

CITIZEN SCIENCE FOR PLANT IDENTIFICATION: INSIGHTS FROM PL@NTNET

Joseph Salmon

Université de Montpellier

Institut Universitaire de France (IUF)



UNIVERSITÉ DE
MONTPELLIER



institut
universitaire
de France

MOTIVATED BY PL@NTNET

FLOWER POWER IN MONTPELLIER



Mainly joint work with:

Tanguy Lefort (Univ. Montpellier, IMAG)

Benjamin Charlier (Univ. Montpellier, IMAG)

Camille Garcin (Univ. Montpellier, IMAG)

Maximilien Servajean (Univ. Paul-Valéry-Montpellier, LIRMM, Univ. Montpellier)

Alexis Joly (Inria, LIRMM, Univ. Montpellier)

and:



Pierre Bonnet (CIRAD, AMAP)

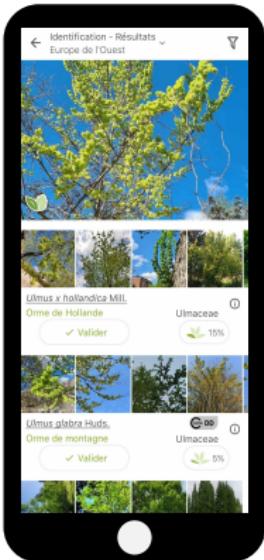
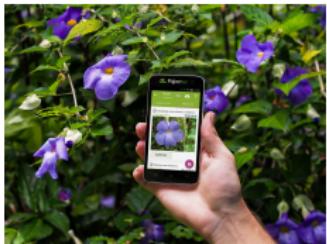
Antoine Affouard, J-C. Lombardo, Titouan Lorieul, Mathias Chouet (Inria, LIRMM, Univ. Montpellier)

CURRENT MAIN RESEARCH TOPIC

ML FOR CITIZEN SCIENCE / Pl@ntNet



A **citizen science** platform using machine learning to help people identify plants with their mobile phones



- ▶ Website: <https://plantnet.org/>
- ▶ Note: no mushroom identification!



- ▶ Start in 2011, now **25M+ users**
- ▶ **200+** countries
- ▶ Up to **2M** image uploaded/day
- ▶ **50K** species
- ▶ **1B+** total images
- ▶ **10M+** labeled / validated

