Report - AI for Efficient Allocation of Renewable Energy Sources under uncertainty in the UK.

Abstract

With climate change continuing to be an unsolved issue, the importance of installing new renewable energy generation facilities is ever increases. When planning the installation of these new systems, generation efficiency is the main consideration. We investigate methods to ensure this efficiency when considering a range of location where the performance of the renewable energy is not certain. Using regression techniques to predict wind turbines generation amount with respect to weather features and a genetic algorithm approach we show that these AI techniques are well suited to tackling the large search space this problem presents and allows for an insight into the most suitable locations for future funding in the renewable energy sector.

Introduction

Due to the ongoing threat of climate change in the current day, the focus on carbon neutral energy sources has never been higher. As such, weather dependent renewable energy generation is demanding a rising amount of investment to transition away from traditional carbon-based fuels. With this rising investment and the importance of these new energy sources, the generation efficiency of the sources installed with this investment is as high as possible as to not waste the opportunity presented. The problem is that the most common renewable energy sources, Wind & Solar are inherently weather reliant, introducing the uncertainty and inconsistency often referenced in any pushback against these energy types.

With the aim of achieving a high efficiency we discover two main problems, how do we predict the amount of energy a location is going to produce, and how do we find a set of locations to optimise the overall generation amount? This presents us an intractable problem evaluating every combination of locations to find the best possible solution, a problem that AI techniques are very well suited for. However, “AI techniques” covers a wide range of approaches, some much more suitable than others so we will be investigating the best combination of algorithms and implementations to ensure our solution is scalable, consistent, and reliable.

In this report we will detail how a combination of existing techniques can be changed to be applied to a real-world use case, with the goal of producing a solution that can return us an “optimal” configuration of renewable energy sources. This will include two main sections of implementation, each focused on one of the two main challenges this problem poses us: Generator Output Prediction; and Optimal Location Selection, each requiring a unique approach with their own issues to tackle.

Background Research