

# Revisit literature

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## Multi-task Gaussian Process Prediction

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However, as pointed out in [1] and supported empirically by [2], assuming relatedness in a set of tasks and simply learning them together can be detrimental.

We propose a model that attempts to learn inter-task dependencies based solely on the *task identities* and the observed data for each task.

This contrasts with approaches in [3, 4] where task-descriptor features  $t$  were used in a parametric covariance function over different tasks—such a function may be too constrained by both its parametric form and the task descriptors to model task similarities effectively. In [4, 3] this property also holds, but instead of specifying a general PSD matrix  $K_f$ , these authors set  $K_f = k_f(t_i, t_k)$ , where  $k_f(\cdot, \cdot)$  is a covariance function over the task-descriptor features  $t$ .

Hence we propose a model that learns a “free-form” task-similarity matrix, which is used in conjunction with a parameterized covariance function over the input features  $x$ .

<https://proceedings.mlr.press/v2/bonilla07a/bonilla07a.pdf>

Evgeniou et al. [19] consider methods for inducing correlations between tasks based on a correlated prior over linear regression parameters. In fact this corresponds to a GP prior using the kernel  $k(x, x') = x^T A x'$  for some positive definite matrix  $A$ . In their experiments they use a restricted form of  $K_f$  with  $K_f = (1 - \lambda) + \lambda M \delta_{1k}$  (their eq. 25), i.e. a convex combination of a rank-1  $\mathbb{1}_k$  matrix of ones and a multiple of the identity. Notice the similarity to the PPCA form of  $K_f$  given in section 3.

Finally, we make use of GP approximations and properties of our model in order to scale our approach to large multi-task data sets