

Traditional Algorithms vs ML

Understanding Machine Learning

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Contents of the Course

Goals

- understanding of foundational ML concepts and commonalities between different methods (more important than algorithmic details)
- ability to properly use ML for scientific or business problems
→ exercise theme: Demand Forecasting (important and challenging business application)

Schedule of Lectures and Exercises

lecture 1: traditional algorithms vs ML	Nov 24
lecture 2: common core of statistical learning	Dec 1
lecture 3: linear models as building blocks of non-linear models	Dec 8
lecture 4: generalization	Dec 15
Christmas edition : Blue Yonder	Dec 22
lecture 5: shallow vs deep learning	Jan 12
lecture 6: transformers	Jan 19
lecture 7: generative vs discriminative models	Jan 26
lecture 8: causality	Feb 2
lecture 9: reinforcement learning	Feb 9
discussion of exercises: demand forecasting (issued in lectures 2, 4, 5, 7)	Feb 17

AI/ML Overview

Main Areas of Artificial Intelligence

- **computer vision**
(spatial structures, state-of-the-art: Convolutional Neural Networks)
- **natural language processing**
(sequential structures, state-of-the-art: transformers)
- **automated decision making, robotics**
(reinforcement learning)

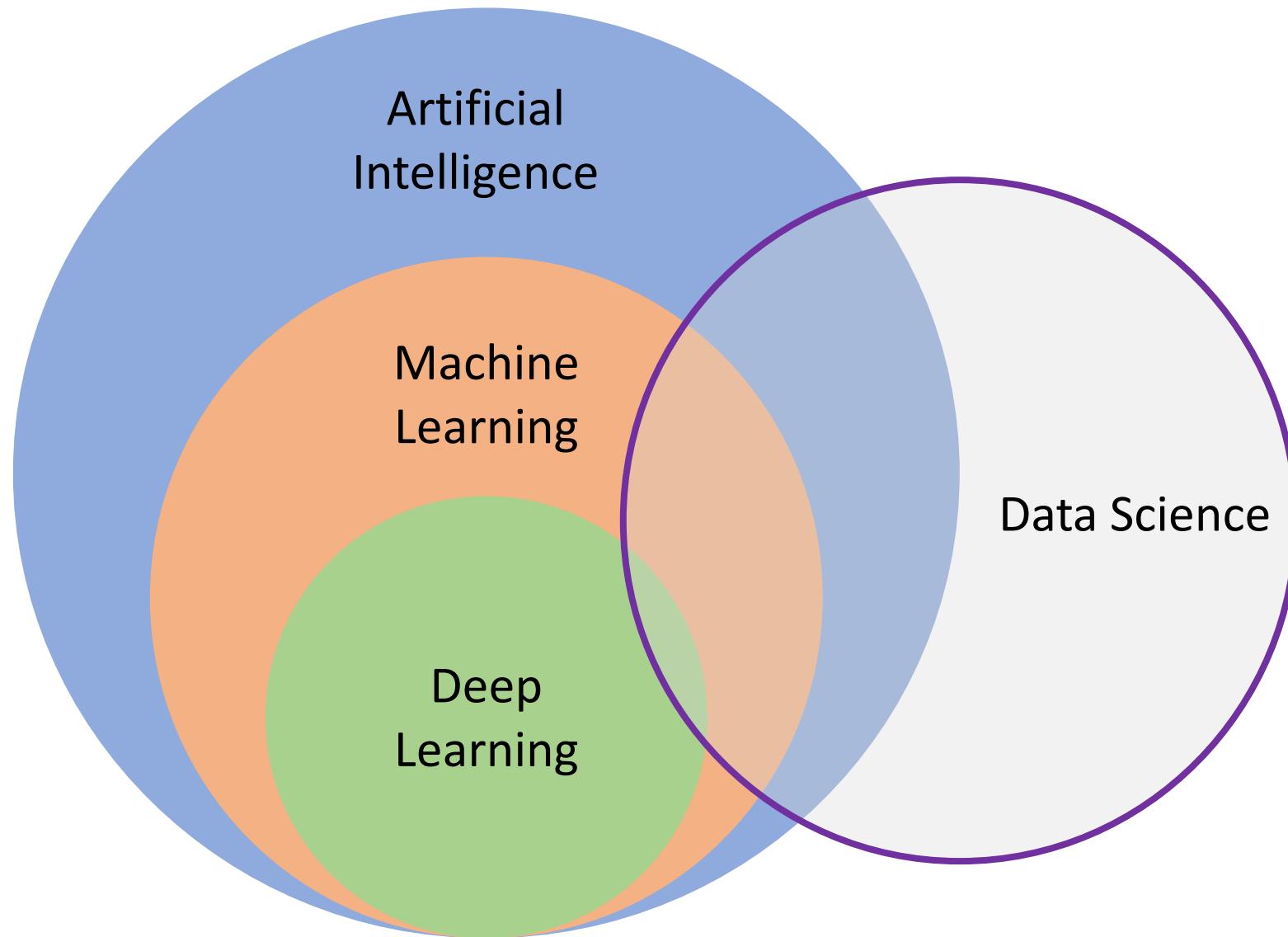


from wikipedia

All of these are enabled by one key ingredient:

