

# Sample Complexity of Diffusion Models for Learning Distributions on Low Dimensional Manifolds

Zixuan Zhang

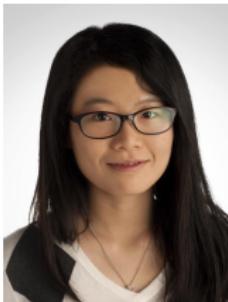
Georgia Tech ISyE

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# Joint Work with



Kaixuan Huang Mengdi Wang  
Princeton Univ.



Tuo Zhao  
Georgia Tech



Minshuo Chen  
Northwestern Univ.

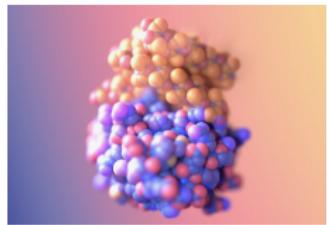
# Transformative Power of Diffusion Models



*DALL-E 3 by OpenAI*  
**Image Generation**



*Sora by OpenAI*  
**Video Generation**



*RFdiffusion by UW*  
**Protein Design**

# Diffusion Model in Generation

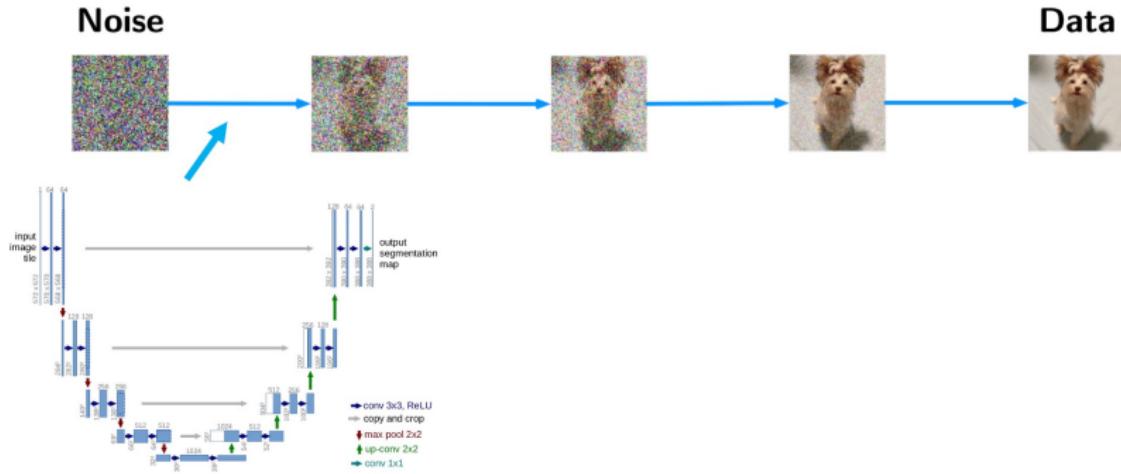
- Generate samples from noise.
- Sequential transformation.



(Sohl-Dickstein et. al., 2015, Song and Ermon, 2019, Ho et. al., 2020)

# Diffusion Model in Generation

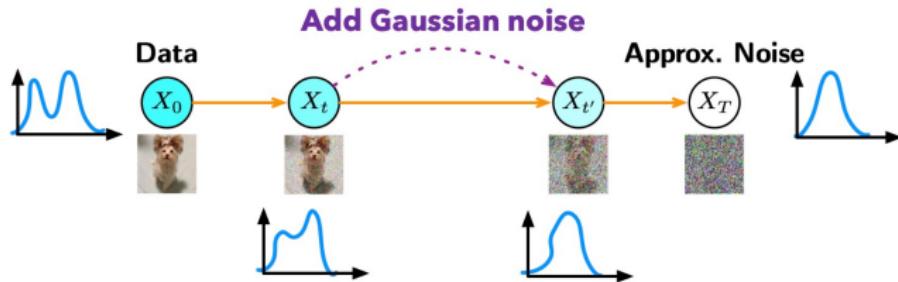
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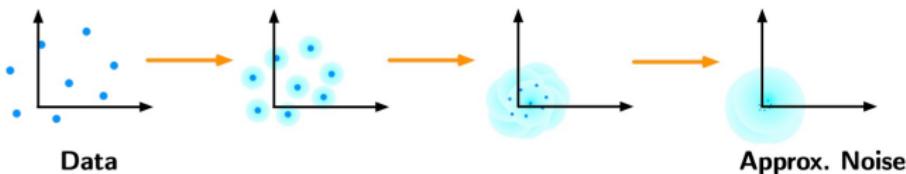
# Forward Process - Noise Corruption