<https://identify.plantnet.org/stats>



Personal Usage



Nature, walks



Gardening



Phytotherapy

Professional Usage



Agro-ecology



Natural Areas Management



Education, animation



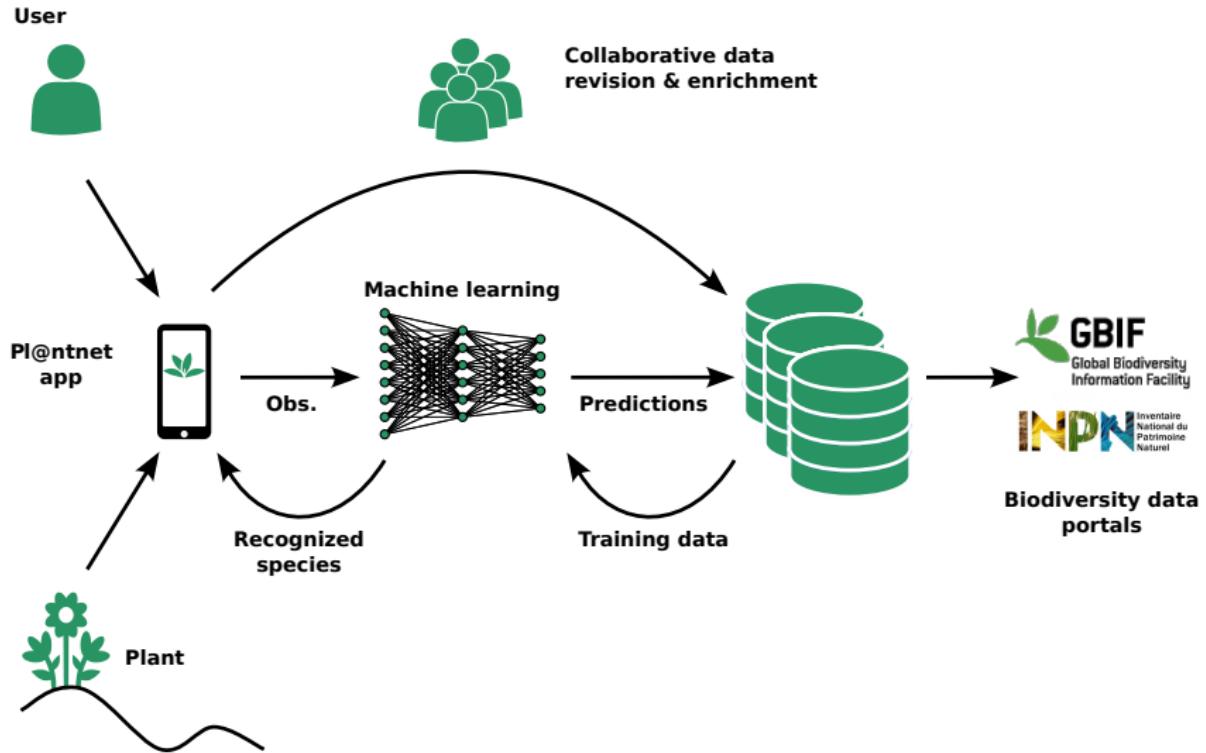
Tourism



Trade

KEY CONCEPT OF PL@NTNET

COOPERATIVE LEARNING



OUTLINE



Pl@nNet description

Contributions

Dataset release for the community: **Pl@ntNet-300K**

Aggregating votes

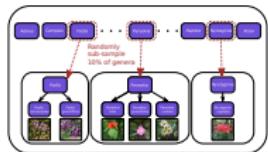
Motivation: an excellent ... but not a perfect app; **How to improve?**

- ▶ Community effort: machine learning, ecology, engineering, amateurs
- ▶ Many open problems (theoretical/practical)
- ▶ Need for methodological/computational breakthrough

PERSONAL ASSOCIATED CONTRIBUTIONS (MOSTLY METHODOLOGICAL)



- ▶ Pl@ntNet-300K⁽¹⁾:
Creation and **release** of a large-scale dataset sharing the same property as Pl@ntNet; available for the community to improve learning systems



⁽¹⁾ C. Garcin, A. Joly, et al. (2021). "Pl@ntNet-300K: a plant image dataset with high label ambiguity and a long-tailed distribution". *Proceedings of the Neural Information Processing Systems Track on Datasets and Benchmarks*.

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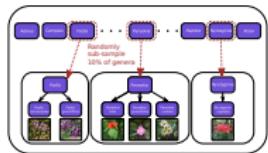
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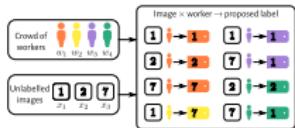
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How to leverage multiple labels per image to improve the model? Need to **assert quality**: the workers, the images/labels, the model, etc.



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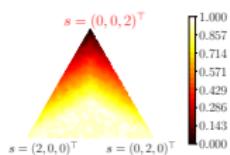
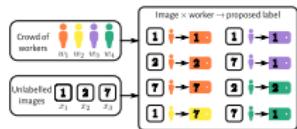
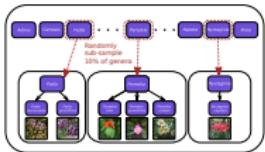
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(MOSTLY METHODOLOGICAL)



- ▶ PI@ntNet-300K⁽¹⁾:
Creation and **release** of a large-scale dataset sharing the same property as PI@ntNet; available for the community to improve learning systems
- ▶ Learning & crowd-sourced data⁽²⁾:
How to leverage multiple labels per image to improve the model? Need to **assert quality**: the workers, the images/labels, the model, etc.
- ▶ Top-K learning⁽³⁾:
Driven by theory, introduce new losses to cope with PI@ntNet constraints to **output multiple labels** (such as user experience, Deep Learning framework, etc.)



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OUTLINE



Pl@nNet description

Contributions

Dataset release for the community: **Pl@ntNet-300K**

Aggregating votes

Popular datasets limitations:

- ▶ structure of label too simplistic (CIFAR-10, CIFAR-100)
- ▶ might be too clean (tasks easy to discriminate)
- ▶ might be too well-balanced (same number of images per class)

Motivation:

release a large-scale dataset **sharing similar features** as the Pl@ntNet dataset to foster research in plant identification \implies Pl@ntNet-300K⁽⁴⁾

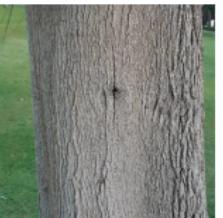
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ASYMMETRY OF ERRORS IN PL@NTNET



ASYMMETRY OF ERRORS IN PL@NTNET

INTRA-CLASS VARIABILITY: SAME LABEL/SPECIES BUT VERY DIVERSE IMAGES



*Guizotia
abyssinica*

*Diascia
rigescens*

*Lapageria
rosea*

*Casuarina
cunninghamiana*

*Freesia
alba*

Based on pictures only, plant species are challenging to discriminate!

