Welford's Online Algorithm for the computation of the Running Variance

To compute the absolute mean and variance for every layer weights' gradients updated per epoch, we use Welford's online algorithm (Welford, 1962).

Computing the Running Absolute Mean of the Weights' Gradient Per Layer

The n-th running absolute mean for the i-th layer gradients mean weights' is

$$\bar{x}_{n,i} = \bar{x}_{n-1,i} + \frac{x_{n,i} - \bar{x}_{n-1,i}}{n}$$

where $\bar{x}_{n-1,i}$ is the previous running absolute mean for the layer i, n is the batch number (i.e. how many times we have updated the variance) and $x_{n,i}$ is the absolute mean of the weights' gradients of the layer i. Also, when $n = 1$, $\bar{x}_{n-1,i} = 0$.

Computing the Running Variance of the Weights Gradient Per Layer

The n-th running variance for the i-th layer weights' gradients absolute mean is

$$s^2_{n,i} = \frac{M_{2,n,i}}{n-1}$$

where

$$M_{2,n,i} = M_{2,n-1,i} + (x_{n,i} - \bar{x}_{n-1,i}) \times (x_{n,i} - \bar{x}_{n,i})$$

Also, when $n = 1$, $M_{2,n,i} = 0$ and $s^2_{n,i} = 0$.

Example of Computation

Having the following two layers gradients weights' update

$$\text{layer}_1 = [0.24, 0.00, -0.15]$$
$$\text{layer}_2 = [-0.16, 0.25, 0.00]$$

Thus, if $n = 1$

$$\bar{x}_{1,1} = 0 + \frac{0.13 - 0}{1} = 0.13$$
$$\bar{x}_{1,2} = 0 + \frac{0.13\bar{6} - 0}{1} = 0.13\bar{6}$$
$$s^2_{1,1} = 0$$
$$s^2_{1,2} = 0$$

For $n = 2$, assuming the updated weights' gradients vectors are

$$\text{layer}_1 = [0.24, 0.00, -0.15] \times 2 = [0.48, 0.00, -0.30]$$
$$\text{layer}_2 = [-0.16, 0.25, 0.00] \times 2 = [-0.32, 0.50, 0.00]$$

the running means and variances are

$$\bar{x}_{2,1} = 0.13 + \frac{0.26 - 0.13}{2} = 0.195$$
$$\bar{x}_{2,2} = 0.13\bar{6} + \frac{0.27\bar{3} - 0.13\bar{6}}{2} = 0.205$$
$$s^2_{2,1} = \frac{0 + (0.26 - 0.13) \times (0.26 - 0.195)}{2 - 1} = 0.00845$$
$$s^2_{2,2} = \frac{0 + (0.27\bar{3} - 0.13\bar{6}) \times (0.27\bar{3} - 0.205)}{2 - 1} = 0.00933889$$

For $n = 3$, assuming the updated weights' gradients vectors are

$$\text{layer}_1 = [0.24, 0.00, -0.15] \times 3 = [0.72, 0.00, -0.45]$$
$$\text{layer}_2 = [-0.16, 0.25, 0.00] \times 3 = [-0.48, 0.75, 0.00]$$

the running means and variances are

$$\bar{x}_{3,1} = 0.195 + \frac{0.39 - 0.195}{3} = 0.26$$
$$\bar{x}_{3,2} = 0.205 + \frac{0.41 - 0.205}{3} = 0.27\bar{3}$$
$$s^2_{3,1} = \frac{0.00845 + (0.39 - 0.195) \times (0.39 - 0.26)}{3 - 1} = 0.0169$$
$$s^2_{3,2} = \frac{0.00933889 + (0.41 - 0.205) \times (0.41 - 0.27\bar{3})}{3 - 1} = 0.018677778$$

Bibliographie

B. P. Welford. Note on a method for calculating corrected sums of squares and products. *Technometrics*, 4(3) :419–420, 1962. doi : 10.1080/00401706.1962.10490022. URL https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00401706.1962.10490022.