

Local Differential Privacy-Based Federated Learning for Internet of Things

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Abstract—The Internet of Vehicles (IoV) is a promising branch of the Internet of Things. IoV simulates a large variety of crowdsourcing applications, such as Waze, Uber, and Amazon Mechanical Turk, etc. Users of these applications report the real-time traffic information to the cloud server which trains a machine learning model based on traffic information reported by users for intelligent traffic management. However,

crowdsourcing application owners can easily infer users' location information, traffic information, motor vehicle information, environmental information, etc., which raises severe sensitive personal information privacy concerns of the users. In addition, as the number of vehicles increases, the frequent communication between vehicles and the cloud server incurs unexpected amount of communication cost. To avoid the privacy threat and reduce the communication cost, in this article, we propose to integrate federated learning and local differential privacy (LDP) to facilitate the crowdsourcing applications to achieve the machine learning model. Specifically, we propose four LDP mechanisms to perturb gradients generated by vehicles. The proposed **Three-Outputs** mechanism introduces three different output possibilities to deliver a high accuracy when the privacy budget is small. The output possibilities of **Three-Outputs** can be encoded with two bits to reduce the communication cost. Besides, to maximize the performance when the privacy budget is large, an optimal piecewise mechanism (**PM-OPT**) is proposed. We further propose a suboptimal mechanism (**PM-SUB**) with a simple formula and comparable utility to **PM-OPT**. Then, we build a novel hybrid mechanism by combining **Three-Outputs** and **PM-SUB**. Finally, an **LDP-FedSGD** algorithm is proposed to coordinate the cloud server and vehicles to train the model collaboratively. Extensive experimental results on real-world data sets validate that our proposed algorithms are capable of protecting privacy while guaranteeing utility.

Index Terms—Federated learning, Internet of Things, local differential privacy.

I. INTRODUCTION

THE DEVELOPMENT of sensors and communication technologies for Internet of Things (IoT) have enabled a fast and large-scale collection of user data, which has bred new services and applications, such as the Waze application that provides the intelligent transportation routing service. This kind of service benefits users' daily life, but it may raise privacy concerns of sensitive data, such as users' location information. To address these concerns, we propose a hybrid approach that integrates federated learning (FL) [1] with local differential privacy (LDP) [2] techniques. FL can facilitate the collaborative learning with uploaded gradients from users instead of sharing users' raw data. An honest-but-curious aggregator may be able to leverage users' uploaded gradients to infer the original data [3], [4]. Thus, we deploy LDP noises to gradients to ensure privacy while not compromising the utility of gradients.

Federated Learning With LDP: In addition to LDP mechanisms, FL also provides privacy protection to the data by enabling users to maintain data locally. FedSGD algorithm [5]

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allows users to submit gradients instead of true data. However, attackers may reverse the gradients to infer original data. By adding LDP noises to the gradients before uploading, we obtain the LDP-based federated stochastic gradient descent LDP-FedSGD algorithm, which prevents attackers from deducing original data even though they obtain perturbed gradients. As a result, the FL server gathers and averages users' submitted perturbed gradients to obtain the averaged result to update the global model's parameters.

Existing LDP Mechanisms: Since the proposal of LDP in [7], various LDP mechanisms have been proposed in the literature. Mechanisms for categorical data are presented in [9]–[11]. For numerical data, for which new LDP mechanisms are developed in this article, prior mechanisms of [6]–[8] are discussed as follows. For simplicity, we consider data with a single numeric attribute which has a domain $[-1, 1]$ (after normalization if the original domain is not $[-1, 1]$). Extensions to the case of multiple numeric attributes will be discussed later in this article.

- 1) *Laplace of [7]*: LDP can be understood as a variant of DP, where the difference is the definition of “neighboring data(sets).” In DP, two data sets are neighboring if they differ in just one record; in LDP, any two instances of the user's data are neighboring. Due to this connection between DP and LDP, the classical Laplace mechanism (referred to Laplace hereinafter) for DP can thus also be used to achieve LDP. Yet, Laplace may not achieve a high utility for some ϵ since ① Laplace does not consider the difference between DP and LDP.
- 2) *Duchi of [6]*: In view of the above drawback ① of Laplace, Duchi *et al.* [6] introduced alternative mechanisms for LDP. For a single numeric attribute, one mechanism, hereinafter referred to Duchi of [6], flips a coin with two possibilities to generate an output, where the probability of each possibility depends on the input. A disadvantage of Duchi is as follows: ② Since the output of Duchi has only two possibilities, the utility may not be high for large ϵ (intuitively, for large ϵ , the privacy protection is weak so the output should be close to the input which means the output should have many possibilities since the input can take any value in $[-1, 1]$).¹
- 3) *Piecewise Mechanism (PM) of [8]*: Due to the drawback ① of Laplace, and the drawback ② of Duchi above, Wang *et al.* [8] proposed the PM which achieves higher utility than Duchi for a large ϵ , since the output range of PM is continuous and has infinite possibilities, instead of just two possibilities as in Duchi. In PM, the plot of the output's probability density function with respect to the output value consists of three “pieces,” among which the center piece has a higher

¹Note that any algorithm satisfying DP or LDP has the following property: the set of possible values for the output does not depend on the input (though the output distribution depends on the input). This can be easily seen by contradiction. Suppose an output y is possible for input x but not for x' (x and x' satisfy the neighboring relation in DP or LDP). Then $\mathbb{P}[y|x] > 0$ and $\mathbb{P}[y|x'] = 0$, resulting in $\mathbb{P}[y|x] > e^\epsilon \mathbb{P}[y|x']$ and hence violating the privacy requirement ($\mathbb{P}[\cdot | \cdot]$ denotes conditional probability).

TABLE I
COMPARISON OF THE WORST CASE VARIANCES OF EXISTING ϵ -LDP MECHANISMS ON A SINGLE NUMERIC ATTRIBUTE WITH A DOMAIN $[-1, 1]$: DUCHI OF [6] GENERATING A BINARY OUTPUT, LAPLACE OF [7] WITH THE ADDITION OF LAPLACE NOISE, AND THE PM OF [8]. FOR AN LDP MECHANISM \mathcal{A} , ITS WORST CASE VARIANCE IS DENOTED BY $V_{\mathcal{A}}$. WE OBTAIN THIS TABLE BASED ON RESULTS OF [8]

Range of ϵ	Comparison of mechanisms
$0 < \epsilon < 1.29$	$V_{\text{Duchi}} < V_{\text{PM}} < V_{\text{Laplace}}$
$1.29 < \epsilon < 2.32$	$V_{\text{PM}} < V_{\text{Duchi}} < V_{\text{Laplace}}$
$\epsilon > 2.32$	$V_{\text{PM}} < V_{\text{Laplace}} < V_{\text{Duchi}}$

probability than the other two. As the input increases, the length of the center piece remains unchanged, but the length of the leftmost (resp., rightmost) piece increases (resp., decreases). Since PM is tailored for LDP, unlike Laplace for LDP, PM has a strictly lower worst case variance (i.e., the maximum variance with respect to the input given ϵ) than Laplace for any ϵ .

Proposing New LDP Mechanisms: Based on results of [8], Table I on Page 8837 shows that among the three mechanisms Duchi, Laplace, and PM, in terms of the worst case variance, Duchi is the best for $0 < \epsilon < 1.29$, while PM is the best for $\epsilon > 1.29$. Then a natural research question is that can we propose better or even optimal LDP mechanisms? The optimal LDP mechanism for numeric data is still open in the literature, but the optimal LDP mechanism for categorical data has been discussed by Kairouz *et al.* [12]. In particular, [12] shows that for a categorical attribute (with a limited number of discrete values), the binary and randomized response mechanisms, are universally optimal for very small and large ϵ , respectively. Although [12] handles categorical data, its results can provide the following insight even for continuous numeric data: for very small ϵ , a mechanism generating a binary output should be optimal; for very large ϵ , the optimal mechanism's output should have infinite possibilities. This is also in consistent with the results of Table I on Page 8837. Based on the above insight, intuitively, there may exist a range of medium ϵ where a mechanism with three, or four, or five, ..., output possibilities can be optimal. To this end, our first motivation of proposing new LDP mechanisms is to develop a mechanism with three output possibilities such that the mechanism outperforms existing mechanisms of Table I for some ϵ . The outcome of the above motivation is our mechanism called Three-Outputs. Since the analysis of Three-Outputs is already very complex, we do not consider a mechanism with four, or five, ..., output possibilities.

In addition, our second motivation of proposing new LDP mechanisms is that despite the elegance of the PM of [8], we can derive the optimal mechanism PM-OPT under the “piecewise framework” of [8], in order to improve PM. Note that PM-OPT is just optimal under the above framework and may not be the optimal LDP mechanism. Since the expressions for PM-OPT are quite complex, we present PM-SUB which compared with PM-OPT is suboptimal, but has simpler expressions and achieves a comparable utility.

Table II on Page 8838 gives a comparison of our and existing LDP mechanisms. For simplicity, we do not include Laplace in the comparison since Laplace is worse than

TABLE II

COMPARISON OF THE WORST CASE VARIANCES OF OUR AND EXISTING ϵ -LDP MECHANISMS ON A SINGLE NUMERIC ATTRIBUTE WITH A DOMAIN $[-1, 1]$. THREE-OUTPUTS AND PM-SUB ARE OUR MAIN LDP MECHANISMS PROPOSED IN THIS ARTICLE. THE RESULTS IN THIS TABLE SHOW THE ADVANTAGES OF OUR MECHANISMS OVER EXISTING MECHANISMS FOR A WIDE RANGE OF PRIVACY PARAMETER ϵ

Range of ϵ	Comparison of mechanisms
$0 < \epsilon < \ln 2 \approx 0.69$	$V_{\text{Duchi}} = V_{\text{Three-Outputs}} < V_{\text{PM-SUB}} < V_{\text{PM}}$
$\ln 2 < \epsilon < 1.19$	$V_{\text{Three-Outputs}} < V_{\text{Duchi}} < V_{\text{PM-SUB}} < V_{\text{PM}}$
$1.19 < \epsilon < 1.29$	$V_{\text{Three-Outputs}} < V_{\text{PM-SUB}} < V_{\text{Duchi}} < V_{\text{PM}}$
$1.29 < \epsilon < 2.56$	$V_{\text{Three-Outputs}} < V_{\text{PM-SUB}} < V_{\text{PM}} < V_{\text{Duchi}}$
$2.56 < \epsilon < 3.27$	$V_{\text{PM-SUB}} < V_{\text{Three-Outputs}} < V_{\text{PM}} < V_{\text{Duchi}}$
$\epsilon > 3.27$	$V_{\text{PM-SUB}} < V_{\text{PM}} < V_{\text{Three-Outputs}} < V_{\text{Duchi}}$

PM for any ϵ according to Table I. As shown in Table II, in terms of the worst case variance for a single numeric attribute with a domain $[-1, 1]$, Three-Outputs outperforms Duchi for $\epsilon > \ln 2 \approx 0.69$ (and is the same as Duchi for $\epsilon \leq \ln 2$), while PM-SUB beats PM for any ϵ ; moreover, Three-Outputs outperforms both Duchi and PM for $\ln 2 < \epsilon < 3.27$, while PM-SUB beats both Duchi and PM for $\epsilon > 1.19$.

We also follow the practice of [8], which combines different mechanisms Duchi and PM to obtain a hybrid mechanism HM. HM has a lower worst case variance than those of Duchi and PM. In this article, we combine Three-Outputs and PM-SUB to propose HM-TP. The intuition is as follows. Given ϵ , the variances of Three-Outputs and PM-SUB [denoted by $T_\epsilon(x)$ and $P_\epsilon(x)$] depend on the input x , and their maximal values (i.e., the worst case variances) may be taken at different x . Hence, for a hybrid mechanism which probabilistically uses Three-Outputs with probability q or PM-SUB with probability $1 - q$, given ϵ , the worst case variance $\max_x(q \cdot T_\epsilon(x) + (1 - q) \cdot P_\epsilon(x))$ may be strictly smaller than the minimum of $\max_x T_\epsilon(x)$ and $\max_x P_\epsilon(x)$. We optimize q for each ϵ to obtain HM-TP. Due to the already complex expression of PM-OPT, we do not consider the combination of PM-OPT and Three-Outputs.

