

# Winning Space Race with Data Science

Janice Chan 31 Oct 2025



#### Outline

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Methodology
- Results
- Conclusion
- Appendix

# **Executive Summary**

- Space Y, new rocket launch provider, aims to compete with Space X.
- Space X Falcon 9 rocket launches with a cost of \$62M
  - Very inexpensive → reason: reuse 1<sup>st</sup> stage
- Using mission parameters (payload, orbit, etc.) to predict successful 1<sup>st</sup> stage landings
  - Accuracy rate of developed predictive models reached 83.3%
- Data-driven approach determines cost of launch
  - Enable more accurate cost assessments and competitive bidding strategies.

# Introduction - Background

- This presentation is a part of the Applied Data Science Capstone Course.
- In this capstone, I take the role of a data scientist working for a new rocket company, Space Y.
- Leveraging data science insights and predictive models from this report, Space Y can make evidence-based bids for rocket launches, enhancing its competitiveness against SpaceX.

#### Introduction – Business Issues

- Space X benefits from low-cost rocket launches.
- Space X advertises Falcon 9 rocket launches on its website with a cost of \$62M when the 1st stage can be reused.
- Space X will sacrifice the first stage due to the mission parameters like payload, orbit, and customer.
- Therefore, this report aims to use first-stage landing predictions as a proxy to estimate launch costs more accurately.



# Methodology

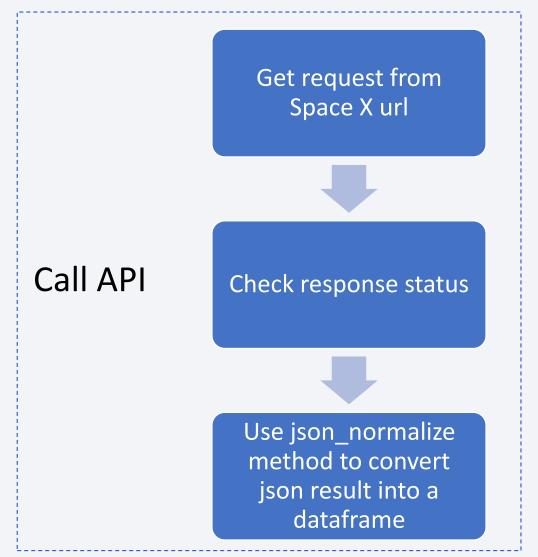
- Data Collection
- Data Wrangling
- Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA) using SQL and Visualization
- Interactive Visual Analytics using Folium and Plotly Dash
- Predictive Analysis using Classification models

#### **Data Collection**

- Two types of data collection
  - API
  - Web scraping

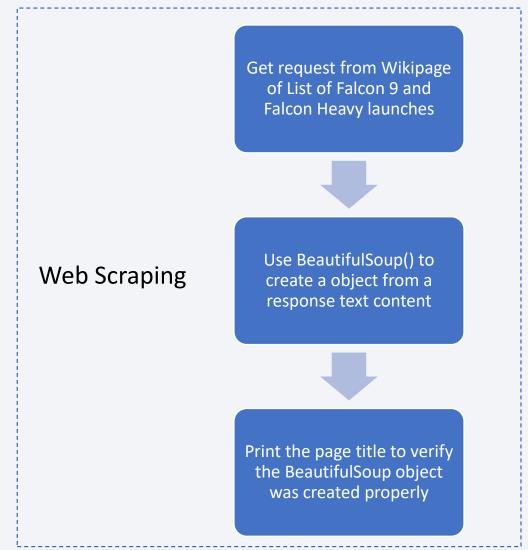
# Data Collection – SpaceX API

- Retrieved SpaceX launch history using an <u>open-source</u> REST API
- Request and parse the SpaceX launch data using the GET request
- Filter the dataframe to only include Falcon 9 launches
- Dealing with Missing Values



