

Data Mining II Project:

Analyzing Data Insights from the IMDb Platform

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1 Introduction

The goal of this report is to illustrate the characteristics of the given IMDb dataset, and to show key insights that can be obtained from it. The IMDb (Internet Movie Database) dataset is a comprehensive collection of information about films, TV shows, actors, crew, and more, compiled from IMDb's vast online database. Widely used in research and data science, this dataset includes various attributes such as movie titles, genres, release year, ratings, and reviews, among other details. The dataset is updated as of September 1, 2024.

2 Data Understanding and Preparation

TODO: distrib graphs The dataset contains 32 columns and 149531 rows of titles of different types. For each title, the dataset contains information regarding many different aspects. Table 1 lists the initial categorical features.

Feature	Description
originalTitle	Original title, in the original language (?)
isAdult	Whether or not the title is for adult
canHaveEpisodes	Whether the title can have episodes
isRatable	Whether the title can be rated by users
titleType	Type of the title (e.g., movie, tyseries)
countryOfOrigin	Countries where the title was primarily produced
genres	Genres associated with the title
regions	Regions for this version of the title
soundMixes	Technical specification of sound mixes
worstRating (ordinal)	Worst title rating
bestRating (ordinal)	Best title rating
rating (ordinal)	IMDB title rating class

Table 1: Initial categorical features of the IMDb dataset

Of the initial categorical attributes, the following were removed:

- originalTitle, as it did not provide particularly useful information;
- isAdult, as it was almost completely correlated with the *Adult* genre, so a logical OR operation was performed, and the genre only was kept; Interesting to note the fact that in our representation, being that the genres are represented through freq enc, we don't have the info
- canHaveEpisodes, as it was completely correlated with the title type being tvSeries or tvMiniSeries;
- isRatable, as it was always true;
- soundMixes, as it required some domain knowledge to be understood, as well as having issues with the values it contained.
- worstRating and bestRating, as they were always 1 and 10, respectively;
- rating, as it was obtainable from the averageRating continuous attribute, through a simple discretization.

Table 2 lists the initial numerical features.

Feature	Description
startYear	Release year of the title (series start year for TV)
endYear	TV Series end year
runtimeMinutes	Primary runtime of the title, in minutes
numVotes	Number of votes the title has received
numRegions	Number of regions for this version of the title
totalImages	Total number of images for the title
totalVideos	Total number of videos for the title
totalCredits	Total number of credits for the title
criticReviewsTotal	Total number of critic reviews
awardWins	Number of awards the title won
awardNominations	Number of award nominations excluding wins
ratingCount	Total number of user ratings submitted
userReviewsTotal	Total number of user reviews
castNumber	Total number of cast individuals
CompaniesNumber	Total number of companies that worked for the title
averageRating	Weighted average of all user ratings
externalLinks	Total number of external links on IMDb page
quotesTotal	Total number of quotes on IMDb page
writerCredits	Total number of writer credits
directorCredits	Total number of director credits

Table 2: Initial numerical features of the IMDb dataset

Of the initial numerical attributes, the following were removed:

- endYear, was removed due to it not being meaningful for non-Series titles, and having around 50% of missing values for tvSeries and tvMiniSeries;
- numVotes, as it had a very high correlation with ratingCount;

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the averageRating attribute.

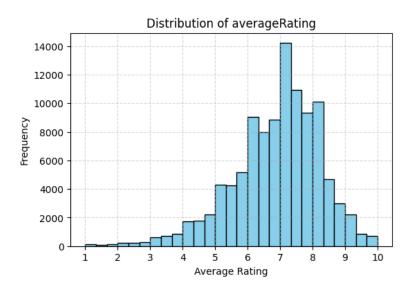


Figure 1: Distribution of the averageRating attribute

The distribution is Normal-like, with a peak around 7. This graph is particularly important because of the centrality of the feature in the classification and regression tasks.

2.1 Feature Engineering

• totalImages, totalVideos and quotesTotal, were merged through a simple sum operation into a single feature (totalMedia) because of their similar semantic meaning, as well as heavy right skewness;

- awardWins and awardNominations, were merged with the same procedure as above into totalNominations, since they represented the same concept;
- userReviewsTotal andcriticReviewsTotal, were merged with the same procedure as above into reviewsTotal, since they represented the same concept;
- regions and countryOfOrigin were merged through a simple union operation. The resulting feature was then represented trhough frequency encoding on the entire list, as well as counts of the number of countries from each continent. This resulted in eight new features (six continents, one for unknown country codes, and the last for the frequency encoding);
- genre attribute, it was observed that each record contained up to three genres, listed in alphabetical order—indicating that the order did not convey any semantic information about the title. To represent this information, three separate features were created, each corresponding to one of the genres. These features were encoded using frequency encoding, sorted in descending order of frequency across the dataset. A value of 0 was used to indicate missing genres—either when no genres were present or to fill the remaining slots when fewer than three were available;
- runtimeMinutes had a very high number of missing values (add %). Since the feature had high relevance in the domain, it was imputed with random sampling from a interquartile range, separately for each title type.

eventually, add description of the imputation procedure for tasks which involved title Type

castNumber, writerCredits, directorCredits with and without totalCredits; deltacredits

3 Outliers

3.1 Finding Baseline

In this outlier analysis section, our primary objective was to identify the top outliers in the dataset using three well-established methods- Local Outlier Factor, Isolation Forest, and Angle-Based Outlier Detection. To establish a baseline for model performance, we initially employed two supervised learning algorithms- Decision Tree and K-Nearest Neighbors. To enhance the alignment between the later module tasks we defined a categorical target variable, rating_bin, by dividing the continuous averageRating into six distinct classes. The classes were defined as follows:

$$0 = [0-5); 1 = [5-6); 2 = [6-7); 3 = [7-8); 4 = [8-9); and 5 = [9-10]$$

The value count for each class was 12856, 19576, 37032, 49164, 25414, and 5489 respectively.

We then performed a grid search with cross-validation (GridSearchCV) on both models to identify the best hyperparameters. Since our dataset was large, we conducted the grid search on a 10% stratified sample to optimize computational efficiency. For K-NN, the optimal parameters were-

```
metric = 'manhattan', n neighbors = 122, weights = 'distance'
```

However, to strike a balance between accuracy and computational efficiency, we restricted our model to use 50 n_neighbors. For Decision Tree, the optimal parameters were-

```
criterion = 'gini', max depth = 10, min samples leaf = 4, min samples split = 10, splitter = 'random'
```

We trained both models on the entire training dataset and evaluated their performance on the test set. We split our training dataset into training (80%) and validation (20%) sets. We computed the baseline accuracy without removing any outliers, which was 36% for K-NN and 32% for Decision Tree.

3.2 Finding Threshold

Next, we applied the three outlier detection methods to identify and remove outliers from the training dataset. We experimented with different contamination levels (0.01, 0.05, 0.1) to determine the optimal proportion of outliers to remove. After removing the identified outliers, we retrained both models on the cleaned training dataset and evaluated their performance on the test set. We observed that removing outliers generally improved model accuracy, but different contamination levels had no significant impact on the results as shown in table 3. Only the results from LOF with a contamination level of 0.1 showed an improvement of 1%. Therefore, we fixed the contamination level at 10% for all three methods to maintain consistency. Subsequently, we combined the results of the three methods by aggregating the outlier score and removed those rows that were flagged as outliers by at least two out of the three methods, which accounted for approximately 3% of the dataset.

