Corrections to “Generalization Bounds via Information Density and Conditional Information Density”

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***Abstract*—An error in the proof of the data-dependent tail bounds on the generalization error presented in Hellström and Durisi (2020) is identified, and a correction is proposed. Furthermore, we note that the absolute continuity requirements in Hellström and Durisi (2020) need to be strengthened to avoid measurability issues.**

I. Data-Dependent Bounds in [1, Eqs. (26), (34), (95), and (98)]

In the proof of [1, Eq. (26)], we incorrectly claimed that [1, Eq. (32)] implies [1, Eq. (26)]. The issue is that [1, Eq. (32)] holds for a *fixed* λ, whereas, for [1, Eq. (26)] to hold, [1, Eq. (32)] needs to hold uniformly over all $\lambda \in \mathbb{R}$.

This issue can be fixed as follows. Since $\mathrm{gen}(w, \boldsymbol{Z})$ is $\sigma/\sqrt{n}$-sub-Gaussian with zero mean under $P_{\boldsymbol{Z}}$ for all w, we can apply [2, Thm. 2.6.(IV)] (with $\lambda = 1 - 1/n$ therein) to conclude that

$$\mathbb{E}_{P_{\boldsymbol{Z}}}\left[\exp\left(\frac{n-1}{2\sigma^2}(\mathrm{gen}(w, \boldsymbol{Z}))^2\right)\right] \leq \sqrt{n}. \tag{1}$$

Taking the expectation with respect to P_W, changing measure to $P_{W\boldsymbol{Z}}$, and rearranging terms, we obtain

$$\mathbb{E}_{P_{W\boldsymbol{Z}}}\left[\exp\left(\frac{n-1}{2\sigma^2}(\mathrm{gen}(W, \boldsymbol{Z}))^2 - \log\sqrt{n} - \imath(W, \boldsymbol{Z})\right)\right] \leq 1. \tag{2}$$

Proceeding as in [1, Cor. 2], with an additional use of Jensen's inequality, we find that with probability at least $1-\delta$ under $P_{\boldsymbol{Z}}$,

$$\left|\mathbb{E}_{P_{W|\boldsymbol{Z}}}[\mathrm{gen}(W, \boldsymbol{Z})]\right| \leq \sqrt{\frac{2\sigma^2}{n-1}\left(D(P_{W|\boldsymbol{Z}}\,||\,P_W) + \log\frac{\sqrt{n}}{\delta}\right)}. \tag{3}$$

Similarly, proceeding as in the proof of [1, Eq. (34)], we find that with probability at least $1-\delta$ under $P_{W\widetilde{\boldsymbol{Z}}\boldsymbol{S}}$,

$$|\mathrm{gen}(W, \boldsymbol{Z})| \leq \sqrt{\frac{2\sigma^2}{n-1}\left(\imath(W, \boldsymbol{Z}) + \log\frac{\sqrt{n}}{\delta}\right)}. \tag{4}$$

The issue reported in this note also affects the data-dependent tail bounds for the random-subset setting reported in [1, Eqs. (95) and (98)]. To fix it, we use that for any fixed $(w, \widetilde{\boldsymbol{z}})$, the random variable $\widehat{\mathrm{gen}}(w, \widetilde{\boldsymbol{z}}, \boldsymbol{S})$ is $1/\sqrt{n}$-sub-Gaussian with zero mean under $P_{\boldsymbol{S}}$. Applying [2, Thm. 2.6.(IV)] with $\lambda = 1 - 1/n$ we obtain

$$\mathbb{E}_{P_{\boldsymbol{S}}}\left[\exp\left(\frac{n-1}{2}(\widehat{\mathrm{gen}}(w, \widetilde{\boldsymbol{z}}, \boldsymbol{S}))^2\right)\right] \leq \sqrt{n}. \tag{5}$$

Taking the expectation with respect to $P_{W\widetilde{\boldsymbol{Z}}}$, changing measure to $P_{W\widetilde{\boldsymbol{Z}}\boldsymbol{S}}$, and rearranging terms, we conclude that

$$\mathbb{E}_{P_{W\widetilde{\boldsymbol{Z}}\boldsymbol{S}}}\left[\exp\left(\frac{n-1}{2}(\widehat{\mathrm{gen}}(W, \widetilde{\boldsymbol{Z}}, \boldsymbol{S}))^2 - \log\sqrt{n} - \imath(W, \boldsymbol{S}|\widetilde{\boldsymbol{Z}})\right)\right] \leq 1. \tag{6}$$