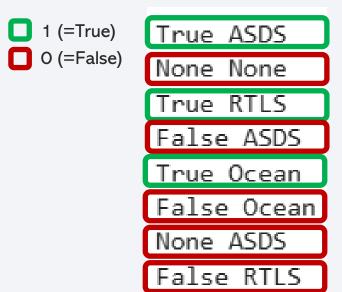
# <u>Data Collection – Web Scraping</u>

- Retrieved Falcon 9 and Falcon Heavy Launches history from Wikipedia
- Request the Falcon9 Launch Wiki page from its URL
- Extract all column/variable names from the HTML table header
- Create a dataframe by parsing the launch HTML tables



# **Data Wrangling**

- Conducted Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA) to identify data patterns
  - Apply value\_counts() on columns
  - Number of launches on each site
  - Number and occurrence of each orbit
  - Number and occurrence of mission outcome of the orbits with for loop
- Define labels for supervised learning models
  - Training label is: 'Class'
  - landing\_class = 0 if bad outcome
    - False Ocean: failure to land a specific region of ocean
    - False RTLS: failure to to land a ground pad
    - False ASDS: failure to to land a drone ship
    - None ASDS and None None: failure to land
  - landing\_class = 1 if good outcome
    - True Ocean: success to land a specific region of ocean
    - True RTLS: success to land a ground pad
    - True ASDS: success to land a drone ship



# **Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA)**

#### EDA with SQL

Load data into database called 'SPACEXTBL' table

```
import pandas as pd
df = pd.read_csv("https://cf-courses-data.s3.us.cloud-object-storage.appdomain.cloud/IBM-DS0321EN-SkillsNetwork/labs/module 2/data/Spacex.csv")
df.to_sql("SPACEXTBL", con, if_exists='replace', index=False,method="multi")
```

- Run SQL queries to retrieve and learn data about Launch site, Payload mass (kg), etc.
- EDA with Data Visualization
  - Read the SpaceX dataset into a Pandas dataframe
  - Plot graphs using Matplotlib and Seaborn visualization libraries
  - Perform Data Features Engineering
    - Apply OneHotEncoder to the categorical columns

```
FlightNumber PayloadMass Flights GridFins Reused
          1 6104.959412
                                     False
                                            False False
                                                            1.0
             525.000000
                                            False False
                                                           1.0
                                            False False
                                                            1.0
             500.000000
                                     False
                                            False False
                                            False False
          5 3170.000000
                                     False
ReusedCount Orbit ES-L1 Orbit GEO ... Serial B1048 Serial B1049
                  False
                            False ...
                                              False
                                                            False
                  False
                            False ...
                                              False
                                                            False
                  False
                            False ...
                                                            False
                                              False
```

```
# Plot a line chart with x axis to be the extracted year and y axis to be the success rate
# Create the line chart
success_rate = df.groupby('Date')['Class'].mean()

# Create the line chart
plt.figure(figsize=(8, 6)) # Optional: set the figure size
success_rate.plot(x='Date', y=success_rate, kind='line')

# Add labels and a title (optional)
plt.xlabel("Year")
plt.ylabel("success rate")

# Display the chart
plt.show()

12
```

