



# Measuring Utility and Privacy of Synthetic Genomic Data

Emiliano De Cristofaro  
<https://emilianodc.com>

# Agenda

Privacy in Machine Learning

Synthetic Data

Privacy (and Utility) in Synthetic  
Genomic Data

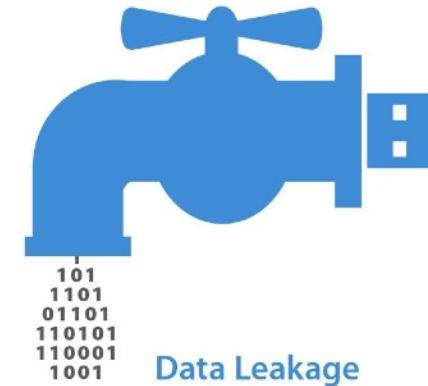
# Agenda

## Privacy in Machine Learning

# Reasoning about “privacy” in ML

Most privacy attacks in ML focus on inferring:

1. Inclusion of a data point in the training set  
(aka “membership inference”)
2. What class representatives (in training set) look like  
(aka “model inversion”)
3. Properties/Attributes of the training data other than  
the main task (aka “property inference”)



# 1. Membership Inference

Adversary wants to **test** whether data of a target **victim** has been used to train a model

Serious problem if inclusion in training set is privacy-sensitive

E.g., main task is: predict whether a smoker gets cancer

[Shokri et al., S&P'17] show it for **discriminative** models

[Hayes et al. PETS'19] for **generative** models (later in the talk)

Membership inference is a very active research area, not only in machine learning...

# Membership Inference (cnt'd)

Membership inference is a very active research area, not only in machine learning...

Given  $f(\text{data})$ , infer if  $x \in \text{data}$  (e.g.,  $f$  is aggregation)

[HSR+08, WLW+09] for **genomic** data

[Pyrgelis et al., NDSS'18] for **mobility** data

**Well-understood problem** (besides leakage)

Use it to establish wrongdoing

Or to assess protection, e.g., with differentially private noise

## 2. Inferring Class Representatives

Prior work focused on properties of an entire class, e.g.:

Model Inversion [Fredrikson et al. CCS'15]

GAN attacks [Hitaji et al. CCS'17]



E.g.: given a gender classifier, infer what a male looks like

But...shouldn't useful machine learning models reveal something about population from which training data was sampled??

Privacy leakage !=

Adv learns something about training data



### 3. Property Inference

How about if we inferred **properties** of a subset of the training inputs...

...but not of the **whole class**?

In a nutshell: given a **gender classifier**, infer **race** of people in Bob's photos

# Agenda

Privacy in Machine Learning

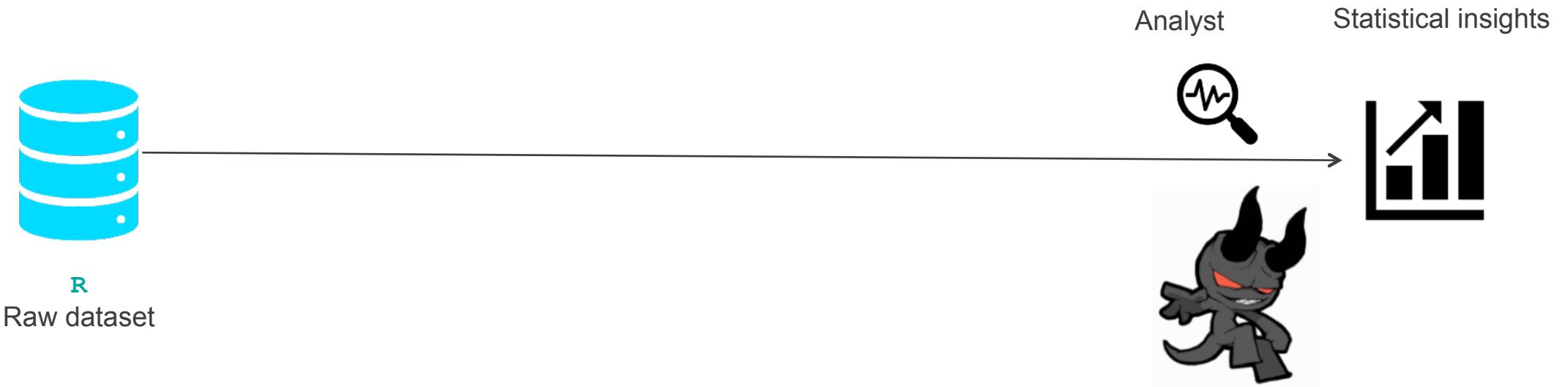
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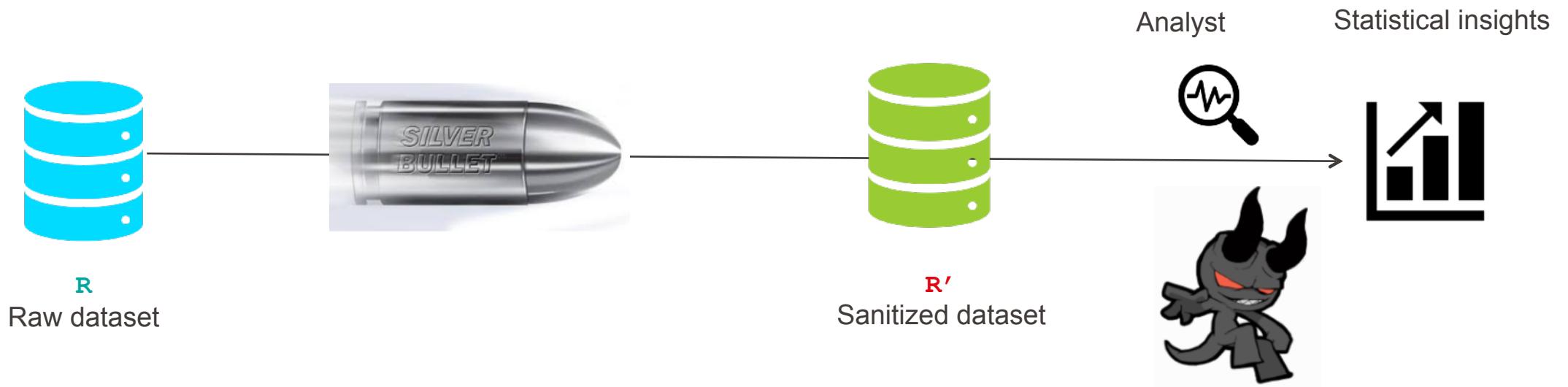
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Synthetic Data

# Data Sharing



# Data Sharing



# Data Release Disasters

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## AOL Proudly Releases Massive Amounts of Private Data

Michael Arrington @arrington?lang=en / 2:17 AM GMT+1 • August 7, 2006

 Comment

Yet Another Update: AOL: "This was a screw up"

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## *Netflix Cancels Contest After Concerns Are Raised About Privacy*

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New York taxi details can be extracted from anonymised data, researchers say

FoI request reveals data on 173m individual trips in US city - but could yield more details, such as drivers' addresses and income



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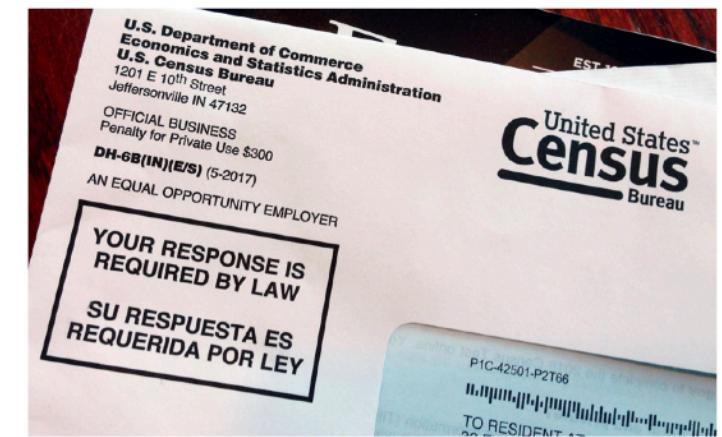
## Netflix Cancels Contest After Concerns Are Raised About Privacy

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The Upshot

## To Reduce Privacy Risks, the Census Plans to Report Less Accurate Data

Guaranteeing people's confidentiality has become more of a challenge, but some scholars worry that the new system will impede research.



A 2018 census test letter mailed to a resident in Providence, R.I. The nation's test run of the 2020 Census is in Rhode Island. Michelle R. Smith/Associated Press

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Study finds HIPAA protected data still at risks

## 'Anonymised' data can never be totally anonymous, says study

Findings say it is impossible for researchers to fully protect real identities in datasets



▲ In practice, supposedly anonymised data can be deanonymised in a number of ways to identify real people.

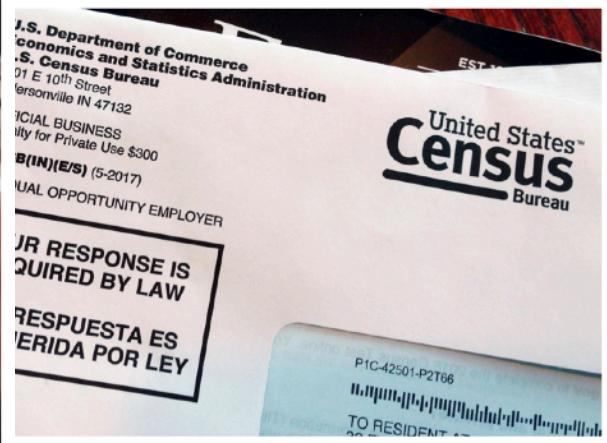
Photograph: Stefan Rousseau/PA

## N.Y.A.C. Cancels Contest After Concerns About Privacy

Upshot

## Reduce Privacy Risks, the Census Plans Report Less Accurate Data

Guaranteeing people's confidentiality has become more of a challenge, but some scholars worry that the new system will undermine research.



First letter mailed to a resident in Providence, R.I. The nation's test run of the 2020 Census  
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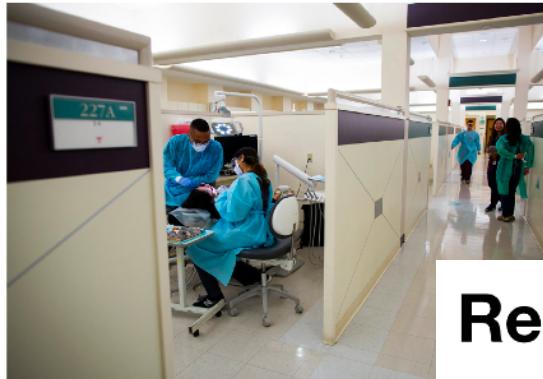
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**Newspaper Cancels Contest After Concerns About Privacy**

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## Researchers Find 'Anonymized' Data Is Even Less Anonymous Than We Thought

Corporations love to pretend that 'anonymization' of the data they collect protects consumers. Studies keep showing that's not really true.

**Upshot**

**Reduce Privacy Risks, the Census Plans Report Less Accurate Data**

Guaranteeing people's confidentiality has become more of a challenge, but some scholars worry that the new system will undermine research.



# Synthetic Data

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**Democratize your data access  
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No more **fines**.  
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Instead of sharing original data, we enable businesses and other data owners to work with compliant synthetic datasets mimicking the structure of original data without disclosing any information about individual data points.



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Department of Commerce -  
National Institute of  
Standards and Technology

## Differential Privacy Synthetic Data Challenge

Propose an algorithm to develop differentially private synthetic datasets to enable the protection of personally identifiable information (PII) while maintaining a dataset's utility for analysis.

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"ODI Leeds and [NHS England](#) will be working together to explore the potential of 'synthetic data.' This is data that has been created following the patterns identified in a real dataset but it contains no personal data, making it suitable to release as open data. Synthetic data is also great for building and prototyping ideas"

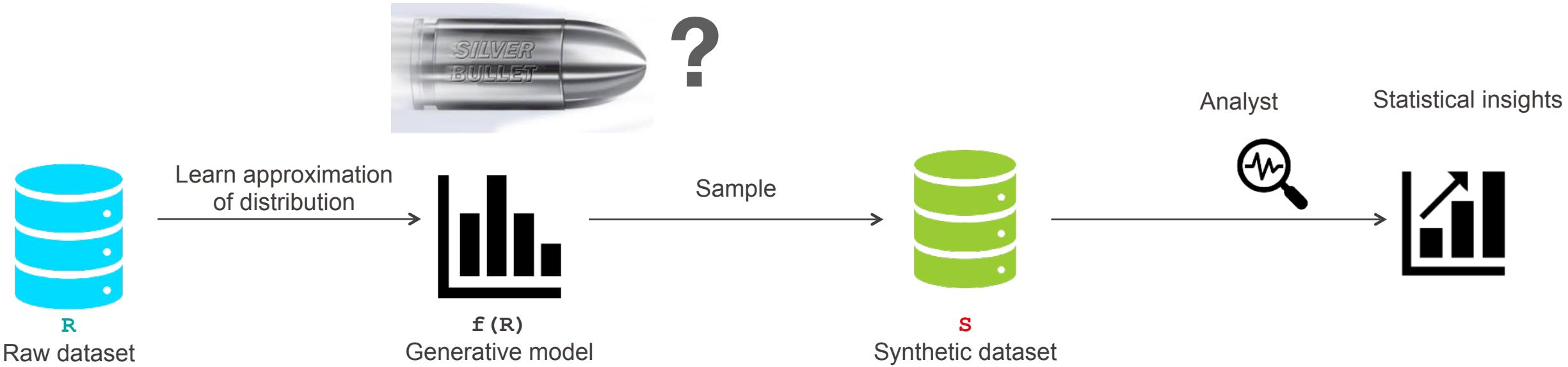
<https://www.odileeds.org/events/synae/>