- Noise corruption process



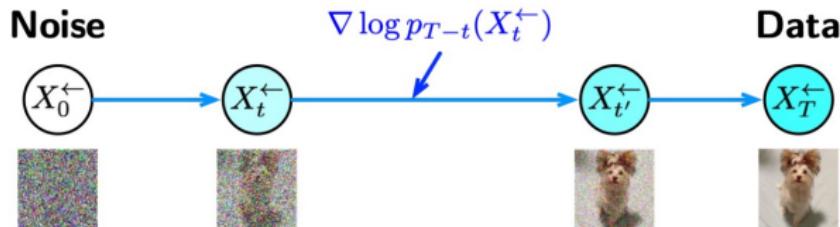
$$dX_t = -\frac{1}{2}X_t dt + dW_t$$

- Data distribution transformed into centered Gaussian



# Backward Process - Sample Generation

- ### ■ Time reversal in distribution



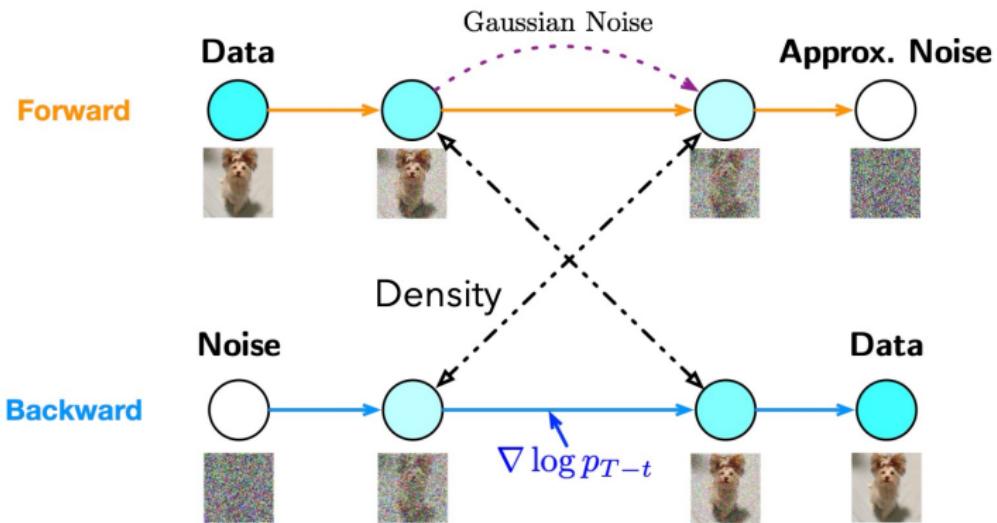
**Forward Process**  $dX_t = -\frac{1}{2}X_t dt + dW_t$

$$\text{Backward Process} \quad dX_t^\leftarrow = \left[ \frac{1}{2} X_t + \nabla \log p_{T-t}(X_t^\leftarrow) \right] dt + d\bar{W}_t$$

Score function

(Anderson, 1982; Haussmann and Pardoux, 1986)

# Forward and Backward Coupling



# Success Despite Curse of Dimensionality

- Sample size (Niles-Weed and Berthet, 2022).

$$\#\text{samples} \asymp \epsilon^{-\frac{D+2s}{s+1}}.$$

- ImageNet resolution:  $D = 224 \times 224 \times 3$ .

$$\#\text{samples} \geq 10^{224 \times 224}.$$



- However, diffusion models are trained with  $< 7B$  samples (Schuhmann et. al., 2022).

