David Kinney DSC 550

Professor Deitenbeck Winter 2020

1.4 Reflection: Week 1 Reflection

I will start with the reading assignment for “Applied Text Analysis with Python”. This is all new territory for me, so there’s that. Additionally, the material is well… dry… I’ve been a software/full-stack developer for most of my professional life and have only had “Data Scientist” on my business card for a few months. Therefore, I’m used to reading more “how-to”s and not so much theory. I will likely spend this afternoon re-reading the Week 1 assignment from this text and hope more of it sinks in. If not, I’m sure it will come to fruition as the course progresses.

On the other hand, “Machine Learning with Python Cookbook” is more my cup of tea. But even after stating that, I will articulate an issue I run into with all of “these” books: this one, Wes McKinney’s “Python for Data Analysis”, Jake Vanderplas’s “Python Data Science Handbook”. That is, they all start off explaining NumPy, and then sorta/kinda say, “yeah, but pandas is much better”. Consequently, I find myself asking, sooooo, then why are you wasting my time with this NumPy stuff? I won’t belabor the point (ok, maybe just a little) but in the three years or so I’ve been programming in Python, I very rarely make use of anything that is directly NumPy. The simplest example I can give is, with pandas Series and DataFrames, why would I ever need to use NumPy arrays and/or matrices directly? (Confession: on some level, I do realize what an ignorant question that probably is).

To sum up, this is my challenge, both academically and professionally: I’d much rather be up to my elbows in coding than in data science… ing… While I truly do love Data Science, I suppose it’s human nature to fall back into your comfort zone. I’ve just started re-reading “Doing Data Science” by Cathy O’Neil and Rachel Schutt in hopes that it will inspire and motivate me to step away from PyCharm, Spyder and Jupyter Lab once in a while and embrace why I’m really doing this and taking this journey.

Stay tuned! 😊