ASYMMETRY OF ERRORS IN PL@NTNET

INTER-CLASS AMBIGUITY: DIFFERENT SPECIES BUT SIMILAR IMAGES



*Cirsium
rivulare*



*Chaerophyllum
aromaticum*



*Conostomium
kenyense*



*Adenostyles
leucophylla*



*Sedum
montanum*



*Cirsium
tuberosum*



*Chaerophyllum
temulum*



*Conostomium
quadrangulare*



*Adenostyles
alliariae*



*Sedum
rupestre*



Some species are visually similar (especially within genus)

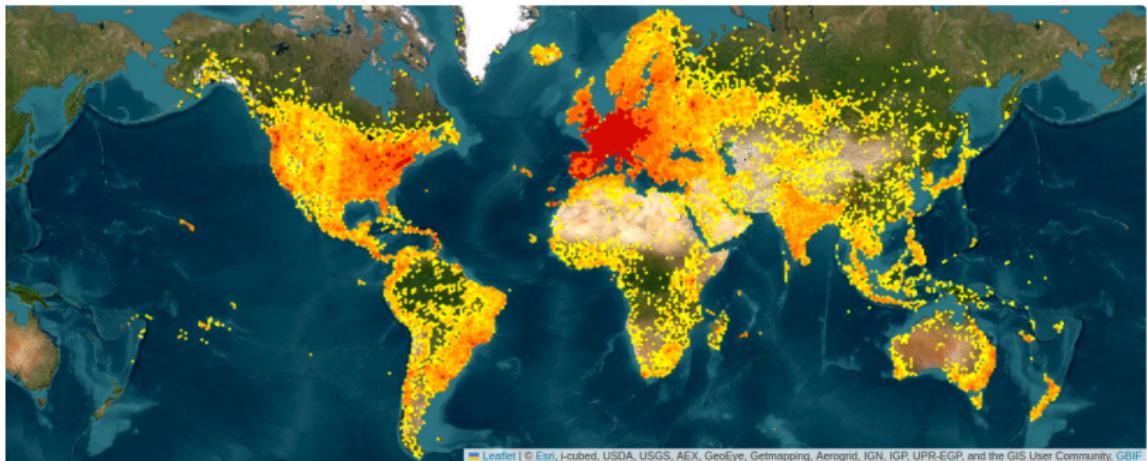
SAMPLING BIAS (13/04/2024)

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GEOGRAPHIC



Spatial density of images collected by Pl@ntNet:



SAMPLING BIAS (13/04/2024)

USEFULNESS FOR HUMANS



Top-5 most observed plant species in Pl@ntNet:



(a) *Echium vulgare* L.
25 134 observations



(b) *Ranunculus ficaria* L.
24 720 observations



(c) *Prunus spinosa* L.
24 103 observations



(d) *Zea mays* L.
23 288 observations



(e) *Alliaria petiolata*
23 075 observations

SAMPLING BIAS (13/04/2024)

ESTHETIC OR RARETY OF SPECIES



10 753 observations



Centaurea jacea

6 observations



Cenchrus agrimonoides

VS.

SAMPLING BIAS (13/04/2024)