$\epsilon$  – error level;  $D$  – data dimensional;  $s$  – smoothness.

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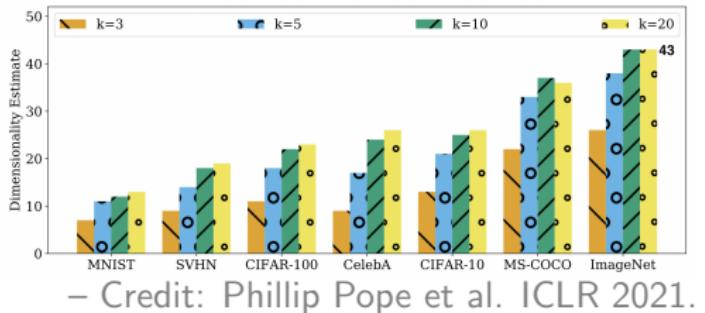
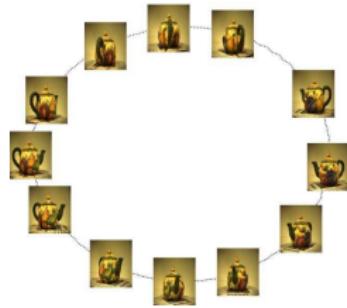


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# Good News: Low-Dimensional Data Structures



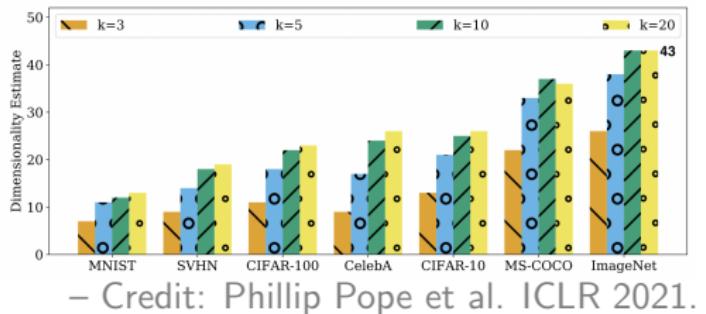
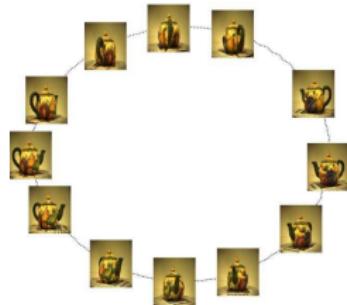
– Credit: Phillip Pope et al. ICLR 2021.

**Intrinsic dimension  $d \ll$  Ambient dimension  $D$ .**

- Deep neural networks are **adaptive** in supervised learning (Chen et. al., 2022; Liu et. al., 2023; Ji et. al., 2023).
- Sample complexity **scales with  $d$  instead of  $D$ .**

Can we establish the **sample complexity** of diffusion models,  
free of curse of ambient dimensionality?