Contributions: Our contributions can be summarized as follows.

- 1) Using the LDP-FedSGD algorithm for FL in Internet of Vehicles (IoV) as a motivating context, we present novel LDP mechanisms for numeric data with a continuous domain. Among our proposed mechanisms, Three-Outputs and PM-SUB outperform existing mechanisms for a wide range of ϵ , as shown in the theoretical results in Table II and confirmed by experiments. In terms of comparing our Three-Outputs and PM-SUB, we have: Three-Outputs, whose output has three possibilities, is better for small ϵ , while PM-SUB, whose output can take infinite possibilities of an interval, has higher utility for large ϵ . Our PM-SUB is a slightly suboptimal version of our PM-OPT to simplify the expressions. We further combine Three-Outputs and PM-SUB to obtain a hybrid mechanism HM-TP, which achieves even higher utility.
- 2) We discretize the continuous output ranges of our proposed mechanisms PM-SUB and PM-OPT. Through the discretization postprocessing, we enable vehicles

to use our proposed mechanisms. In Section VIII, we confirm that the discretization postprocessing algorithm maintains utility with our experiments, while reducing the communication cost.

- 3) Experimental evaluation of our proposed mechanisms on real-world data sets and synthetic data sets demonstrates that our proposed mechanisms achieve higher accuracy in estimating the mean frequency of the data and performing empirical risk minimization tasks than existing approaches.

Organization: In the following, Section II introduces the preliminaries. Then, we introduce related works in Section III. Then, we illustrate the system model and the LDP-based FedSGD (LDP-FedSGD) algorithm in Section IV. Section V presents the problem formation. Section VI proposes novel solutions for the single numerical data estimation. Section VII illustrates proposed mechanisms used for multidimensional numerical data estimation. Section VIII demonstrates our experimental results. Section IX concludes this article.

II. PRELIMINARIES

In LDP, users complete the perturbation by themselves. To protect users' privacy, each user runs a random perturbation algorithm \mathcal{M} , and then he sends perturbed results to the aggregator. The privacy budget ϵ controls the privacy-utility tradeoff, and a higher privacy budget means a lower privacy protection. As a result of this, we define LDP as follows.

Definition 1 (LDP): Let \mathcal{M} be a randomized function with domain \mathbb{X} and range \mathbb{Y} ; i.e., \mathcal{M} maps each element in \mathbb{X} to a probability distribution with sample space \mathbb{Y} . For a nonnegative ϵ , the randomized mechanism \mathcal{M} satisfies ϵ -LDP if

$$\left| \ln \frac{\mathbb{P}_{\mathcal{M}}[Y \in S|x]}{\mathbb{P}_{\mathcal{M}}[Y \in S|x']} \right| \leq \epsilon, \quad \forall x, x' \in \mathbb{X}, \quad \forall S \subseteq \mathbb{Y}. \quad (1)$$

$\mathbb{P}_{\mathcal{M}}[\cdot|\cdot]$ means conditional probability distribution depending on \mathcal{M} . In LDP, the random perturbation is performed by users instead of a centralized aggregator. Centralized aggregator only receives perturbed results which make sure that the aggregator is unable to distinguish whether the true tuple is x or x' with high confidence (controlled by the privacy budget ϵ).

III. RELATED WORK

Recently, LDP has attracted much attention [13]–[20]. Several mechanisms for numeric data estimation have been proposed [6]–[8], [21].

- 1) Dwork *et al.* [7] proposed the Laplace mechanism which adds the Laplace noise to real 1-D data directly. The Laplace mechanism is originally used in the centralized differential privacy mechanism, and it can be applied to LDP directly.
- 2) For a single numeric attribute with a domain $[-1, 1]$, Duchi *et al.* [6] proposed an LDP framework that provides output from $\{-C, C\}$, where $C > 1$.
- 3) Wang *et al.* [8] proposed the PM which offers an output that contains infinite possibilities in the range of $[-A, A]$, where $A > 1$. In addition, they apply LDP

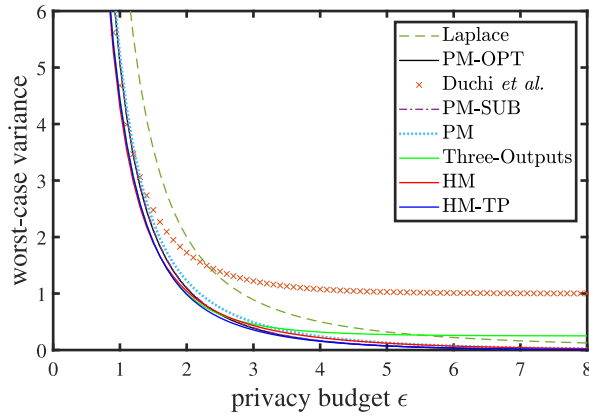


Fig. 1. Different mechanisms' worst case noise variance for 1-D numeric data versus the privacy budget ϵ .

mechanism to preserve the privacy of gradients generated during machine learning tasks. Both approaches by Duchi *et al.* [6] and Wang *et al.* [8] can be extended to the case of multidimensional numerical data.

Deficiencies of Existing Solutions: Fig. 1 illustrates that when $\epsilon \leq 2.3$, Laplace mechanism's worst case noise variance is larger than that of Duchi *et al.*'s [22] solution; however, the Laplace mechanism outperforms Duchi *et al.*'s [22] solution if ϵ is larger. The worst case noise variance in PM is smaller than that of Laplace and Duchi *et al.*'s [22] solution when ϵ is large. The HM mechanism outperforms other existing solutions by taking advantage of Duchi *et al.*'s [22] solution when ϵ is small and PM when ϵ is large. However, PM and HM's outputs have infinite possibilities that are hard to encode. We would like to find a mechanism that can improve the utility of existing mechanisms. In addition, we believe there is a mechanism that retains a high utility and is easy to encode its outputs. Based on the above intuition, we propose four novel mechanisms that can be used by vehicles in Section VI.

In addition, LDP has been widely used in the research of IoT [23]–[27]. For example, Xu *et al.* [23] integrate deep learning with LDP techniques and apply them to protect users' privacy in edge computing. They develop an EdgeSanitizer framework that forms a new protection layer against sensitive inference by leveraging a deep learning model to mask the learned features with noise and minimize data. Choi *et al.* [24] explore the feasibility of applying LDP on ultralow-power (ULP) systems. They use resampling, thresholding, and a privacy budget control algorithm to overcome the low resolution and fixed point nature of ULPs. He *et al.* [25] address the location privacy and usage pattern privacy induced by the mobile edge computing's wireless task offloading feature by proposing a privacy-aware task offloading scheduling algorithm based on constrained Markov decision process. Li *et al.* [26] propose a scheme for privacy-preserving data aggregation in the mobile edge computing to assist IoT applications with three participants, i.e., a public cloud center (PCC), an edge server (ES), and a terminal device (TD). TDs generate and encrypt data and send them to the ES, and then the ES submits the aggregated data to the PCC. The PCC uses its private key to recover the aggregated plaintext data. Their scheme provides

source authentication and integrity and guarantees the data privacy of the TDs. In addition, their scheme can save half of the communication cost. To protect the privacy of massive data generated from IoT platforms, Arachchige *et al.* [27] design an LDP mechanism named as LATENT for deep learning. A randomization layer between the convolutional module and the fully connected module is added to the LATENT to perturb data before data leave data owners for machine learning services. Pihur [28] propose the Podium Mechanism which is similar to our PM-SUB, but his mechanism is applicable to DP instead of LDP.

Moreover, FL or collaborative learning is an emerging distributed machine learning paradigm, and it is widely used to address data privacy problem in machine learning [1], [29]. Recently, FL is explored extensively in the IoT recently [30]–[34]. Lim *et al.* [30] survey FL applications in mobile edge network comprehensively, including algorithms, applications and potential research problems, etc. Besides, Lu *et al.* [32] propose CLONE which is a collaborative learning framework on the edges for connected vehicles, and it reduces the training time while guaranteeing the prediction accuracy. Different from CLONE, our proposed approach utilizes LDP noises to protect the privacy of the uploaded data. Furthermore, Fantacci and Picano [33] leverage FL to protect the privacy of mobile edge computing, while Saputra *et al.* [34] apply FL to predict the energy demand for electrical vehicle networks.

Furthermore, there have been many papers on FL and differential privacy, such as [31], [35]–[43]. For example, Truex *et al.* [36] utilize both secure multiparty computation and centralized differential privacy to prevent inference over both the messages exchanged in the process of training the model. However, they do not analyze the impact of the privacy budget on performance of FL. Hu *et al.* [37] propose a privacy-preserving FL approach for learning effective personalized models. They use Gaussian mechanism, a centralized DP mechanism, to protect the privacy of the model. Compared with them, our proposed LDP mechanisms provide a stronger privacy protection using the LDP mechanism. Hao *et al.* [31] propose a differential enhanced FL scheme for industrial artificial industry. Triastcyn and Faltings [39] employ Bayesian differential privacy on FL. They make use of the centralized differential privacy mechanism to protect the privacy of gradients, but we leverage a stronger privacy-preserving mechanism (LDP) to protect each vehicle's privacy.

Additionally, DP can be applied to various FL algorithms, such as FedSGD [5] and FedAvg [1]. FedAvg requires users to upload model parameters instead of gradients in FedSGD. The advantage of FedAvg is that it allows users to train the model for multiple rounds locally before submitting gradients. Brendan *et al.* [35] propose to apply centralized DP to FedAvg and FedSGD algorithm. In our paper, we deploy LDP mechanisms to gradients in FedSGD algorithm. Our future work is to develop LDP mechanisms for state-of-the-art FL algorithms. Zhao *et al.* [44] propose a SecProbe mechanism to protect privacy and quality of participants' data by leveraging exponential mechanism and functional mechanism of differential privacy. SecProbe guarantees the high accuracy

two instances x_i and x'_i of user i 's data (which are *user-neighboring*), and for any possible subset of outputs² \mathcal{Y}_i of Y_i , we obtain $\mathbb{P}[Y_i \in \mathcal{Y}_i | x_i] \leq e^{\epsilon_i} \times \mathbb{P}[Y_i \in \mathcal{Y}_i | x'_i]$. Clearly, ULDP is achieved by each user implementing LDP studied in this article.

- 2) In RLDP, each user i selects a privacy parameter ϵ_i and applies a randomization algorithm Y_i such that for any two *record-neighboring* instances x_i and x'_i of user i 's data (i.e., x_i and x'_i differ in only one record), and for any possible subset of outputs \mathcal{Y}_i of Y_i , we have $\mathbb{P}[Y_i \in \mathcal{Y}_i | x_i] \leq e^{\epsilon_i} \times \mathbb{P}[Y_i \in \mathcal{Y}_i | x'_i]$. Clearly, in RLDP, what each user does is just to apply standard differential privacy. In contrast, in ULDP above, each user applies LDP.
- 3) In ϵ -RLCP, the aggregator sets a privacy parameter ϵ and applies a randomization algorithm Y such that for any user i , for any two *record-neighboring* instances x_i and x'_i of user i 's data, and for any possible subset of outputs² \mathcal{Y} of Y , we obtain $\mathbb{P}[Y \in \mathcal{Y} | x_i] \leq e^{\epsilon} \times \mathbb{P}[Y \in \mathcal{Y} | x'_i]$. In other words, in RLCP, the aggregator applies standard differential privacy. For the aggregator to implement RLCP well, typically the aggregator should be able to bound the impact of each record on the information sent from a user to the aggregator. Further discussions on this can be interesting, but we do not present more details since RLCP is not our paper's focus.
- 4) In ϵ -ULCP, the aggregator sets a privacy parameter ϵ and applies a randomization algorithm Y so that for any user i , for any two instances x_i and x'_i of user i 's data (which are *user-neighboring*), and for any possible subset of outputs \mathcal{Y} of Y , we have $\mathbb{P}[Y \in \mathcal{Y} | x_i] \leq e^{\epsilon} \times \mathbb{P}[Y \in \mathcal{Y} | x'_i]$. The difference RLCP and ULCP is that RLCP achieves record-level privacy protection while ULCP ensures the stronger user-level privacy protection.