- *learning from experience (Machine Learning)*
- knowledge representation, automated reasoning

Buzz Words ...



Deep Learning:
special kind of ML
algorithms using (deep)
neural networks

Data Science:
extract knowledge from
data (by means of ML,
among other things)

Traditional Algorithms and GOFAI

traditional algorithms:

explicit (handcrafted) instructions for each situation



from wikipedia

symbolic AI (aka GOFAI):

use knowledge by means of symbols (as representations), logic, search
(e.g., expert systems like Deep Blue)

Public perception is changing over time: A modern chess program, nowadays disparaged as brute computing, would have been considered intelligent in the 50s.

ML: Learning from Experience/Data

mainly exploiting statistical dependencies with the aim of
generalization to new (e.g., future) data

ML algorithm + data = explicit algorithm

→ reduction of complexity and much better generalizability compared
to handcrafted algorithms

analogy: Humans do not hit the ground running, but have learning
capabilities. → develop ML algorithm and let it learn from data

Hot Debate: Connectionism vs Symbolic AI

connectionists:

learn from (big) data without prior knowledge

symbolists:

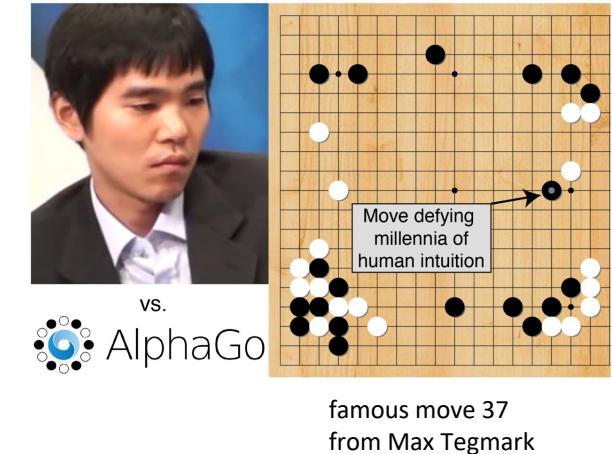
use knowledge with only modest input data

(crude) analogy: learning and evolution

philosophical: empiricist and rationalist schools of mind

hybrid approaches often most successful:

- e.g., AlphaGo with Deep Reinforcement Learning and Monte Carlo Tree Search
- feature engineering for ML models also kind of symbolic knowledge representation



Supercharging the Scientific Method

use ML and data to replace or enhance explicit methods relying on detailed domain knowledge ([Software 2.0](#))

- overcome our evolutionary limitations in math with clever learning algorithms and collecting data
- immediate impact on many aspects of industry, business, science

rather than the (still philosophical) long-term quest for human-level AI
(aka strong AI, AGI)

When to apply ML?

complexity

- decisions under uncertainty, many influencing factors
- e.g., demand forecasting, DNA sequencing
- difficult for humans

automation

- e.g., face and speech recognition, autonomous driving
- goal to reach human-level performance

... and of course you need data to learn from

Learning Paradigms

Supervised Learning

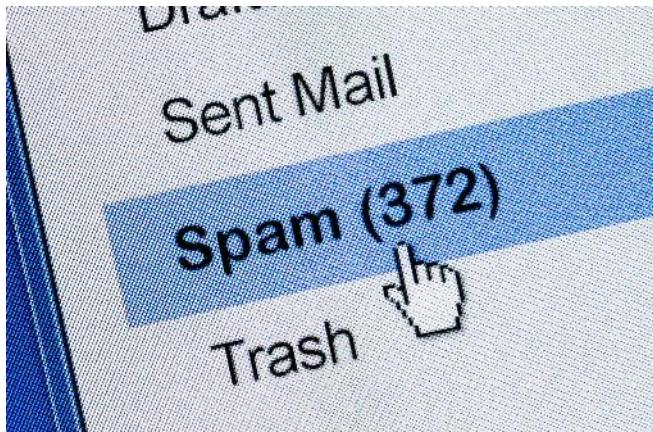
learning by teacher → usually rather narrow tasks

