Single character OCR using Support Vector Machine

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Abstract

This paper describes a solution to an optical character recognition problem for bitmap characters using Support Vector Machines with an RBF kernel, including a description of RBF parameter search and bitmap normalization. Classification performance of 90.8% was achieved against a given training set of 40000 correctly labelled samples [**?**].

KEYWORDS: SVM, Support Vector Machine, RBF, OCR, Character Recognition

1 Dataset description

Training dataset:

- n=42152
- 16 x 8 black and white bitmaps
- Lowercase characters, n=26 (a-z)

Testing dataset:

- n=10000
- Same format

2 Method selection/Why SVM?

- What other options were there
- Why we chose SVM?
- A nod to why we think we chose correctly

3 What is SVM?

- http://www.csie.ntu.edu.tw/ cjlin/papers/guide/guide.pdf
- http://www.ivanciuc.org/Files/Reprint/Ivanciuc_SVM_CCR_2007_23_291.pdf
- RBF kernel: $K(x_i, x_j) = exp(-\gamma||x_i - x_j||^2), \gamma > 0$

Optimization problem $(x_i, y_i), i = 1, ..., l$ where x_i is ... ([**?**]):
minimize w, b, ξ: $\frac{1}{2}w^T w + C\sum_{i=1}^{l}\xi_i$
subject to $y_i(w^T\phi(x_i) + b) \geq 1 - \xi_i, \xi_i \geq 0$

4 Character preprocessing

- Minimize noise by moving characters to bottom left corner. 0.5% improvement

5 RBF kernel parameter search

γ and C

- Initial search space 2**x for x in range(-15, 15)
- Select best area for next round
- Validate by taking final arguments and calculating error rates for +- few percent for both variables.

6 Results and performance

- k-fold cross validation: k=20, error rate 11%
- k-fold cross validation: k=5, error rate 11.5%
- One iteration with training set n=40000 and validation set n=2152 about 17 min with 2.1GHz Xeon (single thread)
- about 300MB of memory for training set n=42152
- Predicting one character: about 2 milliseconds

7 Quick comparison to other algorithms

- kNN (+PCA/LDA)

- ...?

[1]

References

[1] D. Albanese, R. Visintainer, S. Merler, S. Riccadonna, G. Jurman, and C. Furlanello. mlpy: Machine learning python, 2012.