

Stochastic (random) variables

Definition

A random variable X is a function that takes its values from the sample space.

$$X : S \rightarrow \mathbb{R} \quad (1)$$

For a set A we note

$$P(X \in A) = P(\{s \in S, X(s) \in A\}) \quad (2)$$

Cumulative distribution function

Let X be a random variable with cumulative distribution function F . Then F verifies the following properties:

1. For $a, b \in \mathbb{R}$ with $a < b$
 $F(b) - F(a) = P(a < X \leq b) = P(a < x \leq b)$
2. $F(x) = 1 - P(X > x)$, for $x \in \mathbb{R}$
3. F is *cadlag*: right-continuous with limits from the left
4. $\lim_{x \rightarrow -\infty} F(x) = 0$ and $\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} F(x) = 1$

The cumulative distribution function (cdf) F_x characterizes X completely.

Probability mass function

Let $\{x_1, x_2, \dots\}$ be the values of the discrete random variable X .

The function $p(x_k) = P(X = x_k)$, $k = 1, 2, \dots$ is called the probability mass function.

Let X be a random variable with cdf F and pdf p .

Then we have the following properties:

1. $F(x_k) = \sum_{x_j \leq x_k} p(x_j)$

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Continuous variable

If F_x is continuously differentiable, X is called a continuous random variable.

The function $f = F'_x$ is called the probability density function of X .

Let X be a continuous random variable with cdf F and pdf f .

Then

1. $F(x) = \int_{-\infty}^x f(t)dt$
2. $f(x) = F'_x(x)$
3. $P(x \in B) = \int_B f(x)dt$

f characterizes X completely.

The uniform distribution

X is a uniform distribution on $[a, b]$ for $a < b$ if $f(x) = \frac{1}{b-a}$ if $x \in [a, b]$.

We write $X \sim Unif([a, b])$

Let $X \sim Unif([0, 1])$ and $Y = a + (b - a)X$.

Then $Y \sim Unif([a, b])$

Proof For $y \in \mathbb{R}$

$$F_Y(y) = P(Y \leq y) = P(a + (b - a)X \leq y) = P(X \leq \frac{y-a}{b-a})$$

A X in $Unif([0, 1])$; we have

1. $F_X(x) = x$ if $x \in [0, 1]$
2. $F_X(x) = 0$ if $x \leq 0$
3. $F_X(x) = 1$ if $x \geq 1$

Hence

1. $F_Y(y) = \frac{y-a}{b-a}$ if $y \in [a, b]$
2. $F_Y(y) = 0$ if $y \leq a$
3. $F_Y(y) = 1$ if $y \geq b$

Therefore $f_Y(y) = F'_Y(y) = \frac{1}{b-a}$ if $y \in [a, b]$.

Let X be a random variable, $a, c \in \mathbb{R}$

Then