
Problem Set 1 — *Due Friday, October 12, before class starts*
For the Exercise Sessions on Sep 28 and Oct 5

Last name	First name	SCIPER Nr	Points

Problem 1: Divergence and L_1

Suppose p and q are two probability mass functions on a finite set \mathcal{U} . (I.e., for all $u \in \mathcal{U}$, $p(u) \geq 0$ and $\sum_{u \in \mathcal{U}} p(u) = 1$; similarly for q .)

- (a) Show that the L_1 distance $\|p - q\|_1 := \sum_{u \in \mathcal{U}} |p(u) - q(u)|$ between p and q satisfies

$$\|p - q\|_1 = 2 \max_{\mathcal{S}: \mathcal{S} \subset \mathcal{U}} p(\mathcal{S}) - q(\mathcal{S})$$

with $p(\mathcal{S}) = \sum_{u \in \mathcal{S}} p(u)$ (and similarly for q), and the maximum is taken over all subsets \mathcal{S} of \mathcal{U} .

For α and β in $[0, 1]$, define the function $d_2(\alpha||\beta) := \alpha \log \frac{\alpha}{\beta} + (1 - \alpha) \log \frac{1 - \alpha}{1 - \beta}$. Note that $d_2(\alpha||\beta)$ is the divergence of the distribution $(\alpha, 1 - \alpha)$ from the distribution $(\beta, 1 - \beta)$.

- (b) Show that the first and second derivatives of d_2 with respect to its first argument α satisfy $d'_2(\beta||\beta) = 0$ and $d''_2(\alpha||\beta) = \frac{\log e}{\alpha(1 - \alpha)} \geq 4 \log e$.

- (c) By Taylor's theorem conclude that

$$d_2(\alpha||\beta) \geq 2(\log e)(\alpha - \beta)^2.$$

- (d) Show that for any $\mathcal{S} \subset \mathcal{U}$

$$D(p||q) \geq d_2(p(\mathcal{S})||q(\mathcal{S}))$$

[Hint: use the data processing theorem for divergence.]

- (e) Combine (a), (c) and (d) to conclude that

$$D(p||q) \geq \frac{\log e}{2} \|p - q\|_1^2.$$

- (f) Show, by example, that $D(p||q)$ can be $+\infty$ even when $\|p - q\|_1$ is arbitrarily small. [Hint: considering $\mathcal{U} = \{0, 1\}$ is sufficient.] Consequently, there is no generally valid inequality that upper bounds $D(p||q)$ in terms of $\|p - q\|_1$.

Problem 2: Other Divergences

Suppose f is a convex function defined on $(0, \infty)$ with $f(1) = 0$. Define the f -divergence of a distribution p from a distribution q as

$$D_f(p\|q) := \sum_u q(u) f(p(u)/q(u)).$$

In the sum above we take $f(0) := \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} f(t)$, $0f(0/0) := 0$, and $0f(a/0) := \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} tf(a/t) = a \lim_{t \rightarrow 0} tf(1/t)$.

- (a) Show that for any non-negative a_1, a_2, b_1, b_2 and with $A = a_1 + a_2, B = b_1 + b_2$,

$$b_1 f(a_1/b_1) + b_2 f(a_2/b_2) \geq B f(A/B);$$

and that in general, for any non-negative $a_1, \dots, a_k, b_1, \dots, b_k$, and $A = \sum_i a_i, B = \sum_i b_i$, we have

$$\sum_i b_i f(a_i/b_i) \geq B f(A/B).$$

[Hint: since f is convex, for any $\lambda \in [0, 1]$ and any $x_1, x_2 > 0$ $\lambda f(x_1) + (1 - \lambda)f(x_2) \geq f(\lambda x_1 + (1 - \lambda)x_2)$; consider $\lambda = b_1/B$.]

- (b) Show that $D_f(p\|q) \geq 0$.

- (c) Show that D_f satisfies the data processing inequality: for any transition probability kernel $W(v|u)$ from \mathcal{U} to \mathcal{V} , and any two distributions p and q on \mathcal{U}

$$D_f(p\|q) \geq D_f(\tilde{p}\|\tilde{q})$$

where \tilde{p} and \tilde{q} are probability distributions on \mathcal{V} defined via $\tilde{p}(v) := \sum_u W(v|u)p(u)$, and $\tilde{q}(v) := \sum_u W(v|u)q(u)$,

- (d) Show that each of the following are f -divergences.

- i. $D(p\|q) := \sum_u p(u) \log(p(u)/q(u))$. [Warning: \log is not the right choice for f .]
- ii. $R(p\|q) := D(q\|p)$.
- iii. $1 - \sum_u \sqrt{p(u)q(u)}$
- iv. $\|p - q\|_1$.
- v. $\sum_u (p(u) - q(u))^2 / q(u)$

Problem 3: Entropy and pairwise independence

Suppose X, Y, Z are pairwise independent fair flips, i.e., $I(X; Y) = I(Y; Z) = I(Z; X) = 0$.

- (a) What is $H(X, Y)$?
- (b) Give a lower bound to the value of $H(X, Y, Z)$.
- (c) Give an example that achieves this bound.

Problem 4: Generating fair coin flips from biased coins

Suppose X_1, X_2, \dots are the outcomes of independent flips of a biased coin. Let $\Pr(X_i = 1) = p$, $\Pr(X_i = 0) = 1 - p$, with p unknown. By processing this sequence we would like to obtain a sequence Z_1, Z_2, \dots of *fair* coin flips.

Consider the following method: We process the X sequence in successive pairs, (X_1X_2) , (X_3X_4) , (X_5X_6) , mapping (01) to 0, (10) to 1, and the other outcomes (00) and (11) to the empty string. After processing X_1, X_2 , we will obtain either nothing, or a bit Z_1 .

