

Reading Assignment 1

COMP 550, Fall 2020

Due date: Oct 15, 2020 9:00pm

Read the following paper and write a critical summary of it:

Zhang et al., 2015. Character-level Convolutional Networks for Text Classification. *Advances in Neural Information Processing* 28. <http://papers.nips.cc/paper/5782-character-level-convolutional-networks-for-text-classifica>

Your summary should include a description of the paper's contents, its strengths and limitations, and any points that you did not understand. Since this paper discusses techniques that are not covered in the lectures, I expect that there will be concepts that you do not understand! Do not worry, and document this in your write-up.

Also, discuss the following issues in your writeup:

1. How does the proposed method handle OOV items? How does this compared to the methods that we have discussed in class?
2. There does not seem to be a single method that does well across all the datasets. Was this a surprise to you? What are some possible explanations for this? What does this tell us?
3. Table 4 presents the results of many model variants next to each other. Is this justified?

Your summary should be **at most 1 page**. It will be graded on the basis of its coverage, linguistic quality, and clarity of argumentation.

Resources

- Jason Eisner's guide to reading papers: <https://www.cs.jhu.edu/~jason/advice/how-to-read-a-paper.html>
- It may help to read this tutorial on convolutional neural networks for NLP by Denny Britz before reading the paper: <http://www.wildml.com/2015/11/understanding-convolutional-neural-networks-for-nlp/>