# Good News: Low-Dimensional Data Structures



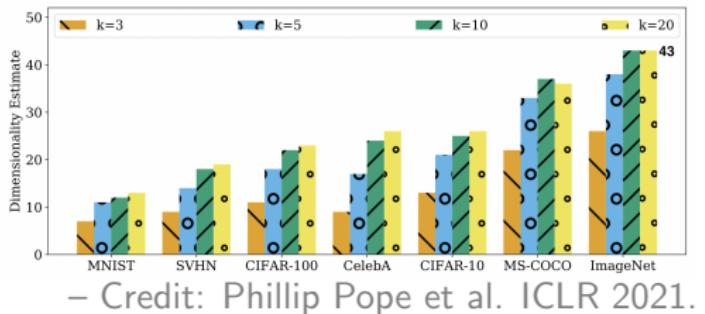
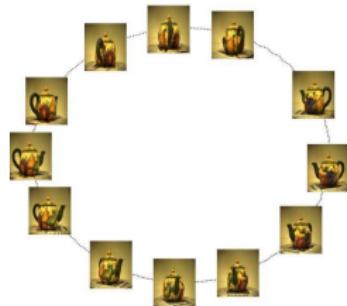
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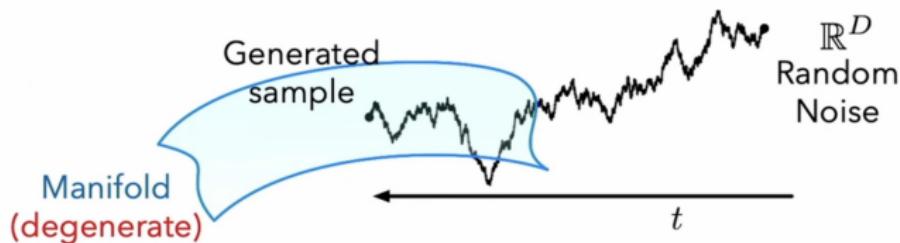
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# However...

- Prior arts are not enough to explain diffusion models.
  - Diffusion model is unsupervised learning.
  - Diffusion model is a dynamic system, implemented in  $\mathbb{R}^D$ .

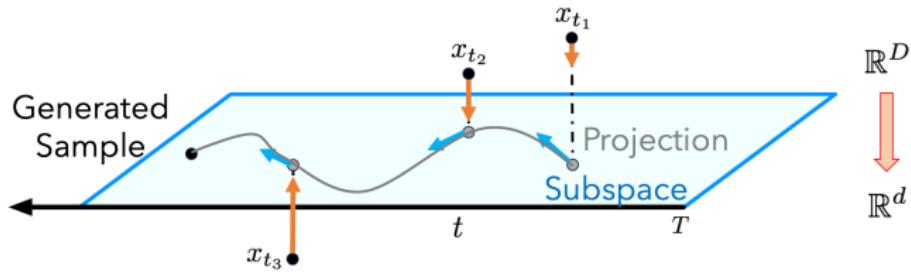


# Simple but Insightful: Linear Subspace

- The score function consists of two components, on-subspace score and orthogonal score (Chen et. al., 2023).

$$\nabla \log p_t(x) = \textcolor{red}{A} \nabla \log p_t^z(\textcolor{red}{A}^\top x) - \frac{1}{1 - e^{-t}} (I_D - AA^\top)x$$

On-subspace                                      Orthogonal

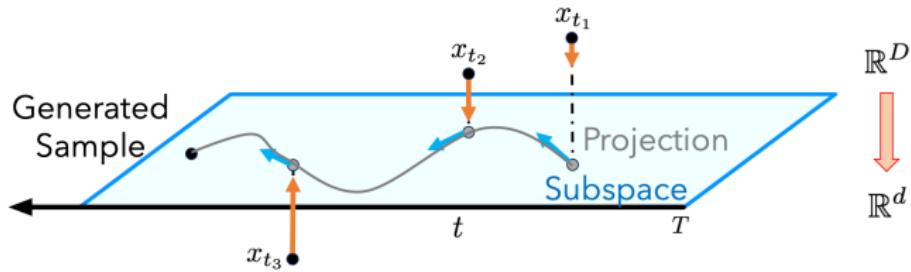


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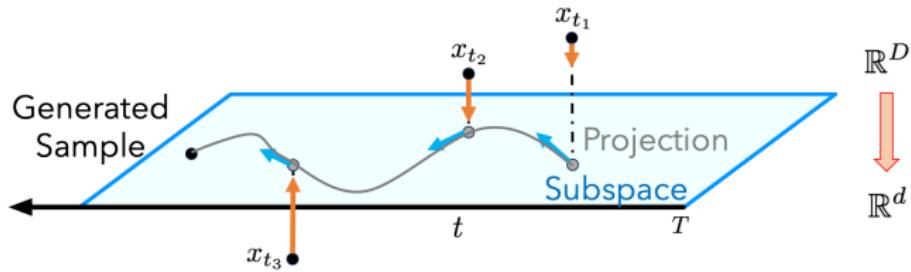


