Improved Bounds on Minimax Regret under Logarithmic Loss via Self-Concordance

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- $\ell_{\log}$ is neither bounded nor Lipschitz.

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Regret: $$R_n(\hat{\mathbf{p}}; \mathcal{F}, \mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}) = \sum_{t=1}^{n} \ell_{\log}(\hat{p}_t, y_t) - \inf_{f \in \mathcal{F}} \sum_{t=1}^{n} \ell_{\log}(f(x_t), y_t).$$

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This quantity depends on

- $\hat{\mathbf{p}}$: Player predictions,
- $\mathcal{F}$: Expert class,
- $\mathbf{x}$: Observed contexts,
- $\mathbf{y}$: Observed data points.

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- Novel proof technique that exploits the curvature of log loss to avoid a key "truncation step" used by previous works.
- Resolve the minimax regret with log loss for Lipschitz experts on $[0,1]^p$ with matching lower bounds.
- Conclude the minimax regret with log loss cannot be completely characterized using sequential entropy.

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Minimax regret: an **algorithm-free quantity** on **worst-case observations**.

$$R_n(\mathcal{F}) = \sup_{x_1} \inf_{\hat{p}_1} \sup_{y_1} \sup_{x_2} \inf_{\hat{p}_2} \sup_{y_2} \cdots \sup_{x_n} \inf_{\hat{p}_n} \sup_{y_n} R_n(\hat{\mathbf{p}}; \mathcal{F}, \mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}).$$

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The first context is observed.

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The player makes their prediction.

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The adversary plays an observation.

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Interpretation: The experts $\mathcal{F}$ are *minimax online learnable* if $R_n(\mathcal{F}) < o(n)$.

- slow rate: $R_n(\mathcal{F}) = \Theta(\sqrt{n})$
- fast rate: $R_n(\mathcal{F}) \leq \mathcal{O}(\log(n))$

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Instead, we use *sequential covering* from Rakhlin and Sridharan (2014).

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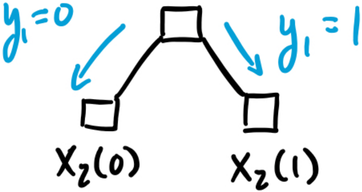

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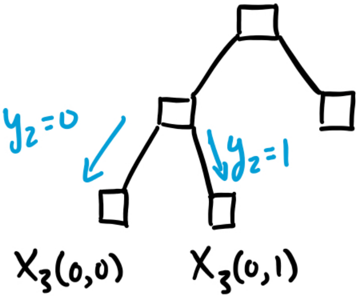

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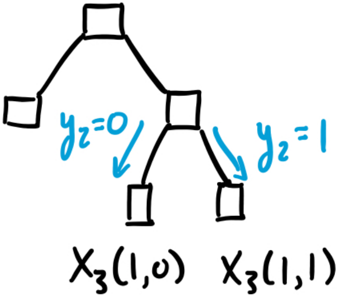

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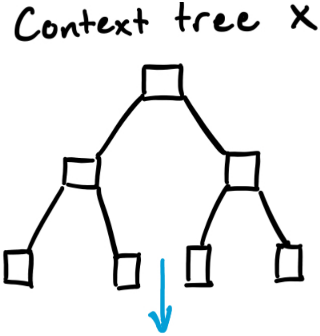

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A class of trees V sequentially covers $\mathcal{F}$ at margin γ on context tree $\mathbf{x}$ if:

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Definitions

- The size of the smallest such V for $\mathbf{x}$ is $\mathcal{N}_\infty(\mathcal{F} \circ \mathbf{x}, \gamma)$.
- *Sequential entropy* for n rounds is $\mathcal{H}_\infty(\mathcal{F}, \gamma, n) = \sup_{\mathbf{x}} \log(\mathcal{N}_\infty(\mathcal{F} \circ \mathbf{x}, \gamma))$.

Improved Minimax Bounds

Theorem (BFR '20)

There exists $c > 0$ such that for all convex $\mathcal{F}$,

$$R_n(\mathcal{F}) \leq \inf_{\gamma > 0} \Big\{ 4n\gamma + c\,\mathcal{H}_\infty\left(\mathcal{F}, \gamma, n\right) \Big\}.$$

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Upper Bound (Computation)

If $\mathcal{H}_\infty\left(\mathcal{F}, \gamma, n\right) = \Theta(\gamma^{-p})$ for $p > 0$,

$$R_n(\mathcal{F}) \leq \mathcal{O}(n^{\frac{p}{p+1}}).$$

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There exists $c > 0$ *such that for all convex* $\mathcal{F}$*,*

$$R_n(\mathcal{F}) \leq \inf_{\gamma > 0} \Big\{ 4n\gamma + c\,\mathcal{H}_\infty(\mathcal{F}, \gamma, n) \Big\}.$$

Upper Bound (Computation)

If $\mathcal{H}_\infty(\mathcal{F}, \gamma, n) = \Theta(\gamma^{-p})$ for $p > 0$,

$$R_n(\mathcal{F}) \leq \mathcal{O}(n^{\frac{p}{p+1}}).$$

Theorem (BFR '20)

If $p \in \mathbb{N}$*, there exists an* $\mathcal{F}$ *with* $\mathcal{H}_\infty(\mathcal{F}, \gamma, n) = \Theta(\gamma^{-p})$ *and*

$$R_n(\mathcal{F}) \geq \Omega(n^{\frac{p}{p+1}}).$$

Applications

Applications

- **1-Lipschitz:**
  $\mathcal{F} = \{f \mid f : [0,1]^p \to [0,1], |f(x) - f(y)| \leq \|x - y\| \ \forall x, y \in [0,1]^p\}$.

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  We have matching upper and lower bounds for this class, so:

$$R_n(\mathcal{F}) = \Theta(n^{\frac{p}{p+1}}).$$

Applications

- **Linear Predictors:**
  $\mathcal{F} = \{f \mid \exists w \text{ s.t. } \|w\|_2 \leq 1, f(x) = \frac{1}{2}[1 + \langle w, x\rangle] \ \forall \|x\|_2 \leq 1\}$.

$$\mathcal{H}_\infty(\mathcal{F}, \gamma, n) = \tilde{\Theta}\left(\gamma^{-2}\right).$$

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Our upper bound cannot be improved, so the minimax regret under log loss cannot be characterized solely by sequential entropy.