

Classification tasks, the Perceptron model

Chris Cornwell

October 21, 2025

Outline

Classification tasks

Perceptron model

Perceptron algorithm

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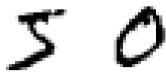
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Example of Classification

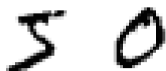
Use some model to determine a digit that was (hand)written in an image



0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9.

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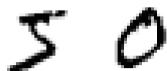


⇒ 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9.

- ▶ Convert image to a vector (*in some way*) → \mathbf{x} .
- ▶ Your model's output: the (predicted) digit.

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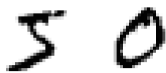
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In data provided, $\{(\mathbf{x}_i, y_i)\}$, observed ("correct") label is $y_i \in \{0, 1, \dots, 9\}$.

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Value of y is on number line; but, consider it a label (or, one of a few separate “buckets”) used to organize different points \mathbf{x} . (When $y_i = 5$, predicting 4 is not any better than 0.)

Close only counts in horseshoes ...Regression

In linear regression, on indpt. variables x_1, x_2, \dots, x_N , had (affine) linear function $y \approx b + w_1x_1 + w_2x_2 + \dots + w_Nx_N$;
values of function \leftrightarrow prediction \hat{y} ; error term $\varepsilon = y - \hat{y}$.

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In regression, the **linear model** $\mathbf{x} \mapsto \hat{y}$ approximates the relationship $\mathbf{x} \mapsto y$.¹ We expect that $|y - \hat{y}|$ is almost never exactly 0; a good model: one where $|y - \hat{y}|$ is small on average (but, still positive).

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“Classification” tasks: the value y is a label, might not even be a number. The prediction \hat{y} is either wrong, or not wrong; close doesn’t count. Good model: when $\hat{y} = y$ as often as possible.

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A linear model for classification

Binary classification: Data from \mathbb{R}^N for some $N > 0$ and only two labels, $\{1, -1\}$.

²Notation here is that x_1, \dots, x_N are the coordinates of the vector \mathbf{x} .

A linear model for classification

Binary classification: Data from \mathbb{R}^N for some $N > 0$ and only two labels, $\{1, -1\}$.

A hyperplane in \mathbb{R}^N is an (affine) linear subspace that separates \mathbb{R}^N in two. Given numbers w_1, w_2, \dots, w_d , and b , it can be thought of as the set of points $\mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{R}^N$ where the linear function $y = b + w_1x_1 + \dots + w_Nx_N$ has value zero²:

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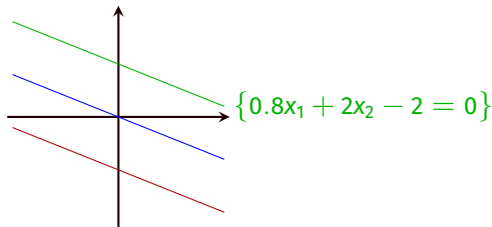


Figure: A few hyperplanes in \mathbb{R}^2 .

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- Calling the hyperplane H and rewriting this in vector form: if $\mathbf{w} = (w_1, w_2, \dots, w_N)$ and $\tilde{\mathbf{w}} = (b, w_1, \dots, w_N)$, then H is the set of \mathbf{x} so that $\tilde{\mathbf{x}}^\top \tilde{\mathbf{w}} = \mathbf{w} \cdot \mathbf{x} + b = 0$.

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- ▶ H separates \mathbb{R}^N into two parts: those \mathbf{x} where $\mathbf{w} \cdot \mathbf{x} + b$ is positive and those where $\mathbf{w} \cdot \mathbf{x} + b$ is negative.
- ▶ \mathbf{w} is a vector that is orthogonal to H (which is $(N - 1)$ -dimensional); $|b|$ and $\|\mathbf{w}\|$ relate to how far H is translated away from the origin.

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Half-space model

Using the notation from last slide: a half-space model in \mathbb{R}^N is determined by $\tilde{\mathbf{w}} = (b, w_1, w_2, \dots, w_N)$, with a corresponding hyperplane H .

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- ▶ (Positive side) set $h(\mathbf{x}) = 1$ if $\mathbf{w} \cdot \mathbf{x} + b > 0$.
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Given data with labels $y_i = \{\pm 1\}$, if there exists a hyperplane H so that, for all i , \mathbf{x}_i has label 1 if and only if it is on the positive side of H , these data are called **linearly separable**.