SIZE



8 376 observations



Magnolia grandiflora



413 observations

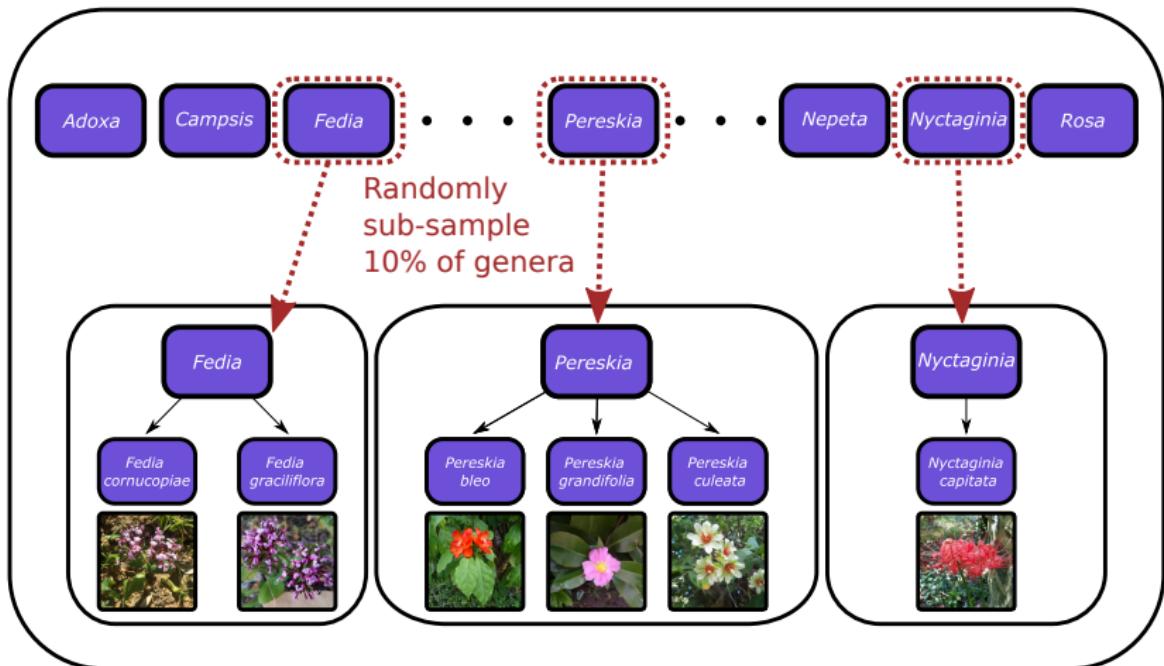


Moehringia trinervia

CONSTRUCTION OF PL@NTNET-300K

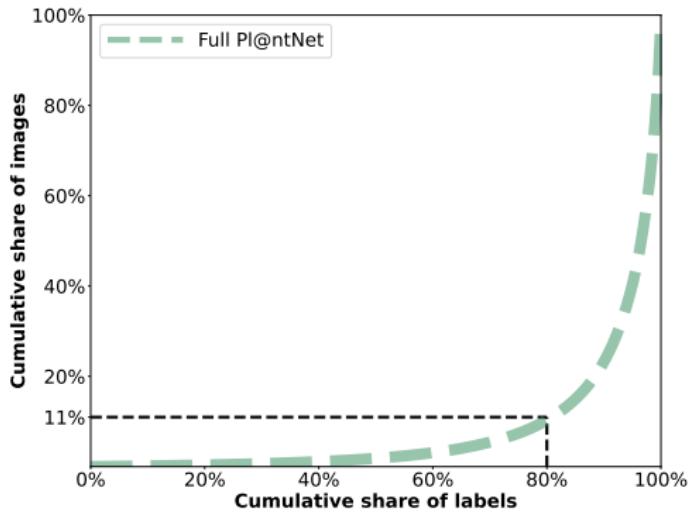
SUBSAMPLING GENERA PRESERVE DATASET CHARACTERISTICS

16



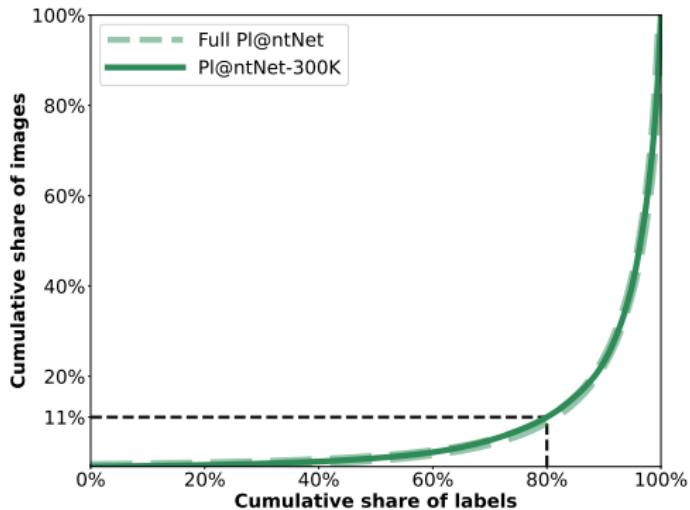
Sample at genus level to preserve intra-genus ambiguity
(use hierarchical structure)