		LOF	IF	ABOD
1%	KNN	42	42	41
1/0	DT	39	39	40
5%	KNN	42	42	41
J /0	DT	39	39	40
10%	KNN	43	42	41
10/0	\mathbf{DT}	40	39	40

Table 3: Accuracy at different threshold

3.3 Outlier Detection Conclusion

In conclusion, our anomaly detection task revealed a consistent trend: both models KNN and DT performed better than the baseline after the removal of outliers. This outcome sets the foundation for our subsequent focus on model explainability in the later sections.

From the T-SNE visualization, we observed that LOF predominantly identified outliers at the edges of the data distribution 2a, whereas IF detected them primarily within a clustered region 2b. ABOD, on the other hand, captured outliers both at the edges and within dense clusters 2c. This variation can be explained by the fundamental differences between the algorithms: LOF emphasizes anomalies in low-density regions, while IF isolates points distant from the main distribution. ABOD, which evaluates outliers based on the angular relationships of points, reflects a hybrid behavior by marking anomalies in both sparse and dense regions. Importantly, since the dataset is dominated by a single high-density region, most points lack anomalous neighbors, explaining why ABOD highlighted relatively fewer strong anomalies. To ensure computational efficiency, we implemented the 'fast' version of ABOD, which approximates angle-based detection using a specified number of neighbors rather than exhaustively computing angles across all data points.

Overall, as we can see from table 3 the removal of outliers with different threshold led to only marginal gains in predictive performance. However, the differences in detection patterns across methods provide valuable insights into the structure and density of the data distribution, reinforcing the importance of combining multiple approaches for a more comprehensive anomaly detection strategy. Therefore, we combined the results of all three methods to identify the common outliers.

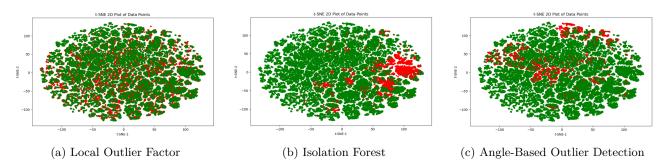


Figure 2: Comparison of T-SNE visualizations for different outlier detection methods.

4 Imbalanced Learning

We then proceeded with imbalance learning task, we used the same variable averageRating to categorize the data into three classes: low (0-4], medium (4-7], high (7-10]. The distribution of the classes is 4979, 67394, 72539 respectively, where the low class accounts for approx 3.5% of the dataset, which is highly imbalanced. We then applied Decision Tree classifier to the initial dataset and achieved 63% accuracy. Then we performed RandomSearchCV to tune the hyperparameters of the Decision Tree Classifier and achieved 67% accuracy. The best parameter were

Our focus was to improve the recall of the low class, so we plotted the confusion matrix to see the number of true positives. As we can see from the table 4 the number of true positives for the low class had increased with different imbalanced learning techniques. Finally, we applied different imbalance learning techniques to improve the performance of the model.

Model Name	Accuracy	True Positives	Recall
Initial DT	63	200	0.20
HyperParameter Tuned DT	67	95	0.09
SMOTE	62	449	0.44
ADASYN	62	439	0.43
Resample	53	576	0.56
ENN	68	346	0.21
AllKNN	66	469	0.30
RandomUnderSampler + ENN	43	1307	0.82
DBSCAN + K-Means	56	907	0.57

Table 4: Imbalanced Learning Model Performance on Low (0-4] class

4.1 Oversampling

In the oversampling techniques, we applied Synthetic Minority Oversampling Technique (SMOTE), and Adaptive Synthetic Sampling (ADASYN) to increase the size of the minority class. Despite the different methodologies, SMOTE and ADASYN, both approaches resulted in nearly identical performance 62% accuracy and recall around 0.44-0.43 for the low class respectively 4. This highlights that while the oversampling strategy can influence which minority samples are emphasized, it does not fundamentally change the class distribution dynamics and may even introduce synthetic noise, thereby limiting overall accuracy improvements. As in our dataset both methods allowed the model to achieve similar overall accuracy and recall, indicating that the choice between these two oversampling techniques may not significantly impact performance in this specific context. The key difference lies in the sample generation strategy: SMOTE treats all minority samples equally during interpolation, whereas ADASYN focuses more on difficult-to-learn samples by adaptively weighting them according to their density in the feature space. However, the similarity in results suggests that the dataset characteristics were such that both oversampling strategies provided comparable benefit in improving the model's sensitivity to minority classes.

4.2 Undersampling

In the undersampling techniques, we applied resample, Edited EditedNearestNeighbours (ENN), AllKNN, combination of RandomUnderSampler + ENN and clustering based undersampling using DBSCAN + K-Means. The best performance was achieved by RandomUnderSampler + ENN with 43% accuracy and 0.82 recall for the low class. DBSCAN and K-Means achieved 56% accuracy and 0.57 recall for the low class. The results were varied and sometimes counterintuitive, making it challenging to derive a single optimal strategy. For instance, the simple resample method achieved an accuracy of 53% with a recall of 0.56, indicating a balanced compromise between correctly predicting the majority class and detecting minority class instances. In contrast, ENN prioritized cleaning noisy or borderline samples, resulting in higher overall accuracy of 68% but a significantly lower recall of 0.21, reflecting poor sensitivity to the minority class. Similarly, AllKNN, which removes samples misclassified by all nearest neighbors, yielded a moderate accuracy of 66% and a recall of 0.30, suggesting that while it reduces noise, it also inadvertently removes some informative minority samples. The combination of RandomUnderSampler + ENN achieved an extreme result, with a low accuracy of 43% but a very high recall of 0.82, demonstrating that aggressive removal of majority class instances can drastically improve detection of the minority class at the cost of overall predictive correctness. Finally, the clustering-based approach (DBSCAN + K-Means)using DBSCAN + K-Means produced an accuracy of 56% and a recall of 0.57, which is relatively balanced, highlighting that clustering can preserve the structure of the data while reducing the majority class. In a nutshell we can say that: simple random resampling treats all samples equally, ENN and AllKNN remove noisy or ambiguous majority samples based on neighborhood consistency, the combined RandomUnderSampler + ENN aggressively removes majority instances to favor recall, and clustering-based undersampling attempts to retain representative majority samples while reducing redundancy. Overall, these experiments highlight the inherent trade-off in undersampling strategies between detecting minority classes and maintaining high overall accuracy, emphasizing that the choice of method should be guided by the specific priorities of the task. For instance, in credit card fraud detection, aggressively undersampling legitimate transactions may help the model catch more fraudulent cases (higher recall) but can also cause more false alarms among genuine transactions texttt(lower overall accuracy). The choice of undersampling method should therefore depend on whether catching fraud or avoiding false alarms is more critical.

4.3 Decision Threshold

After experimenting with both increasing and decreasing the training samples, we focused on the decision tree algorithm and attempted to adjust its decision threshold and class weights in the hypertuned model. We assigned higher importance to the minority class, low class, using the weights obtained from the balanced parameter, which were

'high': 0.6659, 'low': 9.7015, 'medium': 0.7167.