In the case of distributed perturbation, when all users set the same privacy parameter ϵ , we refer to ULDP and RLDP above as ϵ -ULDP and ϵ -RLDP, respectively. Table III presents a comparison of ϵ -ULDP, ϵ -RLDP, ϵ -RLCP, and ϵ -ULCP. In this article's focus, each user applies ϵ -LDP, so our framework is under ULDP. The reasons that we consider ULDP instead of RLDP, RLCP, and ULCP are as follows.

- 1) We do not consider RLDP which implements perturbation at each user via standard differential privacy, since we aim to achieve user-level privacy protection instead of the weaker record-level privacy protection (a vehicle is a user in our IoV applications and may have multiple records). The motivation is that often much data from a vehicle may be about the vehicle's regular driver, and it often makes more sense to protect all data about the regular driver instead of just protecting each single record. A similar argument has been recently stated in [35], which incorporates user-level differential privacy into the training process of FL for language modeling. Specifically, [35] considers user-level privacy to protect the privacy of all typed words of a user, and

²For simplicity, we slightly abuse the notation and denote the output of algorithm Y_i (resp., algorithm Y) by Y_i (resp., Y).

TABLE III

WE COMPARE DIFFERENT PRIVACY NOTIONS IN THIS TABLE. IN THIS ARTICLE, WE FOCUS ON ϵ -LDP WHICH ACHIEVES ULDP. WE DO NOT CONSIDER RLDP WHICH IMPLEMENTS PERTURBATION AT EACH USER VIA STANDARD DIFFERENTIAL PRIVACY, SINCE WE AIM TO ACHIEVE USER-LEVEL PRIVACY PROTECTION INSTEAD OF THE WEAKER RECORD-LEVEL PRIVACY PROTECTION (A VEHICLE IS A USER IN OUR IOV APPLICATIONS AND MAY HAVE MULTIPLE RECORDS). WE ALSO DO NOT INVESTIGATE RECORD/USER-LEVEL PRIVACY PROTECTION WITH CENTRALIZED PERTURBATION (RLCP/ULCP) SINCE THIS ARTICLE CONSIDERS A HONEST-BUT-CURIOUS AGGREGATOR INSTEAD OF A TRUSTED AGGREGATOR

privacy granularity and place of perturbation	privacy property	adversary model
ϵ -LDP (defined for distributed perturbation)	ϵ -ULDP	defend against a honest-but-curious aggregator & external attacks after model publishing
ϵ -DP with distributed perturbation	ϵ -RLDP	
ϵ -DP with centralized perturbation	ϵ -RLCP	trusted aggregator; defend against external attacks after model publishing
user-level privacy with centralized perturbation	ϵ -ULCP	

explains that such privacy protection is more reasonable than protecting individual words as in the case of record-level privacy. In addition, although we can compute the level of user-level privacy from record-level privacy via the group privacy property of differential privacy (see [47, Th. 2.2]), but this may significantly increase the privacy parameter and hence weaken the privacy protection if a user has many records (note that a larger privacy parameter ϵ in ϵ -DP means weaker privacy protection). More specifically, for a user with m records, according to the group privacy property [47], the privacy protection strength for the user under ϵ -record-level privacy is just as that under $m\epsilon$ -user-level privacy (i.e., for a user with m records, ϵ -RLDP ensures $m\epsilon$ -ULDP; ϵ -RLCP ensures $m\epsilon$ -ULCP).

- 2) We also do not investigate RLCP and ULCP since this article considers a honest-but-curious aggregator instead of a trusted aggregator. The aggregator is not completely trusted, so the perturbation is implemented at each user (i.e., vehicle in IoV).

V. PROBLEM FORMATION

Let x be a user's true value, and Y be the perturbed value. Under the perturbation mechanism \mathcal{M} , we use $\mathbb{E}_{\mathcal{M}}[Y|x]$ to denote the expectation of the randomized output Y given input x . $\text{Var}_{\mathcal{M}}[Y|x]$ is the variance of output Y given input x . $\text{MaxVar}(\mathcal{M})$ denotes the worst case $\text{Var}_{\mathcal{M}}[Y|x]$. We are interested in finding a privatization mechanism \mathcal{M} that minimizes $\text{MaxVar}(\mathcal{M})$ by solving the following constraint minimization problem:

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \min_{\mathcal{M}} \text{MaxVar}(\mathcal{M}) \\
 & \text{s.t. Eq. (1),} \\
 & \quad \mathbb{E}_{\mathcal{M}}[Y|x] = x, \text{ and} \\
 & \quad \mathbb{P}_{\mathcal{M}}[Y \in \mathbb{Y}|x] = 1.
 \end{aligned}$$

The second constraint illustrates that our estimator is unbiased, and the third constraint shows the proper distribution where

Algorithm 2: Three-Outputs Mechanism for 1-D Numeric Data

Input: tuple $x \in [-1, 1]$ and privacy parameter ϵ .

Output: tuple $Y \in \{-C, 0, C\}$.

- 1 Sampling a random variable u with the probability distribution as follows:

$$\mathbb{P}[u = -1] = P_{-C \leftarrow x},$$

$$\mathbb{P}[u = 0] = P_{0 \leftarrow x}, \text{ and}$$

$$\mathbb{P}[u = 1] = P_{C \leftarrow x},$$

where $P_{-C \leftarrow x}$, $P_{0 \leftarrow x}$ and $P_{C \leftarrow x}$ are given in (2), (3) and (3).

- 2 **if** $u = -1$ **then**
 - 3 $Y = -C$;
 - 4 **else if** $u = 0$ **then**
 - 5 $Y = 0$;
 - 6 **else**
 - 7 $Y = C$;
 - 8 **return** Y ;
-

\mathbb{Y} is the range of randomized function \mathcal{M} . In the following sections, if \mathcal{M} is clear from the context, we omit the subscript \mathcal{M} for simplicity.

VI. MECHANISMS FOR ESTIMATION OF SINGLE NUMERIC ATTRIBUTE

To solve the problem in Section V, we propose four LDP mechanisms: Three-Outputs, PM-OPT, PM-SUB, and HM-TP. Fig. 1 compares the worst case noise variances of existing mechanisms and our proposed mechanisms. Three-Outputs has three discrete output possibilities, which incurs little communication cost because two bits are enough to encode three different outputs. Moreover, it achieves a small worst case noise variance in the high privacy regime (small privacy budget ϵ). However, to maintain a low worst case noise variance in the low privacy regime (large privacy budget ϵ), we propose PM-OPT and PM-SUB. Both of them achieve higher accuracies than Three-Outputs and other existing solutions when the privacy budget ϵ is large. Additionally, we discretize their continuous ranges of output for vehicles to encode using a postprocessing discretization algorithm. In the following sections, we will explain our proposed four mechanisms and the postprocessing discretization algorithm in detail respectively.

A. Three-Outputs Mechanism

Now, we propose a mechanism with three output possibilities named as Three-Outputs which is illustrated in Algorithm 2. Three-Outputs ensures low communication cost while achieving a smaller worst case noise variance than existing solutions in the high privacy regime (small privacy budget ϵ). Duchi *et al.*'s [22] solution contains two output possibilities, and it outperforms other approaches when the privacy budget is small. However, Kairouz *et al.* [12] prove that two outputs are not always optimal as ϵ increases. By

outputting three values instead of two, Three-Outputs improves the performance as the privacy budget increases, which is shown in Fig. 1. When the privacy budget is small, Three-Outputs is equivalent to Duchi *et al.*'s [22] solution.

For notational simplicity, given a mechanism \mathcal{M} , we often write $\mathbb{P}_{\mathcal{M}}[Y = y|X = x]$ as $P_{y \leftarrow x}(\mathcal{M})$ below. We also sometimes omit \mathcal{M} to obtain $\mathbb{P}[Y = y|X = x]$ and $P_{y \leftarrow x}$.

Given a tuple $x \in [-1, 1]$, Three-Outputs returns a perturbed value Y that equals $-C$, 0 or C with probabilities defined by

$$P_{-C \leftarrow x} = \begin{cases} \frac{1 - P_{0 \leftarrow 0}}{2} + \left(\frac{1 - P_{0 \leftarrow 0}}{2} - \frac{e^\epsilon - P_{0 \leftarrow 0}}{e^\epsilon(e^\epsilon + 1)} \right)x, & \text{if } 0 \leq x \leq 1 \\ \frac{1 - P_{0 \leftarrow 0}}{2} + \left(\frac{e^\epsilon - P_{0 \leftarrow 0}}{e^\epsilon + 1} - \frac{1 - P_{0 \leftarrow 0}}{2} \right)x, & \text{if } -1 \leq x \leq 0 \end{cases} \quad (2)$$

$$P_{C \leftarrow x} = \begin{cases} \frac{1 - P_{0 \leftarrow 0}}{2} + \left(\frac{e^\epsilon - P_{0 \leftarrow 0}}{e^\epsilon + 1} - \frac{1 - P_{0 \leftarrow 0}}{2} \right)x, & \text{if } 0 \leq x \leq 1 \\ \frac{1 - P_{0 \leftarrow 0}}{2} + \left(\frac{1 - P_{0 \leftarrow 0}}{2} - \frac{e^\epsilon - P_{0 \leftarrow 0}}{e^\epsilon(e^\epsilon + 1)} \right)x, & \text{if } -1 \leq x \leq 0, \end{cases} \quad (3)$$

and

$$P_{0 \leftarrow x} = P_{0 \leftarrow 0} + \left(\frac{P_{0 \leftarrow 0}}{e^\epsilon} - P_{0 \leftarrow 0} \right)x, \text{ if } -1 \leq x \leq 1 \quad (4)$$

where $P_{0 \leftarrow 0}$ is defined by

$$P_{0 \leftarrow 0} := \begin{cases} 0, & \text{if } \epsilon < \ln 2, \\ -\frac{1}{6} \left(-e^{2\epsilon} - 4e^\epsilon - 5 \right. \\ \quad \left. + 2\sqrt{\Delta_0} \cos \left(\frac{\pi}{3} + \frac{1}{3} \arccos \left(-\frac{\Delta_1}{2\Delta_0} \right) \right) \right), & \text{if } \ln 2 \leq \epsilon \leq \epsilon' \\ \frac{e^\epsilon}{e^\epsilon + 2}, & \text{if } \epsilon > \epsilon' \end{cases} \quad (5)$$

in which

$$\Delta_0 := e^{4\epsilon} + 14e^{3\epsilon} + 50e^{2\epsilon} - 2e^\epsilon + 25 \quad (6)$$

$$\Delta_1 := -2e^{6\epsilon} - 42e^{5\epsilon} - 270e^{4\epsilon} - 404e^{3\epsilon} - 918e^{2\epsilon} + 30e^\epsilon - 250 \quad (7)$$

$$\text{and } \epsilon' := \ln \left(\frac{3 + \sqrt{65}}{2} \right) \approx \ln 5.53. \quad (8)$$

Next, we will show how we derive the above probabilities. For a mechanism which uses $x \in [-1, 1]$ as the input and only

three possibilities $-C, 0, C$ for the output value, it satisfies

$$\begin{cases} \epsilon\text{-LDP: } \frac{P_{C \leftarrow x}}{P_{C \leftarrow x'}}, \frac{P_{0 \leftarrow x}}{P_{0 \leftarrow x'}}, \frac{P_{-C \leftarrow x}}{P_{-C \leftarrow x'}} \in [e^{-\epsilon}, e^{\epsilon}] & (9a) \\ \text{unbiased estimation:} & \\ C \cdot P_{C \leftarrow x} + 0 \cdot P_{0 \leftarrow x} + (-C) \cdot P_{-C \leftarrow x} = x & (9b) \\ \text{proper distribution:} & \\ P_{y \leftarrow x} \geq 0 \text{ and } P_{C \leftarrow x} + P_{0 \leftarrow x} + P_{-C \leftarrow x} = 1. & (9c) \end{cases}$$

To calculate values of $P_{C \leftarrow x}$, $P_{0 \leftarrow x}$ and $P_{-C \leftarrow x}$, we use Lemma 1 below to convert a mechanism \mathcal{M}_1 satisfying the requirements in (9a)–(9c) to a symmetric mechanism \mathcal{M}_2 . Then, we use Lemma 2 below to transform the symmetric mechanism further to \mathcal{M}_3 whose worst case noise variance is smaller than \mathcal{M}_2 's. Next, we use $P_{0 \leftarrow 1}$ to represent other probabilities, and then we prove that we get the minimum variance when $P_{0 \leftarrow 0} = e^\epsilon P_{0 \leftarrow 1}$ using Lemma 3. Finally, Lemmas 4 and 5 are used to obtain values for $P_{0 \leftarrow 0}$ and the worst case noise variance of Three-Outputs, respectively. Thus, we can obtain values of $P_{C \leftarrow x}$, $P_{0 \leftarrow x}$ and $P_{-C \leftarrow x}$ using $P_{0 \leftarrow 0}$. In the following, we will illustrate above processes in detail.

