Yelp Recommendation System Based on Collaborative Filtering

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Abstract. Based on Yelp Data Challenge dataset, we aim to develop a predictive personalized recommendation system on users review star rating for restaurants, applying collaborative filtering algorithms. In particular, we implement and compare the performances of four algorithms including baseline, User-based and Item-based collaborative filtering and Singular Vaule Deccomposition (SVD). We evaluate our results by comparing our predicted rating to the actual rating using Root Mean Squared Error(RMSE) and Mean Absolute Error(MAE) metrics.

Keywords: Recommendation System, Collaborative filtering, Singular Vaule Deccomposition (SVD), Yelp Data Challenge

1 Introduction

With rapid development of advanced technology, people nowadays can achieve the things that they desired faster and more effectively than ever. While, at the same time, the requirements for accurate, personalized and convenient services are increasing. Fortunately, Yelp contributes to providing reasonable recommendations of various businesses to users, e.g., restaurants.

Yelp collected review dataset which records how well each user rates for limited amount of restaurants. Based on these review history, it suggests favored restaurants to users. The problem is that Yelp seems to offer similar recommendations that are popular for various users. In fact, people may have diverse preferences to food. For instance, some users may prefer Asian food, while others may favor Mexican food. In fact, yelp did not consider these factors too much. Therefore, it seems still have some room to improve the recommendation system in the personalization aspect.

Collaborative filtering, a method making predictions based on a large dataset used by some recommendation system like Yelp, Amazon, and Netflix. It automatically predict about the interests of a user by collecting preference or tastes information from other users. Furthermore, there are numerous collarborative filtering methods, such as baseline, K- nearest neighbor, and matrix decomposition. This paper aims to compare how accurate each methods applying on Yelp Data Challenge through using Root metric Mean Squared Error(RMSE) and Mean Aboslute Error(MAE).

2 Literature Review

There are generaly three types of recommendation systems: content-based filtering, collaborative filtering and hybrid approaches. Content-based recommendation systems work with users profile and items characteristics. The feature used to bulding profiles are often a set of keywords. For example, a music recommendation system[1] implemented with content-based filtering, each song is assigned an attribute manually. If a users profile shows interests in songs with particular atrtibutes, similar songs will be recommended to the user. The limitations of these systems is that it always recommends similar items to user that he has already purchased and its difficult to recommend items for new users.

Collaborative filtering try to predict the utility of items for a particular user based on the items previously rated by other users with similar tastes and preferences. In[2] the author builds a recommendation system for a retail store using three kinds of collaborative filtering algorithms - memory based approach, matrix factorization and bigram matrix method. Collaborative filtering also has limitations that it is difficult to recommend items for new users, to recommend items which have not been rated before, and to recommend when rating information is insufficient.

Hybrid approach combines multiple techniques to overcome the limitations of individual systems. A restaurant recommendation system for yelp user[3] adopts hybrid approach by extracting collaborative and content-based features to identify customer and restaurant profiles. A hybrid cascade of K-nearest neighbor clustering, weighted bi-partite graph projection, and several other learning algorithms are proposed.

3 Data

We collect our data from Yelp recommendation Kaggle competition[4],This dataset contains 11,537 businesses, 8282 check-in sets, 43873 users, and 229907 reviews. We target Restaurant in the city of Phoenix as it is more reasonable to recommend restaurants for users in the same city.

3.1 Data Processing

The original data file is in json format. We firstly parse the raw data of imformation from users, businesses and reviews, respectively and merge them into one dataframe. Then we extract the records with features of Restaurants and Phoenix for futher analysis. After this approach, we have 17145 users, 1454 business and 52749 reviews.

Because many users only review a few restaurants, our dataset yields a sparsity of 99.79% which can be visualized from figure 1. To solve this problem, we create a smaller dataset which only consider restaurants reviewed by more than 50 users.

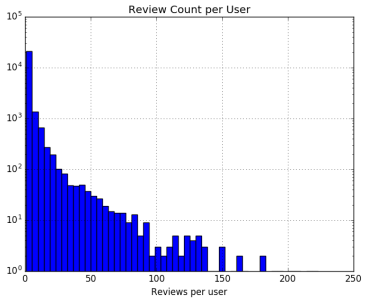

Fig. 1. User review count

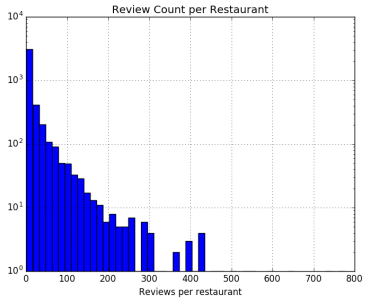

Fig. 2. Restaurants review count

3.2 Traing and Testing sets

In order to evaluate the performance of our recommendation system, we divided our data into training and testing datasets. We extract a list of all restaurants each user has rated, take 80% of this list as training set and 20% as test set.