So, in this way the model would penalize misclassifications of the low class more heavily during training. It was surprising to see that even experimenting with different values of weights and assigning very high weight to low class could not lead to an increase in accuracy. In an attempt to further increase the recall of the low class, we also experimented with adjusting the decision threshold to shift the cutoff point for predicting each class after training. We modified the decision threshold to extreme values such as [0.1, 0.9, 0.1], the model's accuracy showed only marginal changes in decimals and consistently struggled to surpass the baseline accuracy of 67%. This suggests that the limitation may not be due to the model parameters or algorithmic tuning alone, but rather is inherently linked to the characteristics of the data. Both methods share the goal of improving minority class detection, yet their similarity lies in the fact that they cannot generate additional information; they only reweigh or reassign predictions based on existing patterns. The lack of improvement indicates that the features may not provide sufficient discriminatory power to separate the classes effectively, or that the classes themselves are inherently overlapping in the feature space.

4.4 Imbalanced Learning Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that in an attempt to strive for both high accuracy and high recall, we carried out a series of extensive experiments. While our initial DecisionTree model achieved a reasonable accuracy of 63\%, the recall was extremely low (0.20), reflecting its bias towards the majority class. After hyperparameter tuning, the accuracy improved to 67% but recall dropped further to 0.09. This counter-intuitive outcome can be attributed to the fact that tuning optimized for accuracy rather than recall, causing the model to become even more conservative in predicting the minority class. Oversampling techniques such as SMOTE and ADASYN substantially increased recall (0.44 and 0.43, respectively) because they synthetically generated minority samples, allowing the classifier to better recognize underrepresented patterns. However, this came at the cost of accuracy (dropping to 62%), since synthetic data can blur class boundaries and make the classifier more prone to misclassifications in the majority class. Undersampling approaches such as Resample and RandomUnderSampler + ENN achieved very high recall (0.56 and 0.82, respectively), but their accuracy decreased sharply (to 53% and 43%). The reason is that by aggressively reducing the majority class, these methods forced the classifier to focus disproportionately on the minority class, which inflated recall but degraded its ability to generalize across the full distribution. To understand the trade-offs more we looked at feature importance and we found out that the feature tvEpisode emerged as the most significant contributor across multiple models, while other features such as startYear, genre1, genre2, castNumber, and totalCredits also played crucial roles. However, the relative importance of these features varied across different models, indicating that no single feature consistently dominated in all approaches. Thus we were satisfied with the results of SMOTE and ADASYN as they provided a good balance between accuracy and recall.

5 Advanced Classification

In this section, classification results are showcased for two target variables: averageRating (properly binned into 6 classes), and titleType (with 6 classes).

We then applied multiple classification models using the data as preprocessed previously (see Section ??). The first target variable is titleType, which includes six categories: movie, short, tvEpisode, tvSeries, tvSpecial, and video. The classes are not equally distributed, with tvSpecial and video being significantly underrepresented compared to the others. Entries labeled as videoGame were removed from both the training and testing sets, as they were too few to be useful for classification. The remaining categories were merged into broader groups according to the following mapping: movie and tvMovie were grouped as movie, short and tvShort were grouped as short, tvSeries and tvMiniSeries were grouped as tvSeries, while tvEpisode, tvSpecial and video were left unchanged. All feature columns were standardized using a StandardScaler. In addition, the variable canHaveEpisodes was removed prior to training, since it provides direct information about the target titleType and could therefore introduce data leakage.

5.1 Logistic Regression

For the classification of the titleType variable, the target was transformed into numerical labels using LabelEncoder and all numerical features were scaled with StandardScaler to ensure comparability across variables. Since the problem is multi-class, we chose to present the results using the One-vs-Rest (OVR) approach, which trains a binary classifier for each class. We also tested the multinomial strategy, but it was significantly slower and produced comparable results, so OVR was selected for efficiency.

To optimize the model, a hyperparameter search was performed using RandomizedSearchCV with StratifiedKFold (5 folds), ensuring that the class distribution was preserved in each fold. The solver was set to saga, and the parameters tested included the regularization term C (50 values logarithmically spaced between 10^{-3} and 10^{2}), penalty (12 and 11), and class_weight (None and balanced). The hyperparameter search was performed using f1_macro as the scoring metric to balance performance across all classes. The best parameters selected by the search were C = 2.95, penalty = 11, and class_weight = balanced.

For computational efficiency, the search was conducted on a 10% stratified sample of the dataset, which was approximately representative of the original class distribution. The final model was then refitted on the full dataset using the best parameters. Evaluation on the test set was carried out using the confusion matrix, classification report, and one-vs-rest ROC curves for each class. The main performance metrics are summarized in Table 5, and the corresponding ROC curves are shown in Figure 3.

Table 5: Classification report for titleType

Class	Precision	Recall	F1-score
tvEpisode	0.90	0.88	0.89
movie	0.92	0.65	0.76
short	0.74	0.87	0.80
tvSeries	0.50	0.35	0.41
video	0.21	0.47	0.29
tvSpecial	0.07	0.52	0.12
Accuracy		0.75	
Macro avg	0.56	0.62	0.54
Weighted avg	0.83	0.75	0.78

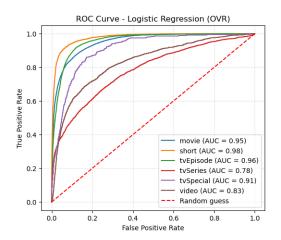


Figure 3: ROC Logistic Regression

From the results, we observe that the model achieves high performance for the movie, short, and tvEpisode classes, with F1-scores of 0.76, 0.80, and 0.89, respectively. The model performs less well on tvSeries, tvSpecial, and video, likely due to lower support in the dataset. Overall, the model reaches an accuracy of 0.75, a macro-average F1 of 0.54, and a weighted F1 of 0.78. These results highlight that while the model discriminates well among the more common classes, its performance is still limited for rarer classes. This pattern is also reflected in the ROC curves shown in Figure 3, where the model clearly separates the more frequent classes, while discrimination is more limited for the less common categories.

Furthermore, coefficient analysis highlighted the main drivers for each class. Globally, totalNomitations, numRegions, and runtimeMinutes were most influential. For individual classes, for example, movie is positively influenced by totalNomitations but negatively by genre3; short is positively influenced by totalNomitations and negatively by companiesNumber; tvEpisode is positively influenced by Europe and negatively by numRegions. Building upon the approach described for titleType, we trained a Logistic Regression model for the multi-class rating_class variable. All numerical features were scaled and, in addition, the categorical variable titleType was included as a predictor and processed via One-Hot Encoding.

Hyperparameters were optimized using again RandomizedSearchCV with StratifiedKFold (5 folds), performed on a 10% stratified sample of the data for computational efficiency. The scoring metric was f1_macro, and the search explored the same set of parameters used for titleType. The optimal configuration was found to be: C = 0.08, penalty = 12, and class_weight = balanced.

The best parameters were then used to fit the model on the full dataset, and evaluation on the test set was carried out.

