Universal Approximation Theorem 0/2/ Cybenko theorem

Theorem 9.3.6 (Cybenko, 1989) Let σ be an arbitrary continuous sigmoidal function in the sense of Definition 2.2.1. Then the finite sums of the form

$$G(x) = \sum_{j=1}^{N} \alpha_j \sigma(w_j^T x + \theta_j), \qquad w_j \in \mathbb{R}^n, \alpha_j, \theta_j \in \mathbb{R}$$

are dense in $C(I_n)$.

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9.7 Summary

The chapter answers the question of what kind of functions can be approximated using multiple layer networks and is based on the approximation theory results developed by Funahashi, Hornik, Stinchcombe, White, and Cybenko in the late 1980s.

The results proved in this chapter show that a one-hidden layer neural network with sigmoid neurons in the hidden layer and linear activation in the output layer can learn continuous functions, integrable functions, and square integrable functions, as well as measurable functions. The quality of neural networks to be potential universal approximators is not the specific choice of the activation function, but rather the feedforward network architecture

The price paid is that the number of neurons in the hidden layer does not have an a priori bound. However, there is a result stating that for each extra digit of accuracy gain in the target approximation, the number of hidden neurons should increase 100-fold.

The approximation results work also if the activation function is a ReLU or a Softplus. However, the proof is not a straightforward modification of the proofs provided in this chapter. The trade-off between depth, width and approximation error is still an active subject of research. For instance, in 2017, Lu et al. [79] proved an universal approximation theorem for width-bounded deep neural networks with ReLU activation functions that can approximate any Lebesgue integrable function on n-dimensional input space. Shortly after, Hanin [52] improved the result using ReLU-networks to approximate any continuous convex function of n-dimensional input variables.

Neural networks can also be used to solve numerically first-order differential equations with initial conditions.

Definition 2.2.1 A function $\sigma : \mathbb{R} \to [0, 1]$ is called sigmoidal if

 $\lim_{x \to +\infty} \sigma(x) = 1.$

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Heaviside function

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error; back propagation of con

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