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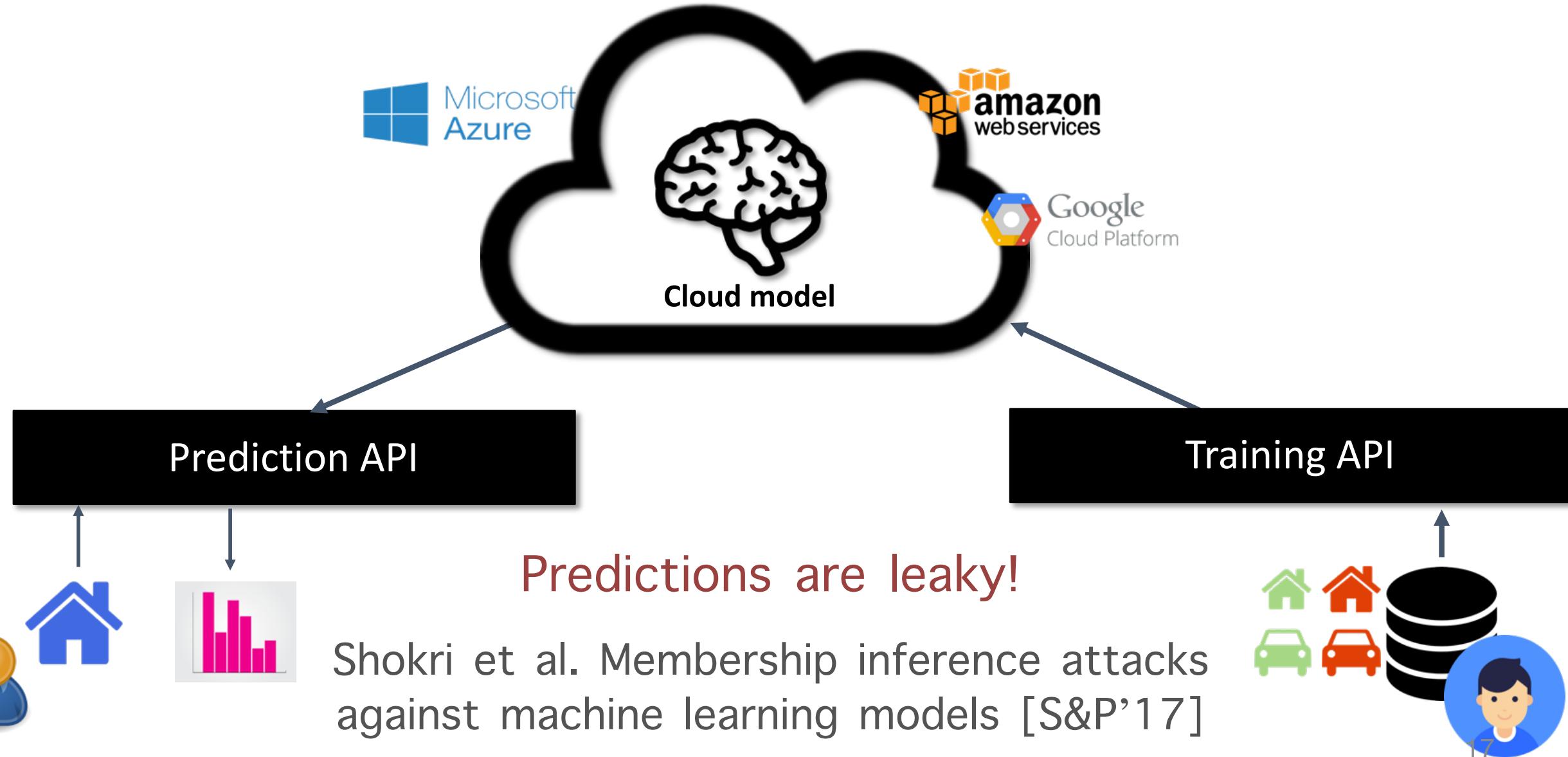


# The Promise of Synthetic Data

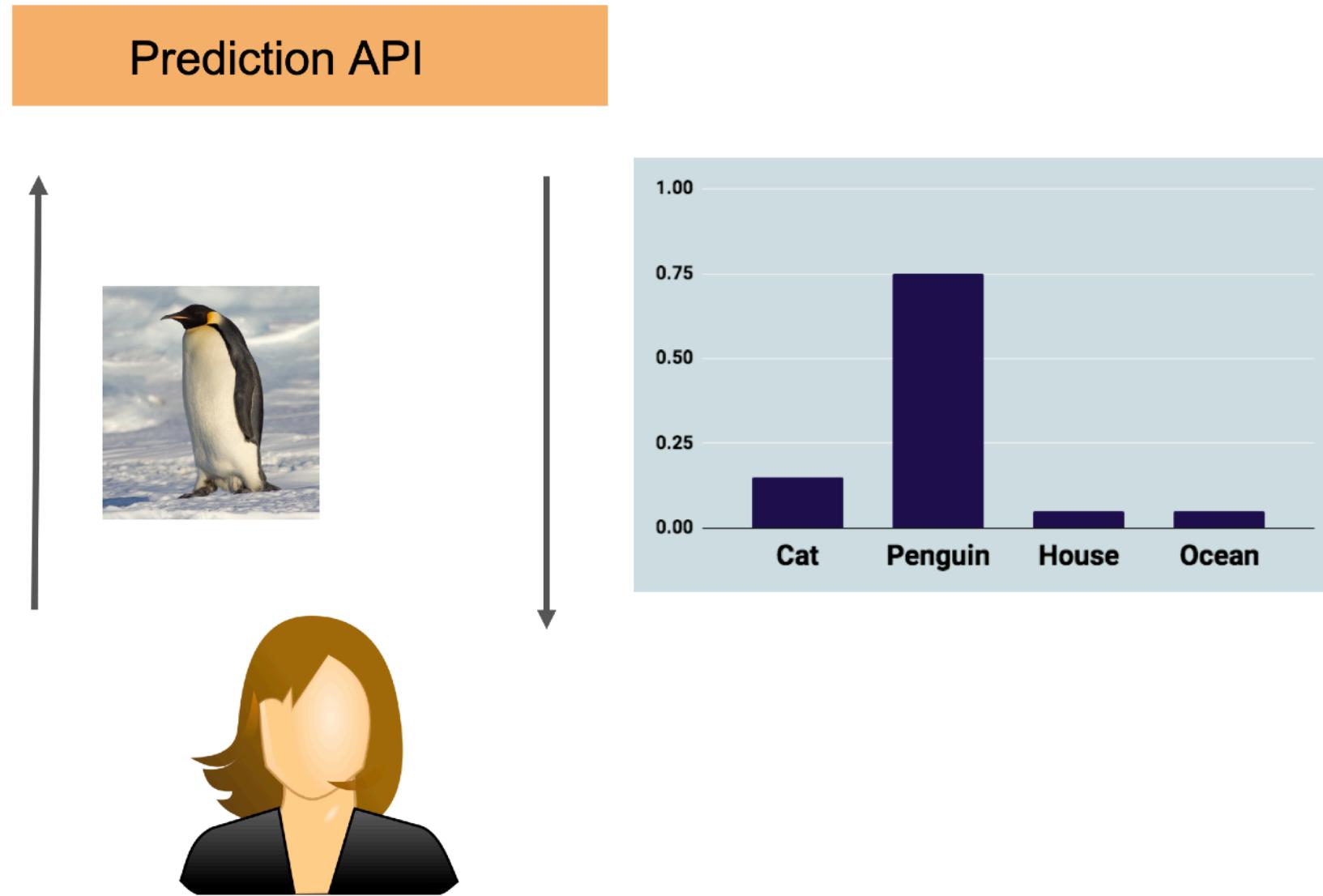


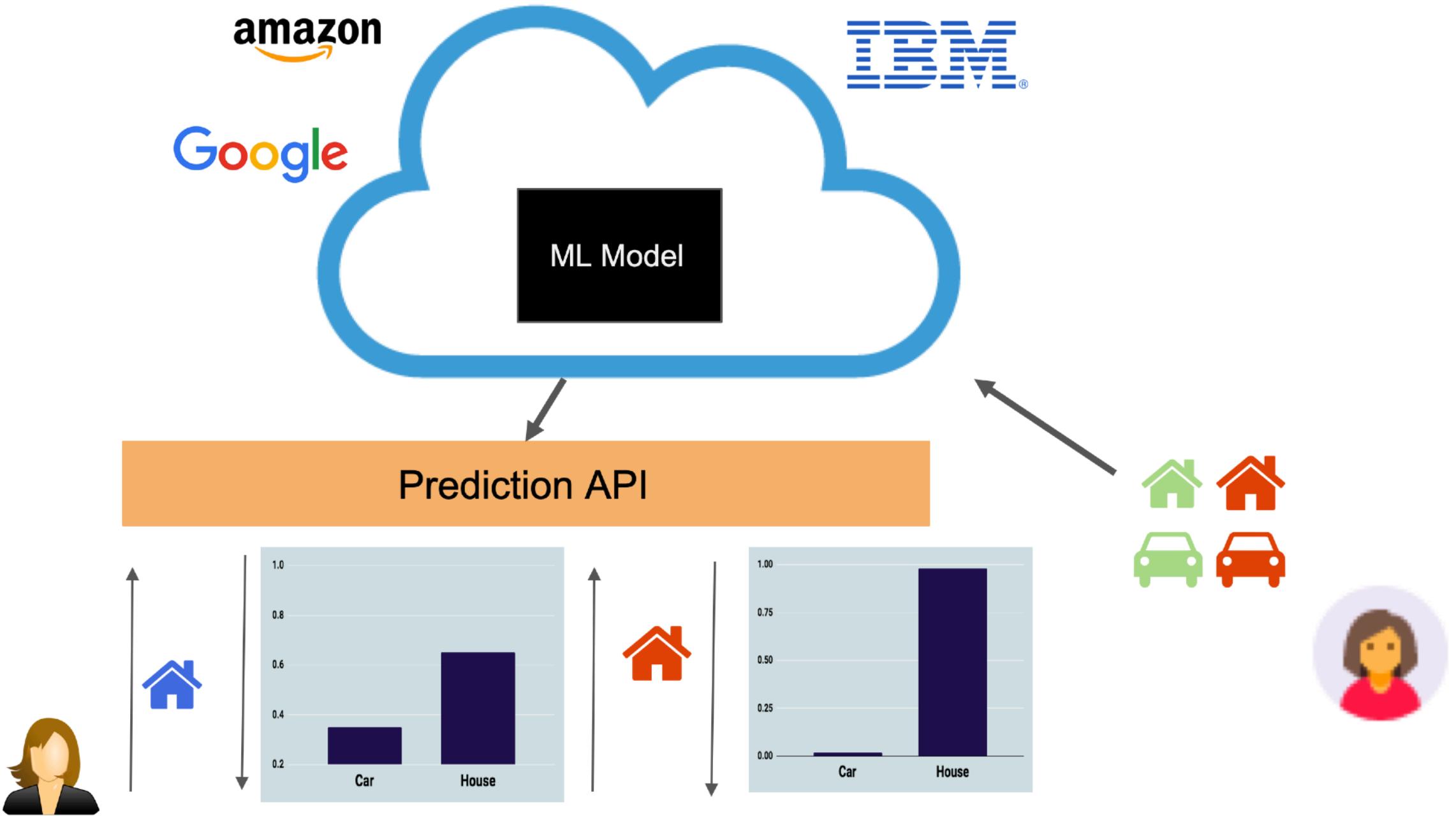
# Attacks Against Synthetic Data?