Linearly separable

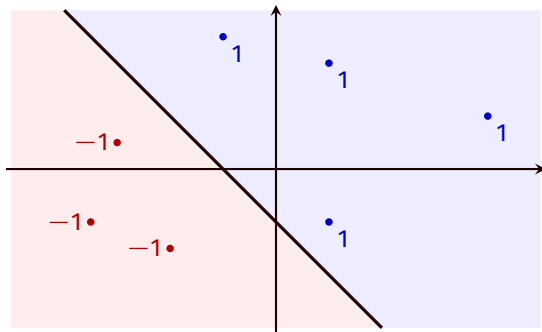


Figure: The hyperplane $H = \{(x_1, x_2) \in \mathbb{R}^2 : x_1 + x_2 + 1 = 0\}$, corresponding positive and negative regions, $\mathbf{w} = (1, 1)$, $b = 1$

Not linearly separable

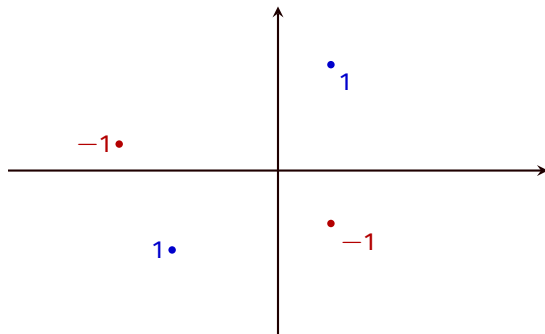


Figure: A data set in \mathbb{R}^2 that is not linearly separable.

Not linearly separable

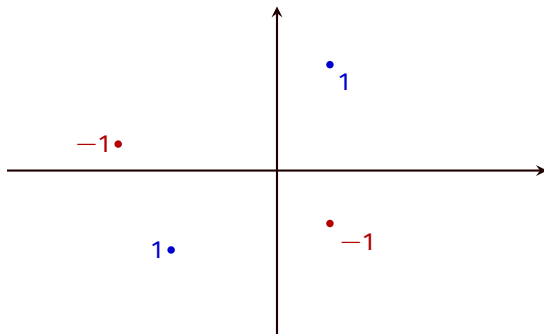


Figure: A data set in \mathbb{R}^2 that is not linearly separable.

- A criterion (checkable, in theory) that is equivalent to “not linearly separable”?

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Setup for Perceptron algorithm

Labeled data: $(\mathbf{x}_1, y_1), \dots, (\mathbf{x}_p, y_p)$, with $\mathbf{x}_i \in \mathbb{R}^N$ and $y_i \in \{\pm 1\}$ for all i . Assuming labeled data is linearly separable, the Perceptron algorithm is a procedure that is guaranteed to find a hyperplane that separates the data.⁴

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To describe it: for each \mathbf{x}_i , use the notation $\tilde{\mathbf{w}}$ and $\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_i$ as before.

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Note that $\tilde{\mathbf{w}} \cdot \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_i = \mathbf{w} \cdot \mathbf{x}_i + b$. For linearly separable data, our goal is to find $\tilde{\mathbf{w}} \in \mathbb{R}^{N+1}$ so that $\tilde{\mathbf{w}} \cdot \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_i$ and y_i have the same sign (both positive or both negative), for all $1 \leq i \leq P$.

- Equivalently, we need $y_i \tilde{\mathbf{w}} \cdot \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_i > 0$ for all $1 \leq i \leq P$.

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Perceptron algorithm

Suppose the data is linearly separable. Also, make \mathbf{x} be a $P \times N$ array of points, with i^{th} row equal to \mathbf{x}_i , and \mathbf{y} an array of the labels. In the pseudocode below, use capitalization for the “tilde” notation: \mathbf{w} is $\tilde{\mathbf{w}}$ and the i^{th} row of \mathbf{x} is $\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_i$.