LONG TAILED DISTRIBUTION PRESERVED WITH SUBSAMPLING OF GENERA



80% of species | 11% of images \iff 20% of species | 89% of images

LONG TAILED DISTRIBUTION PRESERVED WITH SUBSAMPLING OF GENERA

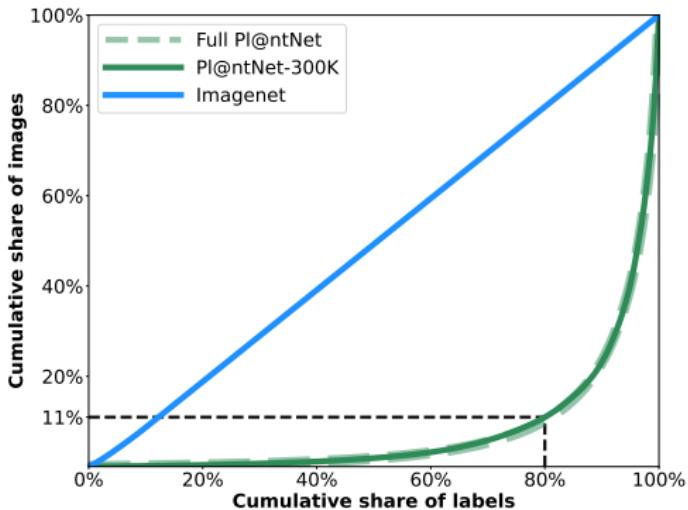


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Reminder:

- ▶ PI@ntNet-300K: 1K+ species
- ▶ PI@ntNet: 50K+ species
- ▶ Earth: 300K+ species

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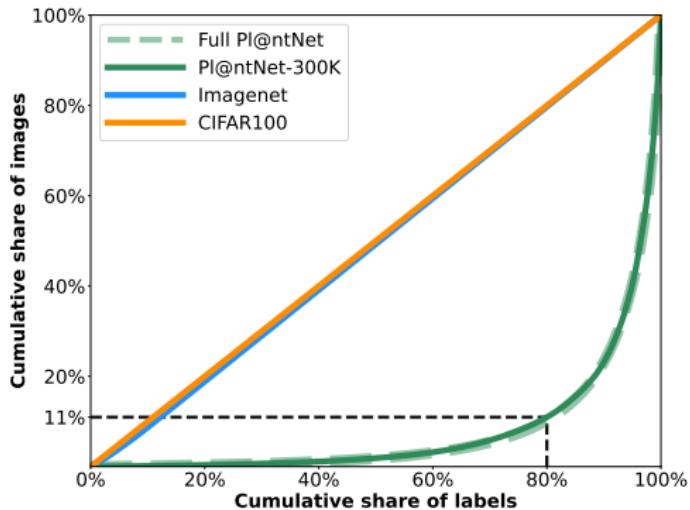


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- ▶ Earth: 300K+ species



- ▶ 306 146 color images
- ▶ 32 GB
- ▶ Labels: $K = 1\ 081$ species
- ▶ 2079 003 volunteers "workers"

Zenodo, 1 click download

<https://zenodo.org/record/5645731>

Code to train models:

<https://github.com/plantnet/PlantNet-300K>

OUTLINE



Pl@nNet description

Aggregating votes

Vote in Pl@ntNet

Weighted Majority Vote (WMV)

Dataset release for the community: **Pl@ntNet South Western European flora**

PL@NTNET ONLINE VOTES

<https://identify.plantnet.org/weurope/observations/>





✗ *Chitalpa tashkentensis* T.S.Elias & Wisura World flora

Observation



pofpof63
Jun 26, 2023

1: user and date



Most probable name

✗ *Chitalpa tashkentensis* T.S.Elias & Wisura

Bignoniaceae Dave

2: votes

Submitted name

✗ *Chitalpa tashkentensis* T.S.Elias & Wisura

Suggested names Vote for the species name

✗ *Chitalpa tashkentensis* T.S.Elias & Wisura Dave

1 5



Vote

Badly determined observation? Vote for Undetermined species

⚠ Observation contains pictures of several plants?: Vote for Malformed observation 0



WHAT ABOUT THE LABELS?

- ▶ Images taken by users ... so are the labels!
- ▶ But users can be wrong, or not experts
- ▶ Several labels can be available!

USERS CAN MAKE CORRECTIONS

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Vesalea grandifolia (Villarreal) Hua Feng Wang & Landrein Flore mondiale Observation



Pavlos
16 sept. 2023



Nom le plus probable

Vesalea grandifolia (Villarreal) Hua Feng Wang & Landrein

Caprifoliaceae Abélia

Nom soumis

Zabelia triflora (R.Br. ex Wall.) Makino ex Hisauti & H.Hara

Noms suggérés Voter pour le nom d'espèce

Vesalea grandifolia (Villarreal) Hua Feng Wang & L... 3

Zabelia triflora (R.Br. ex Wall.) Makino ex Hisauti &... 1

Espèce non identifiée 1



Espèce (Flore mondiale)



Voter

Observation mal déterminée ? Votez pour Espèce indéterminée



Voter pour un organe



Corrected initial submission

BUT SOMETIMES USERS CAN'T BE TRUSTED

<https://identify.plantnet.org/weurope/observations/>



Espèce non identifiée Flore mondiale

Observation

Ernst Fürst
23 janv. 2022

Nom le plus probable

Espèce non identifiée

Nom soumis

Plantago subulata L.