4 Methods

4.1 Baseline

Our baseline model is similar to the model implemented by[5] which is a mean predictor and accounts for the user and item effects.

$$b_{ur} = \mu + b_u + b_r \ . \tag{1}$$

Here μ is the mean rating of reviews of all business by all users. The parameter b_{ur} indicates the difference between the average rating of user u and μ. The parameter bi indicates the difference between the average rating of business i and μ. This will normalize the widely noticed tendency of some user giving higher rating than others and some restaurants getting higher ratings than others.

4.2 User-User Collaborative Filtering

User-user collaborative filtering, also know as *k-NN collaborative*,was the first of the automated CF methods. It find other users whose past rating behavior is similar to that of current user and use their ratings on that item to predict what the current user will like. To predict Mary's preference for an item she has not rated, user-User CF looks for other users who have high agreement with Mary on the items they have both rated.These users ratings for the item in question are then weighted by their level of agreement with Marys ratings to predict Mary's rating on that item.

4.2.1 Computing Predictions

To compute predictions or recommendations for a user u, user-user CF firstly needs to determine the number N of neighbors will be used to generate the result. Then computing the weighted average of the chosen neighboring users' rating i by using similarity as weights. The formula is given as below:

$$p_{u,i} = \bar{r}_u + \frac{\sum_{u' \in N} s(u,u')(r_{u',i} - \bar{r}_{u'})}{\sum_{u' \in N} |s(u,u')|} \tag{2}$$

In order to eliminate the differences in users's use of the rating scale, subtracting the user's mean rating $\bar{r}_{u'}$ to compensate is necessary. The parameter $p_{u,i}$ is predicated rating on item i for user u. $\bar{r}_{u'}$ is average rating on all items rated by user u.The parameter $r_{u',i}$ indicates the rating of user u' on item i.$s(u,u')$ is similarity between user u and u'. N is the number of neighbors chosen for user u.

4.2.2 Computing User Similarity

An critical parameter used to calculate predications is similarity function.Among many proposed similarity functions we only choose Cosine Similarity to give a detailed introduction.

In Cosine Similarity model, users are represented as $|I|$-demensional vectors of rating on $|I|$ items.Similarity is measured by the cosine distance between two rating vectors. The formula is given below indicating how to calculate the Cosine Similarity between user u and v.

$$s(u,v) = \frac{r_u \cdot r_v}{\|r_u\|_2 \|r_v\|_2} = \frac{\sum_i r_{u,i} r_{v,i}}{\sqrt{\sum_i r_{u,i}^2}\sqrt{\sum_i r_{v,i}^2}} \tag{3}$$

Unknown ratings are considered to be 0. r_u is rating vector of user u. $\|r_u\|_2$ is the Euclidean norm of rating vector r_u.

4.3 Item-Item Collaborative Filtering

Item-Item Collaborative Filtering uses similarity between the rating patterns of items.If two items tend to have the same users like and dislike them,then they are similar and users are expected to have similar preferences for similar items.

4.3.1 Computing Predictions

To generate predictions or recommendations for user u on item i, item-item CF firstly determine a set S of items most similar to i. Then computing the weighted average of the user's rating on item j from set S. The formula is given as below:

$$p_{u,i} = \frac{\sum_{j \in S} s(i,j) r_{u,j}}{\sum_{j \in S} |s(i,j)|} \tag{4}$$

The parameter $p_{u,i}$ is predicated rating on item i for user u. S is a set of items most similar to item i. $s(i,j)$ is the similarity between item i and j. $r_{u,j}$ is the rating of user u on item i.

4.3.2 Computing Item Similarity

As in user-user collaborative filtering, a variety of methods can be used for computing item similarity. In this section, we focus on Cosine Similarity, the most popular similarity metric, as it is simple, fast, and produces good predictive accuracy.

$$s(i,j) = \frac{r_i \cdot r_j}{\|r_i\|_2 \|r_j\|_2} \tag{5}$$

Unknown ratings are considered to be 0. r_i is rating vector of item i. $\|r_i\|_2$ is the Euclidean norm of rating vector r_i.

4.4 Singular Value Decomposition

5 Experiments and Results

5.1 Evaluation Metrics

Our goal is to predict the rating a user would give to a restaurant. We predict the rating that user has not rated in the training dataset, but the true rating is stored in the test dataset. We use the root-mean-square error and mean-absolute error for evaluation.

$$RMSE = \sqrt{\frac{\sum \left(r'_{u,i} - r_{u,i}\right)^2}{N}} \tag{6}$$

$$MAE = \sqrt{\frac{\sum \left|r'_{u,i} - r_{u,i}\right|}{N}} \tag{7}$$

Here $r_{u,i}$ is the predicted rating from user u on item i and $r'_{u,i}$ is the true rating; N is the size of test dataset.

6 Results

The performance of our baseline predictor is $RMSE =$, $MAE =$.