## Data Visualization with Folium

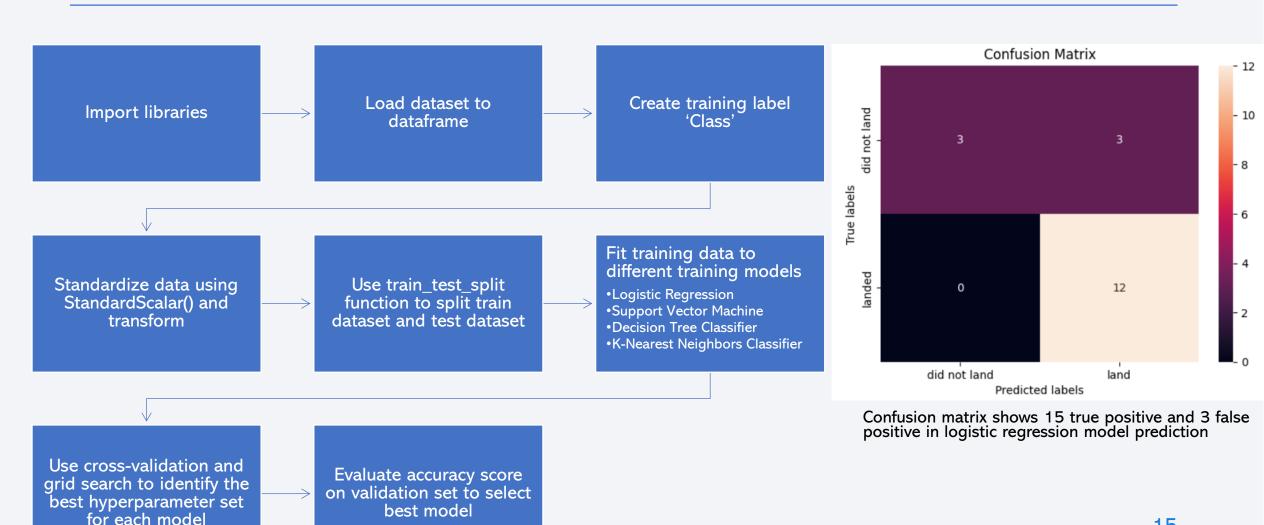
- Analysis on Launch Sites Location
  - Create interactive maps using the Folium Python library
  - Marked all launch sites on a map
  - Marked the successful/ failed launches for each site on map
  - Calculated the distances between a launch site to its proximities
    - Railways
    - Highways
    - Coastlines
    - Cities

# Data Visualization with Plotly Dash

#### Launch Record Dashboard

- Easier for stakeholders to explore interactive real-time data using Plotly Dash
- Dropdown can choose all sites or specific sites
- Pie chart show the success rate
  - Different launch site represented by different color
- Scatter chart show the correlation between payload mass and landing outcome
  - Different booster version category represented by different color
  - Range slider for limiting the payload amount

# Predictive Analysis (Classification)



# **Results**

- Results will show in the followings:
  - Exploratory data analysis results
  - Interactive analytics demo in screenshots
  - Predictive analysis results



# Results: EDA with SQL

- Name of all launch sites
  - CCAFS LC-40 %sql select distinct Launch\_Site from SPACEXTBL
  - VAFB SLC-4E
  - KSC LC-39A
  - CCAFS SLC-40
- Launch Site Names Begin with 'CCA'



Total payload carried by boosters from NASA



Average payload mass carried by booster version F9 v1.1

```
%sql select AVG(PAYLOAD_MASS__KG_) from SPACEXTBL where Booster_Version='F9 v1.1'

* sqlite:///my_data1.db
Done.

AVG(PAYLOAD_MASS__KG_)

2928.4
```

Dates of the first successful landing outcome on ground pad

```
%sql select min(Date) from SPACEXTBL where Landing_Outcome='Success (ground pad)'
  * sqlite:///my_data1.db
Done.
  min(Date)
2015-12-22
```

F9 FT B1021.2 F9 FT B1031.2

 Names of boosters which have successfully landed on drone ship and had payload mass greater than 4000 but less than 6000

```
%sql select distinct Booster_Version from SPACEXTBL where Landing_Outcome ='Success (drone ship)' and PAYLOAD_MASS__KG_ between 4000 and 6000

Booster_Version
F9 FT B1022
F9 FT B1026
```

# Results: EDA with SQL - Continued

Total number of successful and failure mission outcomes



 Names of the booster which have carried the maximum payload mass

F9 B5 B1060.2

F9 B5 B1058.3 F9 B5 B1051.6 F9 B5 B1060.3 F9 B5 B1049.7

 Booster\_Version
 where
 PAYLOAD\_MASS\_\_KG\_
 over(partition by 1) as max\_payload from SPACEXTBL) a

 Booster\_Version
 where
 PAYLOAD\_MASS\_\_KG\_
 = max\_payload

 F9 B5 B1048.4
 F9 B5 B1049.4
 F9 B5 B1051.3
 F9 B5 B1056.4

 F9 B5 B1048.5
 F9 B5 B1049.5
 F9 B5 B1049.5

 Failed landing\_outcomes in drone ship, their booster versions, and launch site names for in year 2015