By symmetry, for any $x \in [-1, 1]$, we enforce

$$\begin{cases} P_{C \leftarrow x} = P_{-C \leftarrow -x} & (10a) \\ P_{0 \leftarrow x} = P_{0 \leftarrow -x}, & (10b) \end{cases}$$

where (10b) can be derived from (10a). The formal justification of (10a) and (10b) is given by Lemma 1 below. Since the input domain $[-1, 1]$ is symmetric, we can transform any mechanism satisfying requirements in (9a)–(9c) to a symmetric mechanism while guaranteeing the worst case noise variance will not increase in Lemma 1. Thus, we can derive probabilities when $x \in [-1, 0]$ using probabilities when $x \in [0, 1]$ based on the symmetry.

Lemma 1: For a mechanism \mathcal{M}_1 satisfying the requirements in (9a)–(9c), the following symmetrization process to obtain a mechanism \mathcal{M}_2 will not increase (i.e., will reduce or not change) the worst case noise variance, while mechanism \mathcal{M}_2 still satisfies the requirements in (9a)–(9c). Symmetrization: For $x \in [-1, 1]$

$$\begin{aligned} P_{C \leftarrow x}(\mathcal{M}_2) &= P_{-C \leftarrow -x}(\mathcal{M}_2) \\ &= \frac{P_{C \leftarrow x}(\mathcal{M}_1) + P_{-C \leftarrow -x}(\mathcal{M}_1)}{2} & (11) \\ P_{0 \leftarrow x}(\mathcal{M}_2) &= P_{0 \leftarrow -x}(\mathcal{M}_2) = \frac{P_{0 \leftarrow x}(\mathcal{M}_1) + P_{0 \leftarrow -x}(\mathcal{M}_1)}{2}. & (12) \end{aligned}$$

Proof: The proof details are given in Appendix A of the supplementary material. ■

Based on Lemma 1, we define a symmetric mechanism as follows.

Symmetric Mechanism: A mechanism under (9a)–(9c) is called a symmetric mechanism if it satisfies (10a) and (10b). In the following, we only consider the symmetric mechanism \mathcal{M}_2 .

Now, we design probabilities for the symmetric mechanism \mathcal{M}_2 . As \mathcal{M}_2 satisfies the unbiased estimation which is a linear relationship, we set probabilities as piecewise linear functions of x as follows.

Case 1: For $x \in [0, 1]$

$$P_{C \leftarrow x} = P_{C \leftarrow 0} + (P_{C \leftarrow 1} - P_{C \leftarrow 0})x, \quad (13)$$

$$P_{-C \leftarrow x} = P_{-C \leftarrow 0} - (P_{-C \leftarrow 0} - P_{-C \leftarrow 1})x \quad (14)$$

$$P_{0 \leftarrow x} = 1 - P_{-C \leftarrow 0} - P_{C \leftarrow 0} + (P_{-C \leftarrow 0} - P_{C \leftarrow 0} + P_{-C \leftarrow 1} - P_{C \leftarrow 1})x. \quad (15)$$

Case 2: For $x \in [-1, 0]$

$$P_{C \leftarrow x} = P_{C \leftarrow 0} + (P_{C \leftarrow 0} - P_{C \leftarrow -1})x \quad (16)$$

$$P_{-C \leftarrow x} = P_{-C \leftarrow 0} - (P_{-C \leftarrow -1} - P_{-C \leftarrow 0})x \quad (17)$$

$$P_{0 \leftarrow x} = 1 - P_{-C \leftarrow 0} - P_{C \leftarrow 0} + (P_{-C \leftarrow 0} - P_{C \leftarrow 0} + P_{-C \leftarrow -1} - P_{C \leftarrow -1})x. \quad (18)$$

Then, we may assign values to our designed probabilities above. We find that if a symmetric mechanism satisfies (19a) and (19b), it obtains a smaller worst case noise variance. From Lemma 2, we enforce

$$\begin{cases} P_{C \leftarrow 1} = e^\epsilon P_{C \leftarrow -1} & (19a) \\ P_{-C \leftarrow -1} = e^\epsilon P_{-C \leftarrow 1}. & (19b) \end{cases}$$

Hence, given a symmetric mechanism \mathcal{M}_2 satisfying Inequality (20), we can transform it to a new symmetric mechanism \mathcal{M}_3 which satisfies (19a) and (19b) through processes of (21)–(23) until $P_{C \leftarrow -1} = e^\epsilon P_{-C \leftarrow 1}$. After transformation, the new mechanism \mathcal{M}_3 achieves a smaller worst case noise variance than mechanism \mathcal{M}_2 . Therefore, we use the new symmetric mechanism \mathcal{M}_3 to replace \mathcal{M}_2 in the future's discussion. Details of transformation are in the Lemma 2.

Lemma 2: For a symmetric mechanism \mathcal{M}_2 , if

$$P_{C \leftarrow 1}(\mathcal{M}_2) < e^\epsilon P_{-C \leftarrow -1}(\mathcal{M}_2) \quad (20)$$

we set a symmetric mechanism \mathcal{M}_3 as follows: For $x \in [-1, 1]$

$$\begin{aligned} P_{C \leftarrow x}(\mathcal{M}_3) &= P_{-C \leftarrow -x}(\mathcal{M}_3) \\ &= P_{C \leftarrow x}(\mathcal{M}_2) \\ &\quad - \frac{e^\epsilon P_{C \leftarrow -1}(\mathcal{M}_2) - P_{C \leftarrow 1}(\mathcal{M}_2)}{e^\epsilon - 1} \end{aligned} \quad (21)$$

$$\begin{aligned} P_{-C \leftarrow x}(\mathcal{M}_3) &= P_{C \leftarrow -x}(\mathcal{M}_3) \\ &= P_{-C \leftarrow x}(\mathcal{M}_2) \\ &\quad - \frac{e^\epsilon P_{-C \leftarrow 1}(\mathcal{M}_2) - P_{-C \leftarrow -1}(\mathcal{M}_2)}{e^\epsilon - 1} \end{aligned} \quad (22)$$

$$\begin{aligned} P_{0 \leftarrow x}(\mathcal{M}_3) &= 1 - P_{C \leftarrow x}(\mathcal{M}_3) - P_{-C \leftarrow x}(\mathcal{M}_3) \\ &= P_{0 \leftarrow x}(\mathcal{M}_2) \\ &\quad + \frac{2(e^\epsilon P_{C \leftarrow -1}(\mathcal{M}_2) - P_{C \leftarrow 1}(\mathcal{M}_2))}{e^\epsilon - 1}. \end{aligned} \quad (23)$$

Moreover, the mechanism \mathcal{M}_3 has a worst case noise variance smaller than that of \mathcal{M}_2 , while \mathcal{M}_3 still satisfies the requirements in (9a)–(9c).

Proof: The proof details are given in Appendix B of the supplementary material. ■

We have proved that the symmetric mechanism \mathcal{M}_3 has a smaller worst case noise variance than that of mechanism \mathcal{M}_2 in Lemma 2, and then we use mechanism \mathcal{M}_3 to obtain

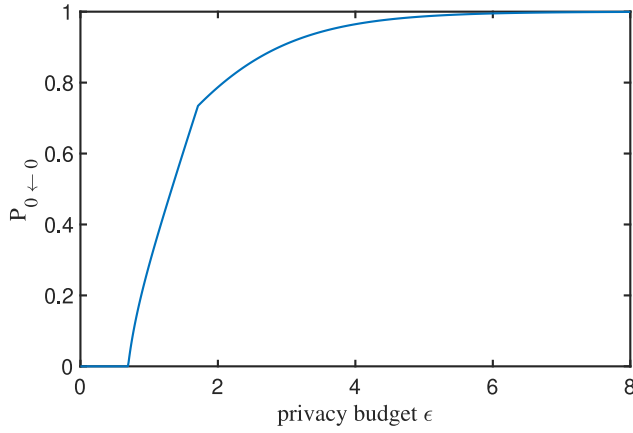


Fig. 3. Optimal $P_{0 \leftarrow 0}$ if the privacy budget $\epsilon \in [0, 8]$.

the relation between $P_{0 \leftarrow 1}$ and $P_{0 \leftarrow 0}$ to find the minimum variance. From Lemma 3 below, we enforce

$$P_{0 \leftarrow 0} = e^\epsilon P_{0 \leftarrow 1}. \quad (24)$$

Then, we use the following Lemma 3 to obtain the relation between $P_{0 \leftarrow 1}$ and $P_{0 \leftarrow 0}$, so that we can obtain $P_{C \leftarrow x}$, $P_{0 \leftarrow x}$, and $P_{-C \leftarrow x}$ using $P_{0 \leftarrow 0}$.

Lemma 3: Given $P_{0 \leftarrow 0}$, the variance of the output given input x is a strictly decreasing function of $P_{0 \leftarrow 1}$ and hence is minimized when $P_{0 \leftarrow 1} = P_{0 \leftarrow 0}/e^\epsilon$.

Proof: The proof details are given in Appendix C of the supplementary material. ■

Lemma 3 shows that we get the minimum variance when $P_{0 \leftarrow 1} = P_{0 \leftarrow 0}/e^\epsilon$. Hence, we replace $e^\epsilon P_{0 \leftarrow 1}$ with $P_{0 \leftarrow 0}$. Then, the variance is equivalent to

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Var}[Y|X=x] &= \left(\frac{e^\epsilon + 1}{(e^\epsilon - 1)(1 - \frac{P_{0 \leftarrow 0}}{e^\epsilon})} \right)^2 \left(1 - P_{0 \leftarrow 0} + (P_{0 \leftarrow 0} - \frac{P_{0 \leftarrow 0}}{e^\epsilon})|x| \right) - x^2. \end{aligned} \quad (25)$$

Complete details for obtaining (25) are in Appendix C of the supplementary material.

Next, we use Lemma 4 to obtain the optimal $P_{0 \leftarrow 0}$ in Three-Outputs to achieve the minimum worst case variance as follows.

Lemma 4: The optimal $P_{0 \leftarrow 0}$ to minimize the $\max_{x \in [-1, 1]} \text{Var}[Y|x]$ is defined by (5).

Proof: The proof details are given in Appendix E of the supplementary material. ■

Remark 1: Fig. 3 displays how $P_{0 \leftarrow 0}$ changes with ϵ in (5). When the privacy budget ϵ is small, $P_{0 \leftarrow 0} = 0$. Thus, Three-Outputs is equivalent to Duchi *et al.*'s [22] solution when $P_{0 \leftarrow 0} = 0$. However, as the privacy budget ϵ increases, $P_{0 \leftarrow 0}$ increases, which means that the probability of outputting true value increases.

By summarizing above, we obtain $P_{-C \leftarrow x}$, $P_{C \leftarrow x}$ and $P_{0 \leftarrow x}$ from (2)–(3) using $P_{0 \leftarrow 0}$.

Algorithm 3: PM-OPT Mechanism for 1-D Numeric Data Under LDP

Input: tuple $x \in [-1, 1]$ and privacy parameter ϵ .