# Machine Learning as a Service

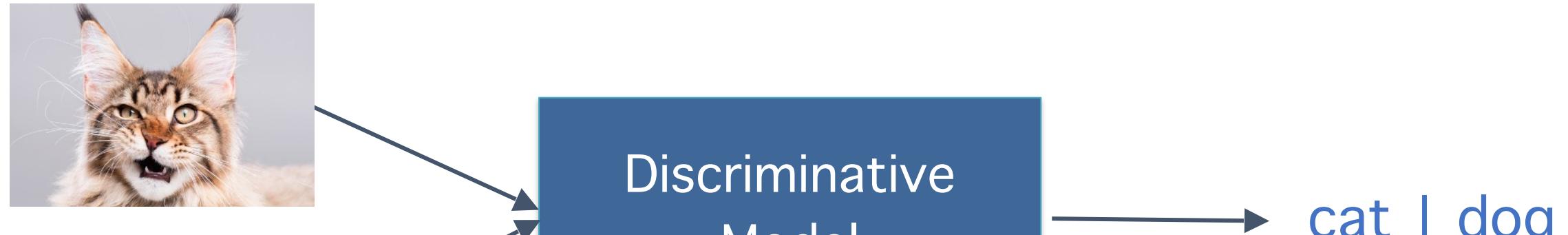


# Membership Inference/Discriminative

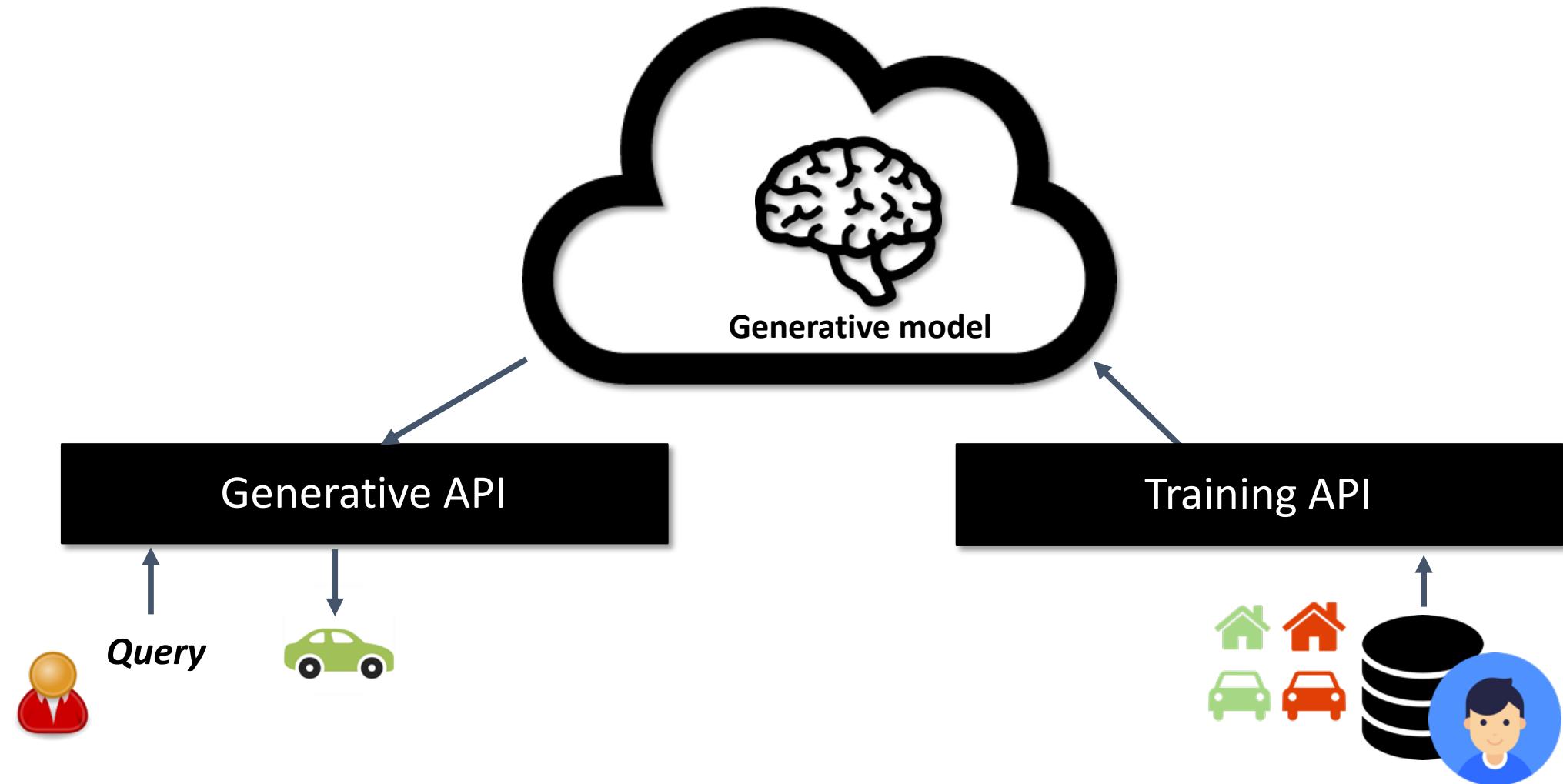




# What About Generative Models?



# Membership Inference in Generative Models

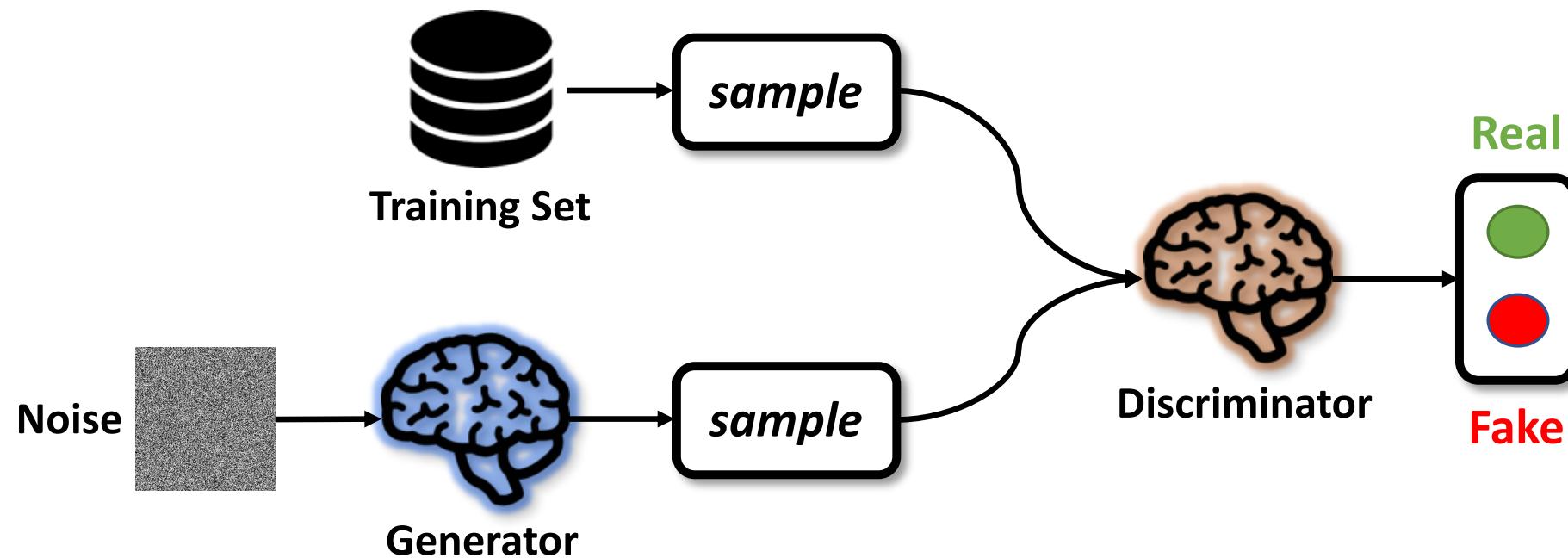


Jamie Hayes, Luca Melis, George Danezis, Emiliano De Cristofaro. LOGAN: Membership Inference Attacks Against Generative Models [PETS 2019]

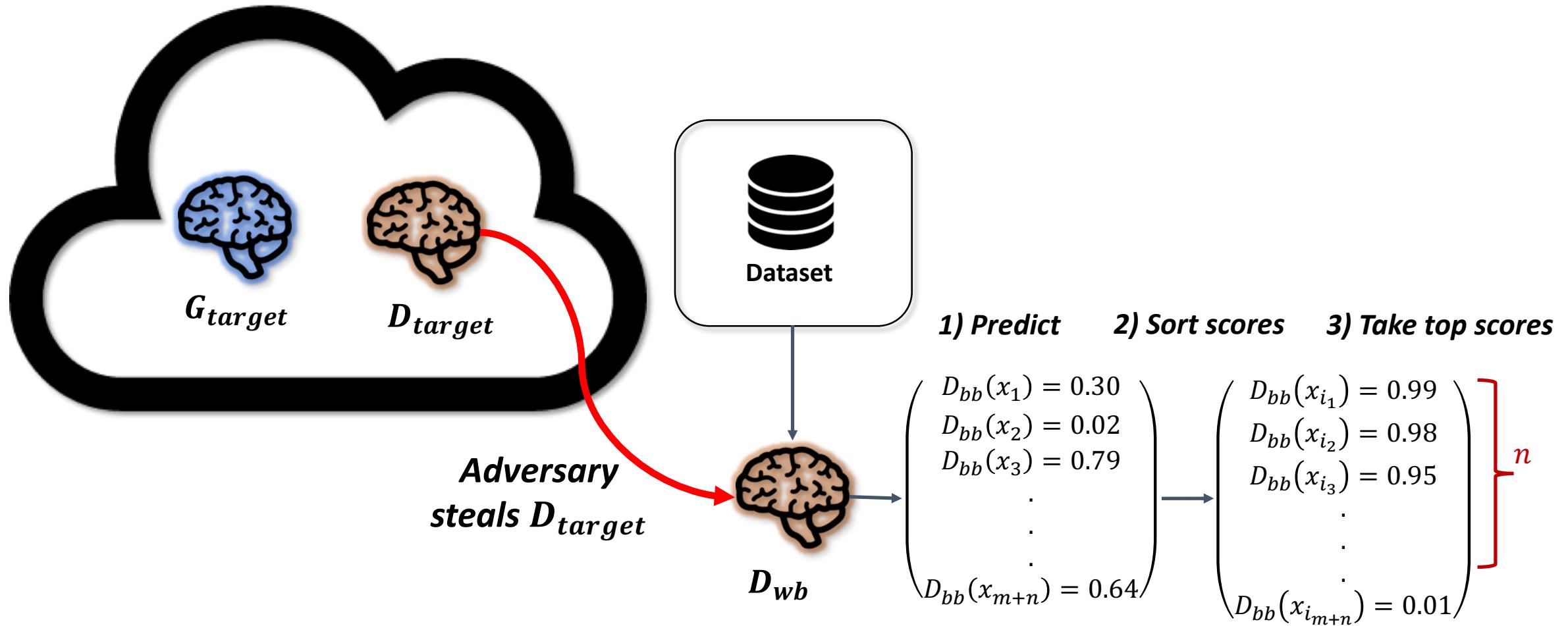
# Inference without predictions?

Use generative models!

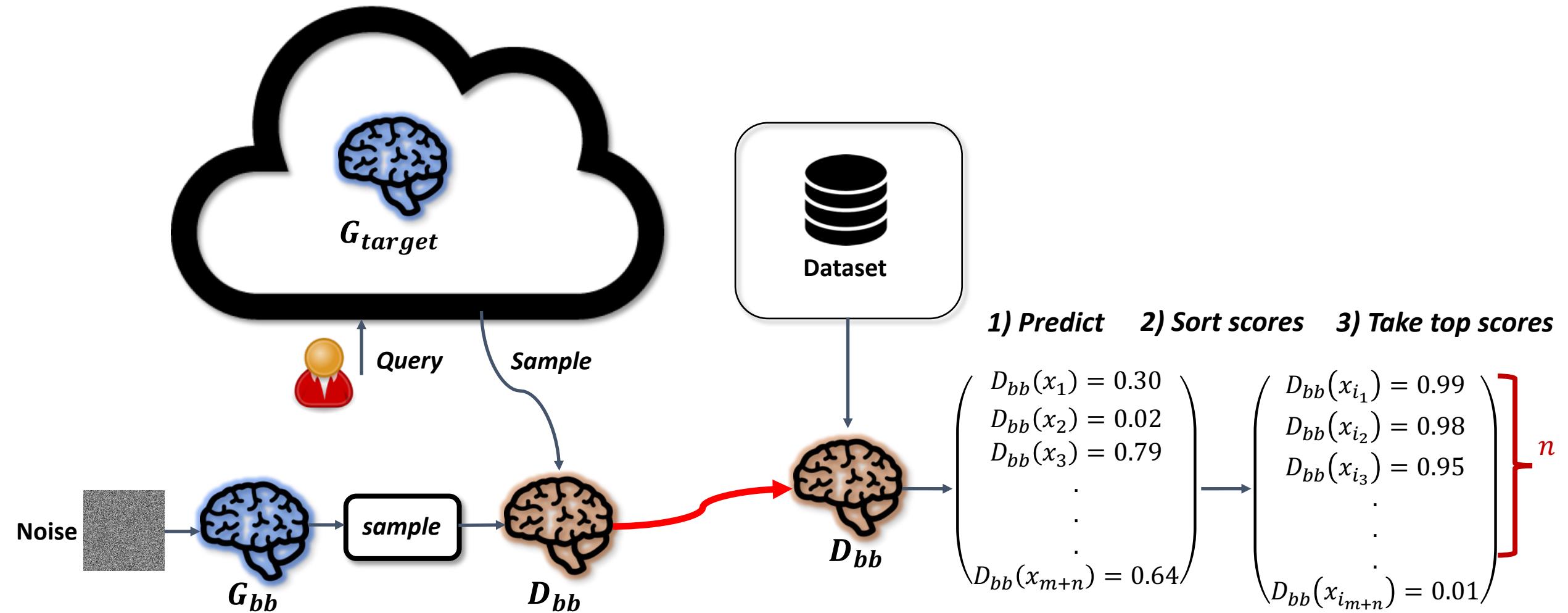
Train GANs to learn the distribution and a prediction model at the same time