Target Quantity

- **known in training:** labeled samples or observations from past
- to be for unknown cases (e.g., future values)

Features

- input information that is
- correlated to target quantity
 - known at prediction time



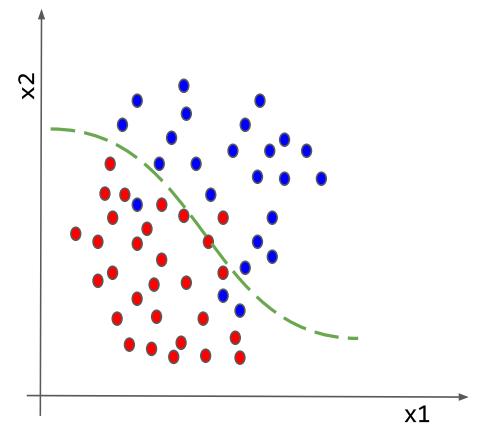
Example: Spam Filtering

Classify emails as spam or no spam

use accordingly **labeled emails as training set**

use information like **occurrence of specific words or email length as features**

features x_1 and x_2 spam, no spam

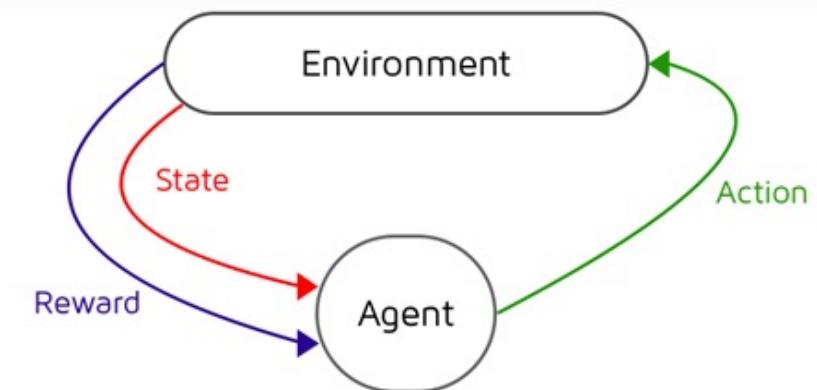


Reinforcement Learning

learning by trial-and-error

goal-based approach → more generic than supervised learning (but sparse reward signals)

- receiving feedback from the environment
- no supervision
- sequential decision making (delayed rewards)
- exploration and exploitation



Unsupervised Learning

learning by observation

no target information → kind of “vague” pattern recognition (but plenty of data)

self-supervised:

- input-output mapping like supervised learning
- but generating labels itself from input information
- learning of semantic feature representations
- e.g., word2vec, BERT, GPT

How Much Information is the Machine Given during Learning?

- ▶ “Pure” Reinforcement Learning (**cherry**)
The machine predicts a scalar reward given once in a while.

- ▶ **A few bits for some samples**

- ▶ **Supervised Learning (icing)**

- The machine predicts a category or a few numbers for each input
- Predicting human-supplied data
- 10→10,000 bits per sample

- ▶ **Self-Supervised Learning (cake génoise)**

- The machine predicts any part of its input for any observed part.
- Predicts future frames in videos
- Millions of bits per sample**



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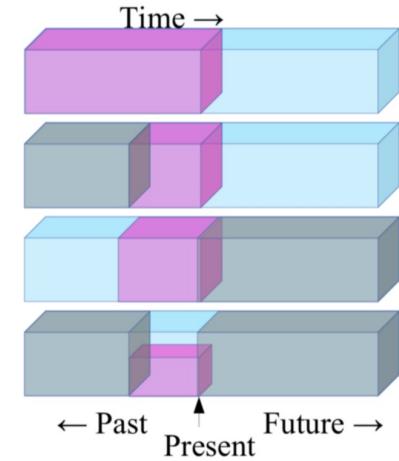
1.1: Deep Learning Hardware: Past, Present, & Future

Y. LeCun

59

Self-Supervised Learning

- ▶ Predict any part of the input from any other part.
- ▶ Predict the **future** from the **past**.
- ▶ Predict the **future** from the **recent past**.
- ▶ Predict the **past** from the **present**.
- ▶ Predict the **top** from the **bottom**.
- ▶ Predict the **occluded** from the **visible**
- ▶ **Pretend there is a part of the input you don't know and predict that.**



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1.1: Deep Learning Hardware: Past, Present, & Future