- (a) Show that, if a bit is obtained, it is fair, i.e., $\Pr(Z_1 = 0) = \Pr(Z_1 = 1) = 1/2$.

In general we can process the X sequence in successive n -tuples via a function $f : \{0, 1\}^n \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^*$ where $\{0, 1\}^*$ denote the set of all finite length binary sequences (including the empty string λ). [The case in (a) is the function $f(00) = f(11) = \lambda$, $f(01) = 0$, $f(10) = 1$. The function f is chosen such that $(Z_1, \dots, Z_K) = f(X_1, \dots, X_n)$ are i.i.d., and fair (here K may depend on (X_1, \dots, X_n)).

- (b) With $h_2(p) = -p \log p - (1 - p) \log(1 - p)$, prove the following chain of (in)equalities.

$$\begin{aligned} nh_2(p) &= H(X_1, \dots, X_n) \\ &\geq H(Z_1, \dots, Z_K, K) \\ &= H(K) + H(Z_1, \dots, Z_K | K) \\ &= H(K) + E[K] \\ &\geq E[K]. \end{aligned}$$

Consequently, on the average no more than $nh_2(p)$ fair bits can be obtained from (X_1, \dots, X_n) .

- (c) Find a good f for $n = 4$.

Problem 5: Extremal characterization for Rényi entropy

Given $s \geq 0$, and a random variable U taking values in \mathcal{U} , with probabilities $p(u)$, consider the distribution $p_s(u) = p(u)^s / Z(s)$ with $Z(s) = \sum_u p(u)^s$.

- (a) Show that for any distribution q on \mathcal{U} ,

$$(1 - s)H(q) - sD(q||p) = -D(q||p_s) + \log Z(s).$$

- (b) Given s and p , conclude that the left hand side above is maximized by the choice by $q = p_s$ with the value $\log Z(s)$,

The quantity

$$H_s(p) := \frac{1}{1 - s} \log Z(s) = \frac{1}{1 - s} \log \sum_u p(u)^s$$

is known as the *Rényi entropy of order s of the random variable U* . When convenient, we will also write $H_s(U)$ instead of $H_s(p)$.

- (c) Show that if U and V are independent random variables

$$H_s(UV) := H_s(U) + H_s(V).$$

[Here UV denotes the pair formed by the two random variables — not their product. E.g., if $\mathcal{U} = \{0, 1\}$ and $\mathcal{V} = \{a, b\}$, UV takes values in $\{0a, 0b, 1a, 1b\}$.]

Problem 6: Guessing and Rényi entropy

Suppose X is a random variable taking K values $\{a_1, \dots, a_K\}$ with $p_i = \Pr\{X = a_i\}$. We wish to guess X by asking a sequence of binary questions of the type ‘Is $X = a_i$?’ until we are answered ‘yes’. (Think of guessing a password).

A *guessing strategy* is an ordering of the K possible values of X ; we first ask if X is the first value; then if it is the second value, etc. Thus the strategy is described by a function $G(x) \in \{1, \dots, K\}$ that gives the position (first, second, ... K th) of x in the ordering. I.e., when $X = x$, we ask $G(x)$ questions to guess the value of X . Call G the guessing function of the strategy.

For the rest of the problem suppose $p_1 \geq p_2 \geq \dots \geq p_K$.

- (a) Show that for any guessing function G , the probability of asking fewer than i questions satisfies

$$\Pr(G(X) \leq i) \leq \sum_{j=1}^i p_j$$

and equality holds for the guessing function G^* with $G^*(a_i) = i$, $i = 1, \dots, K$; this is the strategy that first guesses the most probable value a_1 , then the next most probable value a_2 , etc.

- (b) Show that for any increasing function $f : \{1, \dots, K\} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$, $E[f(G(X))]$ is minimized by choosing $G = G^*$. [Hint: $E[f(G(X))] = \sum_{i=1}^K f(i) \Pr(G = i)$. Write $\Pr(G = i) = \Pr(G \leq i) - \Pr(G \leq i-1)$, to write the expectation in terms of $\sum_i [f(i) - f(i+1)] \Pr(G \leq i)$, and use (a).]
- (c) For any i and $s \geq 0$ prove the inequalities

$$i \leq \sum_{j=1}^i (p_j/p_i)^s \leq \sum_j (p_j/p_i)^s$$

- (d) For any $\rho \geq 0$, show that

$$E[G^*(X)^\rho] \leq \left(\sum_i p_i^{1-s\rho} \right) \left(\sum_j p_j^s \right)^\rho.$$

for any $s \geq 0$. [Hint: write $E[G^*(X)^\rho] = \sum_i p_i i^\rho$, and use (c) to upper bound i^ρ]

- (e) By a choosing s carefully, show that

$$E[G^*(X)^\rho] \leq \left(\sum_i p_i^{1/(1+\rho)} \right)^{1+\rho} = \exp[\rho H_{1/(1+\rho)}(X)].$$

- (f) Suppose U_1, \dots, U_n are i.i.d., each with distribution p , and $X = (U_1, \dots, U_n)$. (I.e., we are trying to guess a password that is made of n independently chosen letters.) Show that

$$\frac{1}{n\rho} \log E[G^*(U_1, \dots, U_n)^\rho] \leq H_{1/(1+\rho)}(U_1)$$

[Hint: first observe that $H_\alpha(X) = nH_\alpha(U_1)$. In other words, the ρ -th moment of the number of guesses grows exponentially in n with a rate upper bounded by in terms of the Rényi entropy of the letters.

It is possible a lower bound to $E[G(U_1, \dots, U_n)^\rho]$ that establishes that the exponential upper bound we found here is asymptotically tight.