# White-Box Attack



# Black-Box Attack

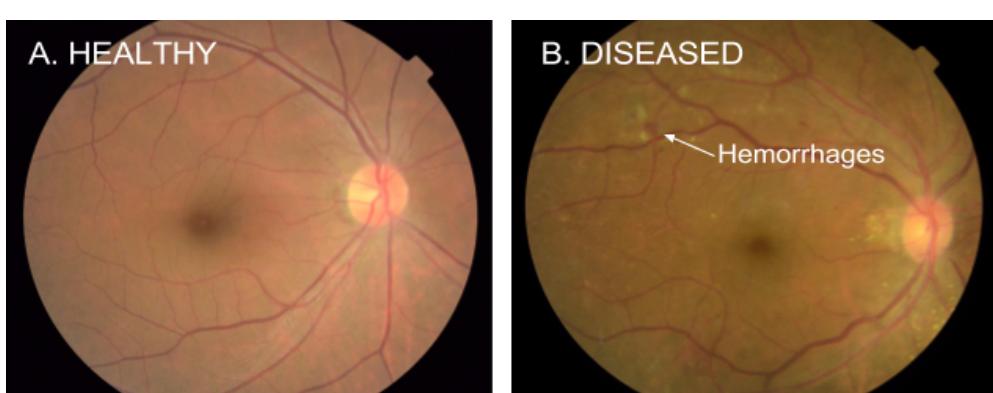


# Datasets

lfw

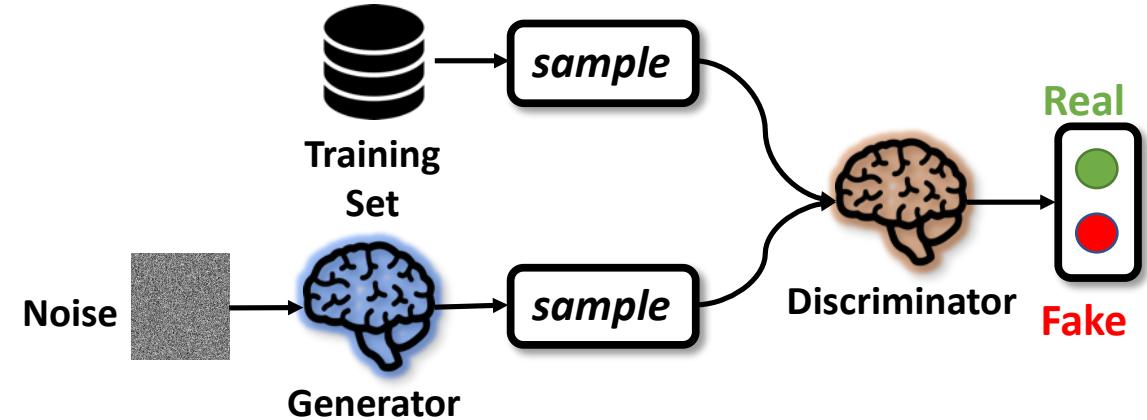


cifar-10



dr

# Models

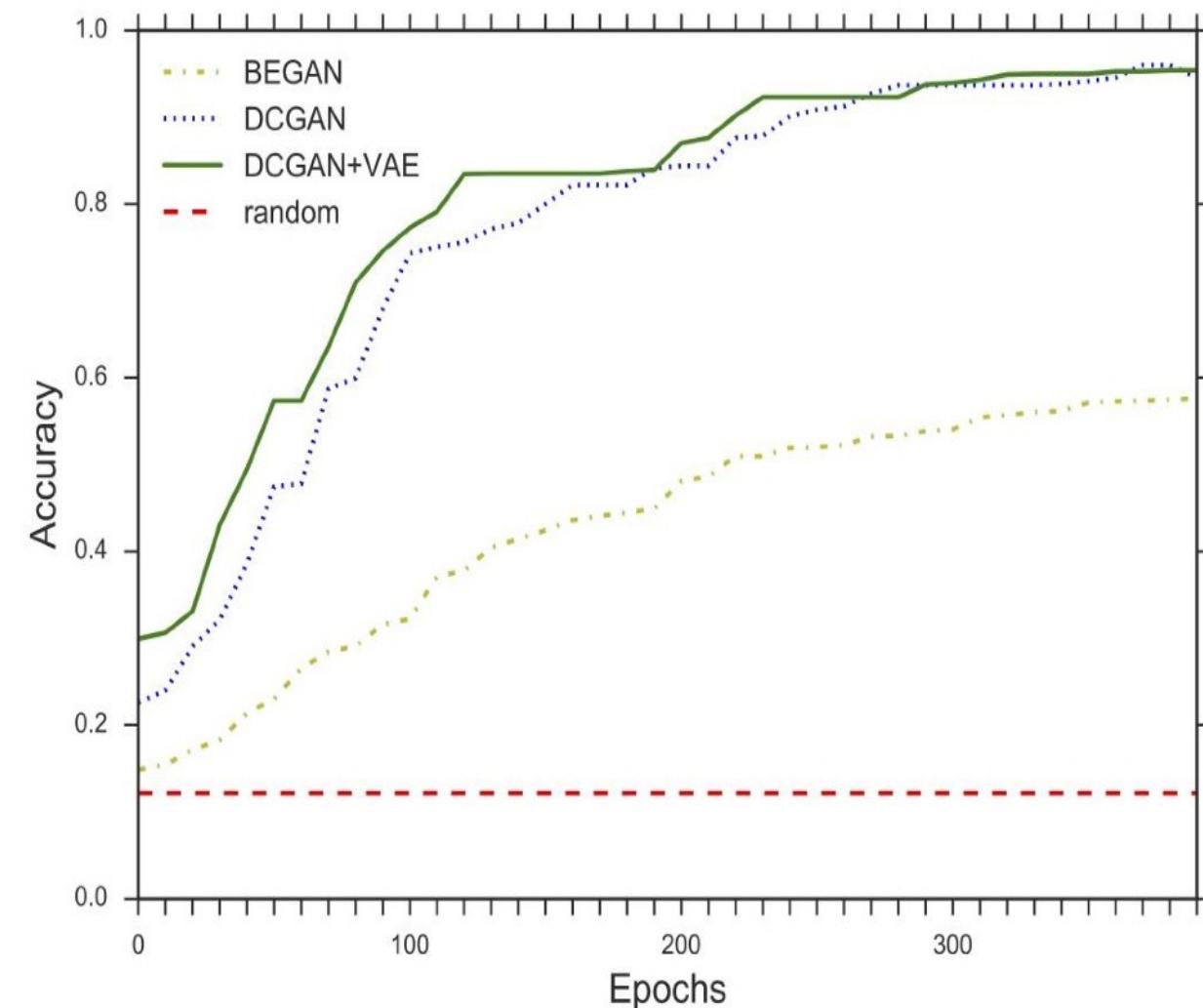


Attacker Model:  
DCGAN

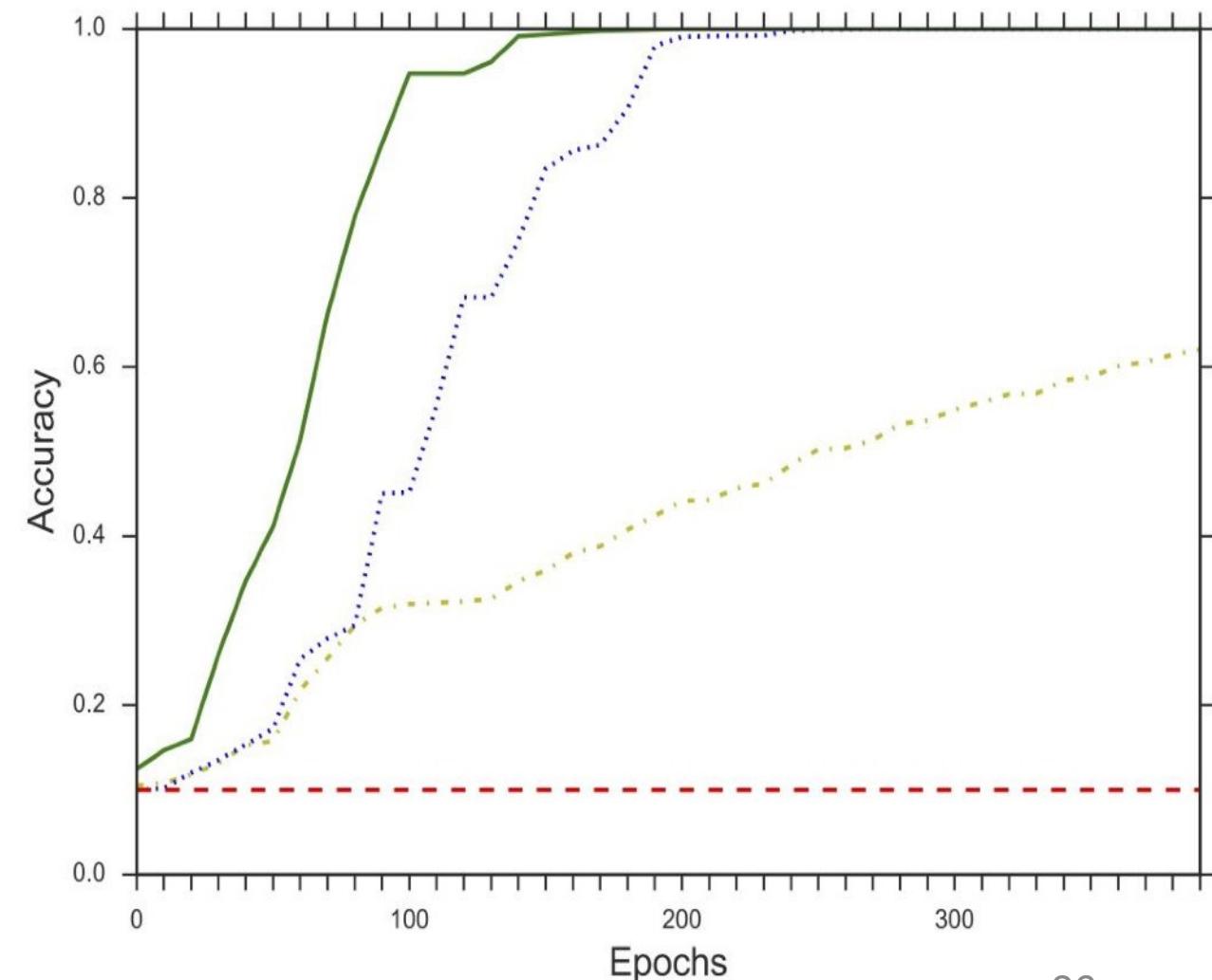
Target Model:  
DCGAN, DCGAN+VAE, BEGAN

# White-Box Results

LFW, top ten classes

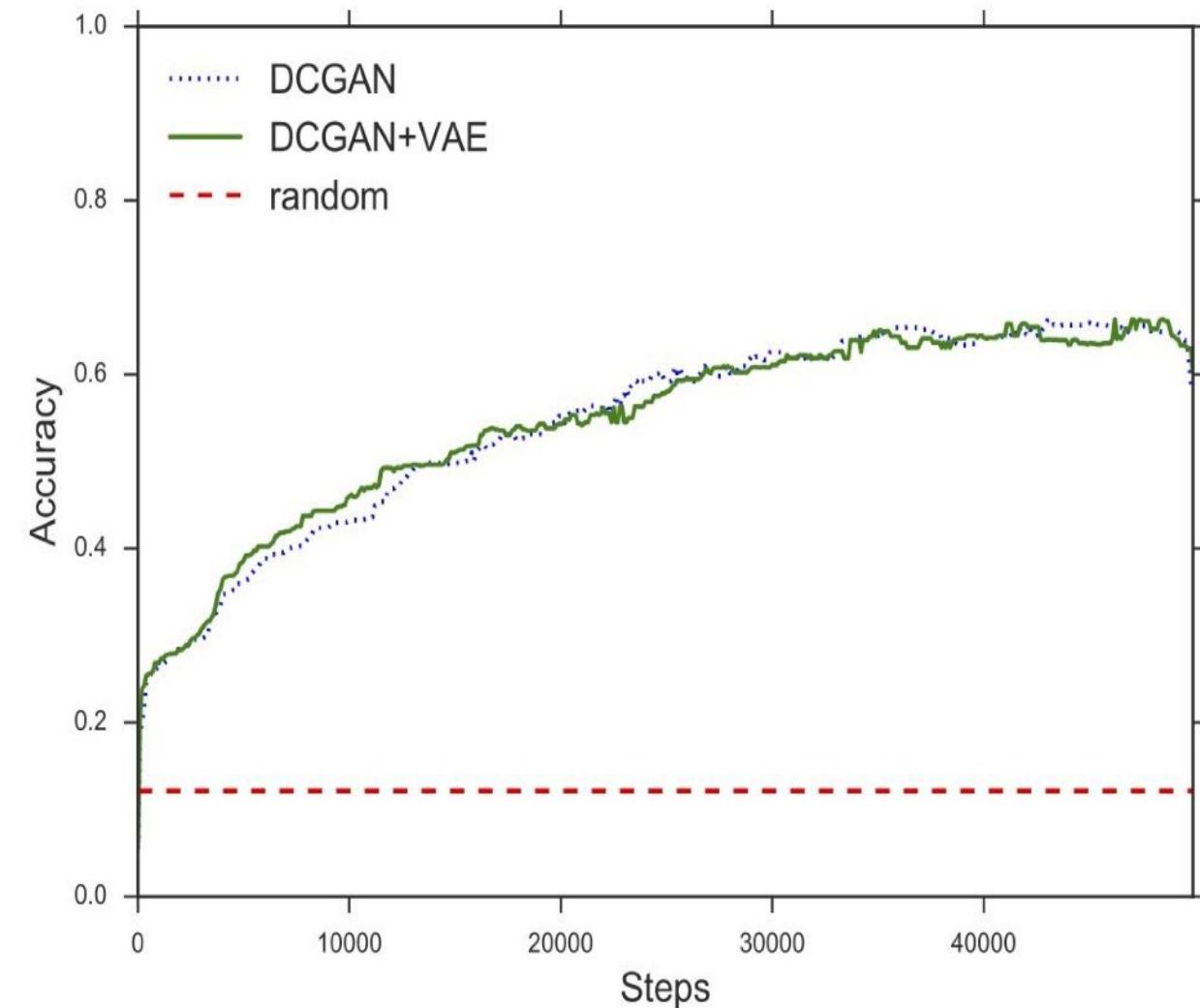


CIFAR-10, random 10% subset

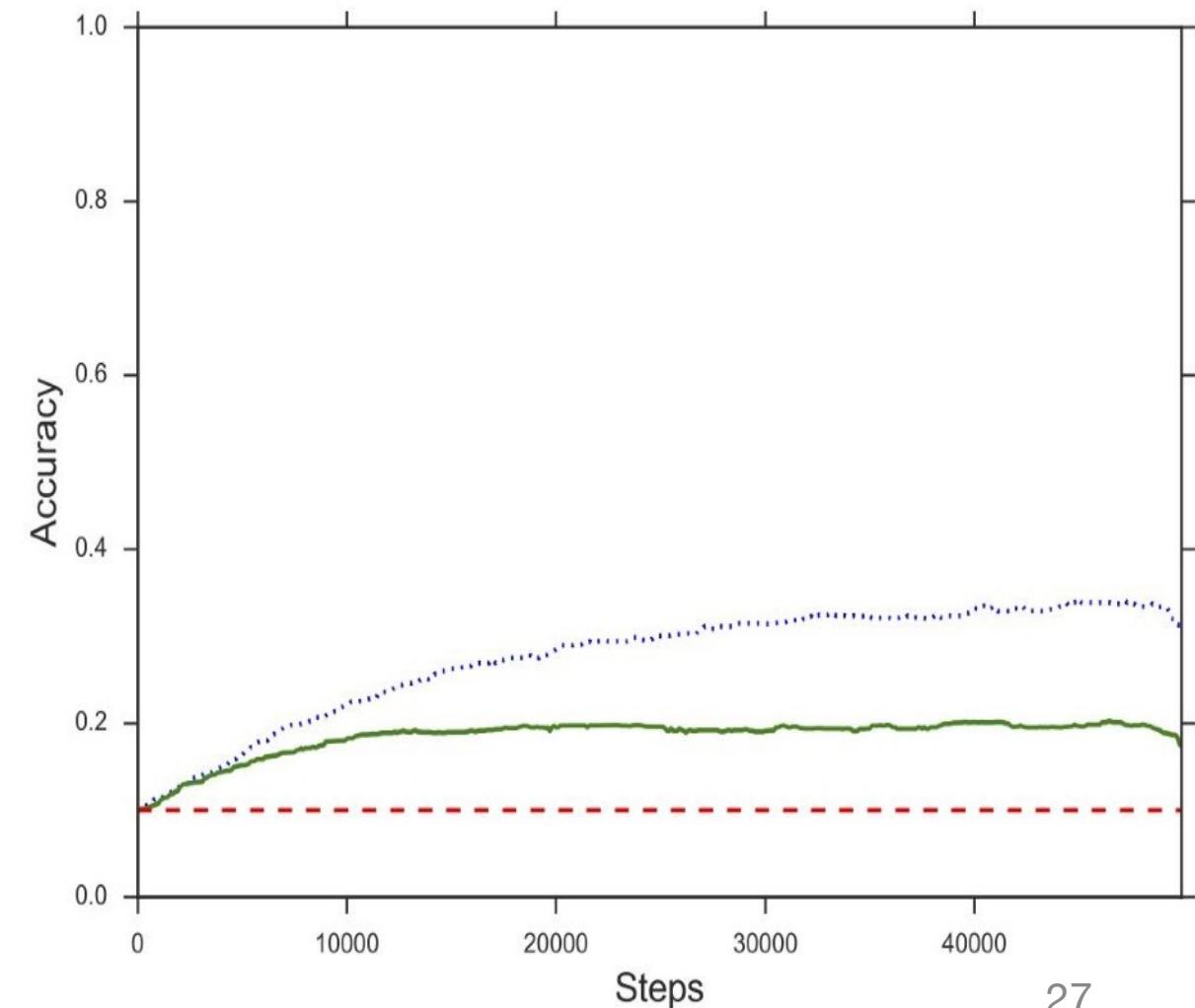