The results for the rating_class target are reported in Table 6 and Figure 4. Overall, the model shows limited predictive ability (accuracy = 0.27, macro F1 = 0.25), with marked variability across classes. The extreme intervals, [1,5) and [9,10), are detected with relatively high recall (0.44 and 0.57), but their low precision yields modest F1-scores. In contrast, the central ranges, which dominate the distribution, prove more difficult to classify: [6,7) reaches only 0.13 in F1, while [7,8) performs better at 0.40.

Regarding ROC curves: discrimination is stronger for the extreme categories (AUCs of 0.75 and 0.76), whereas separability is weaker in the central intervals ([6,7): 0.60, [7,8): 0.64). This suggests that Logistic Regression tends to distinguishing the most polarized cases, while it struggles to capture subtle differences in the middle of the rating scale.

Table 6: Classification report for rating_class

Class	Precision	Recall	F1-score
[1, 5)	0.20	0.44	0.27
[5, 6)	0.26	0.32	0.29
[6, 7)	0.39	0.08	0.13
[7, 8)	0.48	0.34	0.40
[8, 9)	0.25	0.22	0.24
[9, 10)	0.09	0.57	0.16
Accuracy		0.27	
Macro avg	0.28	0.33	0.25
Weighted avg	0.35	0.27	0.27

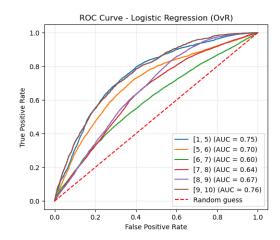


Figure 4: ROC curves for rating_class (OvR)

5.2 Support Vector Machines

We applied Support Vector Machines (SVM) to the titleType classification task. Both linear and non-linear kernels were explored in order to evaluate how decision boundary complexity influences predictive performance. The first experiment used a Linear SVM trained on the full dataset. A grid search with five-fold cross validation was carried out on the parameters $C \in \{0.01, 0.1, 1, 10, 100\}$ and $max_iter \in \{1000, 5000, 10000\}$. The optimal configuration, with C = 100 and $max_iter = 1000$, achieved a test accuracy of 0.81. While precision and recall were high for majority classes (movie, short, tvEpisode), the classifier failed on tvSeries, tvSpecial, and video, indicating that a linear decision boundary is insufficient for this problem.

Non-linear kernels were then evaluated. A grid search was first performed on a stratified 10% subset of the training set to efficiently explore a wide range of hyperparameters for each kernel, since a full search on the complete dataset would have been computationally prohibitive. All kernels were tested with C ranging from 0.01 to 100 and γ set to scale or auto. For the polynomial kernel, the degree was varied between 2 and 4 and coef0 set to 0 or 1. For the sigmoid kernel, coef0 was also explored at 0 and 1.

The best configuration for each kernel, reported in Table 7, was then retrained on the full dataset and evaluated on the test set. Both RBF and polynomial kernels reached approximately 0.90 test accuracy, substantially outperforming the linear baseline and sigmoid. The RBF kernel was selected as the reference non-linear model due to slightly more stable results and improved recall on the under-represented classes.

To address class imbalance, the RBF kernel was retrained with class_weight=balanced. This model reached a slightly lower overall accuracy of 0.84, but recall for tvSpecial and video improved, providing a more equitable classification across categories. The corresponding ROC curves (Figure 5b) show high separability for all classes, with AUC values of 0.99 for movie, short, and tvEpisode, and 0.95 for tvSeries, tvSpecial, and video, confirming that the balanced model achieves good discrimination for the minority categories too.

Then an analysis of the support vectors was conducted. In the unbalanced RBF, nearly all points of minority classes became support vectors, while in the balanced model the total number of support vectors increased but was more evenly distributed across classes, indicating a more complex but fairer decision function.

Table 7 summarizes the main results, including the parameters used for each kernel and the corresponding test performance.

Table 7: Comparison of SVM models on the IMDb classification task.

Model	Best Params (main)	Test Accuracy	Macro F1-score
Linear SVM	$C = 100, max_iter = 1000$	0.81	0.45
RBF kernel	$C = 10, \gamma = \text{scale}$	0.90	0.64
Polynomial kernel	$C = 10$, degree=3, $\gamma = \text{auto}$	0.90	0.64
Sigmoid kernel	$C = 0.1, \gamma = \text{auto}$	0.65	0.36
RBF (balanced)	$C = 10, \gamma = \text{scale}, \text{balanced}$	0.84	0.65

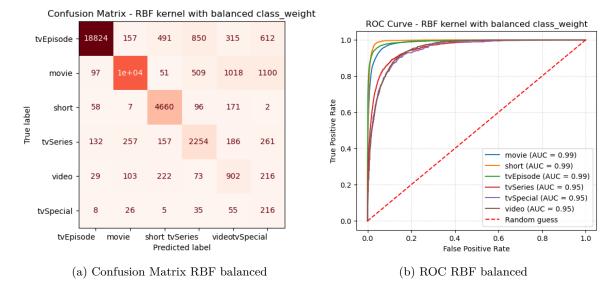


Figure 5: Confusion Matrix and ROC Curve for the SVM (kernel rbf and balanced class weight) on the titleType classification task.

Support Vector Machines were applied to the averageRating classification task using the same kernels and hyperparameter search strategies as for titleType. A Linear SVM achieved only 0.37 accuracy and a macro F1-score of 0.28, indicating that a linear decision boundary is inadequate.

Non-linear kernels were then explored. Both RBF and polynomial kernels reached similar test accuracy around 0.39, substantially outperforming the sigmoid kernel (0.28). Due to slightly more stable results and better handling of minority categories, the RBF kernel was selected as the reference model.

To address class imbalance, the RBF model was retrained with class_weight=balanced. Overall accuracy decreased slightly to 0.29, but recall improved for the minority classes, particularly the extreme bins [1,5) and [9,10). The classification report shows that the model captures a high proportion of extreme instances (recall 0.55 for [1,5) and 0.63 for [9,10)), although precision is low (0.23 and 0.10, respectively), resulting in moderate F1-scores (0.33 and 0.18). Intermediate bins are predicted with higher precision but lower recall, reflecting the difficulty of separating densely populated central categories.

ROC curves confirm this pattern: AUC is highest for the extremes ([1,5): 0.79, [9,10): 0.80) and lower for intermediate bins ([6,7): 0.61, [7,8): 0.65), indicating that the model distinguishes extreme ratings better than the mid-range values.

Overall, non-linear kernels improve performance over linear SVM, but the ordinal nature of averageRating and the strong class imbalance continue to challenge accurate prediction across all bins.

5.3 Ensemble methods

Boosting and Random Forest models were trained on the classification tasks, while being optimized via Stratified Randomized Search with 5-fold cross-validation over a predefined hyperparameter space.

Table 8 shows the best hyperparameters found for Random Forest and AdaBoost on the averageRating task.

For Random Forest, a relatively high maximum depth as well as low values for minimum samples per split and leaf indicate that the individual trees are quite complex.

For AdaBoost, the base estimator is again characterized by high complexity. The learning rate is moderate, leading to reasonably fast learning.

Random Forest			
n_estimators	97		
max_depth	19		
min_samples_split	2		
min_samples_leaf	6		
max_features	0.91		
criterion	gini		
class_weight	None		
${f AdaBoost}$			
n_estimators	67		
learning_rate	0.45		
estimatormax_depth	17		
<pre>estimatormin_samples_split</pre>	7		
estimatormin_samples_leaf	1		

Table 8: Hyperparameters found for ensemble models.