%sql select distinct substr(Date, 6,2) as month, Landing\_Outcome, Booster\_Version, Launch\_Site from SPACEXTBL
where Landing\_Outcome = 'Failure (drone ship)' and substr(Date,0,5) = '2015'
month Landing\_Outcome Booster\_Version Launch\_Site

month	Landing_Outcome	Booster_Version	Launch_Site
01	Failure (drone ship)	F9 v1.1 B1012	CCAFS LC-40
04	Failure (drone ship)	F9 v1.1 B1015	CCAFS LC-40

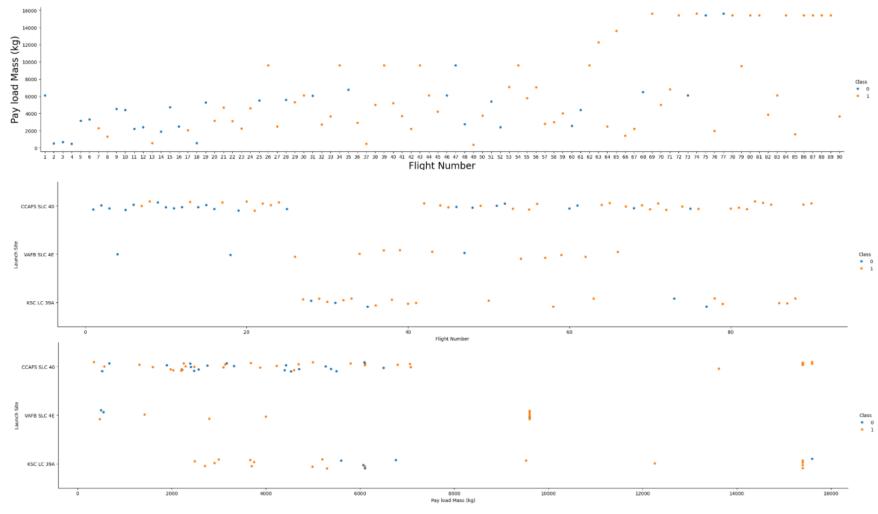
Rank Landing Outcomes Between 2010-06-04 and 2017-03-20

%sql select distinct Landing\_Outcome, count(1) as outcome\_rank from SPACEXTBL where Date between '2010-06-04' and '2017-03-20
group by Landing Outcome order by count(1) desc

outcome_rank	
10	
5	
5	
3	
3	
2	
2	
1	

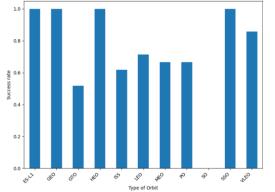
## Results: EDA with Visualization

- Flight Number vs. Payload Mass (kg)
  - 1<sup>st</sup> stage successful land is positively correlated to flight number but tends to negatively related to payload mass. 1<sup>st</sup> stage failure land has no pattern.
- Flight Number vs. Launch Site
  - CCAFS SLC 40 has the most failure land in 1<sup>st</sup> stage, while others have more successful land in 1<sup>st</sup> stage.
- Payload Mass (kg) vs. Launch Site
  - CCAFS SLC 40 has more 1<sup>st</sup> stage successful land at heavier payload mass, while VAFB SLC 4E and KSC LC 39A are more 1<sup>st</sup> stage successful land in different payload mass.

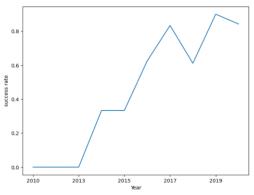


## Results: EDA with Visualization

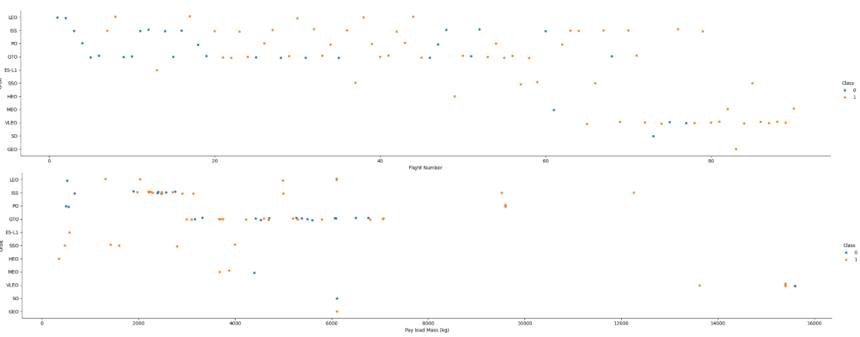
- Type of Orbit vs. Success rate
  - Only 'SO' did not have successful land in 1<sup>st</sup> stage, while all others type of orbits have successful land in 1<sup>st</sup> stage.



