

Exercise Sheet 1: Linear Models

The overarching topic of our exercises will be Demand Forecasting, i.e., time series predictions for different products in different locations, for example of a grocery chain.

The description of the data sets to be used for the exercises and the variables therein can be found in the file `datasets_description.txt`.

1) EDA

Familiarize yourself with the data and conduct an Explanatory Data Analysis (EDA), using summary statistics, visualizations, etc.

2) Univariate models

- a) Predict the demand (expressed by sales values) of all product-location-date combinations in `test`, using a univariate time series model of your choice (without using the actual values in `test_results`), e.g., Exponential Weighted Moving Averages (EWMA, included in python package *pandas*, hint: You can include additional columns in the group-by for the EWMA estimation.). This static train-test setup corresponds to multi-step forecasting with a mix of forecast horizons from one day to six months.
- b) Predict now with a single forecast horizon of one day, corresponding to a dynamic setup with a sliding window over the test data set. You need to use the sales information from `test_results` for this. But make sure not to use the sales information of the day to predict (future information at prediction time).

3) Evaluation of predictions

- a) Compute the mean absolute deviation (MAD) and the mean squared error (MSE) of your predictions on `test.csv` compared to the respective actual values in `test_results`. (For this, you need to merge the two data sets by means of the product-location-date keys.)
- b) Compute MAD and MSE only for product-location-date combinations with promotions as well as time windows of one week before and one week after events.
- c) Plot the time series of your predictions and actuals (each summed up over the different product-location combinations) for the time period of `test`.
- d) Repeat this for each location (sums only running over products) and product-group level 3 (sums running over locations and products in respective product group).

4) Multivariate models

- a) Repeat the predictions and evaluations from above with a linear ML model (i.e., training all product-location time series together in a multivariate way), e.g., linear regression from the python package *scikit-learn*. This requires an i.i.d. (identical and independent distributed random variables) assumption over the different time steps (and products and locations). You need a one-hot encoding for the categorical variables to include several products and locations in one model. You can choose one of the two setups in exercise 2) a and b. Repeat the evaluations with this model.
- b) Compare the importance of the different features by means of the learned model parameters.
- c) Use predictions of your univariate method from exercise 2 (also applied on `train.csv`) as additional features (or replacing one-hot encoded product and location features) for your linear regression model. Again, you can choose one of the two setups in exercise 2) a and b (or a mix of the two).
- d) Turn your linear regression into a multiplicative model by using an appropriate link function, like in the Poisson regression algorithm from *scikit-learn*.