The two models use a different number of estimators, with Random Forest employing a larger ensemble. This is likely due to the fact that Random Forest builds trees independently, while AdaBoost adds weak learners sequentially, focusing on correcting previous errors.

Another interesting aspect is the distribution of feature importances. Both models assign most of the importance to the same set of features:

- ratingCount
- startYear
- runtimeMinutes
- deltaCredits

Random Forest assigns about 50% of the total importance to these features, spreading it evenly among them. AdaBoost assigns about 75%, 41 of which is attributed to ratingCount and startYear.

Table 9 summarizes the classification report for both models. Although the performances of the two models are similar, Random Forest outperforms AdaBoost in all metrics but Macro-averaged Precision. The weighted averaged metrics, here not reported, also give the edge to Random Forest.

Model	Accuracy	Macro Precision	Macro Recall	Macro F1-score
Random Forest	0.45	0.47	0.35	0.37
AdaBoost	0.43	0.49	0.33	0.35

Table 9: Performances of the models on the averageRating classification task.

Performances of both models are limited, and the results show that the different classes are not well separated. This can be observed in Random Forest's confusion matrix in figure 6a. The matrix also shows that many of the misclassifications occur within adjacent classes, which is expected given the ordinal nature of the target variable. In particular, a lot of confusion occurs between the most represented classes, [6,7), [7,8) and [8,9). This is likely due to the fact that these classes cover a wide variety of titles that perform similarly in terms of ratings. Additionally, as seen in graph 1, Many of the titles have ratings that fall close to the boundaries between these classes, making it more difficult for the model to distinguish between them.

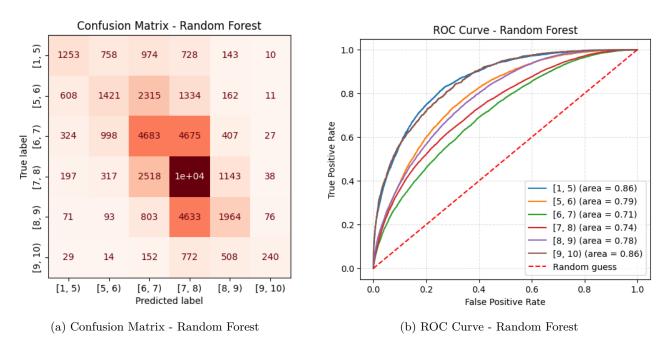


Figure 6: Confusion matrix and ROC Curve for Random Forest on the averageRating classification task.

Figure 6b shows the ROC curve for AdaBoost. AUCs are generally high, with the lowest ones being 0.70 and 0.72, although these correspond to the highest-represented classes. This suggests that the models are better at separating the extreme classes, while the more frequent intermediate ones are more difficult to distinguish.

Table 10 shows the best hyperparameter configurations found for Random Forest and AdaBoost on the titleType task.

For Random Forest, the trees are quite deep and complex, with low minimum samples per split and leaf.

For AdaBoost, the learning rate is very low, leading to slow, incremental learning. The base estimator is a decision tree with considerable depth and higher minimum samples per split and leaf than Random Forest's trees, indicating that each weak learner is slightly less complex.

Again, the two models use a very different number of estimators, with Random Forest employing a much larger ensemble. For feature importances, both models assign over half of the importance to runtimeMinutes, indicating a high dependence on this feature for classification.

Random Forest				
n_estimators	42			
max_depth	19			
min_samples_split	4			
min_samples_leaf	3			
max_features	0.74			
criterion	gini			
class_weight	None			
${f AdaBoost}$				
n_estimators	11			
learning_rate	0.03			
estimatormax_depth	14			
<pre>estimatormin_samples_split</pre>	18			
estimatormin_samples_leaf	10			

Table 10: Hyperparameter search space for ensemble models.

Table 11 summarizes the classification report for both models.

Model	Accuracy	Macro Precision	Macro Recall	Macro F1-score
Random Forest	0.92	0.84	0.71	0.75
AdaBoost	0.92	0.81	0.70	0.73

Table 11: Performances of the models on the titleType classification task.

Figures 7a shows the confusion matrix for Random Forest. Consistently good performances can be observed across the most represented classes. video and tvSpecial are the classes that cause the most problems, since they are often misclassified as the more frequent classes. The class movie attracts most of these misclassifications, likely due to similar durations of the products in these categories. Likely due to the same reason, video is also often misclassified as short.

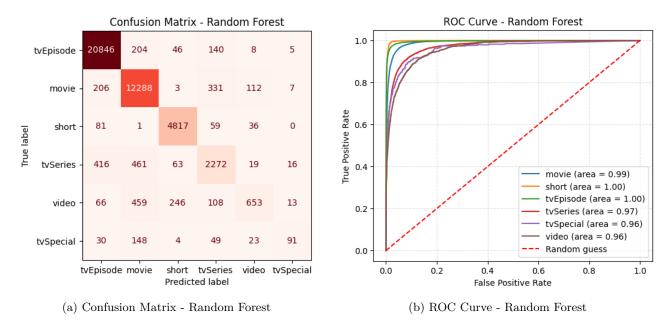


Figure 7: Confusion matrix and ROC Curve for Random Forest on the titleType classification task.

The ROC curve shows high AUCs for all classes, with the lowest ones being for the aformentioned less represented classes, both achieving 0.96. This indicates that the model is very good at maintaining a low false positive rate for these, while correctly identifying the more represented classes.

5.4 Neural Networks

For both classification tasks, a feedforward neural network was implemented.

For the averageRating task, the architecture consists of an input layer, six hidden layers with ReLU activation, forming a diamond shape (increasing and then decreasing number of neurons), a dropout layer (rate 0.2) to prevent overfitting, and an output layer with softmax activation for multi-class classification.

The model was compiled with the Adam optimizer, categorical cross-entropy loss, and accuracy as the evaluation metric. No early stopping was used, in order to observe the full training dynamics. Training was set to last for 500 epochs, with a batch size of 64 and a validation split of 20%.

Figures 8a and 8b show the training and validation loss and accuracy over epochs. The training loss shows a steady decrease, while the validation loss stops improving after around 100 to 150 epochs. A similar trend is observed in the accuracy plot, although the end of the the rise can be found after around 200 epochs. Neither graph shows particular signs of overfitting, but the stagnation of the validation metrics suggests that the model could benefit from further regularization. Experiments were made with different dropout rates and configurations, as well as different training batch sizes and learning rates, in an attempt to improve generalization, but this remained the best configuration found.

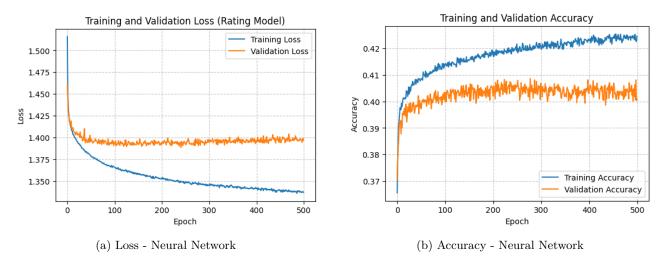


Figure 8: Training and validation loss and accuracy for the neural network on the averageRating classification task.