- Launch Success Yearly Trend
  - Launch year is positively correlated to the success rate since 2013.

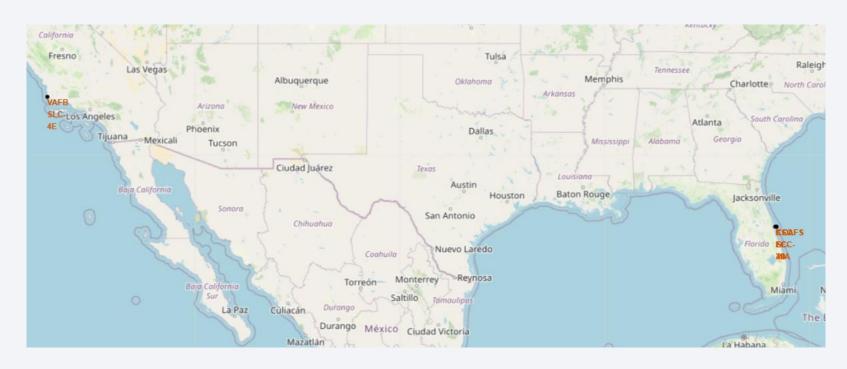


- Flight Number vs. Type of Orbit
  - Flight number is positively correlated to all type of orbit, which have more successful land in 1<sup>st</sup> stage with larger flight number.
- Payload Mass (kg) vs. Type of Orbit
  - Lighter payload mass has positive influence on SSO, heavier payloads have a negative influence on GTO, but positive influence on ISS.





# Results: All launch sites on a map

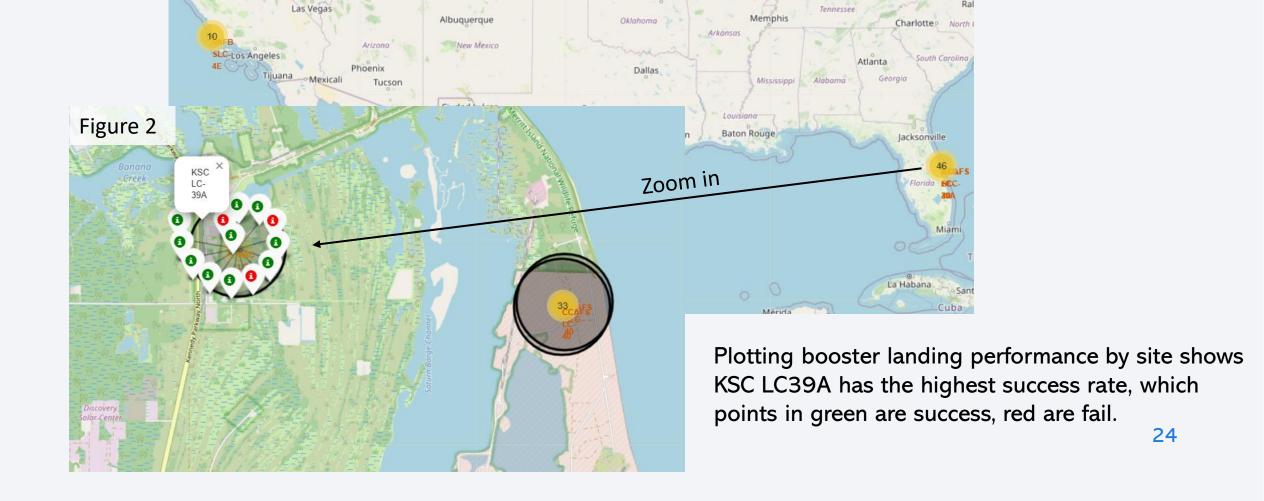


Plotting launch sites emphasizes their proximity to the coast and equator.

