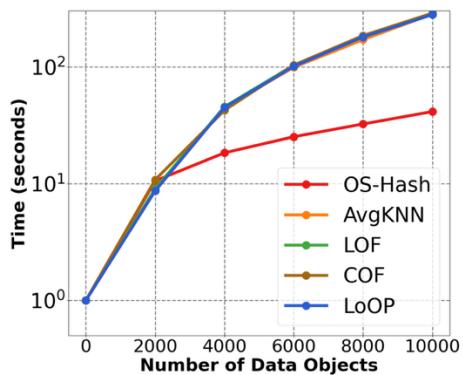
MUTAG



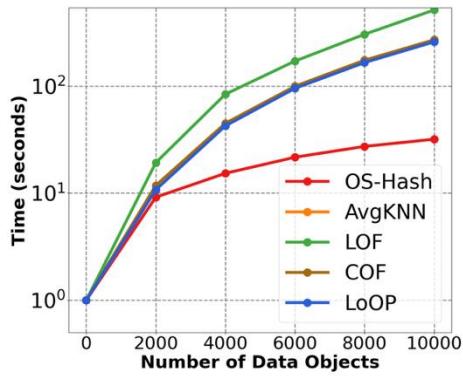
AIDS



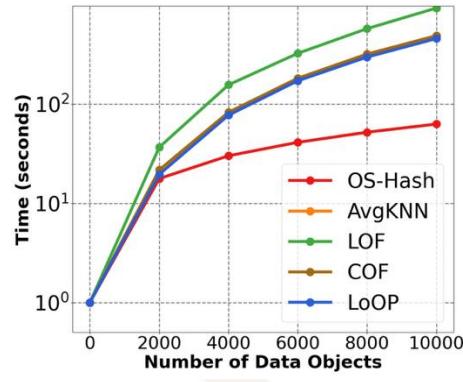
TOX21



TOX21



EDGE18



NODE18



# Stream: AUC Scores

Dataset	OS-Stream	RS-Stream	AvgKNN-Stream	LOF-Stream
ACTIVITY	<b>99.96</b>	84.51	33.59	38.55
KDDCUP99-T	87.09	<b>95.27</b>	12.43	66.35

**Table 7: AUC results in multidimensional data streams**

Dataset	OS-Stream	AvgKNN-Stream	LOF-Stream
ACTIVITY-T	<b>81.89</b>	35.08	40.57
CROP-T	<b>81.99</b>	71.89	52.97

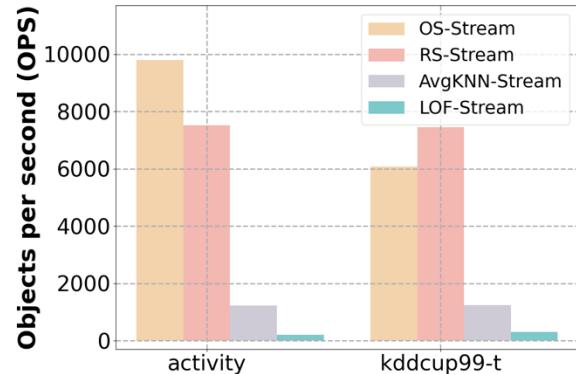
**Table 8: AUC results in time series data streams**

Dataset	OS-Stream	AvgKNN-Stream	LOF-Stream
TOX21-AR-T	<b>72.07</b>	52.87	53.64
MCF-7-T	<b>60.08</b>	52.94	56.18

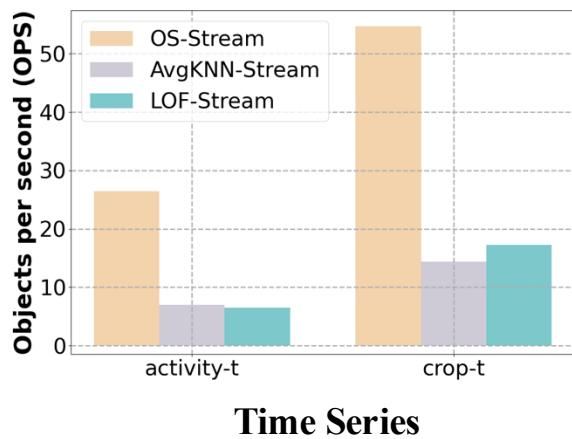
**Table 9: AUC results in graph data streams**