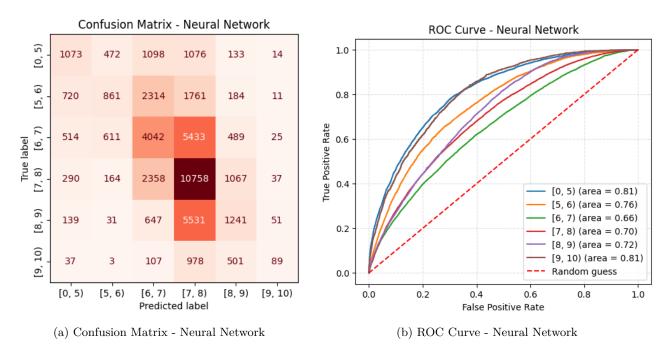


Figure 9: Confusion Matrix and ROC Curve for the Neural Network on the averageRating classification task.

	Precision	Recall	F1-score
Macro avg	0.39	0.29	0.29
Weighted avg	0.39	0.40	0.36
Accuracy			0.40

Table 12: Classification performances for the neural network on the averageRating classification task.

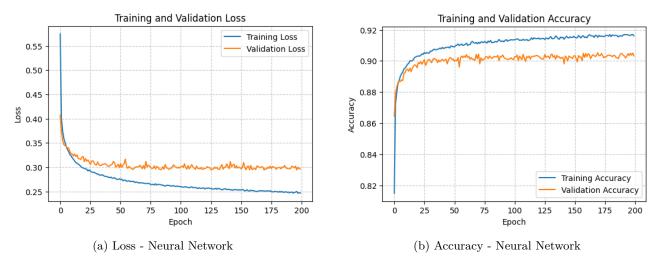


Figure 10: Training and validation loss and accuracy for the neural network on the titleType classification task.

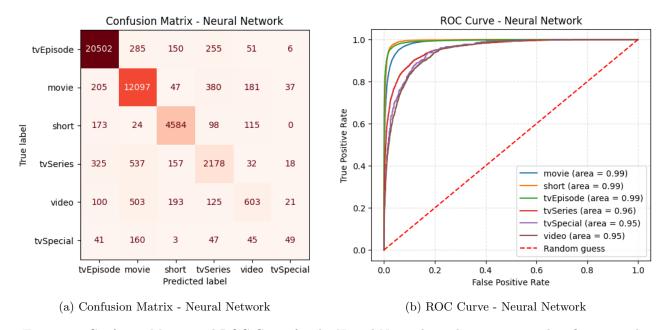


Figure 11: Confusion Matrix and ROC Curve for the Neural Network on the titleType classification task.

5.5 Gradient Boosting Machines

Next, we applied a Gradient Boosting Machine (GBM) to evaluate its ability to classify the titleType and rating_bin variable. GBM is an ensemble method that builds a series of decision trees sequentially, where each tree attempts to correct the errors of its predecessor. Unlike Random Forest, which builds trees independently and averages their predictions, GBM focuses on minimizing the loss function through gradient descent, making it highly adaptive to complex patterns in the data. The baseline accuracy to predict titleType was found out to be 0.94, while for rating_bin it was 0.40. For both tasks, we sampled the data to 10% of the training set to perform hyperparameter tuning, due to the high computational cost of training GBM models on large datasets. The hyperparameter tuning was performed using RandomizedSearchCV with 5-fold stratified cross-validation. Table 13 shows the best parameters found for the titleType and rating_bin.

${f title Type}$				
subsample	0.8			
n_estimators	500			
max_depth	6			
min_samples_split	10			
min_samples_leaf	1			
max_features	None			
<pre>learning_rate</pre>	0.1			
rating_bin				
subsample	0.6			
n_estimators	400			
max_depth	5			
min_samples_split	10			
min_samples_leaf	2			
max_features	sqrt			
learning_rate	0.05			

Table 13: Hyperparameter search space for GBM.

Table 14: Classification report for titleType

Class	Precision	Recall	F1-score
tvEpisode	0.94	0.97	0.96
movie	0.95	0.98	0.97
short	0.98	0.98	0.98
tvSeries	0.94	0.97	0.96
video	0.77	0.45	0.57
tvSpecial	0.79	0.55	0.65
Accuracy		0.96	
Macro avg	0.90	0.82	0.85
Weighted avg	0.96	0.96	0.96

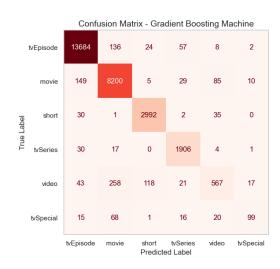


Figure 12: Confusion Gradient Boosting Machine

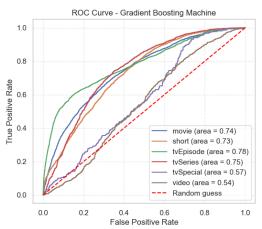


Figure 13: ROC Gradient Boosting Machine

From the table 14, we can see that GBM performs very well on the titleType task, achieving an accuracy of 0.96. The confusion matrix (Figure 12) shows that the model is able to correctly classify most of the classes, with only a few misclassifications recorded for the less represented classes video and tvSpecial. The ROC curves (Figure 13) also show high AUC values for all classes, indicating that the model is able to separate the classes well. The differences in ROC curve suggest that the model is more effective at distinguishing

structured and well-documented categories such as tvEpisode, tvSeries, and movie, To further investigate, we examined feature importance and found that runtimeMinutes, numRegions, and directorCredits were among the most influential features. Titles with longer runtimes and broader regional distribution were more likely to be classified as movies or tvSeries, while shorter or regionally limited titles tended to fall into categories like short or video. The number of director credits also served as a proxy for production quality and documentation, helping the model differentiate between professionally produced content and less formal formats. Interestingly, the Europe feature emerged as a strong predictor, possibly due to cultural or market-specific trends in title type distribution.

Table 15: Classification report for titleType

Class	Precision	Recall	F1-score	
0	0.49	0.38	0.43	
1	0.37	0.26	0.31	
2	0.41	0.39	0.40	
3	0.47	0.67	0.56	
4	0.43	0.30	0.35	
5	0.44	0.22	0.29	
Accuracy		0.44		
Macro avg	0.44	0.37	0.39	
Weighted avg	0.44	0.44	0.43	

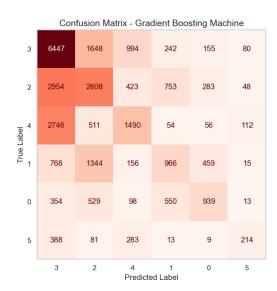


Figure 14: Confusion Matrix Gradient Boosting Machine

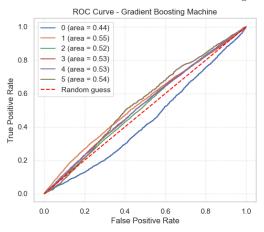


Figure 15: ROC Gradient Boosting Machine

From the table 15, it is evident that the Gradient Boosting Machine performs moderately on the rating_bin classification task, achieving an overall accuracy of 0.44. While this is less than 50%, considering that the task involves six classes, the model exceeds the baseline accuracy of 1/6, indicating that it is capturing some underlying patterns in the data. Examination of the confusion matrix (Figure 14) reveals that the model correctly classifies rating class 3 more reliably than others, while classes 2 and 4 are often misclassified as 3, and classes 0, 1, and 5 exhibit similar tendencies. A noteworthy observation is that misclassifications tend to occur between neighboring classes, whereas classes that are further apart, such as 0 and 5, are rarely confused. This suggests that the model is not producing random predictions, but rather that the proximity and overlap of class distributions present inherent challenges in distinguishing closely spaced ratings.