## Results: Success/failed launches for each site on the map

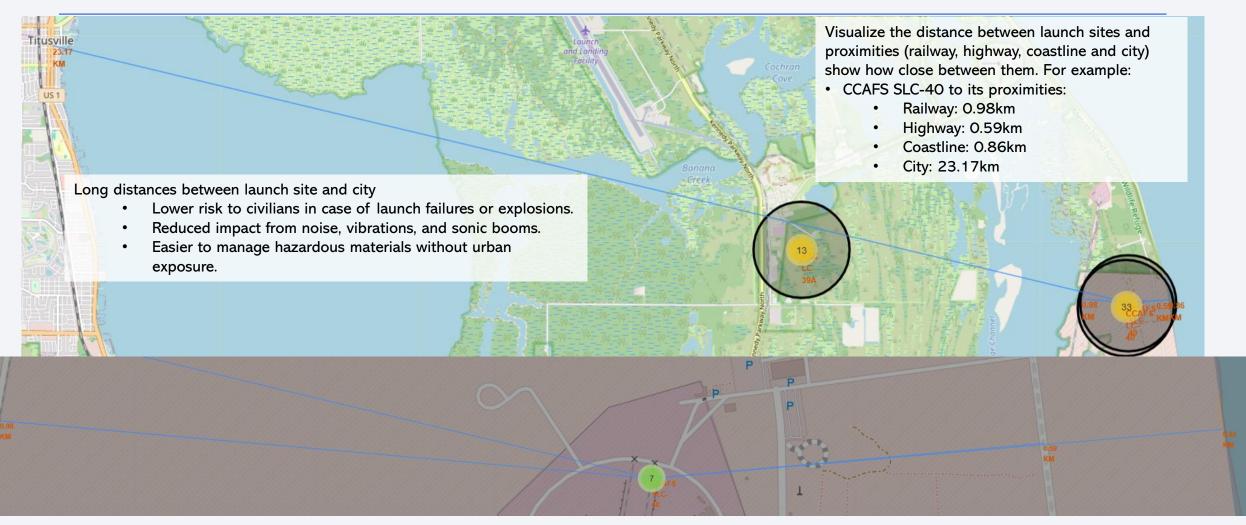
Figure 1

Fresno



Kentucky.

# Results: Distances between launch site to its proximities

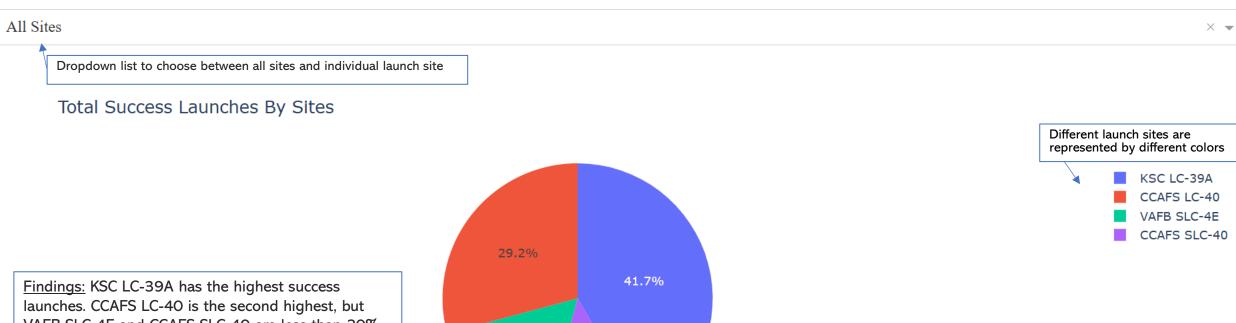


- · Short distances between launch site and railway, highway, coastline
  - faster and cheaper transportation of heavy equipment, and fuel.
  - · Easier movement of oversized components like boosters and payloads
- Launches over the ocean, minimizing risk to people and property.
- · Easier recovery of reusable rocket stages and capsules from the sea.

