

Revisit literature

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Multi-task Gaussian Process Prediction

Edwin V. Bonilla, Kian Ming A. Chai, Christopher K. I. Williams

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 $K_f = k_f(t_l, t_k)$, 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 $K_f = (1 - \lambda) + \lambda M \delta_{lk}$ (their eq. 25), i.e. a convex combination of a rank-1 lk 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