Noms suggérés Voter pour le nom d'espèce

Plantago subulata L. Plantain à feuilles en aléne

5

Espèce non identifiée

2

Polytrichum commune Hedw.

2

Polytrichum commune

1

Espèce (Flore mondiale)



Corrected ?

Voter pour un organe

5 - - - - -

Voter pour la qualité

BUT SOMETIMES USERS CAN'T BE TRUSTED

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5



2



2



1

Espèce non identifiée



2



2

Polytrichum commune Hedw.



2



2

Polytrichum commune



1



1

Contributeurs

Sylvain Gaudin

PlantNet Curator (Vanessa Hequet)

x

Majority is wrong

Fermer



Voter pour un organe



5

Voter pour la qualité

CROWDSOURCING FOR CLASSIFICATION

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY



General.

- ▶ The good: Fast, easy, cheap data collection

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THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

General.

- ▶ The good: Fast, easy, cheap data collection
- ▶ The bad: Noisy labels with different levels of expertise
- ▶ The ugly: (partly) missing theory, ad-hoc methods for noisy labels

NOTATION

- ▶ Classes/labels/species:

$$\begin{matrix} \text{flower icon} \\ k \end{matrix} \in \left\{ \text{flower icons} \right\} \triangleq [K]$$

- ▶ Images collected:

$$\begin{matrix} \text{framed flower image icon} \\ x_i \end{matrix} \in \left\{ \text{framed flower images} \right\} \triangleq \mathcal{X}_{\text{train}}$$

- ▶ Users/labelers:

$$\begin{matrix} \text{green user icon} \\ u \end{matrix} \in \left\{ \text{user icons} \right\} \triangleq [n_{\text{user}}]$$

- ▶ Labels given by u to x_i : $y_i^u \triangleq \begin{matrix} \text{flower icon} \\ \text{framed flower image icon} \end{matrix} \in \left\{ \text{flower icons} \right\}$

- ▶ Users labeling x_i : $\begin{matrix} \text{green user icon} \\ \text{framed flower image icon} \end{matrix} \triangleq \mathcal{U}(x_i)$

OBJECTIVE

Provide for all images x_i an aggregated label \hat{y}_i based on the votes y_i^u of the workers $u \in \mathcal{U}$.

MAJORITY VOTE

Naive idea:

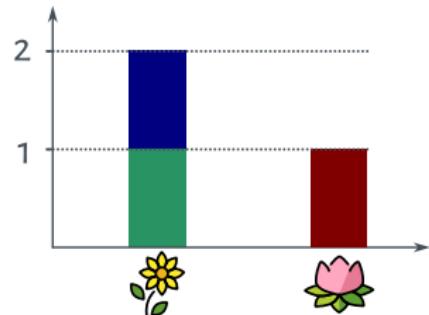
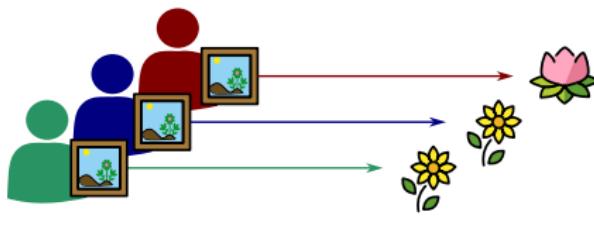
make users vote and take the most voted label for each image

MAJORITY VOTE

27

Naive idea:

make users vote and take the most voted label for each image



Result : $\hat{y}^{\text{MV}} =$

Definition: Majority Voting (MV)

Majority Voting outputs the most answered label:

$$\forall x_i \in \mathcal{X}_{\text{train}}, \quad \hat{y}_i^{\text{MV}} = \arg \max_{k \in [K]} \left(\sum_{u \in \mathcal{U}(x_i)} \mathbb{1}_{\{y_i^u = k\}} \right)$$

Properties:

- ✓ simple
- ✓ adapted for any number of users
- ✓ usually efficient, often few labelers sufficient (say⁽⁵⁾ <5)
- ✗ ineffective for borderline cases
- ✗ suffer from spammers / adversarial users

⁽⁵⁾ R. Snow et al. (2008). "Cheap and Fast - But is it Good? Evaluating Non-Expert Annotations for Natural Language Tasks". *Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing*. EMNLP 2008. Association for Computational Linguistics, pp. 254–263.