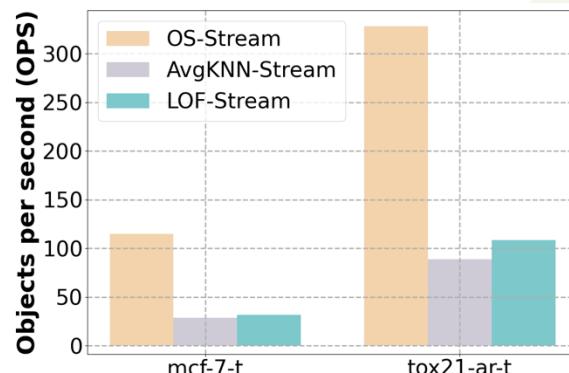
# Stream: Object per Second



Multidimensional



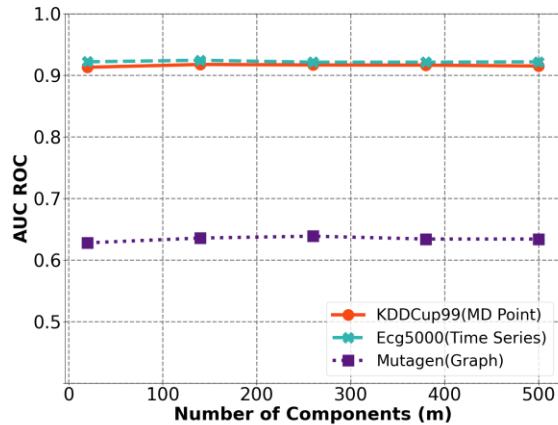
Time Series



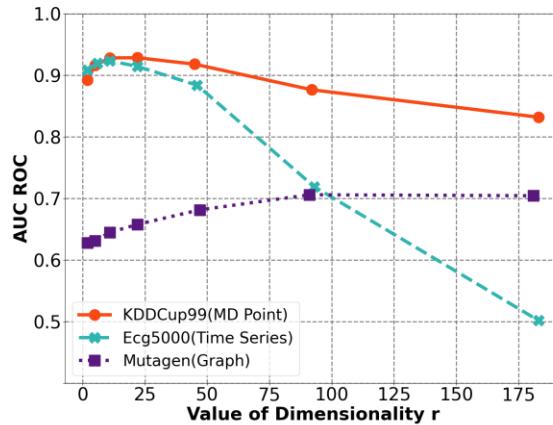
Graphs



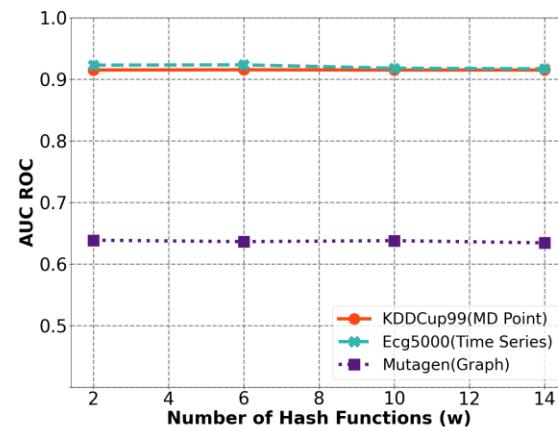
# Parameter Analysis



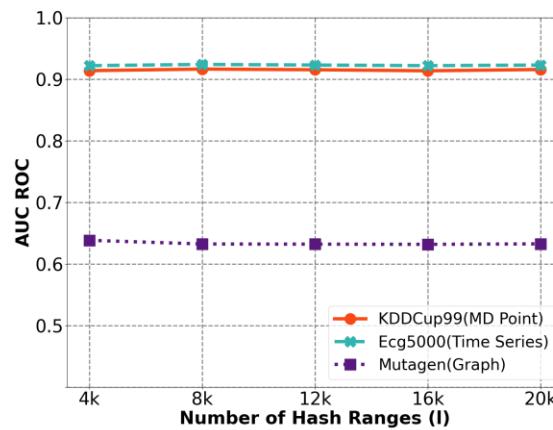
# Base Detectors, m



Dimensionality, r



# Hash Functions, w



Hash Table Size, l



# Conclusion

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# Conclusion

- Proposed OS-Hash, a linear-time, constant-space oblique subspace outlier detector.
- Introduced oblique subspaces for arbitrary-shaped data.
- Applicable to multidimensional, time-series, graph, and streaming data.
- Experiments show superior accuracy, efficiency, and generality over state-of-the-art methods.



# Thank You!