Output: tuple $Y \in [-A, A]$.

```

1 Value  $t$  is calculated in the (30);
2 Sample  $u$  uniformly at random from  $[0, 1]$ ;
3 if  $u < e^\epsilon / (t + e^\epsilon)$  then
4   | Sample  $Y$  uniformly at random from
   |  $[L(\epsilon, x, t), R(\epsilon, x, t)]$ ;
5 else
6   | Sample  $Y$  uniformly at random from
   |  $[-A, L(\epsilon, x, t)) \cup (R(\epsilon, x, t), A]$ ;
7 return  $Y$ ;
```

Then, we can calculate the optimal $P_{0 \leftarrow 0}$ to obtain the minimum worst case noise variance of Three-Outputs as follows:

Lemma 5: The minimum worst case noise variance of Three-Outputs is obtained when $P_{0 \leftarrow 0}$ satisfies (5).

Proof: The proof details are given in Appendix F of the supplementary material. ■

A Clarification About Three-Outputs Versus Four-Outputs: One may wonder why we consider a perturbation mechanism with three outputs (i.e., our Three-Outputs) instead of a perturbation mechanism with four outputs (referred to as Four-Outputs), since using two bits to encode the output of a perturbation mechanism can represent four outputs. The reason is as follows. The approach to design Four-Outputs is similar to that for Three-Outputs, but the detailed analysis for Four-Outputs will be even more tedious than that for Three-Outputs (which is already quite complex). Given above reasons, we elaborate Three-Outputs but not Four-Outputs in this article.

B. PM-OPT Mechanism

Now, we advocate an optimal PM (PM-OPT) as shown in Algorithm 3 to get a small worst case variance when the privacy budget is large. As shown in Fig. 1, Three-Outputs's worst case noise variance is smaller than PM's when the privacy budget $\epsilon < 3.2$. But it loses the advantage when the privacy budget $\epsilon \geq 3.2$. As the privacy budget increases, Kairouz *et al.* [12] suggest to send more information using more output possibilities. Besides, we observe that it is possible to improve Wang *et al.*'s [8] PM to achieve a smaller worst case noise variance. Thus, inspired by them, we propose an optimal PM named as PM-OPT with a smaller worst case noise variance than PM.

For a true input $x \in [-1, 1]$, the probability density function of the randomized output $Y \in [-A, A]$ after applying LDP is given by

$$\mathbb{P}[Y = y|x] = \begin{cases} c, & \text{for } y \in [L(\epsilon, x, t), R(\epsilon, x, t)] \\ d, & \text{for } y \in [-A, L(\epsilon, x, t)) \cup (R(\epsilon, x, t), A] \end{cases} \quad (26a)$$

$$(26b)$$

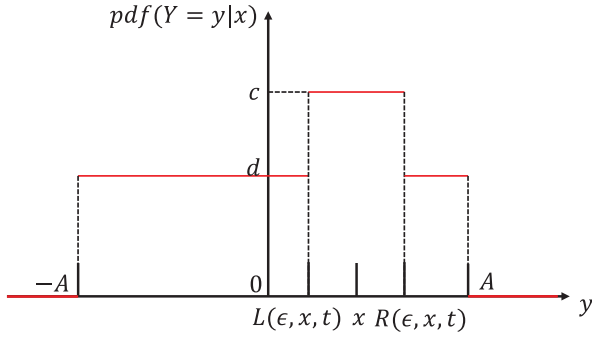


Fig. 4. Probability density function $\mathbb{P}[Y = y|x]$ of the randomized output Y after applying ϵ -LDP.

where

$$c = \frac{e^\epsilon t(e^\epsilon - 1)}{2(t + e^\epsilon)^2} \quad (27)$$

$$d = \frac{t(e^\epsilon - 1)}{2(t + e^\epsilon)^2} \quad (28)$$

$$A = \frac{(e^\epsilon + t)(t + 1)}{t(e^\epsilon - 1)} \quad (29)$$

$$L(\epsilon, x, t) = \frac{(e^\epsilon + t)(xt - 1)}{t(e^\epsilon - 1)}$$

$$R(\epsilon, x, t) = \frac{(e^\epsilon + t)(xt + 1)}{t(e^\epsilon - 1)}$$

and

$$t = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{e^{2\epsilon} + 2^{2/3} \sqrt[3]{e^{2\epsilon} - e^{4\epsilon}}} + \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{\frac{2e^{2\epsilon} - 2^{2/3} \sqrt[3]{e^{2\epsilon} - e^{4\epsilon}}}{4e^\epsilon - 2e^{3\epsilon}} + \frac{4e^\epsilon - 2e^{3\epsilon}}{\sqrt{e^{2\epsilon} + 2^{2/3} \sqrt[3]{e^{2\epsilon} - e^{4\epsilon}}}}} \\ - \frac{e^\epsilon}{2}, \text{ if } \epsilon < \ln \sqrt{2} \\ - \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{e^{2\epsilon} + 2^{2/3} \sqrt[3]{e^{2\epsilon} - e^{4\epsilon}}} + \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{\frac{2e^{2\epsilon} - 2^{2/3} \sqrt[3]{e^{2\epsilon} - e^{4\epsilon}}}{4e^\epsilon - 2e^{3\epsilon}} - \frac{4e^\epsilon - 2e^{3\epsilon}}{\sqrt{e^{2\epsilon} + 2^{2/3} \sqrt[3]{e^{2\epsilon} - e^{4\epsilon}}}}} \\ - \frac{e^\epsilon}{2}, \text{ if } \epsilon > \ln \sqrt{2} \\ \frac{\sqrt{3 + 2\sqrt{3}} - 1}{\sqrt{2}}, \text{ if } \epsilon = \ln \sqrt{2}. \end{cases} \quad (30a)$$

$$t = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{e^{2\epsilon} + 2^{2/3} \sqrt[3]{e^{2\epsilon} - e^{4\epsilon}}} + \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{\frac{2e^{2\epsilon} - 2^{2/3} \sqrt[3]{e^{2\epsilon} - e^{4\epsilon}}}{4e^\epsilon - 2e^{3\epsilon}} + \frac{4e^\epsilon - 2e^{3\epsilon}}{\sqrt{e^{2\epsilon} + 2^{2/3} \sqrt[3]{e^{2\epsilon} - e^{4\epsilon}}}}} \\ - \frac{e^\epsilon}{2}, \text{ if } \epsilon < \ln \sqrt{2} \\ - \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{e^{2\epsilon} + 2^{2/3} \sqrt[3]{e^{2\epsilon} - e^{4\epsilon}}} + \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{\frac{2e^{2\epsilon} - 2^{2/3} \sqrt[3]{e^{2\epsilon} - e^{4\epsilon}}}{4e^\epsilon - 2e^{3\epsilon}} - \frac{4e^\epsilon - 2e^{3\epsilon}}{\sqrt{e^{2\epsilon} + 2^{2/3} \sqrt[3]{e^{2\epsilon} - e^{4\epsilon}}}}} \\ - \frac{e^\epsilon}{2}, \text{ if } \epsilon > \ln \sqrt{2} \\ \frac{\sqrt{3 + 2\sqrt{3}} - 1}{\sqrt{2}}, \text{ if } \epsilon = \ln \sqrt{2}. \end{cases} \quad (30b)$$

$$t = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{e^{2\epsilon} + 2^{2/3} \sqrt[3]{e^{2\epsilon} - e^{4\epsilon}}} + \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{\frac{2e^{2\epsilon} - 2^{2/3} \sqrt[3]{e^{2\epsilon} - e^{4\epsilon}}}{4e^\epsilon - 2e^{3\epsilon}} + \frac{4e^\epsilon - 2e^{3\epsilon}}{\sqrt{e^{2\epsilon} + 2^{2/3} \sqrt[3]{e^{2\epsilon} - e^{4\epsilon}}}}} \\ - \frac{e^\epsilon}{2}, \text{ if } \epsilon < \ln \sqrt{2} \\ - \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{e^{2\epsilon} + 2^{2/3} \sqrt[3]{e^{2\epsilon} - e^{4\epsilon}}} + \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{\frac{2e^{2\epsilon} - 2^{2/3} \sqrt[3]{e^{2\epsilon} - e^{4\epsilon}}}{4e^\epsilon - 2e^{3\epsilon}} - \frac{4e^\epsilon - 2e^{3\epsilon}}{\sqrt{e^{2\epsilon} + 2^{2/3} \sqrt[3]{e^{2\epsilon} - e^{4\epsilon}}}}} \\ - \frac{e^\epsilon}{2}, \text{ if } \epsilon > \ln \sqrt{2} \\ \frac{\sqrt{3 + 2\sqrt{3}} - 1}{\sqrt{2}}, \text{ if } \epsilon = \ln \sqrt{2}. \end{cases} \quad (30c)$$

The meaning of t can be seen from $(t - 1)/(t + 1) = L(\epsilon, 1, t)/R(\epsilon, 1, t)$. When the input is $x = 1$, the length of the higher probability density function $\mathbb{P}[Y = y|x] = e^\epsilon t(e^\epsilon - 1)/(2(t + e^\epsilon)^2)$ is $R(\epsilon, 1, t) - L(\epsilon, 1, t)$. $R(\epsilon, 1, t)$ is the right boundary, and $L(\epsilon, 1, t)$ is the left boundary. If $0 < t < \infty$, we can derive $\lim_{t \rightarrow 0} (t - 1)/(t + 1) = -1$, meaning the right boundary is opposite to the left boundary if t is close to 0. Since $\lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} (t - 1)/(t + 1) = 1$, it means that the right boundary is equal to the left boundary when t is close to ∞ .

Moreover, Fig. 4 illustrates that the probability density function of (26) contains three pieces. If $y \in [L(\epsilon, x, t), R(\epsilon, x, t)]$, the probability density function is equal to c which is

Algorithm 4: PM-SUB Mechanism for 1-D Numeric Data Under LDP

Input: tuple $x \in [-1, 1]$ and privacy parameter ϵ .

Output: tuple $Y \in [-A, A]$.

```

1 Sample  $u$  uniformly at random from  $[0, 1]$ ;
2 if  $u < e^\epsilon / (e^{\epsilon/3} + e^\epsilon)$  then
3   Sample  $Y$  uniformly at random from
    $[(e^\epsilon + e^{\epsilon/3})(xe^{\epsilon/3} - 1)/e^{\epsilon/3}/(e^\epsilon - 1),$ 
    $(e^\epsilon + e^{\epsilon/3})(xe^{\epsilon/3} + 1)/e^{\epsilon/3}/(e^\epsilon - 1)]$ ;
4 else
5   Sample  $Y$  uniformly at random from
    $[-A, (e^\epsilon + e^{\epsilon/3})(xe^{\epsilon/3} - 1)/e^{\epsilon/3}/(e^\epsilon - 1)) \cup$ 
    $((e^\epsilon + e^{\epsilon/3})(xe^{\epsilon/3} + 1)/e^{\epsilon/3}/(e^\epsilon - 1), A]$ ;
6 return  $Y$ ;
```

higher than other two pieces $y \in [-A, L(\epsilon, x, t))$ and $y \in (R(\epsilon, x, t), A]$. We calculate the probability of a variable Y falling in the interval $[L(\epsilon, x, t), R(\epsilon, x, t)]$ as $\mathbb{P}[L(\epsilon, x, t) \leq Y \leq R(\epsilon, x, t)] = \int_{L(\epsilon, x, t)}^{R(\epsilon, x, t)} c \, dY = e^\epsilon / (t + e^\epsilon)$.

Furthermore, we use the following lemmas to establish how we get the value t in (26).

Lemma 6: Algorithm 3 achieves ϵ -LDP. Given an input value x , it returns a noisy value Y with $\mathbb{E}[Y|x] = x$ and

$$\text{Var}[Y|x] = \frac{t + 1}{e^\epsilon - 1} x^2 + \frac{(t + e^\epsilon)((t + 1)^3 + e^\epsilon - 1)}{3t^2(e^\epsilon - 1)^2}. \quad (31)$$

Proof: The proof details are given in Appendix I of the supplementary material. ■

Thus, when $x = 1$, we obtain the worst case noise variance as follows:

$$\max_{x \in [-1, 1]} \text{Var}[Y|x] = \frac{t + 1}{e^\epsilon - 1} + \frac{(t + e^\epsilon)((t + 1)^3 + e^\epsilon - 1)}{3t^2(e^\epsilon - 1)^2}. \quad (32)$$

Then, we obtain the optimal t in Lemma 7 to minimize (32).

