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**Measuring mutual information in
Neural Networks**

Computer Science Tripos – Part II

Robinson College

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Proforma

Name: **Andrius Grabauskas**
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Project Originator: **Dr. Damon Wischik**
Supervisor: **Prof. Alan Mycroft**

Original Aims of the Project

Work Completed

Special Difficulties

¹This word count was computed by `detex diss.tex | tr -cd '0-9A-Za-z \n' | wc -w`

Declaration

I, Andrius Grabauskas of Robinson College, being a candidate for Part II of the Computer Science Tripos, hereby declare that this dissertation and the work described in it are my own work, unaided except as may be specified below, and that the dissertation does not contain material that has already been used to any substantial extent for a comparable purpose.

Signed

Date

Contents

1	Introduction	9
2	Preparation	11
3	Implementation	13
4	Evaluation	15
5	Conclusion	17
	Bibliography	17
A	Project Proposal	19

List of Figures

Acknowledgements

Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapter 2

Preparation

Chapter 3

Implementation

Chapter 4

Evaluation

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Appendix A

Project Proposal

Measuring mutual information within Neural networks

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Saturday 20th October, 2018

Project Originator: Andrius Grabauskas

Project Supervisor: Dr. Damon Wischik

Director of Studies: Prof. Alan Mycroft

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Introduction and Description of the Work

The goal of this project is to confirm or deny the results produced by Shwartz-ziv & Tishby in their paper "Opening the black box of Deep Neural Networks via Information"¹

The paper tackles our understating of Deep Neural Networks (DNN's). As of yet there is no comprehensive theoretical understanding of how DNN's learn from data. The authors proposed to measure how information travels within the DNN's layers.

They found that training of neural networks can be split into to two distinct phases: memorization followed by the compression phase.

- memorization - each layer increases information about the input and the label
- compression - this is the generalization stage where each layer tries to forget details about the input while still increasing mutual information with the label thus improving performance of the DNN. This phase takes the wast majority of the training time.

They found that each layer in neural network tries to throw out unnecessary data from the input while preserving information about the output/label. As the network is trained each layer preserves more information about the label

¹<https://arxiv.org/abs/1703.00810>

The results they found were interesting but also contentious as they have not yet provided a formal proof, just experimental data as a result there are many peers that are cautious and sceptical of the theory even a paper² was produced that tries to suggest that the theory is wrong, however this was dismissed by Tishby & Shwartz-Ziv³

Starting Point

I have watched a talk that Prof. Tishby gave on this topic at Yandex, no other preparation was done.

Resources Required

The training DNN's and measuring mutual information will be computationally expensive so I will be using Azure cloud GPU service to acquire the required compute for this project. The GPU credits will be provided by Damon Wischik

For backups I intend to store my work on GitHub and my own personal machine. In case my laptop breaks I will get another one or use the MCS machines.

Substance and Structure of the Project

The aim of this project to reproduce the results provided by Prof. Tishby and his colleagues. The intention of my work is to help settle the debate surrounding the topic either strengthening the arguments in favour of the theory in case my results are inline with the aforementioned results or encourage discussion in case my results contradict the theory.

My work will require me to have a comprehensive understanding of Information theory, Information bottleneck and neural networks.

One of the more contentious parts of my project will be measuring mutual information between the input a layer in the DNN and the label. It will be computationally expensive to measure it in DNN since we will need to retrain the network in order to get a distribution rather than a single value. I will use Gaussian approximation to measure it (relevant paper⁴)

Will need to use Python to train the neural networks and GNUplot or alternative to plot the results.

Success Criteria

Reimplement the code that was used to generate the papers results. Confirm or deny the results produced in "Opening the black box of Deep Neural Networks via Information" paper on the same dataset as the paper. In order to do that I will need to: Train a neural network on the same dataset

²https://openreview.net/pdf?id=ry_WPG-A-

³https://openreview.net/forum?id=ry_WPG-A-¬eId=S1lBxcE1z

⁴<https://arxiv.org/abs/1508.00536>

that was used in the paper and measure mutual information between the layers. Analyse the results produced and address any discrepancies that may have occurred.

Extensions

Provided I achieve the success criteria there are two main ways to extend it.

- Use different datasets to test the theory. Using different datasets would confirm that the results are not data specific. Current datasets we are considering: MNIST⁵ and NOT-MNIST⁶.
- Explore different ways of measuring mutual information. One interesting way would be to explore a discrete neural network where every node would only be able assigned discrete values say 1...256. This would make the distribution within a DNN layer discrete and hence it would make calculating mutual information straightforward. However quantizing the neural network could possibly hurt the performance of the network.

⁵<http://yann.lecun.com/exdb/mnist/>

⁶<https://www.kaggle.com/quanbk/notmnist>

Schedule

- **20th Oct – 2nd Nov**

I expect to spend the first two weeks reading up on Information theory (primarily from Mackay's book⁷) and the information bottleneck method in order to understand the nuances of the paper.

- **3rd Nov – 30th Nov**

The following weeks I intend to spend reading up on DNN's doing some introductory courses, I will train the neural network on the same data as the paper but at this point will not yet try to measure the mutual information between the layers.

At this point I will also start examining the code⁸ provided and start to implement parts of it which don't deal with information measurement.

- **1st Dec – 28th Dec**

Will start reading up on mutual Information measurement with local Gaussian approximation.

Implementing mutual information measurement in code.

At this point I expect the computation to be too demanding for my machine and will need to use provided compute.

- **29th Dec – 1st Feb**

Having a working system to test data sets I will try to reproduce results from the paper on the same dataset. This will achieve my success criteria.

At this point my success criteria should be completed I will spend some time writing the skeleton of the thesis. Look for any discrepancies between my results and the ones provided in the paper.

- **2nd Feb – 2nd Feb**

Assuming everything goes as planned I will start looking into implementing one of the extensions. Which are :

- Testing the theory on different datasets.
- Implementing a quantized neural network implementation.

or both, if time is in my favour.

- **3rd Feb – 2nd Mar**

Will use the remaining time to write up the dissertation.

⁷Information Theory, Inference, and Learning Algorithms by David J. C. MacKay

⁸<https://github.com/ravidziv/IDNNs>