The Perceptron algorithm finds \mathbf{w} iteratively as follows.⁵

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```
input:  $\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}$   ##  $\mathbf{x}$  is  $P$  by  $N$ ,  $\mathbf{y}$  is 1d array
 $\mathbf{X} \leftarrow$  prepend 1 to each row of  $\mathbf{x}$ 
 $\mathbf{W} \leftarrow (0, 0, \dots, 0)$   ## Initial  $\mathbf{W}$ 
while (exists  $i$  with  $\mathbf{y}[i] * \text{dot}(\mathbf{W}, \mathbf{X}[i]) \leq 0$ ) {
     $\mathbf{W} \leftarrow \mathbf{W} + \mathbf{y}[i] * \mathbf{X}[i]$   # smallest such  $i$ 
}
return  $\mathbf{W}$ 
```

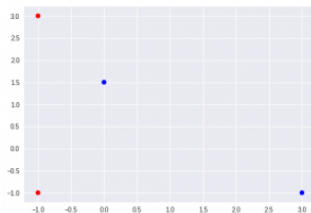
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Example

A simple example in \mathbb{R}^2 , with $n = 4$ points.

$$\mathbf{x}: \begin{bmatrix} -1 & 3 \\ -1 & -1 \\ 3 & -1 \\ 0 & 1.5 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\mathbf{y}: \begin{bmatrix} -1 \\ -1 \\ 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$$



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Use $\tilde{\mathbf{w}}^{(t)}$ for value of $\tilde{\mathbf{w}}$ on step t . Start: $\tilde{\mathbf{w}}^{(1)} = (0, 0, 0)$.

Next step: $\tilde{\mathbf{w}}^{(2)} = \vec{0} + y_1 \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_1 = -1 * (1, -1, 3) = (-1, 1, -3)$.

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Next: since $y_1 \tilde{\mathbf{w}}^{(2)} \cdot \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_1 > 0$, check

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Continue in this way – on each step check dot products (in order) with

$y_1 \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_1, y_2 \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_2, y_3 \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_3, y_4 \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_4$. Eventually you return the vector

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i.e., $H = \{(x_1, x_2) \in \mathbb{R}^2 : 1 + 4x_1 - 0.5x_2 = 0\}$ separates the points.

Perceptron algorithm, stopping time

Under our assumptions for Perceptron algorithm, a guarantee on eventually stopping.

Theorem

Define $R = \max_i \|\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_i\|$ and $B = \min\{\|\mathbf{v}\| : \mathbf{v} \text{ satisfies } y_i \mathbf{v} \cdot \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_i \geq 1, \forall i\}$. Then, the Perceptron algorithm stops after at most $(RB)^2$ iterations and, when it stops with output $\tilde{\mathbf{w}}$, then $y_i \tilde{\mathbf{w}} \cdot \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_i > 0$ for all $1 \leq i \leq P$.

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Idea of proof: Write \mathbf{v}^* for vector that realizes the minimum B . Also, $\tilde{\mathbf{w}}^{(t)}$ is the vector $\tilde{\mathbf{w}}$ on the t^{th} step, $\tilde{\mathbf{w}}^{(1)} = (0, 0, \dots, 0)$.

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Using how $\tilde{\mathbf{w}}^{(t+1)}$ is obtained from $\tilde{\mathbf{w}}^{(t)}$, can show that $\mathbf{v}^* \cdot \tilde{\mathbf{w}}^{(T+1)} \geq T$ after $T + 1$ iterations. Also, using the condition on $\tilde{\mathbf{w}}^{(T)}$ that necessitates an update, can show that $|\tilde{\mathbf{w}}^{(T+1)}| \leq R\sqrt{T}$. (For both statements, induction proves it.)

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Theorem

Define $R = \max_i \|\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_i\|$ and $B = \min \{ \|\mathbf{v}\| : \mathbf{v} \text{ satisfies } y_i \mathbf{v} \cdot \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_i \geq 1, \forall i \}$. Then, the Perceptron algorithm stops after at most $(RB)^2$ iterations and, when it stops with output $\tilde{\mathbf{w}}$, then $y_i \tilde{\mathbf{w}} \cdot \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_i > 0$ for all $1 \leq i \leq P$.

Idea of proof: Write \mathbf{v}^* for vector that realizes the minimum B . Also, $\tilde{\mathbf{w}}^{(t)}$ is the vector $\tilde{\mathbf{w}}$ on the t^{th} step, $\tilde{\mathbf{w}}^{(1)} = (0, 0, \dots, 0)$.

Using how $\tilde{\mathbf{w}}^{(t+1)}$ is obtained from $\tilde{\mathbf{w}}^{(t)}$, can show that $\mathbf{v}^* \cdot \tilde{\mathbf{w}}^{(T+1)} \geq T$ after $T + 1$ iterations. Also, using the condition on $\tilde{\mathbf{w}}^{(T)}$ that necessitates an update, can show that $|\tilde{\mathbf{w}}^{(T+1)}| \leq R\sqrt{T}$. (For both statements, induction proves it.)

With those inequalities and the Cauchy-Schwarz inequality, $T \leq BR\sqrt{T}$, which we can rearrange to $T \leq (BR)^2$ (if an update was needed on step T).

Another example, the Iris data set

First discussed by R.A. Fisher in a 1936 paper, Iris data set commonly used in explanations. It contains 150 points in \mathbb{R}^4 , each for an individual iris flower from one of 3 species: *Iris setosa*, *Iris virginica*, and *Iris versicolor*.



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Iris setosa points are linearly separable from the other two.

Labels: *Iris setosa* \leftarrow 1; *Other species* \leftarrow -1.



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Begin by opening the notebook

`'perceptron-iris-notebook.ipynb'` ...After completing the algorithm, should get final $\tilde{\mathbf{w}} = (b, \mathbf{w})$, where $\mathbf{w} = (1.3, 4.1, -5.2, -2.2)$ and $b = 1$.



Figure: Images by G. Robertson, E. Hunt, Radomil ©CC BY-SA 3.0