The ROC curves (Figure 15) reinforce this observation, showing relatively low AUC values of approximately 0.54 for all classes, which indicates limited separability among the rating bins. Compared to tasks such as title Type, the model struggles to distinguish rating_bin, likely due to the continuous and overlapping nature of ratings as opposed to the more discrete and structured categories of title types. Feature importance analysis provides additional insight: rating Count emerges as the strongest predictor, which is intuitive since titles with higher ratings are more likely to be correctly classified. Start Year appears influential, potentially reflecting

temporal trends in ratings, while runtimeMinutes indicates that longer titles tend to receive higher ratings. Other features such as totalCredits, castNumber, totalMedia, and tvEpisode also contribute significantly, with tvEpisode being more impactful than other TV formats like tvMiniseries, tvSpecial, or tvShort, possibly due to greater representation in the dataset. Overall, the results suggest that while the model captures broad patterns such as the tendency for longer or more regionally distributed titles to receive higher ratings, it struggles with fine-grained distinctions between closely spaced rating bins.

5.6 Model Comparison

5.7 Explainable AI

To better understand the predictions made by our Neural Network model, we employed LIME Local Interpretable Model-agnostic Explanations to provide local explanations for individual predictions. LIME works by perturbing the input data around a specific instance and observing how the model's predictions change. This allows us to identify which features are most influential for that particular prediction. For our analysis, we selected the first instance from the test set of both classification tasks: titleType and averageRating. We then used LIME to generate explanations for the model's predictions on these instances.

5.7.1 titleType

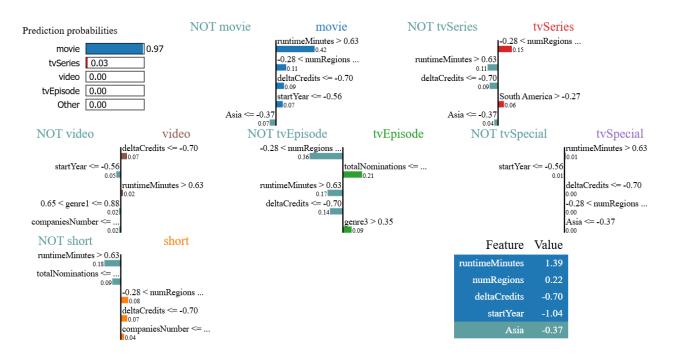


Figure 16: LIME explanation for the titleType prediction of instance 0 in the test set.

Figure 16 shows the LIME explanation for the titleType prediction of instance 0. We only show the top 5 features for clarity. The model assigns a high probability of 0.97 to the class movie, with all other classes receiving negligible scores. This strong confidence is supported by the decision rules extracted from the local surrogate model, which highlight the most influential features contributing to the classification. The top features include runtimeMinutes, numRegions, deltaCredits, and startYear, each evaluated against specific thresholds. For instance, the value of runtimeMinutes is 1.39 (standardized), which exceeds the threshold used to exclude categories such as short and tvEpisode, both of which typically have shorter durations. Similarly, the low value of numRegions (0.28) and deltaCredits (0.01) helps eliminate classes like video and tvSpecial, which often have limited regional distribution and sparse production metadata. The standardized startYear value of -1.04 suggests an older release date, which may align more closely with traditional movie formats than episodic or special content. The decision paths shown in the visualization reinforce the model's reasoning by systematically ruling out alternative classes through feature-based logic. Notably, the absence of branching toward competing categories like tvSeries or video indicates that the feature profile of this instance is highly aligned with the learned representation of a movie.

Figure 17 presents the top five features contributing to the model's prediction for a specific instance '0' in the titleType classification task. The feature runtimeMinutes > 0.63 has the highest positive contribution of

```
Explanation for the top 5 features:
Feature 'runtimeMinutes > 0.63': Contribution: 0.4208
Feature '-0.28 < numRegions <= 0.57': Contribution: 0.1110
Feature 'deltaCredits <= -0.70': Contribution: 0.0875
Feature 'startYear <= -0.56': Contribution: 0.0744
Feature 'Asia <= -0.37': Contribution: -0.0688
```

Figure 17: Contribution of top 5 features

0.4208, indicating that longer runtimes strongly support the classification decision, likely favoring categories such as *movie* or tvSeries. The condition $-0.28 < numRegions \le 0.57$ contributes 0.1110, suggesting that moderate regional distribution adds further support to the predicted class, possibly reflecting titles with limited but nontrivial geographic reach. The feature $deltaCredits \le -0.70$, with a contribution of 0.0875, implies that a low difference between director and writer credits may signal a more streamlined or unified production, which is often characteristic of traditional movie formats. The condition $startYear \le -0.56$ contributes 0.0744, indicating that older titles are more likely to belong to certain categories, perhaps due to historical production norms or metadata completeness. Interestingly, the feature $Asia \le -0.37$ has a negative contribution of -0.0688, suggesting that limited association with the Asian region reduces the likelihood of certain title types, possibly reflecting regional content trends or distribution biases. Collectively, these contributions reveal how the model leverages both structural and geographic metadata to make confident predictions, and they underscore the interpretability of the decision-making process through localized feature analysis.

5.7.2 averageRating

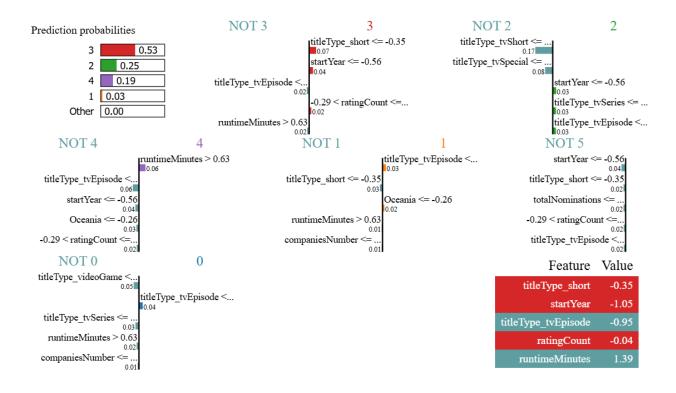


Figure 18: LIME explanation for the rating_class prediction of instance 0 in the test set.