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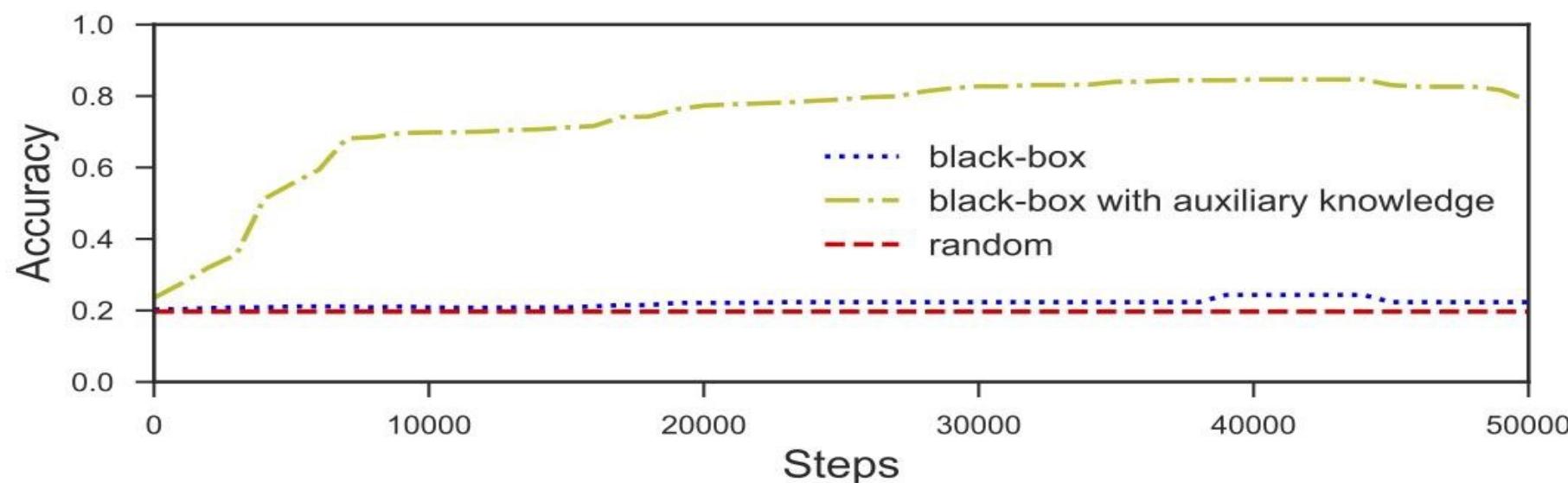
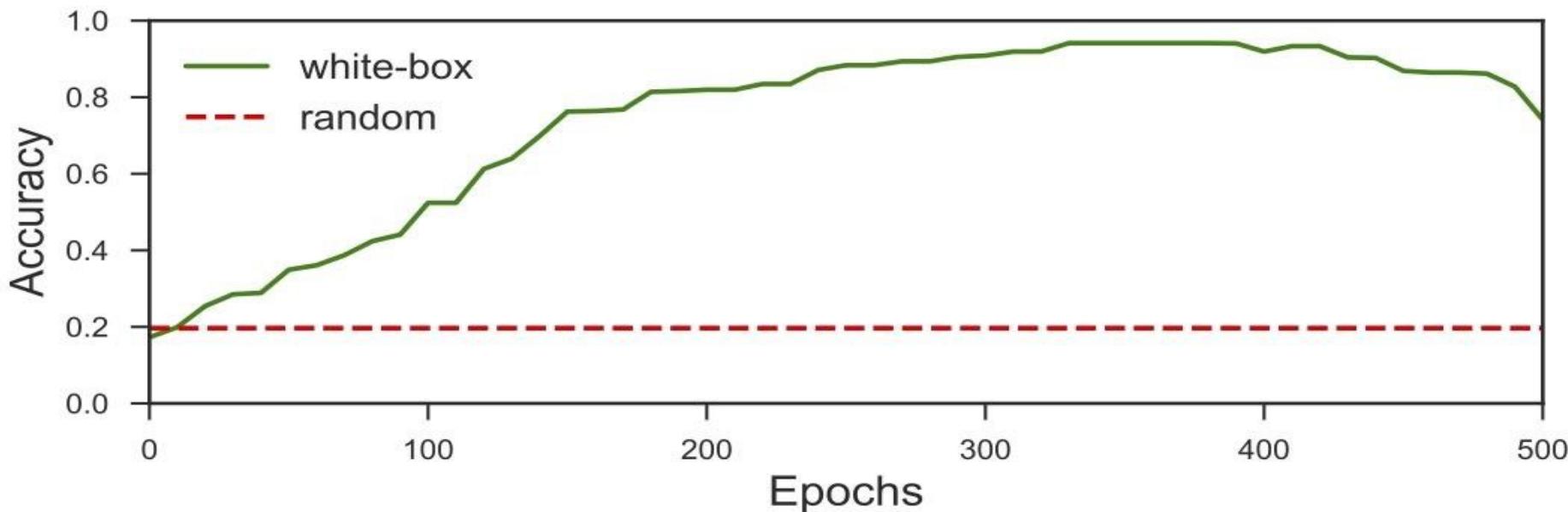
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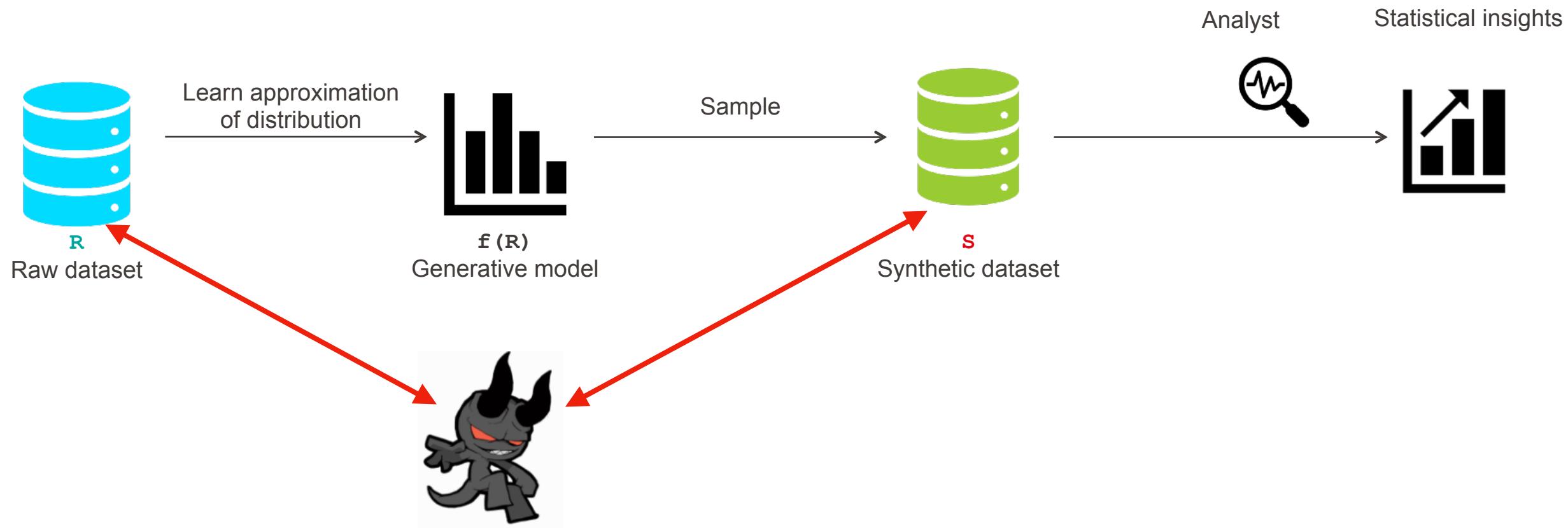
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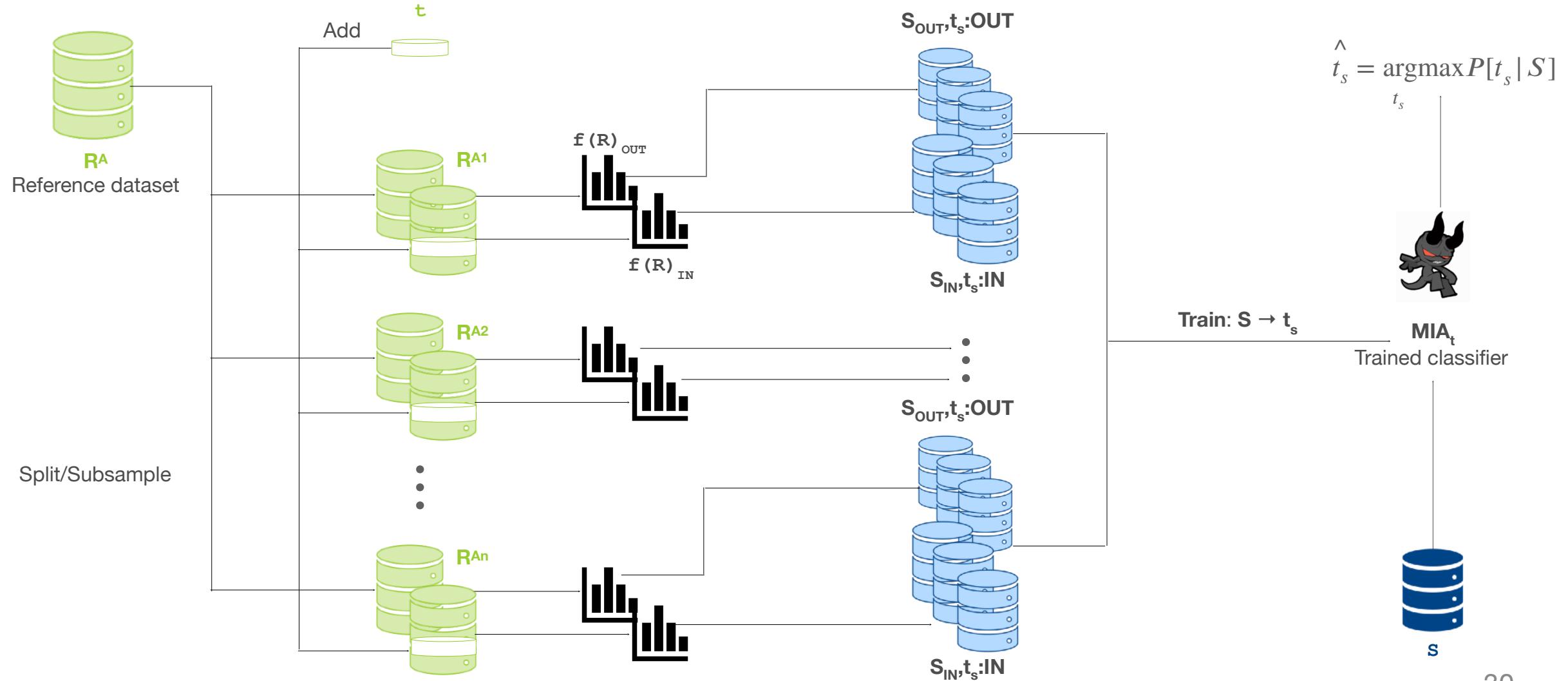
# DR Dataset



# [Stadler et al., Usenix'21]



# Membership Inference



# Privacy Gain

- Under the assumption equal prior  $P[t_s] = 0.5$  and perfect linkage in case of raw dataset  $P[MIA_t(R) = t_s] = 1$

