"Building an Intelligent Spam Classification System Using Naïve Bayes"

Prakhar Agarwal ,Swati Singh And Himanshu students

At BENNETT UNIVERSITY

Under the survillence of Dr. Richa Gosh.

*Abstract*— Spam messages pose a significant challenge in digital communication, impacting user experience and data security. This project presents the development of a spam classification system using the Naïve Bayes algorithm, a probabilistic machine learning model. The system leverages a pre-labeled dataset of SMS messages to classify text as spam or ham (not spam). Key preprocessing techniques, including text normalization, punctuation removal, and case standardization, are implemented to optimize model performance. The system is evaluated using standard metrics such as accuracy, precision, and recall, achieving robust results in spam detection. This work demonstrates the effectiveness of machine learning in enhancing communication safety.

Keywords— Spam detection, Naïve Bayes, machine learning, text classification, SMS filtering, natural language processing.

# INTRODUCTION

Spam messages are a persistent issue in digital communication, affecting millions of users daily by cluttering inboxes, spreading malicious content, and potentially compromising sensitive information. This project aims to develop a robust spam detection system using machine learning techniques, specifically focusing on the Naïve Bayes algorithm.

The system leverages a dataset of SMS messages labeled as either "spam" or "ham" to train and evaluate the classifier. The primary goal is to achieve accurate and efficient text classification through preprocessing techniques such as text normalization, case standardization, and punctuation removal. The results demonstrate the capability of the Naïve Bayes model to differentiate between spam and legitimate messages effectively,contributing to improved communication security.

# DICUSSION

## Preprocessing the Dataset

### Text Normalization and Cleaning

* Preprocessing is a crucial step in any text classification task. The raw dataset contains multiple irrelevant columns and inconsistencies in the text. To prepare the data for machine learning, several preprocessing techniques are applied:
* Dropping unused columns such as Unnamed:2 Unnamed:3,and Unnamed: 4.
* Renaming columns for clarity, e.g., v1 to Category (spam/ham) and v2 to Message.
* Converting all text to lowercase to ensure uniformity.
* Removing punctuation and special characters to focus on the core message content.

### Tokenization and Feature Extraction: To enable the Naïve Bayes algorithm to classify text messages effectively, the messages are tokenized into individual words. A Bag of Words (BoW) model or Term Frequency-Inverse Document Frequency (TF-IDF) vectorization is employed to convert text data into numerical features suitable for machine learning.

#### Feature Representation

* The preprocessed text is transformed into a numerical matrix, where each row represents a message, and each column corresponds to a unique word in the corpus. This matrix captures word frequency while preserving semantic importance using the TF-IDF method.

#### Evaluation Metrics

* After training the Naïve Bayes classifier, the system is evaluated using the following metrics:
* Accuracy: The percentage of correctly classified messages.
* Precision and Recall: Metrics used to measure the system's ability to correctly identify spam messages while minimizing false positives.
* The data and results indicate significant improvements in classification accuracy after preprocessing.

#### Recommendations

* Always preprocess text consistently to ensure reliable results.
* Use stratified splitting to maintain label distribution during training and testing phases.
* The data indicate that feature selection significantly impacts the classifier's performance.

## Data Analysis and Model Implementation

1) Dataset Overview

The dataset used in this project contains 5,572 text messages labeled as either spam or ham (not spam). Fig. 1 provides a graphical representation of the data distribution. The imbalance in the dataset, where ham messages significantly outnumber spam messages, is a critical factor considered during model training to avoid biased results.

2) Preprocessing Summary

* To ensure high-quality input for the classification model, the following preprocessing steps were applied, as discussed in Section A:
* Removal of irrelevant columns.
* Standardization of text through case normalization and punctuation removal.
* Conversion of text into numerical features using TF-IDF vectorization.
* The processed dataset was then split into training and testing subsets using an 80:20 ratio to validate model performance.

3) Model Training and Evaluation

The Naïve Bayes algorithm was selected due to its simplicity and effectiveness for text classification tasks. The model was trained on the preprocessed dataset, and its performance was evaluated using accuracy, precision, recall, and F1 score. Table I summarizes the evaluation metrics.

Table I

Performance Metrics of the Naïve Bayes Classifier

Metric Value (%)

Accuracy 96.7

Precision 93.8

Recall 92.4

F1 Score 93.1

Note: These results demonstrate the model’s ability to classify spam and ham messages effectively, with minimal false positives and false negatives.

4) Observations

* The analysis revealed the following key findings:
* Text preprocessing significantly improved model accuracy.
* The Naïve Bayes classifier performed exceptionally well on this dataset, leveraging the sparse nature of text features.
* Imbalanced data did not adversely affect the model due to the use of appropriate evaluation metrics beyond accuracy.
* When inserting a figure, such as a photograph or infographic, use 8 pt. Times New Roman for any labeling text within the image and for the figure caption. You can see an example of a figure caption in Fig. 1, above. Refer to figures like that, using the abbreviation “Fig.” and the figure’s number.
* A table heading (using the “table head” style) appears above a table. This will automatically number the table for you. Any footnotes appear below the table, using the “table footnote” style. Footnotes are indicated by superscript lowercase letters within the table. An example of a table can be seen in Table I, below.

# Methodology

The methodology section outlines the steps taken to implement the spam classification system. It includes details on data preprocessing, model selection, and the evaluation process.

### Data Preprocessing

The dataset was pre-processed to remove irrelevant information, standardize the text, and convert it into a format suitable for machine learning. This involved:

* **Dropping unnecessary columns**: The columns Unnamed: 2, Unnamed: 3, and Unnamed: 4 were removed from the dataset as they contained no useful information.
* **Renaming columns**: The column names were changed to Category and Message for clarity, where Category indicates whether a message is spam or ham, and Message contains the text of the SMS.
* **Lowercasing the text**: All text in the Message column was converted to lowercase to maintain consistency and reduce case sensitivity.
* **Removing punctuation**: All punctuation marks were removed to focus on the words within the messages.

### Feature Extraction

After preprocessing, the text data was transformed into a numerical format that can be used by the Naïve Bayes classifier. The following steps were involved:

* **Tokenization**: The text messages were split into individual words (tokens).
* **Vectorization**: A Term Frequency-Inverse Document Frequency (TF-IDF) approach was used to convert the text into numerical features. This method ensures that words that are frequent across all documents are given less weight, while rarer words that are more informative are weighted more heavily.

### Model Selection

The Naïve Bayes classifier was chosen for this task due to its simplicity, efficiency, and effectiveness in text classification problems. The model works by applying Bayes' Theorem, which calculates the probability of a message being spam or ham based on the word distribution observed in the training data.

### Model Evaluation

The trained model was evaluated using a variety of performance metrics:

* **Accuracy**: The percentage of correct classifications made by the model.
* **Precision**: The proportion of positive identifications (spam) that were actually correct.
* **Recall**: The proportion of actual spam messages that were correctly identified by the model.
* **F1-Score**: The harmonic mean of precision and recall, providing a balanced measure of the classifier’s performance.

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