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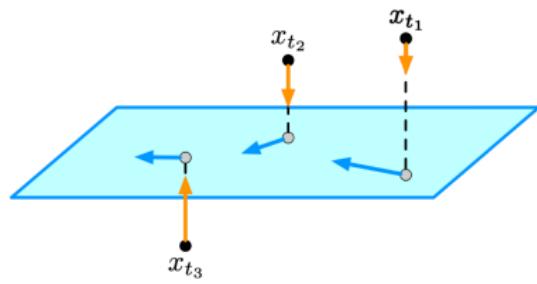
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On-subspace Orthogonal

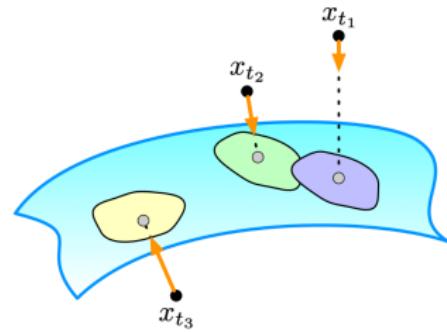


# Delve into Manifolds

Linear Subspace



Manifold



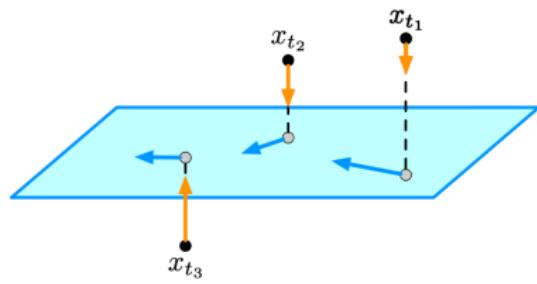
Score = On-subspace + Orthogonal

Score = On-manifold + Orthogonal  
+ interaction-term

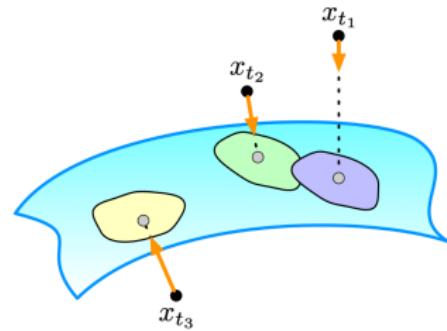
Curvature dependent!

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Linear Subspace



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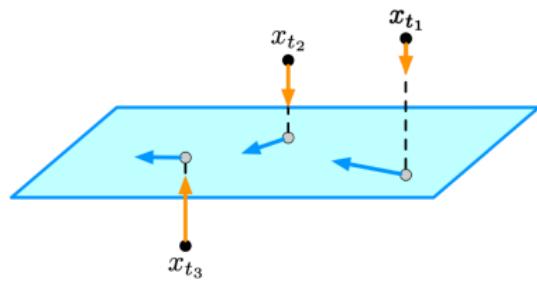
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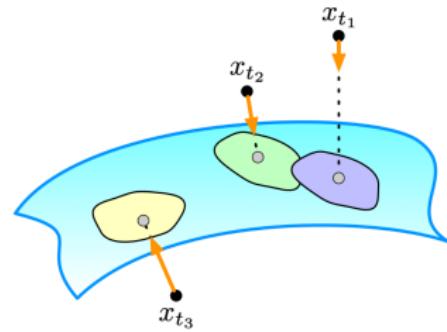
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# Delve into Manifolds

Linear Subspace



Manifold



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# Score Decomposition

- Score decomposition via projection  $\Pi_t$  onto manifold:

$$\nabla \log p_t(x) = \textcolor{blue}{s}_{\mathcal{M}}(\Pi_t(x); t) - \frac{1}{1 - e^{-t}}(x - \Pi_t(x)) + \textcolor{orange}{\text{interaction.}}$$

On-Manifold

Orthogonal

- Orthogonal score **blows up** when time approaches zero.
- Only holds for inputs near manifold.

