Training and testing on different distributions

Example: Cat vs Non-cat

In this example, we want to create a mobile application that will classify and recognize pictures of cats taken and uploaded by users.

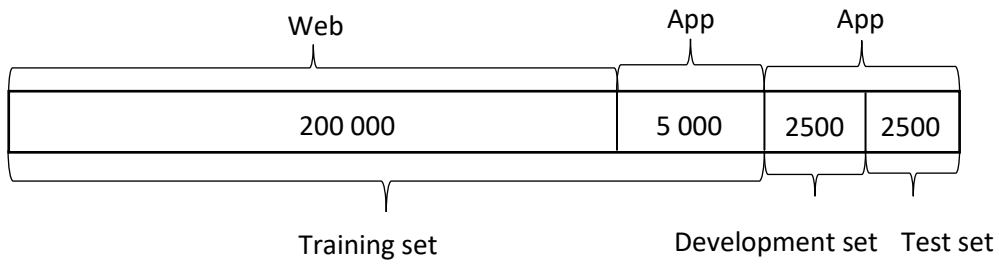
There are two sources of data used to develop the mobile app. The first data distribution is small, 10 000 pictures uploaded from the mobile application. Since they are from amateur users, the pictures are not professionally shot, not well framed and blurrier. The second source is from the web, you downloaded 200 000 pictures where cat's pictures are professionally framed and in high resolution.

The problem is that you have a different distribution:

1- small data set from pictures uploaded by users. This distribution is important for the mobile app.
2- bigger data set from the web.

The guideline used is that you have to choose a development set and test set to reflect data you expect to get in the future and consider important to do well.

The data is split as follow:



The advantage of this way of splitting up is that the target is well defined.

The disadvantage is that the training distribution is different from the development and test set distributions. However, this way of splitting the data has a better performance in long term.