Y. LeCun

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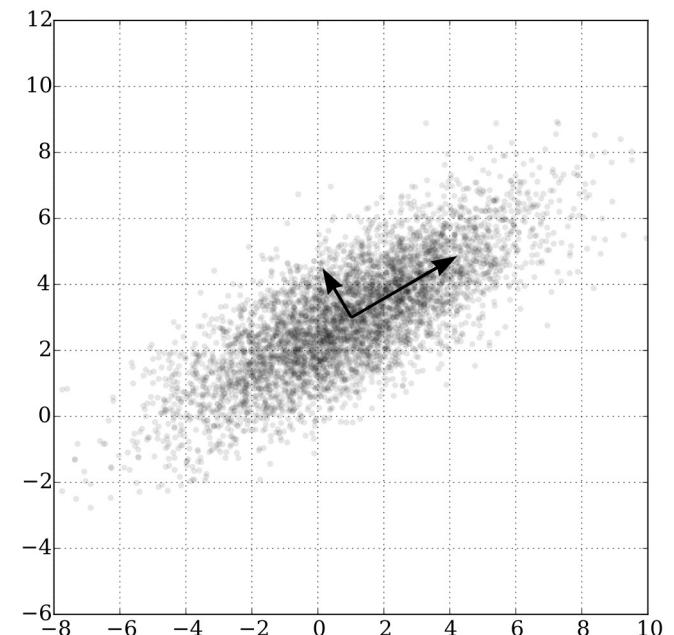
Example for Unsupervised Learning

dimensionality reduction by principal component analysis (PCA)

using only first few principal components (eigenvectors of data's covariance matrix)

intuition: fitting p -dimensional ellipsoid to data

- axes representing principal components
 - large axis → high variance, small axis → low variance
 - successively choose directions of maximum variance
- account for as much variability (uniqueness) of data set as possible



from wikipedia

often used as lower-dimensional features in other (supervised) methods

Fitting / Statistical Learning

Notation

- random variable: X
- vector of p random variables X_j (features): \boldsymbol{X}
- observation of random variable X : x
- matrix of n observations of p features x_{ij} : \mathbf{X}
- vector of observations: \boldsymbol{x}
 - vector of n observations x_i : \boldsymbol{x}
 - vector of observation of p features x_j : \boldsymbol{x}
- column vector: \boldsymbol{x}
- row vector: \boldsymbol{x}^T
- parameter: β
- vector of parameters β_k : $\boldsymbol{\beta}$
- probability that X takes on value x_0 : $P(X = x_0)$
- probability distribution: $p(x) = P(X = x)$

design matrix



Supervised Learning Scenario

map inputs to output: $y = f(x)$ (estimated: $\hat{f}(x)$)
random variables Y and $X = (X_1, X_2, \dots, X_p)$

classification

- categorical target (e.g., image of cat or not $\rightarrow y = 0$ or $y = 1$)
- predict probability to belong to specific class

regression

- real-valued target
- $Y \in [0, \infty)$ (e.g., demand forecasting) or $Y \in (-\infty, \infty)$



... ML ...

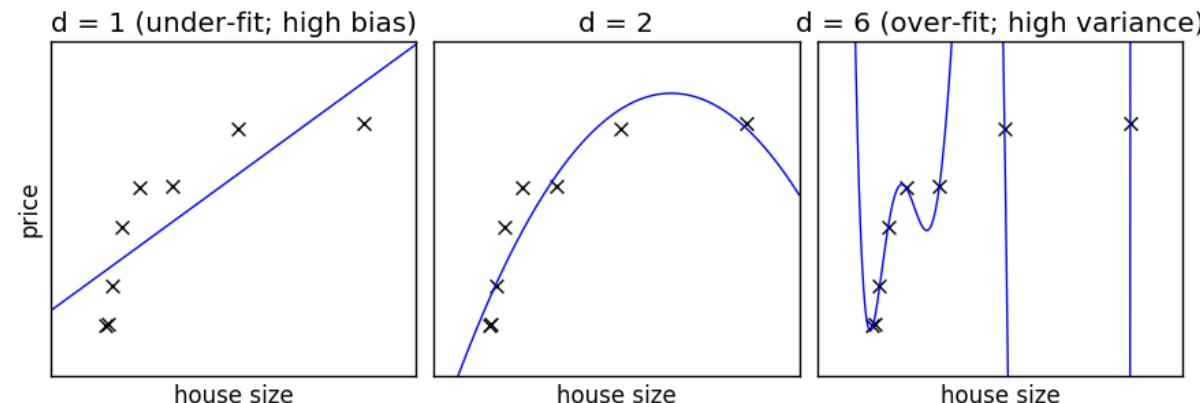


ML domain:
no deterministic dependencies
between input and output

Curve Fitting / Parameter Estimation

- fit train data set of (y_i, x_i) pairs
→ minimization of cost function
 - e.g., least squares method, maximum likelihood estimation
 - usually many dimensions (features X_j)

d: degree of fitted polynomial → number of parameters



from scikit-learn documentation

apply learned statistical dependencies from training to new test data set

different (y_i, x_i) pairs considered as random samples of underlying data-generating process (i.i.d. assumption), for both train and test data sets