$$PG_t(S, R) \triangleq \frac{1 - P[MIA_t(S) = t_s]}{2}$$

$$P[MIA_t(S) = t_s] = 1$$

Publishing  $s$  is equivalent to  
publishing  $R$

$$PG_t = 0$$

$$PG_t = 0.25$$

$$P[MIA_t(S) = t_s] = 0.5$$

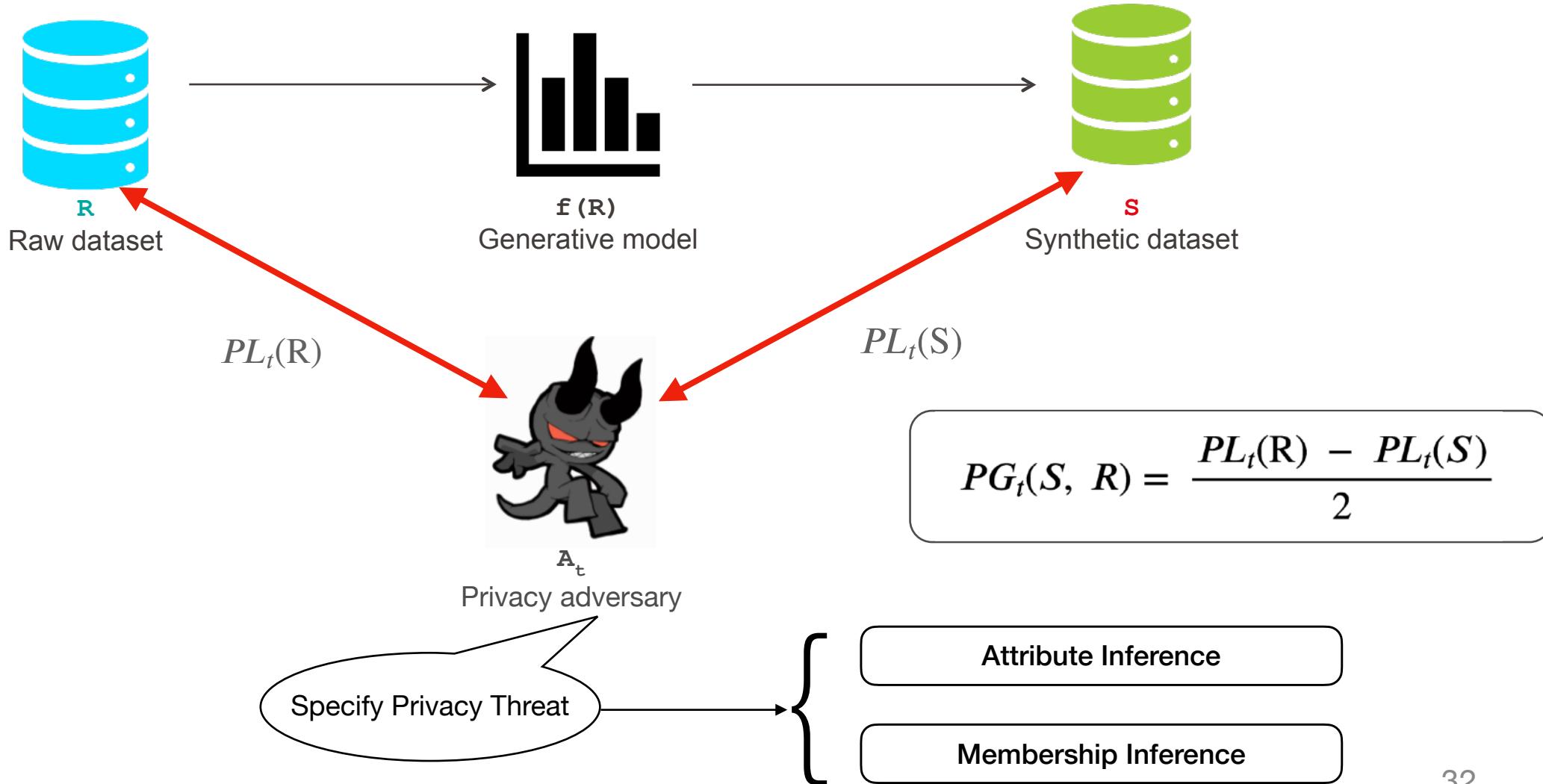
Publishing  $s$  gives the adversary no advantage over  
**random guessing**

$$P[MIA_t(S) = t_s] = 0$$

Publishing  $s$  reduces the  
adversary's chance of success

$$PG_t = 0.5$$

# Privacy Gain



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# Genome Sequencing

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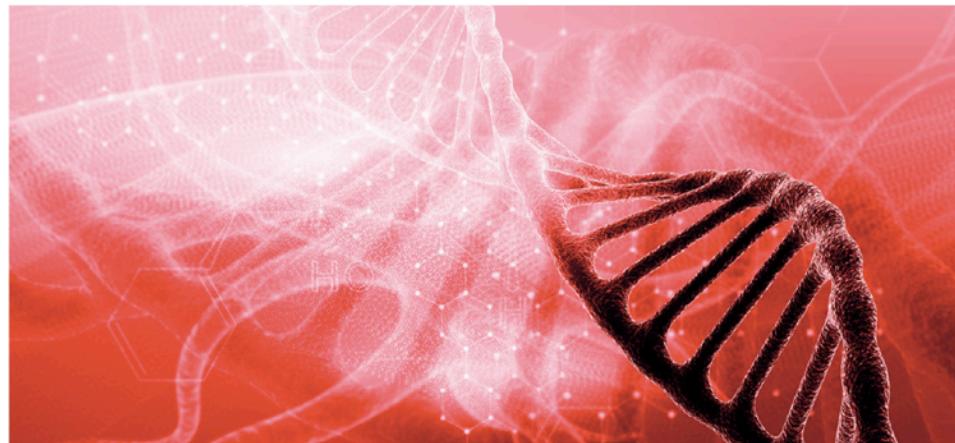
**YaleNews**

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Yale Cancer Center scientists build genomic research platform to help treat cervical cancer

By Anne Doerr | OCTOBER 18, 2019



# Genome Sequencing

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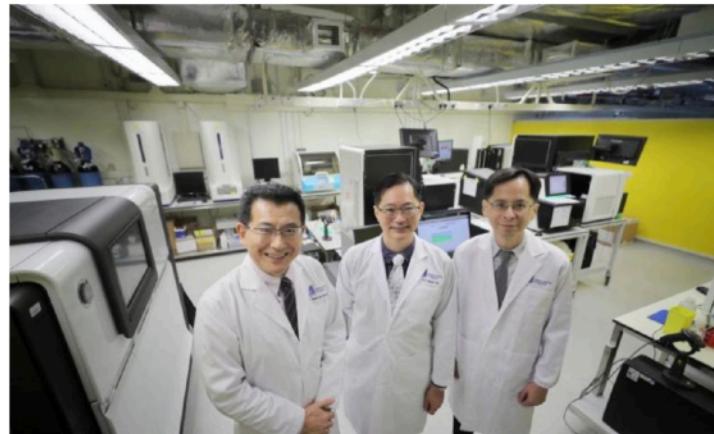
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Singapore researchers create world's largest Asian genetic databank



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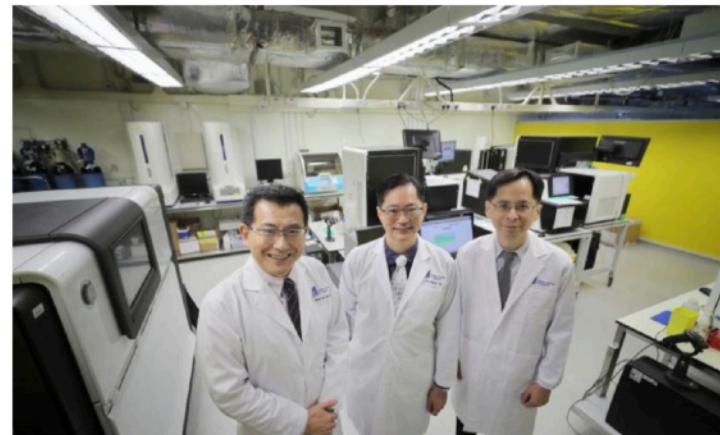
## NIH backs new \$7M genome center for All of Us research program

Jackie Drees - 17 hours ago [Print](#) | [Email](#)



The National Institutes of Health awarded \$7 million to the HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology to

Singapore researchers create world's largest Asian genetic databank



# Threats

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Technology

## **DNA Test Service Exposed Thousands of Client Records Online**

By [Nico Grant](#)

9 July 2019, 18:16 BST *Updated on 10 July 2019, 21:09 BST*

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### NHS patients' genetic data targeted as foreign hackers attack high security MoD unit



Save 33

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## China Uses DNA to Track Its People, With the Help of American Expertise

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MEGAN MOLTENI SCIENCE 06.28.2019 03:05 PM

## China Uses DNA to Track Its People, With the Help of a Billion Smartphones

## Man Found Guilty in a Murder Mystery Cracked By Cousins' DNA

The trial of William Earl Talbott II hinged on a lead from a genealogy site. The verdict will shape the future of crime-fighting and genetic privacy.

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# Genomic Privacy

Treasure trove of **sensitive** information

Ethnic heritage, predisposition to diseases

Genome = the ultimate **identifier**

Hard to anonymize / de-identify

Sensitivity is **perpetual**

Cannot be “revoked”

Leaking one's genome ≈ leaking relatives' genome

# Enter Synthetic Genomic Data

Recombination model (Recomb)\*

Restricted Boltzmann Machines (RBM)+

Generative Adversarial Networks (GAN)+

Wasserstein GAN (WGAN)^

Recombination RBM (Rec-RBM), new

Recombination GAN (Rec-GAN), new

\*Samani et al. Quantifying genomic privacy via inference attack with high-order SNV correlations

+Yelmen et al. Creating Artificial Human Genomes Using Generative Models

^Killoran, et al. Generating and designing DNA with deep generative models

# Datasets

CEU Population (HapMap Project)

CHB Population (HapMap Project)