Lemma 7: The optimal t for $\min_t \max_{x \in [-1, 1]} \text{Var}[Y|x]$ is (30).

Proof: By computing the first-order derivative and second-order derivative of $\min_t \max_{x \in [-1, 1]} \text{Var}[Y|x]$, we get the optimal t . The proof details are given in Appendix F of the supplementary material. ■

C. PM-SUB Mechanism

We propose a suboptimal PM (PM-SUB) to simplify the sophisticated computation of t in (4) of PM-OPT, and details of PM-SUB are shown in Algorithm 4.

Fig. 1 illustrates that PM-OPT achieves a smaller worst case noise variance compared with PM, but the parameter t for PM-OPT in (30) is complicated to compute. Some vehicles are unable to process the complicated computation. To make t simple for vehicles to implement, we need to find a simple expression for it while ensuring the mechanism's performance. Then, we find that Wang *et al.*'s [8] PM is the case when $t = e^{\epsilon/2}$. Inspired by PM, $\ln t$ and ϵ can be linearly related. Then, we find that $\ln t/\epsilon$ is close to $1/3$ [for PM-OPT in (30)], so we can set $e^{\epsilon/3}$ as t in (26) for a new mechanism named as

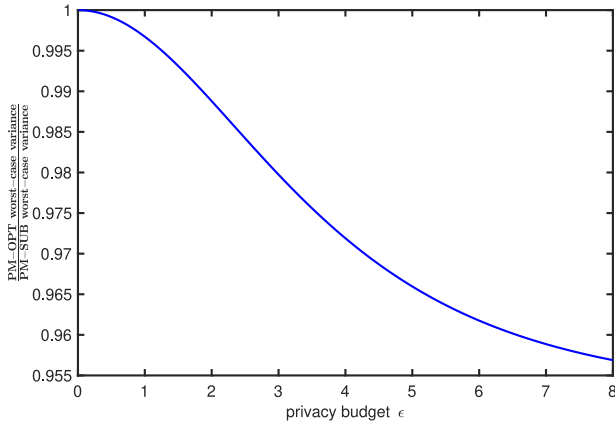


Fig. 5. PM-OPT's worst case noise variance versus PM-SUB's worst case noise variance.

Algorithm 5: Discretization Postprocessing

Input: Perturbed data $y \in [-C, C]$, and domain $[-C, C]$ is separated into $2m$ pieces, where m is a positive integer.

Output: Discrete data Z .

1 Sample a Bernoulli variable u such that

$$\mathbb{P}[u = 1] = \left(\frac{C \cdot (\lfloor \frac{m \cdot y}{C} \rfloor + 1)}{m} - y \right) \cdot \frac{m}{C};$$

2 **if** $u = 1$ **then**

3 $Z = C \cdot \lfloor \frac{m \cdot y}{C} \rfloor / m;$

4 **else**

5 $Z = C \cdot (\lfloor \frac{m \cdot y}{C} \rfloor + 1) / m;$

6 **return** $Z;$

PM-SUB. The probability of a variable Y falling in the interval $[L(\epsilon, x, e^{\epsilon/3}), R(\epsilon, x, e^{\epsilon/3})]$ is $e^{\epsilon} / (e^{\epsilon/3} + e^{\epsilon})$, and we give the detail of proof in Appendix J in the supplementary material.

Similar to PM-OPT, we derive the worst case noise variance of PM-SUB from Lemma 6 with $t = e^{\epsilon/3}$ as follows:

$$\max_{x \in [-1, 1]} \text{Var}[Y|x] = \frac{5e^{4\epsilon/3}}{3(e^{\epsilon} - 1)^2} + \frac{5e^{2\epsilon/3}}{3(e^{\epsilon} - 1)^2} + \frac{2e^{\epsilon}}{(e^{\epsilon} - 1)^2}. \quad (33)$$

As shown in Fig. 5, PM-SUB's worst case noise variance is close to PM-OPT's, but it is smaller than PM's, which can be observed in Fig. 1.

D. Discretization Postprocessing

Both PM-OPT and PM-SUB's output ranges is $[-1, 1]$ which is continuous, so that there are infinite output possibilities given an input x . Thus, it is difficult to encode their outputs for vehicles. Hence, we consider to apply a postprocessing process to discretize the continuous output range into finite output possibilities. Algorithm 5 shows our discretization postprocessing steps.

The idea of Algorithm 5 is as follows. We discretize the range of output into $2m$ parts due to the symmetric range $[-C, C]$, and then we obtain $2m + 1$ output possibilities. After

we get a perturbed data y , it will fall into one of $2m$ segments. Then, we categorize it to the left boundary or the right boundary of the segment, which resembles sampling a Bernoulli variable.

Next, we explain how we derive probabilities for the Bernoulli variable. Let the original input be x . A random variable Y represents the intermediate output after the perturbation and a random variable Z represents the output after the discretization. The range of Y is $[-C, C]$. Because the range of output is symmetric with respect to 0, we discretize both $[-C, 0]$ and $[0, C]$ into m parts, where the value of m depends on the user's requirement. Thus, we discretize Y to Z to take only the following $(2m + 1)$ values:

$$\left\{ i \times \frac{C}{m} : \text{integer } i \in \{-m, -m+1, \dots, m\} \right\}. \quad (34)$$

When Y is instantiated as $y \in [-C, C]$, we have the following two cases.

- ① If y is one of the above $(2m + 1)$ values, we set Z as y .
- ② If y is not one of the above $(2m + 1)$ values, and then there exist some integer $k \in \{-m, -m+1, \dots, m-1\}$ such that $kC/m < y < (k+1)C/m$. In fact, this gives $k < ym/C < k+1$, so we can set $k := \lfloor ym/C \rfloor$. Then conditioning on that Y is instantiated as y , we set Z as kC/m with probability $k+1 - ym/C$ and as $(k+1)C/m$ with probability $ym/C - k$, so that the expectation of Z given $Y = y$ equals y [as we will show in (145), this ensures that the expectation of Z given the original input as x equals x].

The following Lemma 8 shows the probability distribution of assigning y with a boundary value in the second case above when the intermediate output y is not one of discrete $(2m + 1)$ values.

Lemma 8: After we obtain the intermediate output y after perturbation, we discretize it to a random variable Z equal to kC/m or $(k+1)C/m$ with the following probabilities:

$$\mathbb{P}[Z = z | Y = y] = \begin{cases} k+1 - \frac{ym}{C}, & \text{if } z = \frac{kC}{m} \\ \frac{ym}{C} - k, & \text{if } z = \frac{(k+1)C}{m}. \end{cases} \quad (35)$$

Proof: The proof details are given in Appendix K of the supplementary material. ■

After discretization, the worst case noise variance does not change or get worse proved by Lemma 9 as follows.

Lemma 9: Let LDP mechanism be Mechanism \mathcal{M}_1 , and discretization algorithm be Mechanism \mathcal{M}_2 . Let all of output possibilities of Mechanism \mathcal{M}_1 be S_1 , and output possibilities of Mechanism \mathcal{M}_2 be S_2 . $S_2 \subset S_1$. When given input x , \mathcal{M}_1 and \mathcal{M}_2 are unbiased. The worst case noise variance of Mechanism \mathcal{M}_2 is greater than or equal to the worst case noise variance of Mechanism \mathcal{M}_1 .

Proof: The proof details are given in Appendix L of the supplementary material. ■

E. HM-TP Mechanism

Fig. 1 shows that Three-Outputs outperforms PM-SUB when the privacy budget ϵ is small, whereas PM-SUB

achieves a smaller variance if the privacy budget ϵ is large. To fully take advantage of two mechanisms, we combine Three-Outputs and PM-SUB to create a new hybrid mechanism named as HM-TP. Fig. 1 illustrates that HM-TP obtains a lower worst case noise variance than other solutions.

Hence, HM-TP invokes PM-SUB with probability β . Otherwise, it invokes Three-Outputs. We define the noisy variance of HM-TP as $\text{Var}_{\mathcal{H}}[Y|x]$ given inputs x as follows:

$$\text{Var}_{\mathcal{H}}[Y|x] = \beta \cdot \text{Var}_{\mathcal{P}}[Y|x] + (1 - \beta) \cdot \text{Var}_{\mathcal{T}}[Y|x]$$

where $\text{Var}_{\mathcal{P}}[Y|x]$ and $\text{Var}_{\mathcal{T}}[Y|x]$ denote noisy outputs' variances incurred by PM-SUB and Three-Outputs, respectively. The following lemma presents the value of β .

Lemma 10: The $\max_{x \in [-1, 1]} \text{Var}_{\mathcal{H}}[Y|x]$ is minimized when β is (150). Due to the complicated equation of β , we put it in the Appendix in the supplementary material.

Proof: The proof details are given in Appendix M of the supplementary material. ■

Since we have obtained the probability β , we can calculate the exact expression for the worst case noise variance in Lemma 11 as follows.

Lemma 11: If β satisfies Lemma 10, we obtain the worst case noise variance of HM-TP as

$$\begin{aligned} & \max_{x \in [-1, 1]} \text{Var}_{\mathcal{H}}[Y|x] \\ &= \begin{cases} \text{Var}_{\mathcal{H}}[Y|x^*], & \text{if } 0 < \beta \\ < \frac{2(e^\epsilon - a)^2(e^\epsilon - 1) - ae^\epsilon(e^\epsilon + 1)^2}{2(e^\epsilon - a)^2(e^\epsilon + t) - ae^\epsilon(e^\epsilon + 1)^2}, \\ \max\{\text{Var}_{\mathcal{H}}[Y|0], \text{Var}_{\mathcal{H}}[Y|1]\}, & \text{otherwise,} \end{cases} \end{aligned}$$

where $x^* := (\beta - 1)ae^\epsilon(e^\epsilon + 1)^2 / (2(e^\epsilon - a)^2(\beta(e^\epsilon + t) - e^\epsilon + 1))$ and $a = P_{0 \leftarrow 0}$ which is defined in (5).

Proof: The proof details are given in Appendix U of the supplementary material. ■

VII. MECHANISMS FOR ESTIMATION OF MULTIPLE NUMERIC ATTRIBUTES

Now, we consider a case in which the user's data record contains $d > 1$ attributes. There are three existing solutions to collect multiple attributes as follows.

- 1) The straightforward approach which collects each attribute with privacy budget ϵ/d . Based on the composition theorem [47], it satisfies ϵ -LDP after collecting of all attributes. But the added noise can be excessive if d is large [8].
- 2) Duchi *et al.*'s [22] solution, which is rather complicated, handles numeric attributes only.
- 3) Wang *et al.*'s [8] solution is the advanced approach that deals with a data tuple containing both numeric and categorical attributes. Their algorithm requires to calculate an optimal $k < d$ based on the single dimensional attribute's ϵ -LDP mechanism, and a user submits selected k dimensional attributes instead of d dimensions.

Thus, we follow Wang *et al.*'s [8] idea to extend Section VI to the case of multidimensional attributes. Algorithm 6 shows the pseudo-code of our extension for our PM-SUB,

Algorithm 6: Mechanism for Multiple-Dimensional Numeric Attributes

Input: tuple $x \in [-1, 1]^d$ and privacy parameter ϵ .
Output: tuple $Y \in [-A, A]^d$.
1 Let $Y = \langle 0, 0, \dots, 0 \rangle$;
2 Let $k = \max\{1, \min\{d, \lfloor \epsilon/2.5 \rfloor\}\}$;
3 Sample k values uniformly without replacement from $\{1, 2, \dots, d\}$;
4 **for** each sampled value j **do**
5 Feed $x[t_j]$ and ϵ/k as input to PM-SUB, Three-Outputs or HM-TP, and obtain a noisy value y_j ;
6 $Y[t_j] = (d/k)y_j$;
7 **return** Y ;

Three-Outputs, and HM-TP. Given a tuple $x \in [-1, 1]^d$, the algorithm returns a perturbed tuple Y that has nonzero value on k attributes, where

$$k = \max\left\{1, \min\left\{d, \left\lfloor \frac{\epsilon}{2.5} \right\rfloor\right\}\right\} \quad (36)$$

and Appendix S in the supplementary material proves our selected k is optimal after extending PM-SUB, Three-Outputs, and HM-TP to support d dimensional attributes.