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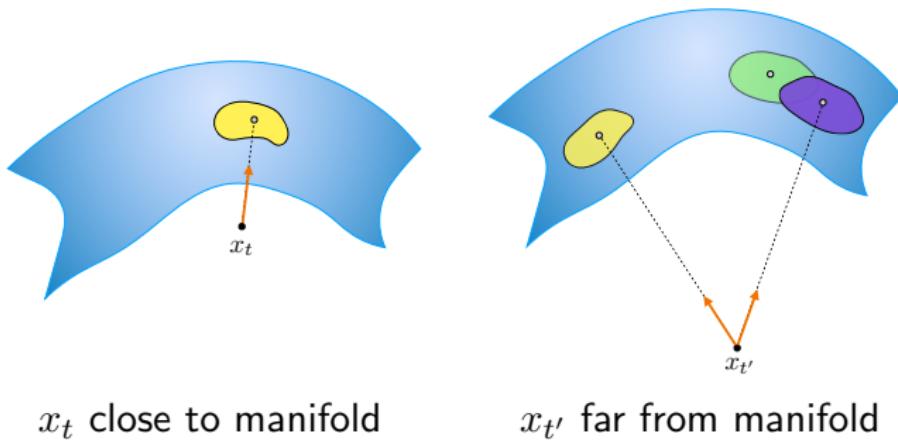
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On-ManifoldOrthogonal

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# Score Behavior for “Faraway” Inputs

- Score locates corrupted data to nearby neighborhoods.
- For each neighborhood, score consists of **on tangent-space score** and **orthogonal score**.



# Distribution Recovery

## Theorem

Assume  $P_0$  is supported on a  $d$ -dimensional manifold with  $d \ll D$ .

1. Score network (overparameterized) converges at the rate

$$\tilde{\mathcal{O}} \left( [\text{curv}(\mathcal{M}) + 1] n^{-\frac{s}{d+2s}} \right).$$

2. Estimated distribution converges at the rate

$$W_1(\hat{P}, P_0) = \tilde{\mathcal{O}} \left( [\text{curv}(\mathcal{M}) + 1] n^{-\frac{s+1}{d+2s}} \right).$$

Here  $s$  is the smoothness of  $P_0$ .

- **Adaptive** to data intrinsic structures.
- **Efficient** in learning data distributions.  
Matches the minimax rate (Tang and Yang, 2022).

# Summary

- Score behavior.
- NN score estimation.
- Sample complexity of distribution estimation.

# Reference

- [1] Chen, M., Huang, K., Zhao, T., and Wang, M. "Score approximation, estimation and distribution recovery of diffusion models on low-dimensional data", *In International Conference on Machine Learning*, 2023.
- [2] M. Chen, H. Jiang, W. Liao and Tuo Zhao, "Nonparametric Regression on Low-Dimensional Manifolds using Deep ReLU Networks", *IMA Information and Inference*, 2021.
- [3] Zhang, K., Zhang, Z., Chen, M., Takeda, Y., Wang, M., Zhao, T., and Wang, Y. X. "Nonparametric Classification on Low Dimensional Manifolds using Overparameterized Convolutional Residual Networks", *arXiv preprint*, 2023.
- [4] Liu, H., Chen, M., Zhao, T. and Liao, W. "Besov function approximation and binary classification on low-dimensional manifolds using convolutional residual networks", *In International Conference on Machine Learning*, 2021.

**Thank You!**