Figure 18 presents the LIME explanation for the rating_class prediction of instance 0 in the test set, generated from a sequential neural network model. The predicted class is 0, with a confidence of 53%, followed by class 1 (25%), class 2 (13%), and class 3 (9%), indicating a moderate level of uncertainty but a clear preference toward the lowest rating bin. For this instance, titleType_short = 0.43 and titleType_tvEpisode = 0.5 suggest the content is neither a short nor a TV episode, which may steer the model away from mid-range rating bins typically associated with episodic or short-form content. The value startYear = -1.05 indicates an older release, which often correlates with lower ratings due to outdated production standards or limited

```
Explanation for the top 5 features:
Feature 'titleType_short <= -0.35': Contribution: 0.0692
Feature 'startYear <= -0.56': Contribution: 0.0384
Feature 'titleType_tvEpisode <= -0.95': Contribution: -0.0236
Feature '-0.29 < ratingCount <= 0.50': Contribution: 0.0215
Feature 'runtimeMinutes > 0.63': Contribution: -0.0192
```

Figure 19: Contribution of top 5 features

contemporary relevance. Additionally, ratingCount = -0.25 reflects low audience engagement, reinforcing the likelihood of a lower rating bin. Interestingly, runtimeMinutes = 1.39 suggests a longer duration, which might typically support higher ratings, but in this context, it appears insufficient to offset the negative influence of other features. The surrogate explanation reveals how the neural network integrates temporal, structural, and popularity-related metadata to arrive at its prediction, and it highlights the nuanced interplay between feature thresholds and class probabilities in a locally interpretable manner.

Figure 19 illustrates the top five features influencing the model's prediction for the rating_bin classification. The feature titleType_short \leq -0.35 contributes positively with a value of 0.0692, suggesting that titles categorized as "short" are more likely to fall into a specific rating bin, possibly due to their niche appeal or limited exposure. The feature startYear \leq -0.56 adds a contribution of 0.0384, potentially reflecting historical rating standards or audience expectations. Conversely, the feature titleType_tvEpisode \leq -0.95 has a negative contribution of -0.0236, implying that the absence or low presence of TV episodes reduces the likelihood of the predicted rating bin, possibly due to episodic content receiving more polarized ratings. The condition -0.29 < ratingCount \leq 0.50 contributes 0.0215, suggesting that moderate rating counts slightly support the classification, likely reflecting a balance between popularity and niche interest. Lastly, runtimeMinutes > 0.63 contributes negatively with -0.0192, indicating that longer runtimes may detract from the predicted rating bin, perhaps due to pacing issues or audience fatigue. The model appears to weigh structural metadata (e.g., title type, runtime) alongside temporal and popularity indicators to infer rating categories. Overall, The model's interpretability lies in its transparent structure, allowing us to trace how each feature contributes to the final classification. This is particularly valuable for validating predictions and identifying potential biases in the training data.

6 Advanced Regression

The chosen target variable is averageRating, which represents the average rating (on a 1–10 scale) assigned by IMDb users to each title. The exploratory data analysis showed that its distribution is approximately normal, with most titles concentrated in the range between 6 and 7.

6.1 Random Forest Regression

We applied the *Random Forest Regression* algorithm on the task. Before training the model, although not strictly necessary for tree-based models, we standardized the numerical features for consistency and transformed the categorical feature titleType using *One-Hot Encoding*.

The hyperparameters were optimized using RandomizedSearchCV with 5-fold cross-validation, exploring different values for the number of trees (100, 200, 300, 400, 500), the maximum depth (None, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30), the minimum number of samples required for a split (2, 5, 10, 15) and for a leaf (1, 2, 4, 6), and the number of features considered at each split (sqrt, log2). The best hyperparameters found are highlighted in bold. The R^2 score was used as the evaluation metric during cross-validation.

The optimized Random Forest was first evaluated on the test set (results reported in Table 16). Subsequently, the model was retrained using only the 18 most important features identified through feature importance analysis. Feature selection was guided by a cumulative importance plot, which showed that these 18 features accounted for over 90% of the total importance, effectively reducing the dimensionality from the original 28 features without a significant loss in predictive performance.

Table 16: Performance of the Random Forest Regressor on the test set (full model vs reduced features).

Model	MAE	MSE	R^2
Random Forest (All Features)	0.7536	1.0833	0.4033
Random Forest (Top 18 Features)	0.7550	1.0922	0.3984

The results, reported in Table 16, indicate that the Random Forest model achieves a mean absolute error below one point on the IMDb scale and explains around 40% of the variance in the target variable. Notably, the model trained on only the top 18 features performs almost identically to the full-feature model (R²: 0.3984 vs 0.4033), showing that predictive power is concentrated in a limited subset of variables.

Feature importance analysis further highlighted that the most influential predictors include both numerical variables, such as runtimeMinutes, startYear, ratingCount, and deltacredits, and categorical variables derived from the encoding step, such as titleType_tvEpisode, among others.

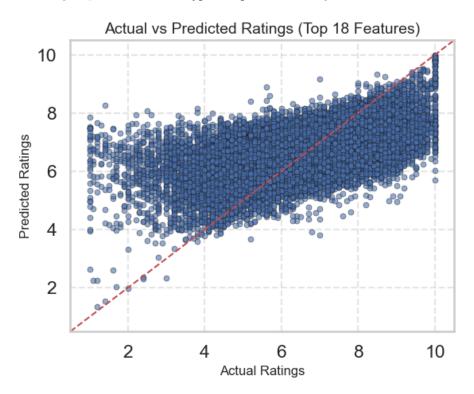


Figure 20: Actual vs Predicted averageRating for the Random Forest model trained on the top 18 features.

The scatter plot in Figure 20 shows that the predicted ratings roughly follow the trend of the actual ratings. Most predictions fall in the 6-7 range, consistent with the distribution of the target variable. While the model captures the general pattern, deviations occur, particularly at the extremes, which is consistent with the moderate R^2 of around 0.40. This indicates that the model explains a substantial portion of the variance, but there remains considerable unexplained variability.

7 Time Series Analysis

7.1 Data Understanding

The dataset consists of 1134 films, each represented by a time series of daily domestic box-office gross revenues in the United States and Canada, spanning 100 days from release day (day 0) to day 99. Each observation also includes descriptive metadata. The dataset contains 104 attributes in total: 100 numerical columns corresponding to daily gross revenues, one numerical column for the IMDb average rating, and three categorical columns identifying the film id, genre, and rating category.

Preliminary inspection revealed no missing values. For films with runs shorter than 100 days, missing entries were completed through a synthetic extension procedure, which imputes values using a noise-augmented mean of the observed revenues. This ensures uniform series length, although it introduces artificial values that may influence analyses focusing on the later days of a film's lifecycle.

Descriptive statistics provide an overview of the box-office revenue trends. On release day, the average revenue is approximately 9 million USD, with maximum values exceeding 150 million USD. Revenues decline rapidly in subsequent days, reaching mean values near 100000 USD by day 99. Variance remains high across the series, indicating substantial variability in revenue levels among films. IMDb ratings show a mean of 6.6 with a standard deviation of 0.9, ranging from 2.8 to 8.7. The rating_category variable, which will serve as the target for the classification part, is distributed across five classes: Low (10 titles), Medium Low (128), Medium (387), Medium High (232), and High (377). The distribution is highly imbalanced, with the Low category being significantly underrepresented compared to the other classes.

The presence of extreme values and synthetic extensions may necessitate normalization to ensure comparability of the time series and support more robust analyses.

- 7.2 Motifs and Anomalies Discovery
- 7.3 Clustering
- 7.4 Classification