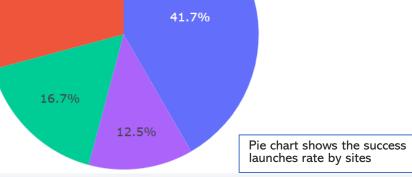


#### Results: Launch Records Dashboard – All Sites

## SpaceX Launch Records Dashboard



VAFB SLC-4E and CCAFS SLC-40 are less than 20% success launches.



#### Results: Launch Records Dashboard – Sites with highest launch success ratio

## SpaceX Launch Records Dashboard

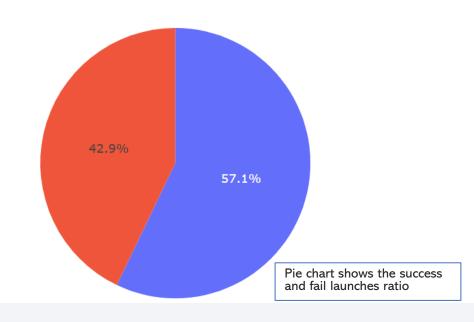
\_\_\_\_\_

CCAFS SLC-40

Total Success Launches for site CCAFS SLC-40

Dropdown list to choose between all sites and individual launch site

<u>Findings:</u> CCAFS SLC-40 has the highest launch success rate. CCAFS LC-40 is the second highest with around 40% success rate, while VAFB SLC-4E and KSC LC-39A are less than 30% success rate.

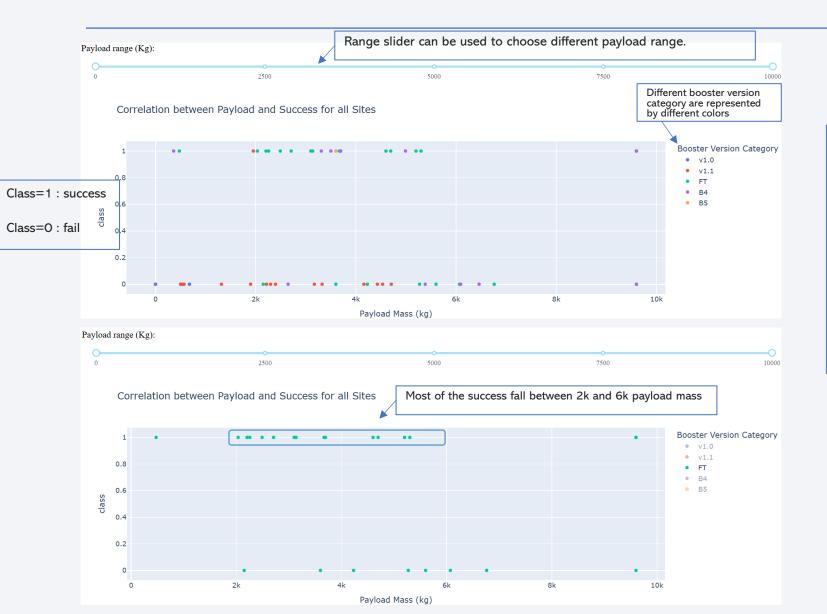


Fail class (=0) in blue; Success class (=1) is red

0 1

X w

#### Results: Launch Records Dashboard – Payload vs Success for All sites

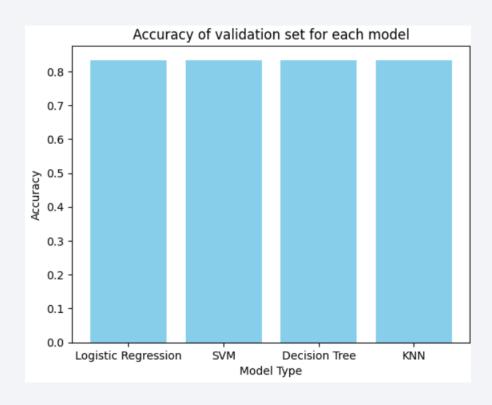


#### Findings:

- Most of the success are fall into the payload range between 2000kg and 6000kg.
- The highest success rate of booster version category is FT with less fail rate.
- Other booster version category are tended to more failure.