OUTLINE



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Vote in Pl@ntNet

Weighted Majority Vote (WMV)

Dataset release for the community: **Pl@ntNet South Western European flora**



Constraints: wide range of skills, different levels of expertise

Modeling aspect: add a user weight to balance votes

WEIGHTS, CONFIDENCE AND ACCURACY

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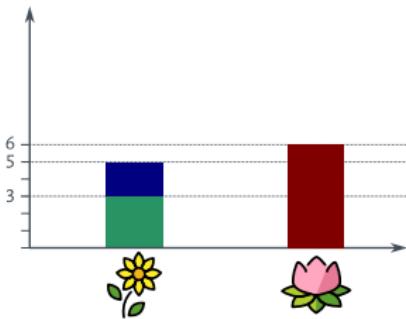
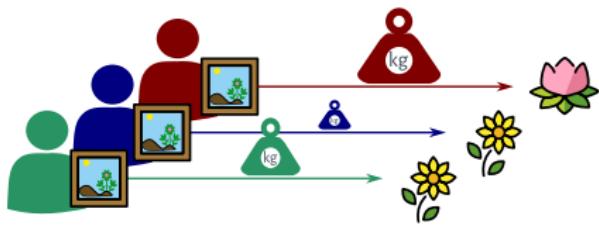
Modeling aspect: add a user weight to balance votes



Let us assume $(w_u)_{u \in \mathcal{U}}$ given for now

WEIGHTED MAJORITY VOTE (WMV)

EXAMPLE



Result : $\hat{y}^{\text{WMV}} = \text{pink flower}$

Definition: label confidence

The label confidence $\text{conf}_i(k)$ of label k for image x_i is the sum of the weights of the workers who voted for k :

$$\forall k \in [K], \quad \text{conf}_i(k) = \sum_{u \in \mathcal{U}(x_i)} w_u \mathbf{1}_{\{y_i^u=k\}}$$

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Size effect:

- ▶ more votes \Rightarrow more confidence
- ▶ more expertise \Rightarrow more confidence

Definition: label accuracy

The label accuracy $\text{acc}_i(k)$ of label k for image x_i is the normalized sum of weights of the workers who voted for k :

$$\forall k \in [K], \quad \text{acc}_i(k) = \text{conf}_i(k) / \sum_{k' \in [K]} \text{conf}_i(k')$$

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Interpretation: only the proportion of the weights matters

WEIGHTED MAJORITY VOTE (WMV)

Definition: Weighted Majority Voting (WMV)

Majority voting but weighted by a confidence score per user u :

$$\forall x_i \in \mathcal{X}_{\text{train}}, \quad \hat{y}_i^{\text{WMV}} = \arg \max_{k \in [K]} \left(\sum_{u \in \mathcal{U}(x_i)} w_u \mathbb{1}_{\{y_i^u=k\}} \right)$$

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Note: the weights w_u can be computed from confidence or accuracy

$$\hat{y}_i^{\text{WMV}} = \arg \max_{k \in [K]} (\text{conf}_i(k)) = \arg \max_{k \in [K]} (\text{acc}_i(k))$$

LABEL VALIDATION

Suppose that you have a label estimate \hat{y}_i for x_i :

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Labels quality check: need for **expertise**

keep images with label confidence above a threshold θ_{conf} , validate \hat{y}_i when
 $\text{conf}_i(\hat{y}_i) > \theta_{\text{conf}}$