Generalization

core of ML:

empirical risk minimization (training error) as proxy for minimizing unknown population risk (test error, aka generalization error or out-of-sample error)

generalization gap: difference between test and training error

- **interpolation**: to unencountered samples from training environment
- **extrapolation**: to testing conditions differing from training environment

curse of dimensionality: “*learning in high dimensions always amounts to extrapolation*”

Generalized Linear Models

Linear Regression

$$y_i = \alpha + \sum_{j=1}^p \beta_j x_{ij} + \varepsilon_i \quad (\text{model})$$

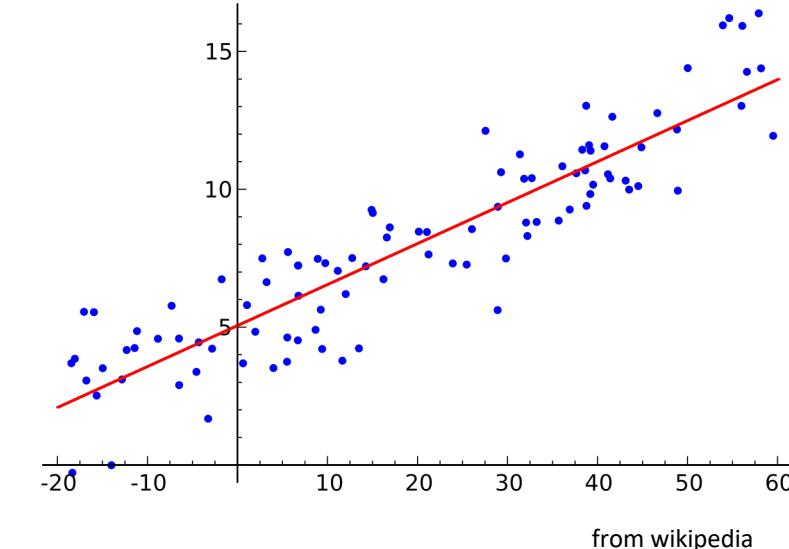
y : dependent variable / target

x : p independent variables / features

α, β : $p + 1$ parameters

ε : error term / statistical noise

} vector (y) or matrix (X) of given data
→ to be fitted
reflects assumed data distribution (here: Gaussian with same variance σ^2 for all samples)



from wikipedia

- X and Y jointly distributed random variables
- $\hat{f}(x)$: predict, e.g., conditional mean of conditional density function $p(y|x)$

depending on used loss function
(conditional mean for squared loss of least squares method)

Linear Regression

fit:

$$y_i = \hat{\alpha} + \sum_{j=1}^p \hat{\beta}_j x_{ij} + \varepsilon_i$$

predict:

$$\hat{y}_i = E[Y|X = \mathbf{x}_i] = \hat{f}(\mathbf{x}_i) = \hat{\alpha} + \sum_{j=1}^p \hat{\beta}_j x_{ij}$$

to be estimated:

- $\hat{\alpha}, \hat{\beta}$

$$\rightarrow \hat{\sigma}^2 = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (y_i - \hat{f}(\mathbf{x}_i))^2$$

(approximating assumed true α, β, σ)

$$p(y|\mathbf{x}_i) = \mathcal{N}(y; \hat{y}_i, \hat{\sigma}^2)$$

Multiplicative Model

- count data: $Y \in [0, \infty)$
- Y follows Poisson (or negative binomial / Poisson-gamma) distribution

log-linear model (Gaussian errors in fit, Poisson with mean \hat{y}_i predicted):

$$\underbrace{\log(E[Y|X = x_i])}_{\hat{y}_i} = \hat{\alpha} + \sum_{j=1}^p \hat{\beta}_j x_{ij}$$

single parameter

- further advantage: usually multiplicative effects for count data, i.e., proportional (small effects for small counts, large effects for large counts)

Scheme of Generalized Linear Models

$$g(E[Y|X = \mathbf{x}_i]) = \hat{\alpha} + \sum_{j=1}^p \hat{\beta}_j x_{ij}$$

link function g :

- linking range of Y to linear predictor
- canonical forms for different Y distributions (e.g., log for Poisson, identity for Gaussian
→ linear regression)