Proceeding as in [1, Cor. 6], we conclude that with probability at least $1-\delta$ under $P_{\widetilde{\boldsymbol{Z}}\boldsymbol{S}}$,

$$\mathbb{E}_{P_{W|\widetilde{\boldsymbol{Z}}\boldsymbol{S}}}\left[\widehat{\mathrm{gen}}(W, \widetilde{\boldsymbol{Z}}, \boldsymbol{S})\right] \leq \sqrt{\frac{2}{n-1}\left(D(P_{W|\widetilde{\boldsymbol{Z}}\boldsymbol{S}}\,||\,P_{W|\widetilde{\boldsymbol{Z}}}) + \log\frac{\sqrt{n}}{\delta}\right)}. \tag{7}$$

Furthermore, with probability at least $1-\delta$ under $P_{W\widetilde{\boldsymbol{Z}}\boldsymbol{S}}$,

$$\left|\widehat{\mathrm{gen}}(W, \widetilde{\boldsymbol{Z}}, \boldsymbol{S})\right| \leq \sqrt{\frac{2}{n-1}\left(\imath(W, \boldsymbol{S}|\widetilde{\boldsymbol{Z}}) + \log\frac{\sqrt{n}}{\delta}\right)}. \tag{8}$$

To summarize, the data-dependent tail bounds reported in [1, Eqs. (26), (34), (95), and (98)] should be replaced with (3), (4), (7), and (8) respectively.

Note that the data-independent tail bounds that we provide in [1, Eqs. (27), (35), (41), (42), (96), (99), (101), and (102)] still hold verbatim, although their proofs need to be modified. Specifically, for a fixed λ, one needs to first replace the information measure appearing in the bounds with its data-independent relaxation. The desired bounds then follow by setting λ equal to a suitably chosen, data-independent constant. Consider for example the data-independent bound in [1, Eq. (27)]. To obtain it, we first use [1, Eq. (33)] in [1, Eq. (32)], which results in

$$P_{\boldsymbol{Z}}\left[\frac{\lambda^2\sigma^2}{2n} - \lambda\,\mathbb{E}_{P_{W\,|\,\boldsymbol{Z}}}[\mathrm{gen}(W, \boldsymbol{Z})] + \frac{\mathbb{E}^{1/t}_{P_{\boldsymbol{Z}}}\left[D(P_{W\,|\,\boldsymbol{Z}}\,||\,P_W)^t\right]}{\delta^{1/t}} + \log\frac{1}{\delta} \geq 0\right] \geq 1 - 2\delta. \tag{9}$$

The desired result follows by setting $\lambda = \pm\sqrt{\frac{a}{b}}$, where $a = \mathbb{E}^{1/t}_{P_{\boldsymbol{Z}}}\left[D(P_{W\,|\,\boldsymbol{Z}}\,||\,P_W)^t\right]/\delta^{1/t} + \log\frac{1}{\delta}$ and $b = \sigma^2/(2n)$, and then replacing δ with $\delta/2$.

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II. Absolute Continuity Assumption

In the statement of [1, Thm. 1], we assumed that $P_{W\boldsymbol{Z}} \ll P_W P_{\boldsymbol{Z}}$. To avoid measurability issues, we should also assume that $P_W P_{\boldsymbol{Z}} \ll P_{W\boldsymbol{Z}}$. Similarly, in [1, Thm. 4], we should also assume that $P_{W|\widetilde{\boldsymbol{Z}}} P_{\widetilde{\boldsymbol{Z}}} P_{\boldsymbol{S}} \ll P_{W\widetilde{\boldsymbol{Z}}\boldsymbol{S}}$.

References

[1] F. Hellström and G. Durisi, "Generalization bounds via information density and conditional information density," *IEEE J. Sel. Areas Inf. Theory*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 824–839, Dec. 2020.

[2] M. J. Wainwright, *High-Dimensional Statistics: a Non-Asymptotic Viewpoint*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2019.