Overall, our algorithm for collecting multiple attributes outperforms existing solutions, which is confirmed by our experiments in Section VIII. But Three-Outputs uses only one more bit compared with Duchi *et al.*'s [22] solution to encode outputs. Moreover, our Three-Outputs obtains a higher accuracy in the high privacy regime (where the privacy budget is small) and saves many bits for encoding since PM and HM's continuous output range requires infinite bits to encode, whereas PM-SUB and HM-TP's advantages are obvious at a large privacy budget. Furthermore, because vehicles cannot encode continuous range, we discretize the continuous range of outputs to discrete outputs. Our experiments in Section VII-C confirm that we can achieve similar results to algorithms before discretizing by carefully designing the number of discrete parts. Hence, our proposed algorithms are obviously more suitable for vehicles than existing solutions.

Intuitively, Algorithm 6 requires every user to submit k attributes instead of d attributes, such that the privacy budget for each attribute increases from ϵ/d to ϵ/k , which helps to minimize the noisy variance. In addition, by setting k as (36), Algorithm 6 achieves an asymptotically optimal performance while preserving privacy, which we will prove using Lemmas 12 and 13. Lemmas 12 and 13 are proved in the same way as that of Lemmas 4 and 5 in [8].

Lemma 12: Algorithm 6 satisfies ϵ -LDP. In addition, given an input tuple x , it outputs a noisy tuple Y , such that for any $j \in [1, d]$, and each t_j of those k attributes is selected uniformly at random (without replacement) from all d attributes of x , and then $\mathbb{E}[Y[t_j]] = x[t_j]$.

Proof: Algorithm 6 composes k numbers of ϵ -LDP perturbation algorithms; thus, based on composition theorem of

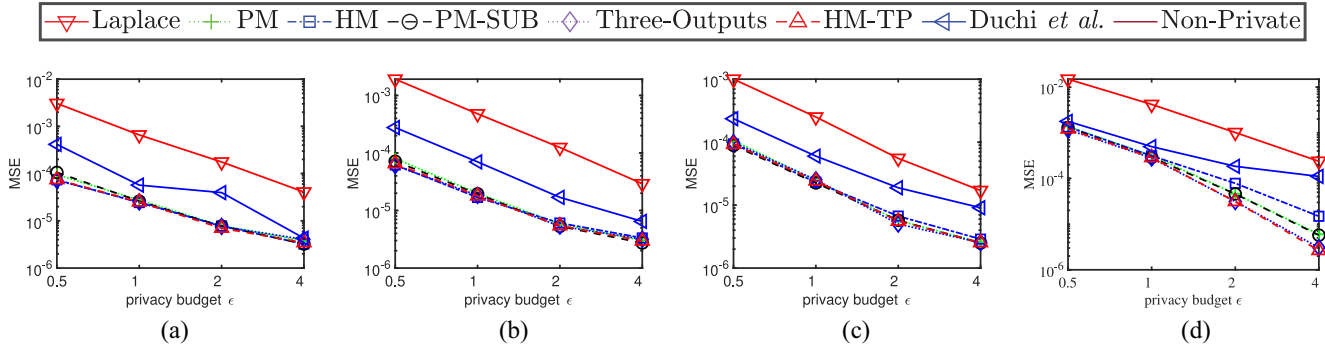


Fig. 6. Result accuracy for mean estimation (on numeric attributes). (a) MX-Numeric. (b) BR-Numeric. (c) WISDM-Numeric. (d) Vehicle-Numeric.

differential mechanism [48], Algorithm 6 satisfies ϵ -LDP. As we can see from Algorithm 6, each perturbed output Y equals to $(d/k)y_j$ with probability k/d or equals to 0 with probability $1 - k/d$. Thus, $\mathbb{E}[Y[t_j]] = k/d \cdot \mathbb{E}[d/k \cdot y_j] = \mathbb{E}[y_j] = x[t_j]$ holds. ■

Lemma 13: For any $j \in [1, d]$, let $Z[t_j] = 1/n \sum_{i=1}^n Y[t_j]$ and $X[t_j] = 1/n \sum_{i=1}^n x[t_j]$. With at least $1 - \beta$ probability

$$\max_{j \in [1, d]} |Z[t_j] - X[t_j]| = O\left(\frac{\sqrt{d \ln(d/\beta)}}{\epsilon \sqrt{n}}\right).$$

Proof: The proof details are given in Appendix R of the supplementary material. ■

VIII. EXPERIMENTS

We implemented both existing solutions and our proposed solutions, including PM-SUB, Three-Outputs, HM-TP proposed by us, PM and HM proposed by Wang *et al.* [8], Duchi *et al.*'s [22] solution and the traditional Laplace mechanism. Our data sets include 1) the WISDM Human Activity Recognition data set [49] is a set of accelerometer data collecting on Android phones from 35 subjects performing six activities, where the domain of the timestamps of the phone's uptime is removed from the data set, and the remaining three numeric attributes are accelerations in x , y , and z directions measured by the Android phone's accelerometer and two categorical attributes; 2) two public data sets extracted from Integrated Public Use Microdata Series [50] contain census records from Brazil (BR) and Mexico (MX). BR includes 4M tuples and 16 attributes, of which six are numerical and ten are categorical. MX contains 4M records and 19 attributes, of which five are numerical and 14 are categorical; and 3) a vehicle data set obtained by collecting from a distributed sensor network, including acoustic (microphone), seismic (geophone), and infrared (polarized IR sensor) [51]. The data set contains 98 528 tuples and 101 attributes, where 100 attributes are numerical representing information, such as the raw time series data observed at each sensor and acoustic feature vectors extracted from each sensor's microphone. One attribute is categorical denoting different types of vehicles, which are labeled manually by a human operator to ensure high accuracy. Besides, information about vehicles is gathered to find out the type or brand of the vehicle. The Vehicle data set is also used as the FL benchmark by [52]. We

normalize the domain of each numeric attribute to $[-1, 1]$. In our experiments, we report average results over 100 runs.

A. Results on the Mean Values of Numeric Attributes

We estimate the mean of every numeric attribute by collecting a noisy multidimensional tuple from each user. To compare with Wang *et al.*'s [8] mechanisms, we follow their experiments and then divide the total privacy budget ϵ into two parts. Assume a tuple contains d attributes which include d_n numeric attributes and d_c categorical attributes. Then, we allocate $d_n \epsilon / d$ budget to numeric attributes, and $d_c \epsilon / d$ to categorical ones, respectively. Our approach of using LDP for categorical data is same as that of Wang *et al.* [8]. We estimate the mean value for each of the numeric attributes using existing methods: 1) Duchi *et al.*'s [22] solution handles multiple numeric attributes directly; 2) when using the Laplace mechanism, it applies ϵ/d budget to each numeric attribute individually; and 3) PM and HM are from Wang *et al.* [8]. In Section VII, we evaluate the mean square error (MSE) of the estimated mean values for numeric attributes using our proposed approaches. Fig. 6 presents MSE results as a function of the total budget of ϵ in the data sets (WISDM, MX, BR and Vehicle). To simplify the complexity, we use last 6 numerical attributes of the Vehicle data set to calculate MSE. Overall, our experimental evaluation shows that our proposed approaches outperform existing solutions. HM-TP outperforms existing solutions in all settings, whereas PM-SUB's MSE is smaller than PM's when privacy budget ϵ is large, such as 4, and Three-Outputs' performance is better at a small privacy budget. Hence, experimental results are in accordance with our theories.

We also run a set of experiments on synthetic data sets that contain numeric attributes only. We create four synthetic data sets, including 16 numeric attributes where each attribute value is obtained by sampling from a Gaussian distribution with mean value $u \in \{0, 1/3, 2/3, 1\}$ and standard deviation of $1/4$. By evaluating the MSE in estimating mean values of numeric attributes with our proposed mechanisms, we present our experimental results in Fig. 7. Hereby, we confirm that PM-SUB, Three-Outputs and HM-TP outperform existing solutions.

B. Results on Empirical Risk Minimization

In the following experiments, we evaluate the proposed algorithms' performance using linear regression, logistic

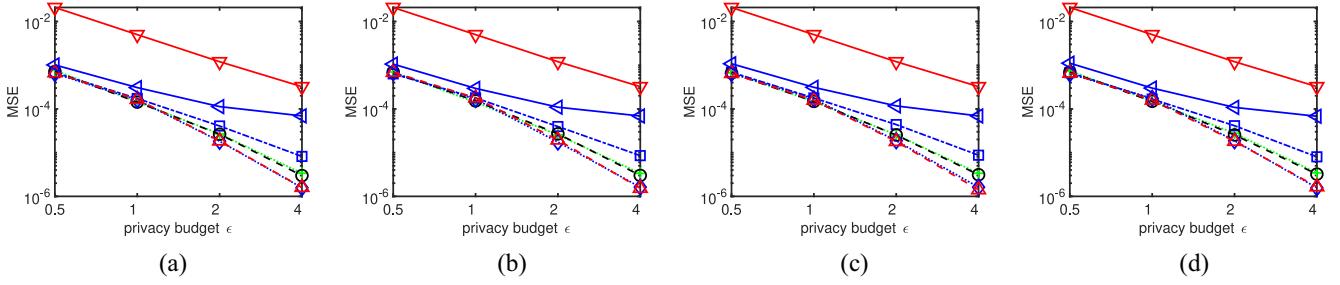


Fig. 7. Result accuracy on synthetic data sets with 16 dimensions, each of which follows a Gaussian distribution $N(\mu, 1/16)$ truncated to $[-1, 1]$. (a) $\mu = 0$. (b) $\mu = 1/3$. (c) $\mu = 2/3$. (d) $\mu = 1$.

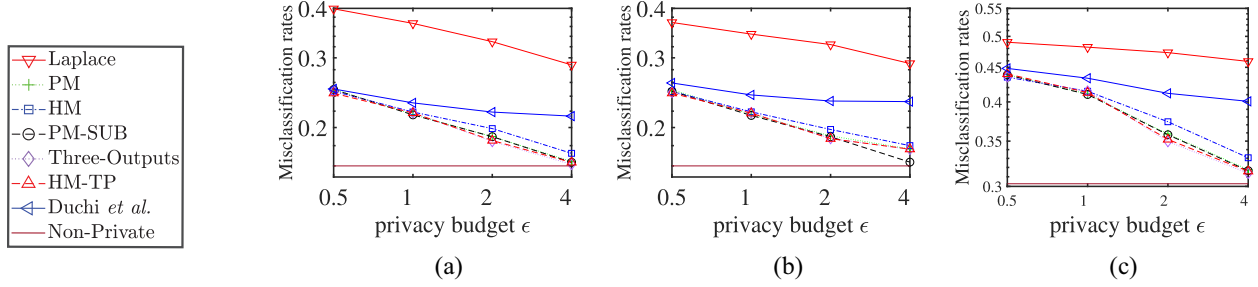


Fig. 8. Logistic regression. (a) MX. (b) BR. (c) WISDN.

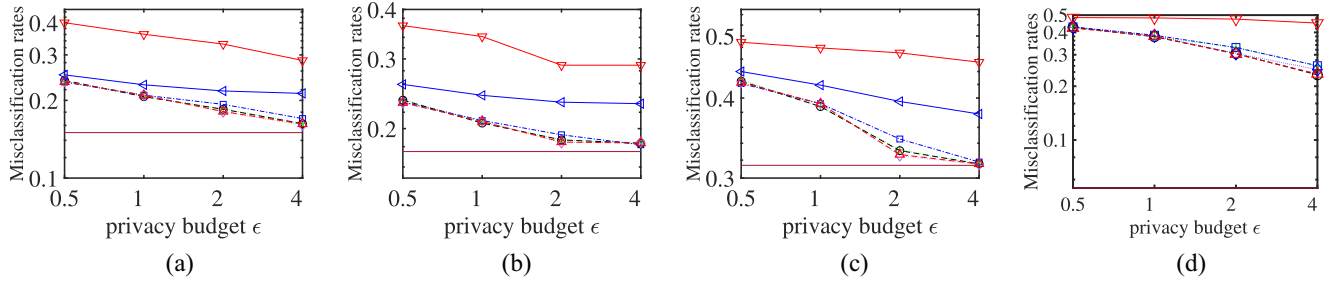


Fig. 9. Support vector machines. (a) MX. (b) BR. (c) WISDN. (d) Vehicle.