Y following probability distribution from exponential family (e.g., Poisson or Gaussian)

Classification: Logistic Regression

- predict probability p_i for $y = 1$ respectively $y = 0$ for each sample
- link function: logit (log-odds)
- Y following Bernoulli distribution

$$\text{logit}(E[Y|X = \mathbf{x}_i]) = \ln\left(\frac{p_i}{1-p_i}\right) = \hat{\alpha} + \sum_{j=1}^p \hat{\beta}_j x_{ij}$$

Toward Non-Linear Models

Generalized Additive Models

blending of Generalized Linear Models and additive models

$$g(E[Y|X = \mathbf{x}_i]) = \hat{\alpha} + \sum_{j=1}^p \hat{h}_j(x_{ij})$$

smooth functions



extension: add interaction terms between different features, e.g., X_3 and X_4

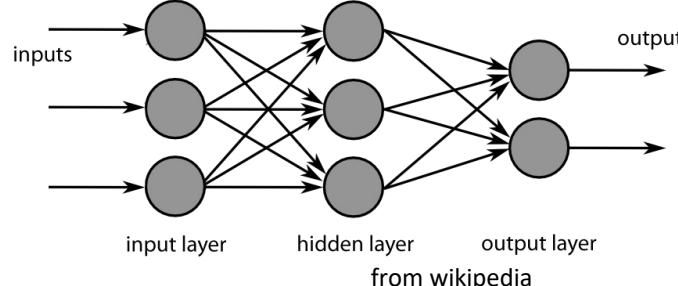
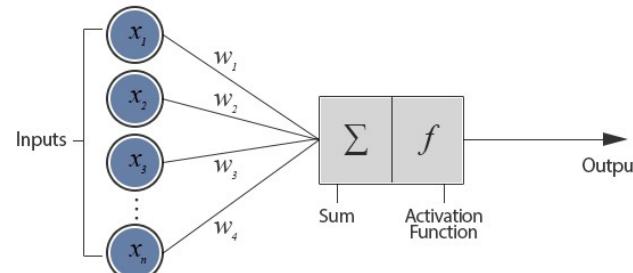
- potentially non-parametric form
- describe non-linear effects
- estimated, e.g., via backfitting algorithm

Algorithmic Families and Linear Building Blocks

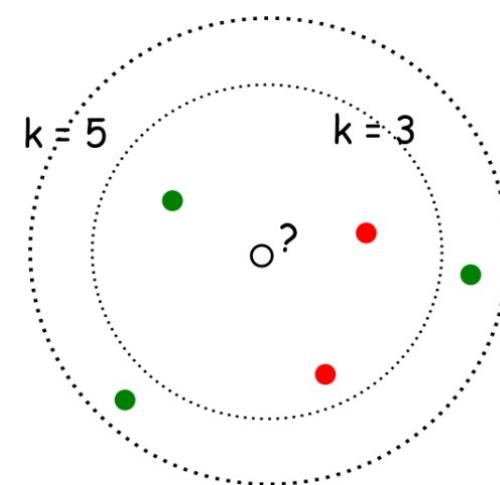
linear (parametric) models

- linear regression
- Generalized Linear Models
- Generalized Additive Models

neural networks: non-linear just by means of activation functions



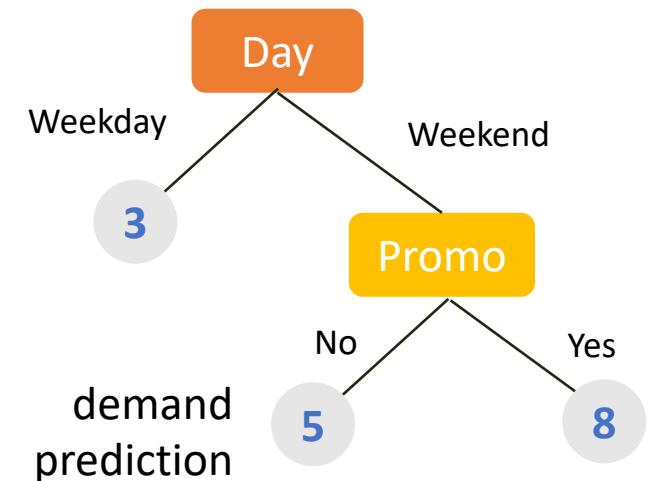
nearest neighbors (local methods, instance-based learning) – non-parametric models



with $k = 3$, ●
with $k = 5$, ●

kernel/support-vector machines: linear model (maximum-margin hyperplane) with kernel trick

decision trees



often used in ensemble methods

- bagging: random forests
- boosting: gradient boosting

At its heart, all the diverse statistical learning methods are reflections of the **same underlying concept**, and just differ in their applicability for different use cases.