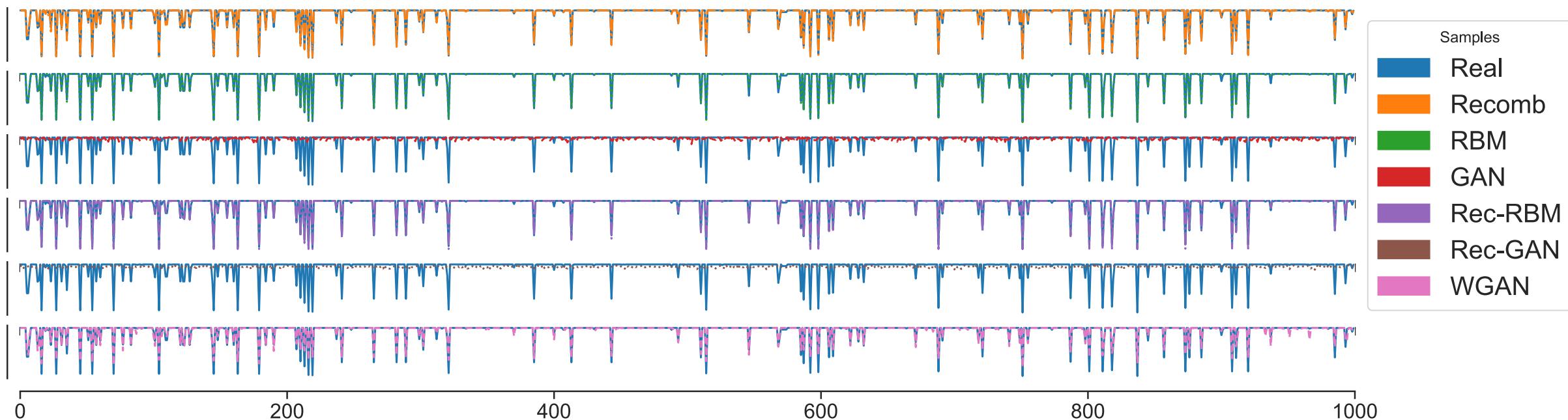
1,000 Genomes Project

# Utility

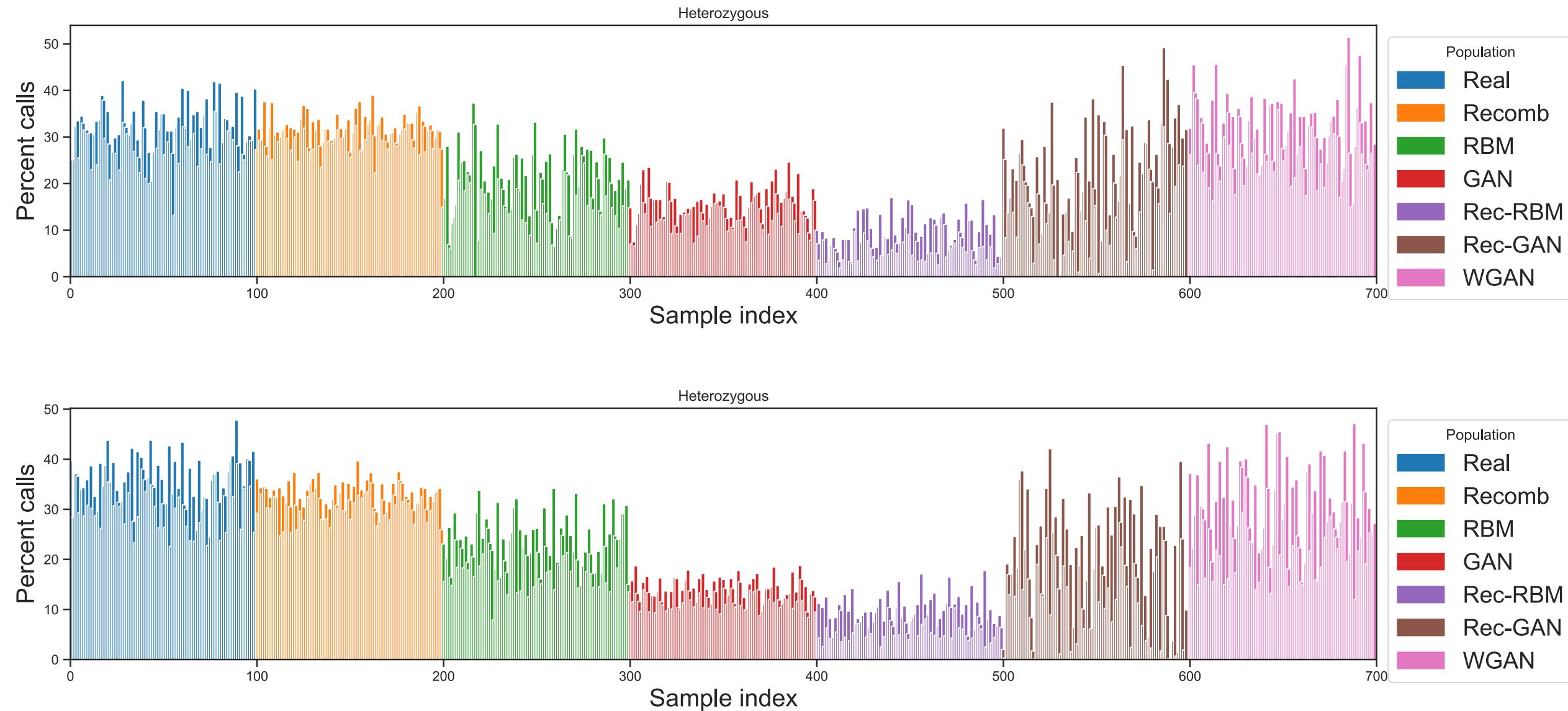
# Allele Statistics

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1000 Genomes

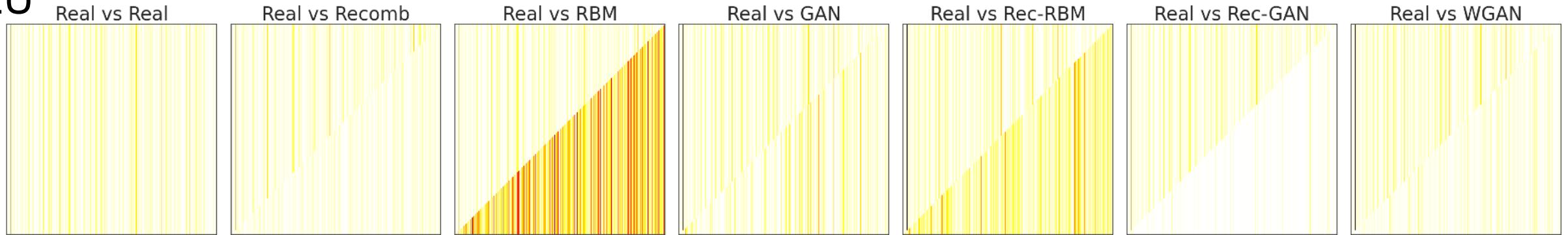


# Population Statistics

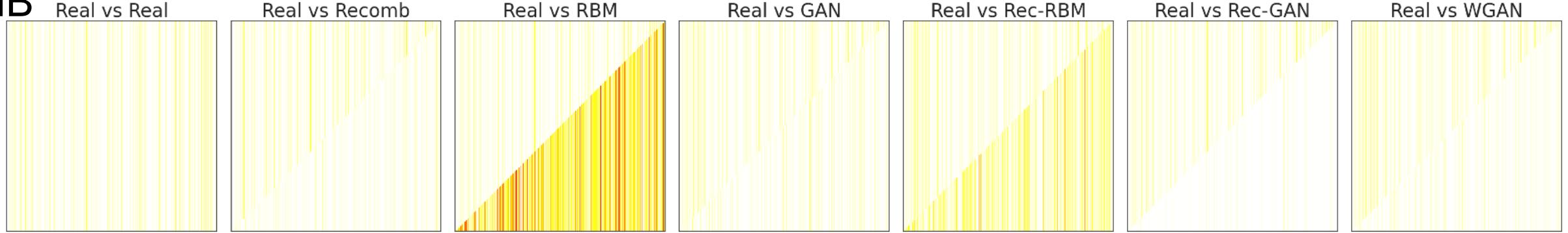


# Linkage Disequilibrium

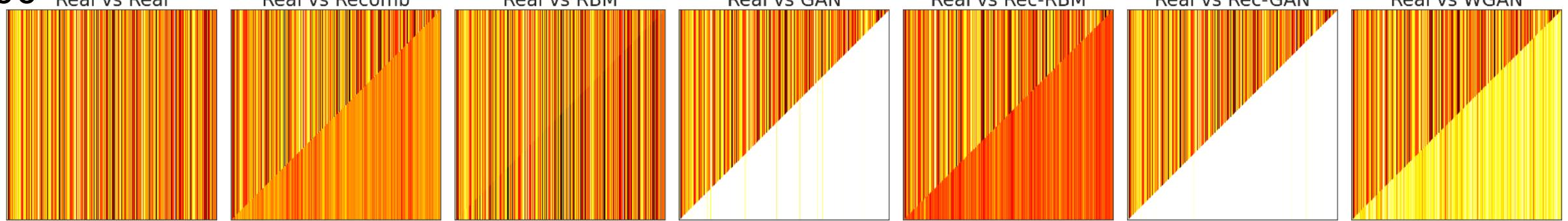
CEU



CHB

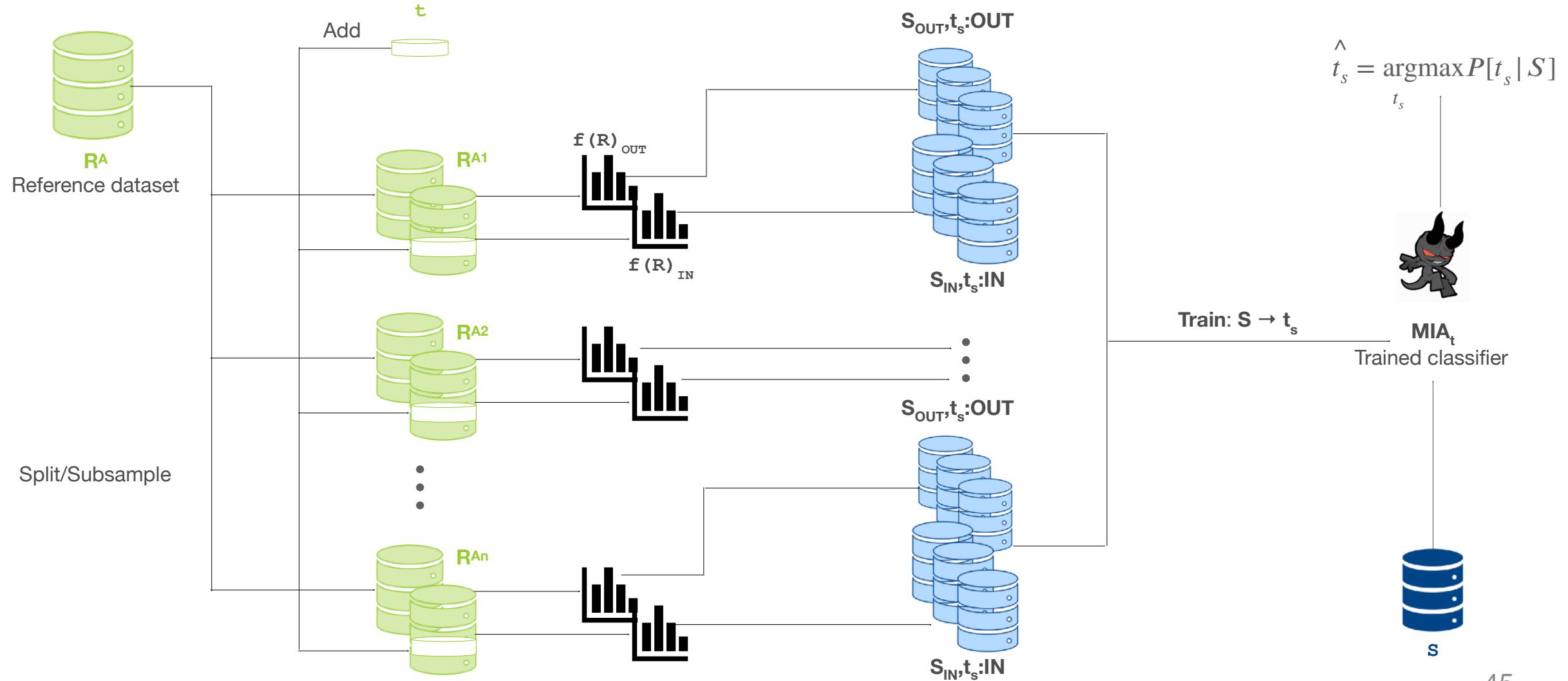


1000



# Privacy

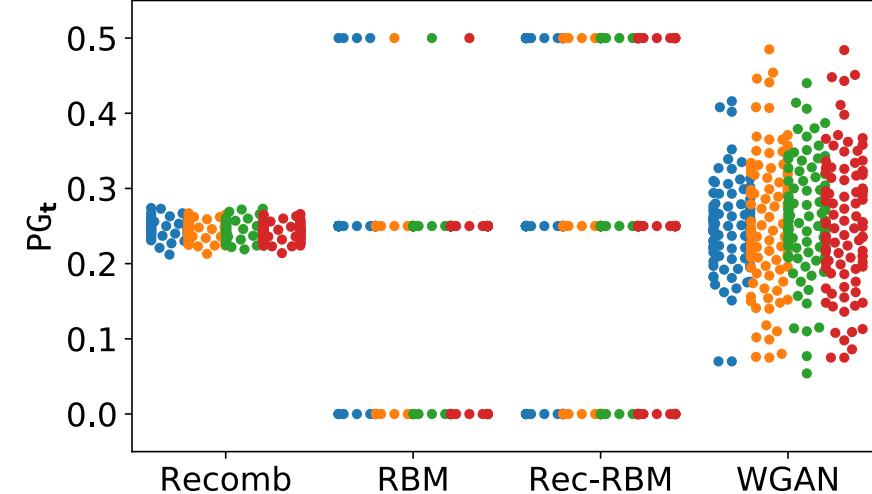
# Membership Inference



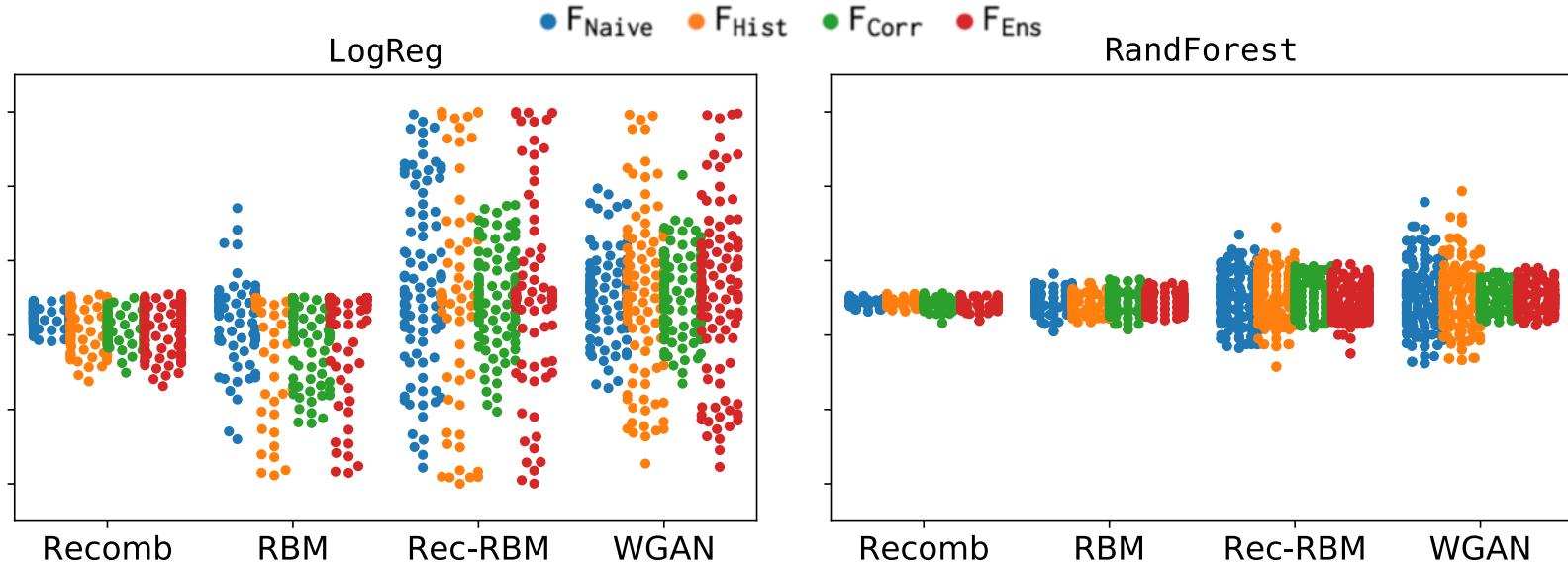
# Membership Inference

CEU

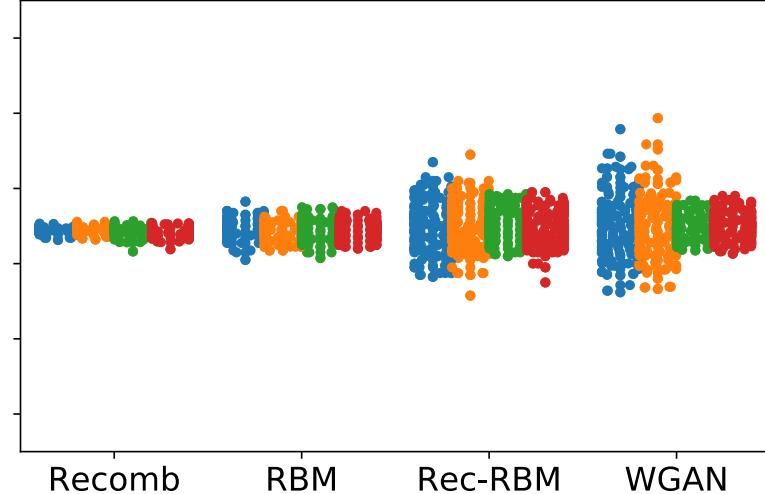
KNN



LogReg

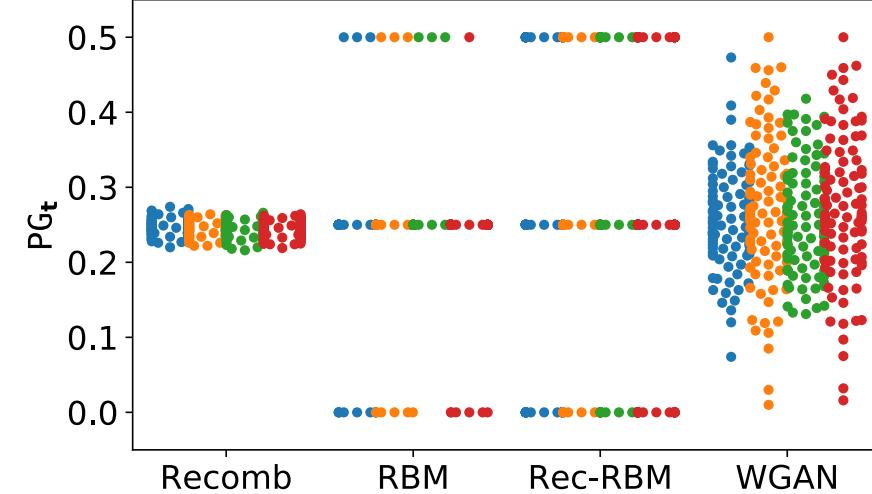


RandForest

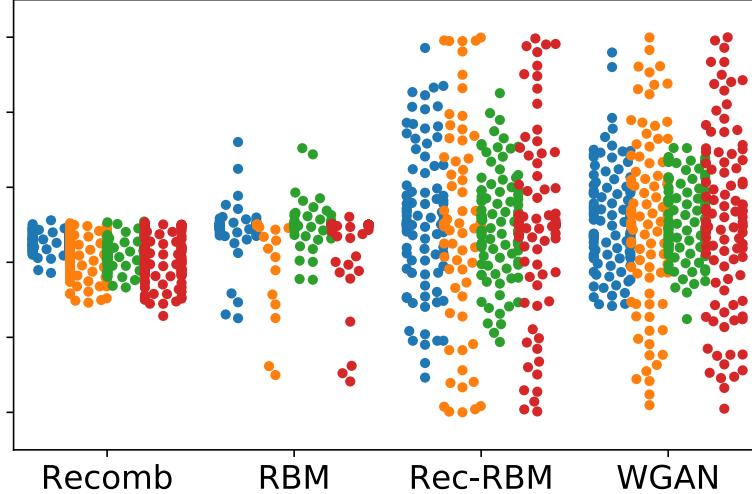


CHB

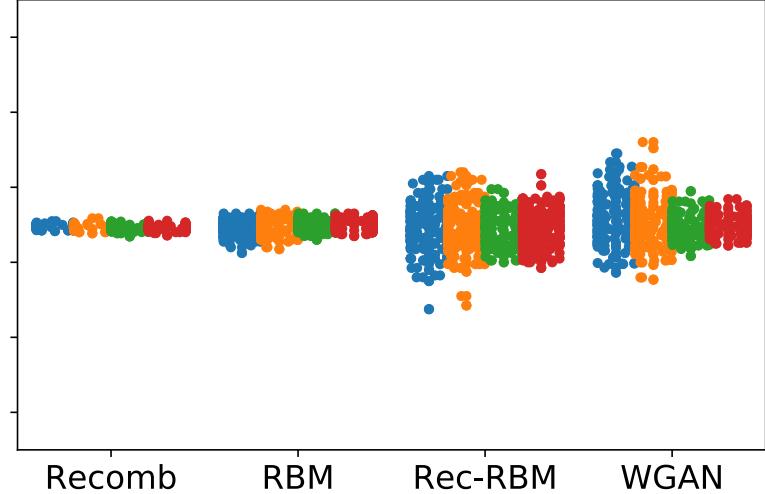
KNN



LogReg

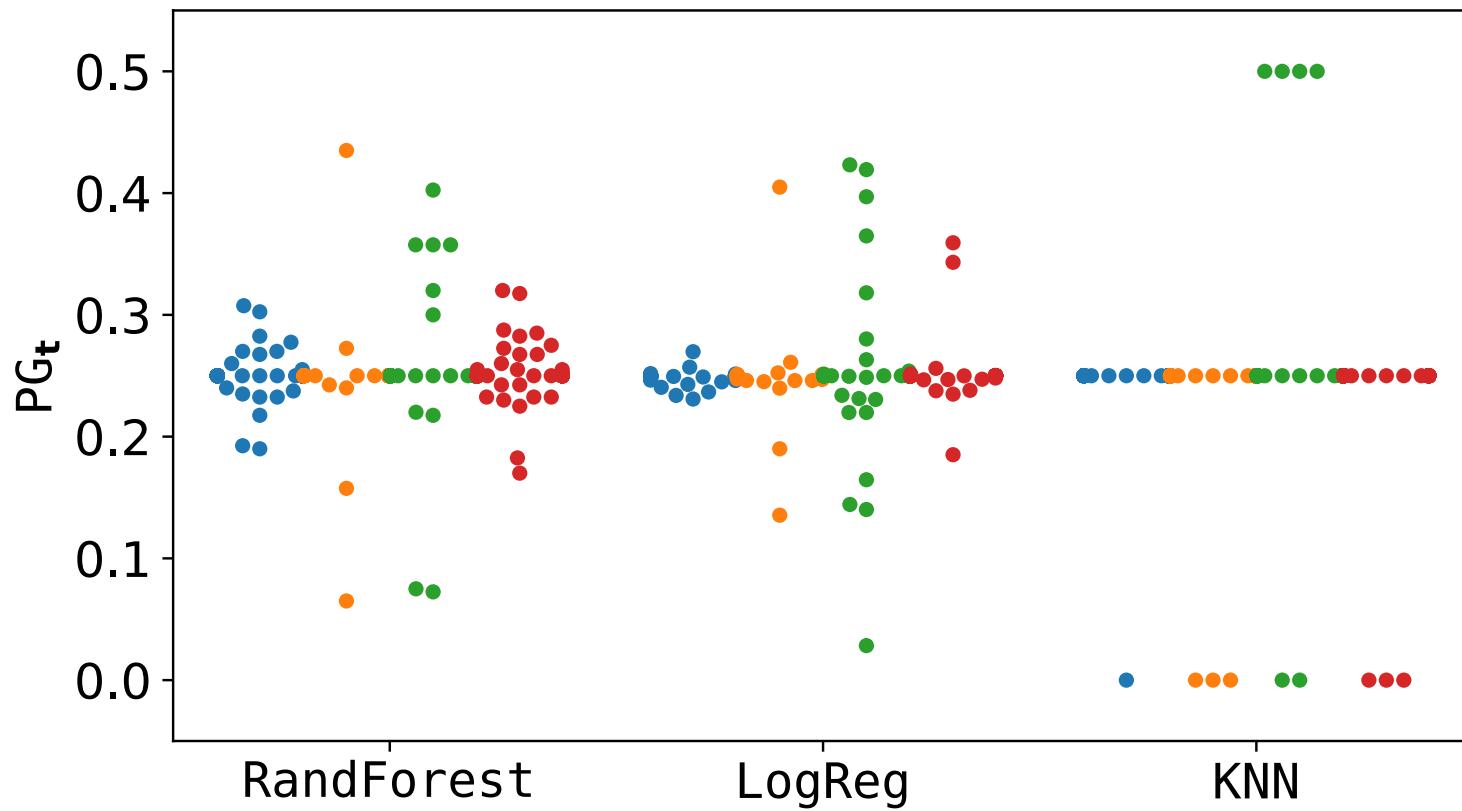


RandForest



# Membership Inference

1000 Genomes



# Membership Inference w Partial Information

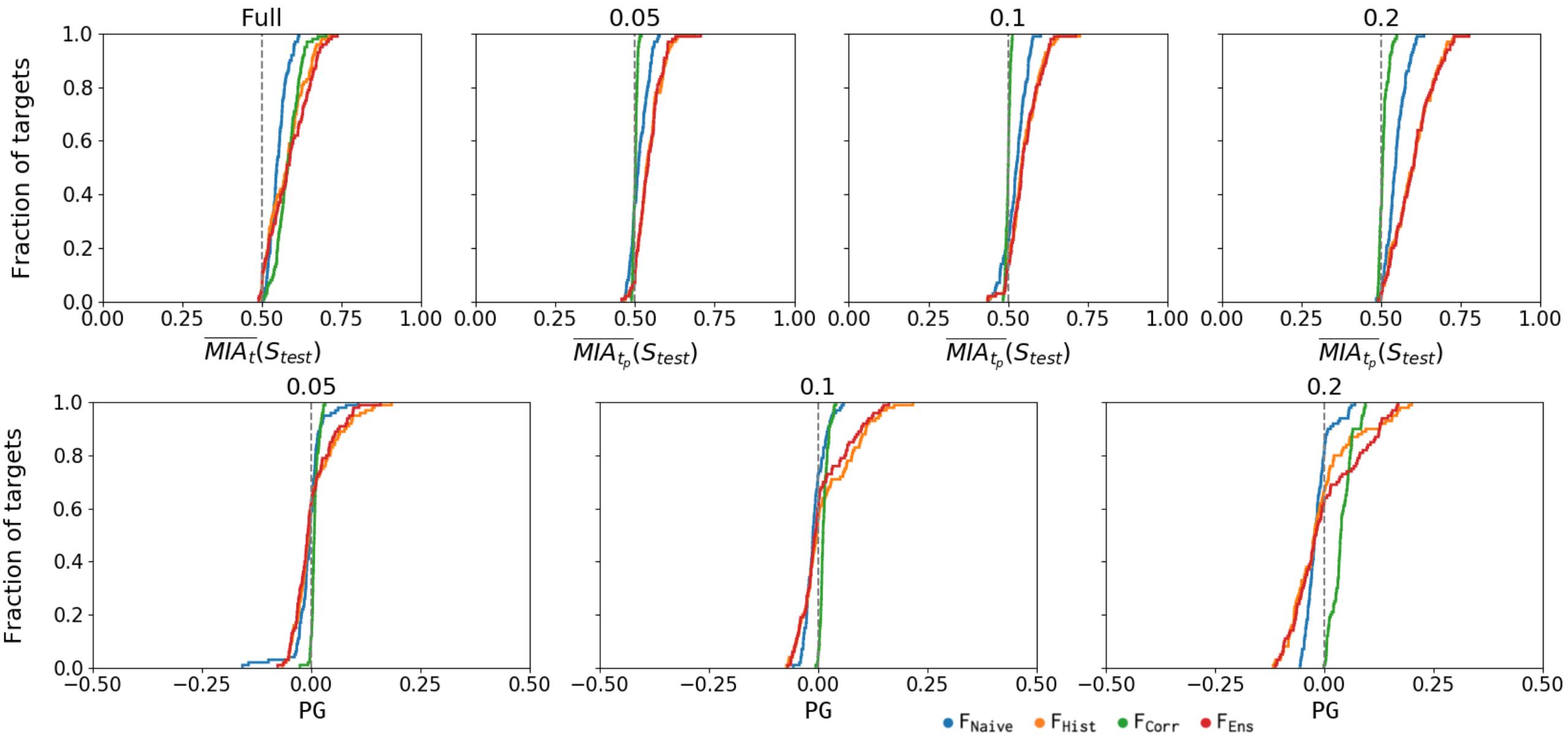
- We only give the attacker access to a fraction of SNVs from the target sequence, chosen at random.