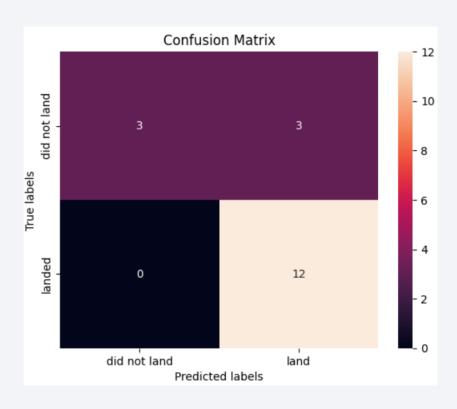


# **Classification Accuracy**



All models have the same accuracy which is 83.33%

## **Confusion Matrix**



All models have the same confusion matrix.

There are 15 true positive and 3 false positive out of 18 samples in validation set at the 1<sup>st</sup> stage booster.

#### **Conclusions**

- Step-by-step to determine the cost of launch
  - Data collection through Space X API and Web scraping about Falcon 9 and Falcon Heavy Launches history
  - Data wrangling to clean and transform raw data to usable format for analysis
  - Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA) using SQL and Visualization to find the patterns in data
  - Interactive Visual Analytics using Folium to drill down and analyze launch site locations and Plotly Dash to explore interactive real-time data to show the correlation between parameters.
  - Predictive Analysis using Classification models can predict Space X would land the 1st stage booster successfully with 83.3% accuracy.
- Improvement to have better competitiveness against Space X
  - Add more useful information as dataset
  - Use other predictive models to train
  - Fine-tune the models with feature engineering and re-fit with whole training dataset

# **Appendix**

#### Data collection

- Space X API <a href="https://github.com/r-spacex/SpaceX-API">https://github.com/r-spacex/SpaceX-API</a>
- Falcon 9 and Falcon Heavy launches <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\_of\_Falcon\_9\_and\_Falcon\_Heavy\_launches">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\_of\_Falcon\_9\_and\_Falcon\_Heavy\_launches</a>

#### Notebook outputs

- Data Collection API https://github.com/Platinum900/Applied-Data-Science/blob/main/lab1.1\_Data\_Collection\_API.ipynb
- Data Collection Web scraping https://github.com/Platinum900/Applied-Data-Science/blob/main/lab1.2 Data Collection Web Scraping.ipynb
- Data Wrangling https://github.com/Platinum900/Applied-Data-Science/blob/main/lab2\_Data\_Wrangling.ipynb
- EDA SQL https://github.com/Platinum900/Applied-Data-Science/blob/main/lab3.1\_EDA\_SQL.ipynb
- EDA Visualization <a href="https://github.com/Platinum900/Applied-Data-Science/blob/main/lab3.2\_EDA\_Visualization.ipynb">https://github.com/Platinum900/Applied-Data-Science/blob/main/lab3.2\_EDA\_Visualization.ipynb</a>
- Launch site location using Folium https://github.com/Platinum900/Applied-Data-Science/blob/main/lab4.1\_Launch\_site\_location\_Folium.ipynb
- Dashboard using Plotly Dash <a href="https://github.com/Platinum900/Applied-Data-Science/blob/main/lab4.2\_Dashboard\_Plotly\_Dash.py">https://github.com/Platinum900/Applied-Data-Science/blob/main/lab4.2\_Dashboard\_Plotly\_Dash.py</a>
- Machine learning prediction <a href="https://github.com/Platinum900/Applied-Data-Science/blob/main/lab5\_SpaceX\_Machine%20Learning%20Prediction.ipynb">https://github.com/Platinum900/Applied-Data-Science/blob/main/lab5\_SpaceX\_Machine%20Learning%20Prediction.ipynb</a>
- SpaceX booster prediction presentation https://github.com/Platinum900/Applied-Data-Science/blob/main/spacex\_booster\_prediction\_presentation.pdf