(need to find method with best inductive bias for the task at hand → generalization capability)

ML Workflow

Modeling

extract features

- help the ML algorithm to better understand the data
- impose assumptions hard to discover in the raw data

choose ML algorithm

- From open-source libraries like scikit-learn or pytorch, you rarely write an own
- Many different algorithms available, differently suited for given task

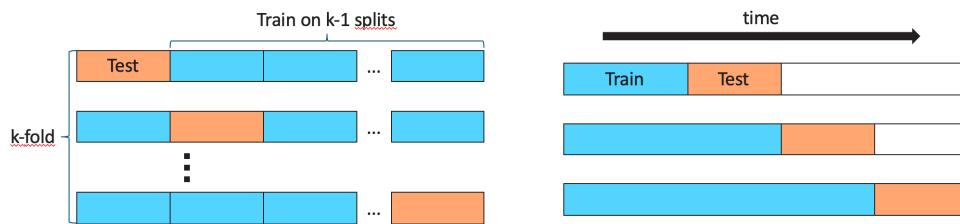
execute hyperparameter tuning

Variety of different forms,
all model settings not
automatically adjusted by
the machine

Evaluation

test structure

cross-validation



decide on acceptance of model changes by means of A/B tests: improved model vs baseline (current best)

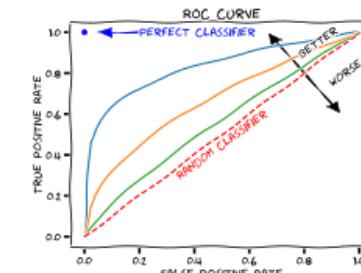
measure accuracy of predictions

regression

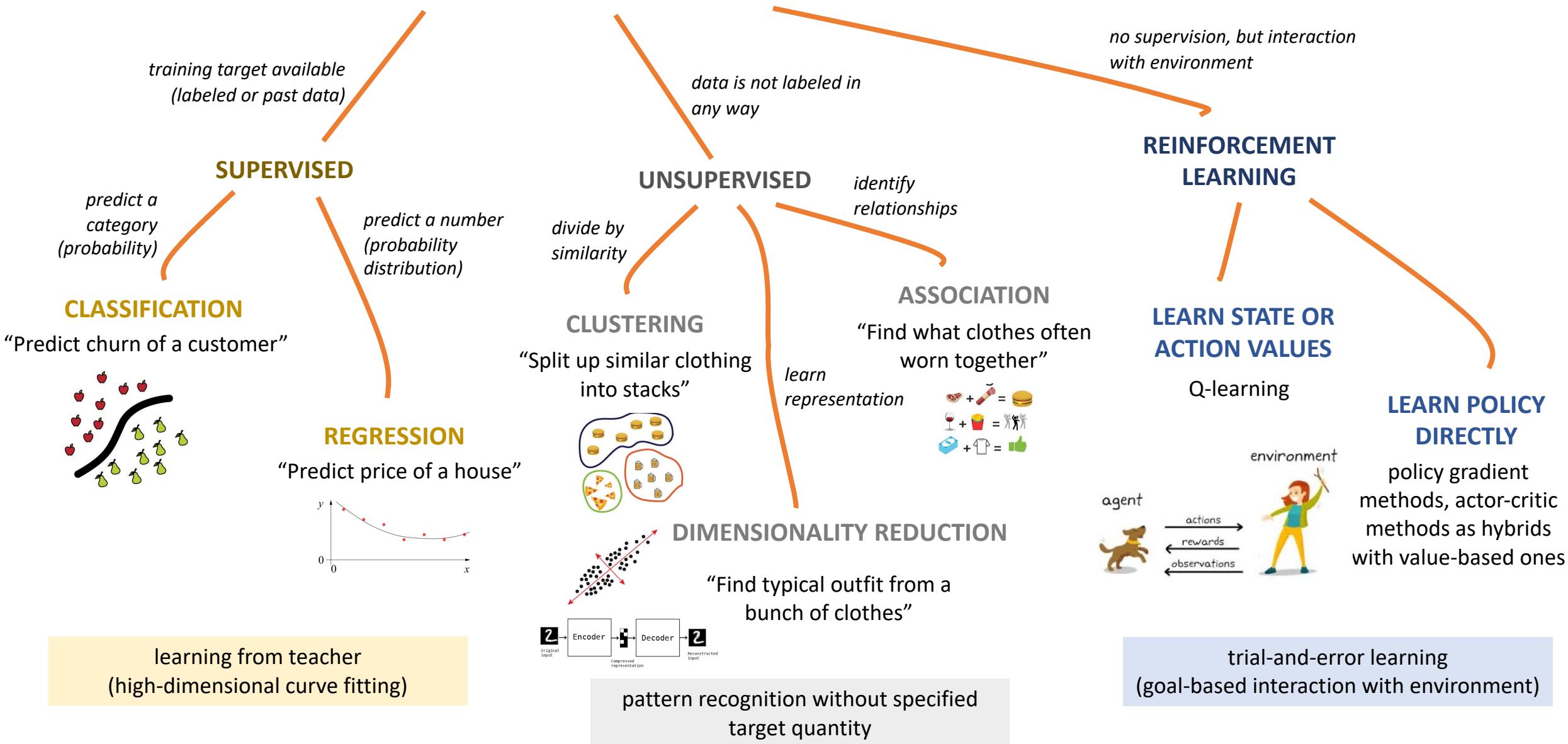
- point estimate: absolute (MAD, MSE, ...) or relative (MAPE, ...) metrics
- full probability distribution: tricky ;)