- The attacker then uses the Recombination model as an inference method to predict the rest of the sequence.
- The PG formula needs adjusting:

$$PG_t = \frac{\overline{MIA}_{t_p}(R_t) - \overline{MIA}_{t_p}(S_{test})}{2}, \text{ where}$$

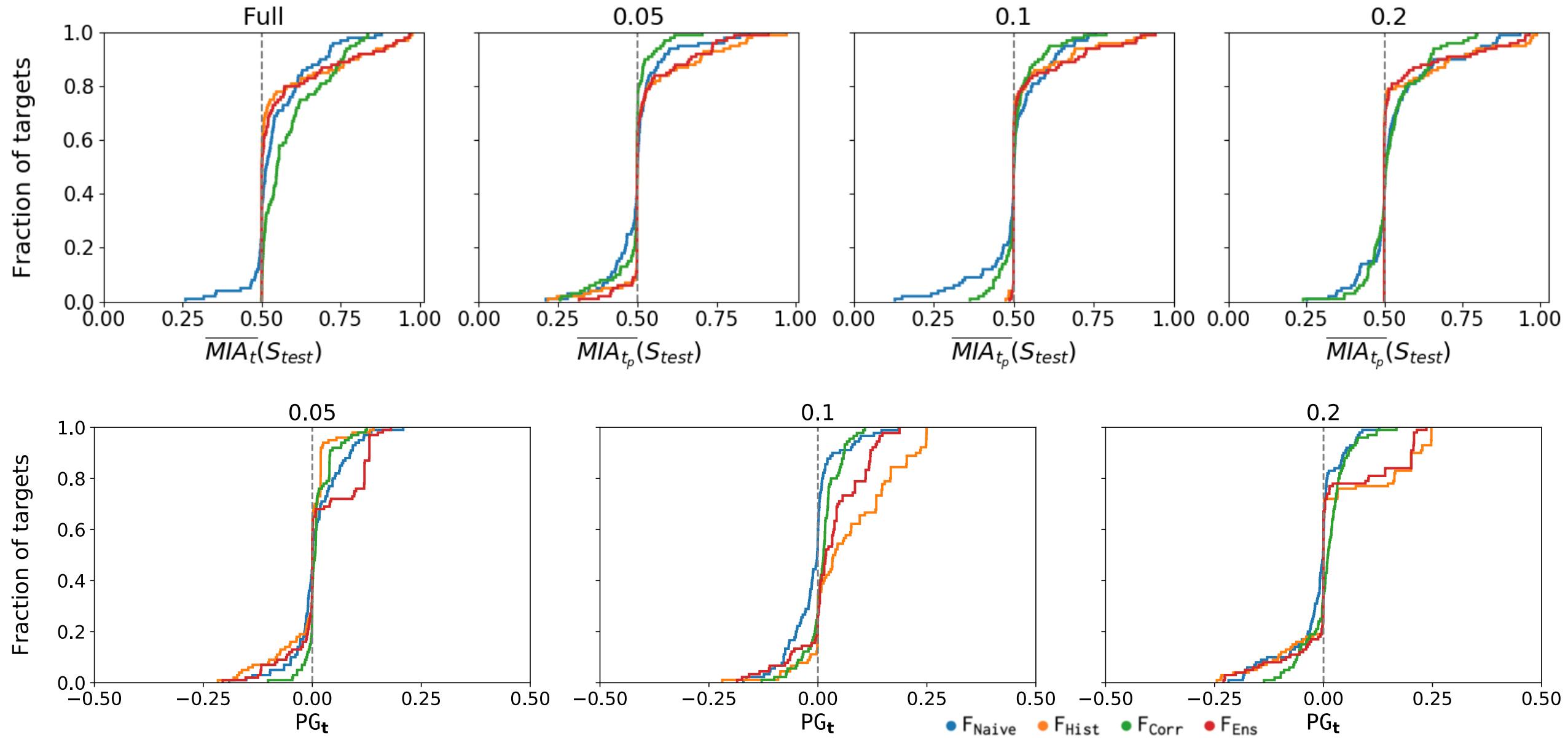
$$\overline{MIA}_{t_p}(S_{test}) = \sum_{S_i \in S_{test}} \frac{\Pr[MIA_{t_p}(S_i) = 1]}{2 * n_s}, \text{ and}$$

$$\overline{MIA}_{t_p}(R_t) = \sum_{R_i \in R_t} \frac{\Pr[MIA_{t_p}(R_i) = 1]}{2 * n_s}.$$

# MIA with Partial Information



# MIA with Partial Information



# Take Aways

- High-quality synthetic data must accurately capture the relations between data points; however, this can enable attackers to infer sensitive information about the training data used to generate the synthetic data
- The size of the training dataset matters, especially in the case of non-statistical generative models
- Overall, there is no single method that outperforms the others for all metrics and all datasets.

# Conclusion

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