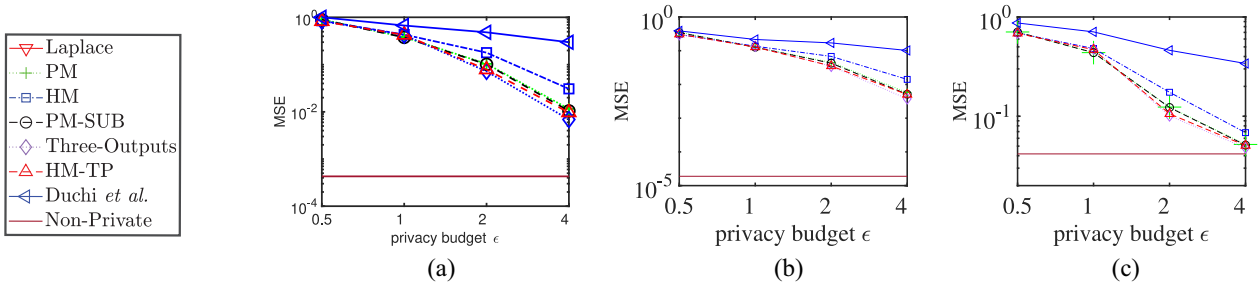


Fig. 10. Linear regression. (a) MX. (b) BR. (c) WISDN.

regression, and SVM classification tasks. We change each categorical attribute t_j with k values into $k - 1$ binary attributes with a domain $\{-1, 1\}$, for example, given $t_j = 1$ 1 represents the l th ($l < k$) value on the l th binary attribute and -1 on each of the rest of $k - 2$ attributes and 2) -1 represents the k th value on all binary attributes. After the transformation, the dimension of WISDN is 43, BR (resp. MX) is 90 (resp. 94) and Vehicle is 101. Since both the BR and MX data sets contain the “total income” attribute, we use it as the dependent variable and consider other attributes as independent variables. The Vehicle data set is used for SVM [51], [52]. Each tuple

in the Vehicle data set contains 100-D feature and a binary label.

Consider each tuple of data as the data set of a vehicle, so vehicles calculate gradients and run different LDP mechanisms to generate noisy gradients. Each mini-batch is a group of vehicles. Thus, the centralized aggregator, i.e., cloud server updates the model after each group of vehicles send noisy gradients. The experiment involves 8 competitors: PM-SUB, Three-Outputs, HM-TP, PM, HM, Duchi *et al.*’s solution, Laplace and a nonprivate setting. We set the regularization factor $\lambda = 10^{-4}$ in all approaches. We use ten-fold

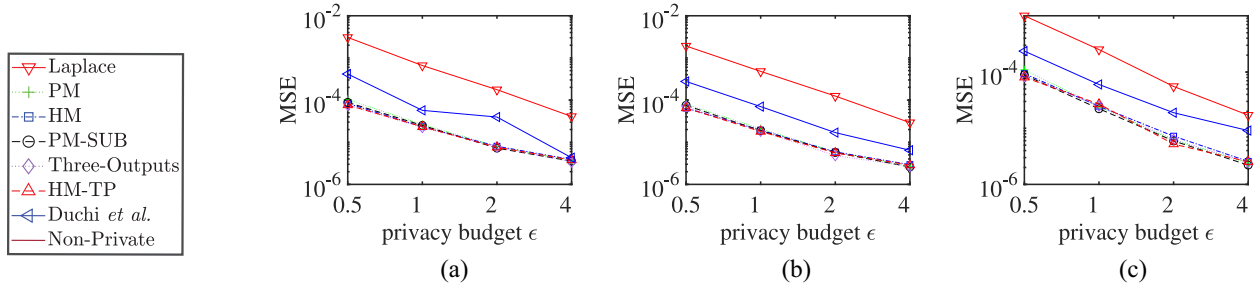


Fig. 11. Result accuracy for mean estimation with discretization post processing on PM, HM, and HM-TP. (a) MX. (b) BR. (c) WISDN.

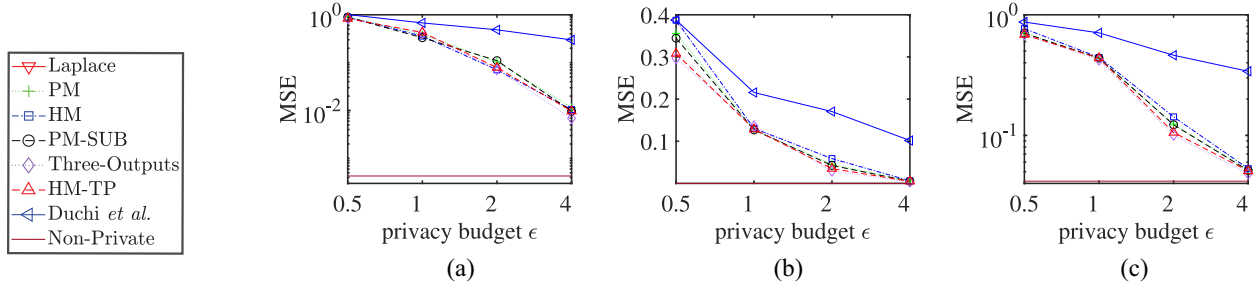


Fig. 12. Linear regression with discretization post processing on PM, HM, and HM-TP (privacy parameter $\epsilon = 4$). (a) MX. (b) BR. (c) WISDN.

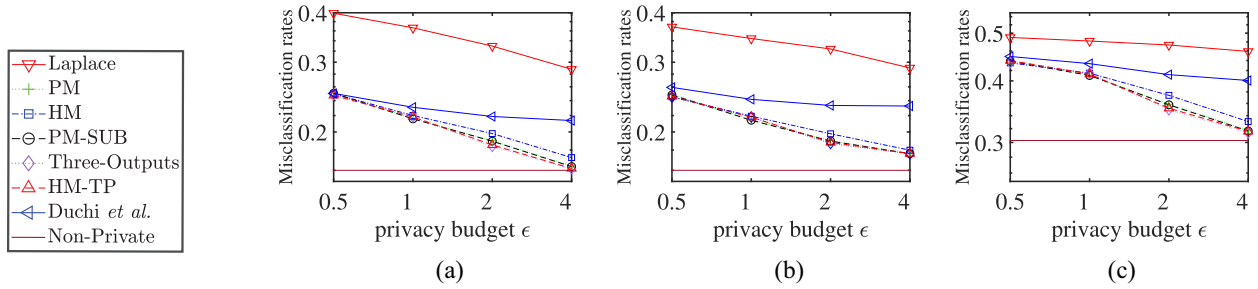


Fig. 13. Logistic regression with discretization post processing on PM, HM, and HM-TP (privacy budget $\epsilon = 4$). (a) MX. (b) BR. (c) WISDN.

cross-validation 5 times to evaluate the performance of each method in each data set. Figs. 8 and 9 show that the proposed mechanisms (PM-SUB, Three-Outputs, and HM-TP) have lower misclassification rates than other mechanisms. Fig. 10 shows the MSE of the linear regression model. We ignore Laplace's result because its MSE clearly exceeds those of other mechanisms. In the selected privacy budgets, our proposed mechanisms (PM-SUB, Three-Outputs, and HM-TP) outperform existing approaches, including Laplace mechanism, Duchi *et al.*'s solution, PM, and HM.

C. Results after Discretization

In this section, we add a discretization post processing step in Algorithm 5 to the implementation of mechanisms with continuous range of outputs, including PM, PM-SUB, HM and HM-TP. To confirm that the discretization is effective, we perform the following experiments. We separate the output domain $[-C, C]$ into 2000 segments, and then we have 2001 possible outputs given an initial input x . We add a discretization step to the experiments in Section VIII-A. Fig. 11 displays our experimental results. We confirm that our proposed approaches outperform existing solutions in

estimating the mean value using three real-world data sets: 1) WISDM; 2) MX; and 3) BR after discretizing.

In addition, we use log regression and linear regression to evaluate the performance after discretization. We repeat the experiments in Section VIII-B with an additional discretization post processing step. Figs. 12 and 13 present our experimental results. Compared with other approaches, the performance is similar to that before discretizing. Furthermore, Fig. 14 illustrates how the accuracy changes as output possibilities increase. It shows that the misclassification rate of the logistic regression task and the MSE of the linear regression task are related to the size of output possibilities. Although incurring with randomness, we find that the misclassification rate and MSE decrease as the number of output possibilities increases. When there are three output possibilities, it incurs randomness. Moreover, Fig. 15 shows that PM-SUB outperforms Three-Outputs, when the number of output possibilities is large. However, when we discretize the range of outputs into 2000 segments, the performance is satisfactory and similar to the performance with a continuous range of outputs. Hence, our proposed approaches combined with the discretization step help retain the performance while enabling the usage in vehicles.

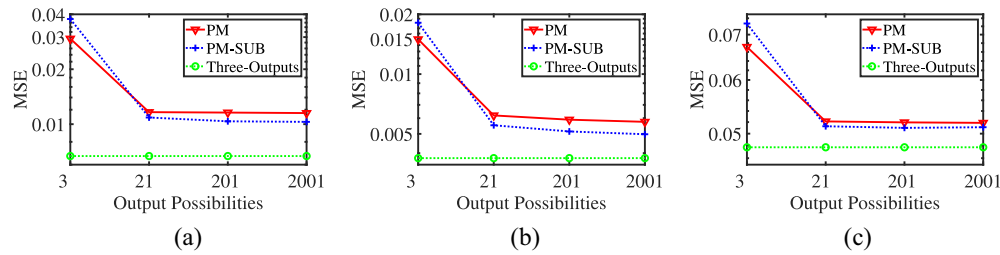


Fig. 14. Linear regression with discretization post processing on PM, HM, and HM-TP (privacy budget $\epsilon = 4$). (a) MX. (b) BR. (c) WISDN.

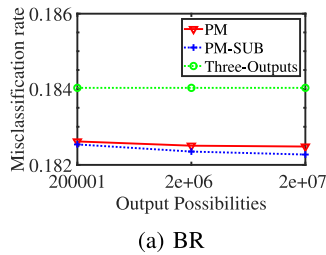


Fig. 15. Support vector machine with discretization post processing on PM, HM, and HM-TP (privacy budget $\epsilon = 5$).

IX. CONCLUSION

In this article, we propose PM-OPT, PM-SUB, Three-Outputs, and HM-TP LDP mechanisms. These mechanisms effectively preserve the privacy when collecting data records and computing accurate statistics in various data analysis tasks, including estimating the mean frequency and machine learning tasks, such as SVM classification, logistic regression, and linear regression. Moreover, we integrate our proposed LDP mechanisms with FedSGD algorithm to create an LDP-FedSGD algorithm. The LDP-FedSGD algorithm enables the vehicular crowdsourcing applications to train a machine learning model to predict the traffic status while avoiding the privacy threat and reducing the communication cost. More specifically, by leveraging LDP mechanisms, adversaries are unable to deduce the exact location information of vehicles from uploaded gradients. Then, FL enables vehicles to train their local machine learning models using collected data and then send noisy gradients instead of data to the cloud server to obtain a global model. Extensive experiments demonstrate that our proposed approaches are effective and able to perform better than existing solutions. Further, we intend to apply our proposed LDP mechanisms to deep neural network to deal with more complex data analysis tasks.

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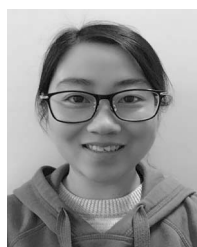
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