classification

ROC curve (true and false positive rates)

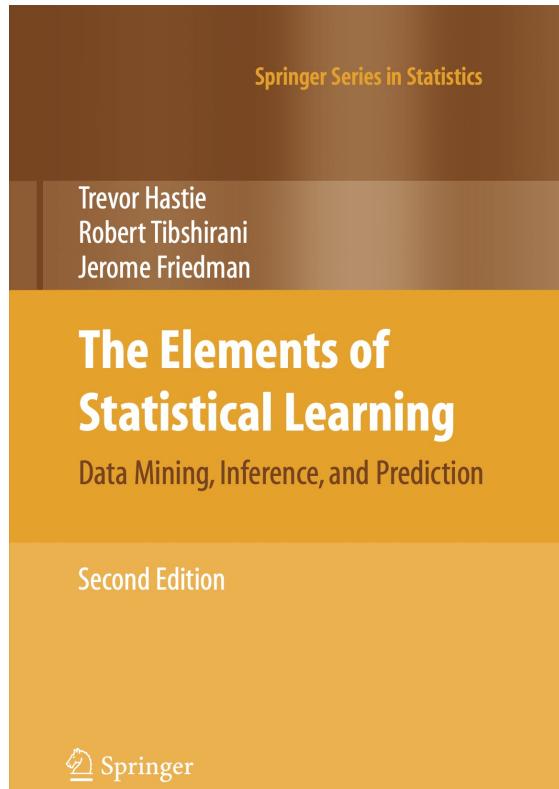


MACHINE LEARNING



Literature

books on the foundations of ML (relevant for the whole course):



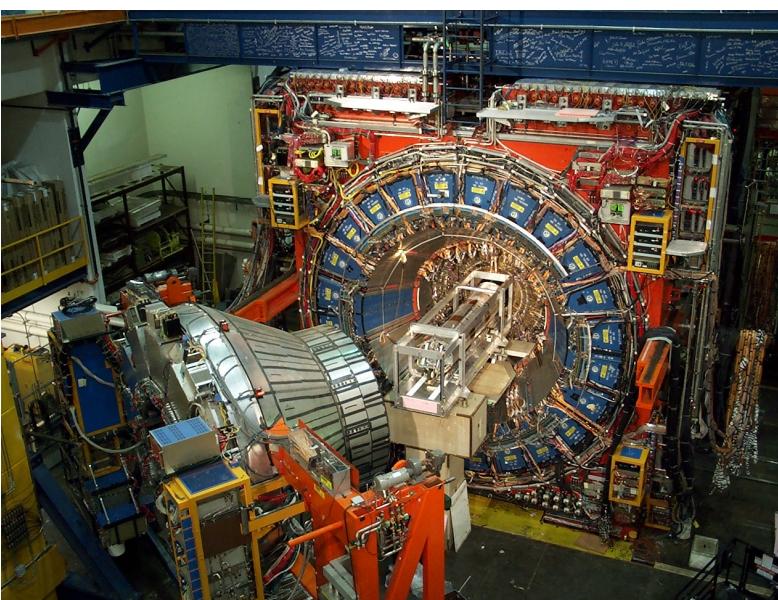
My Way into ML

classification of decay signatures in particle colliders

Tevatron accelerator at Fermilab



CDF detector at Tevatron



<https://arxiv.org/abs/1105.5995>
<https://arxiv.org/abs/1207.0825>

charmed baryon signals filtered out of background