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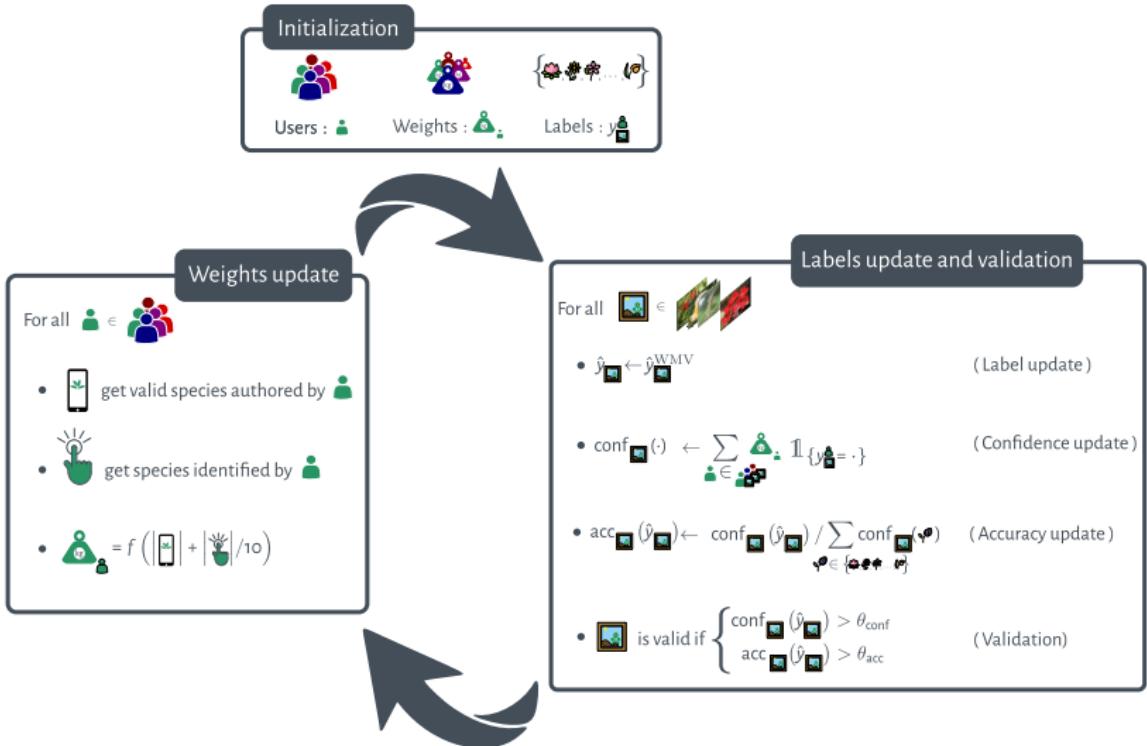
keep images with label confidence above a threshold θ_{conf} , validate \hat{y}_i when $\text{conf}_i(\hat{y}_i) > \theta_{\text{conf}}$

Agreement check: need for **consensus**

keep images with label accuracy above a threshold θ_{acc} , validate \hat{y}_i when $\text{acc}_i(\hat{y}_i) > \theta_{\text{acc}}$

PL@NTNET LABEL AGGREGATION (EM ALGORITHM)

WEIGHT USER VOTE BY NUMBER OF IDENTIFICATIONS



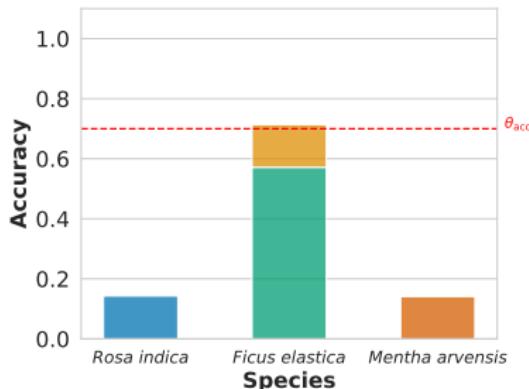
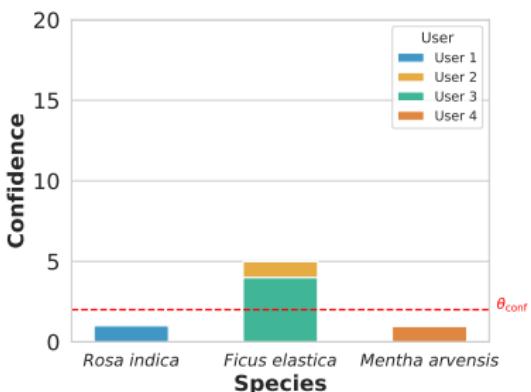
WEIGHTS EXAMPLE

- $n_{\text{user}} = 6, K = 3 : \text{Rosa indica}, \text{Ficus elastica}, \text{Mentha arvensis}$
- $\theta_{\text{conf}} = 2$ and $\theta_{\text{acc}} = 0.7$
- Users weights as follows:



WEIGHTS EXAMPLE

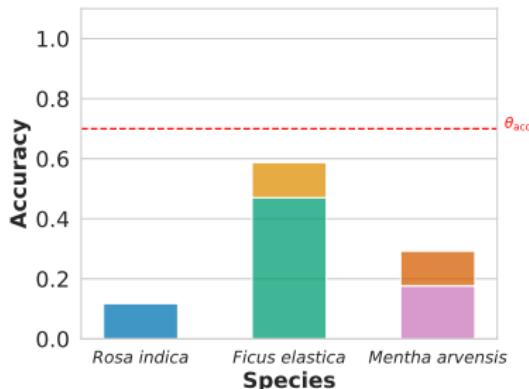
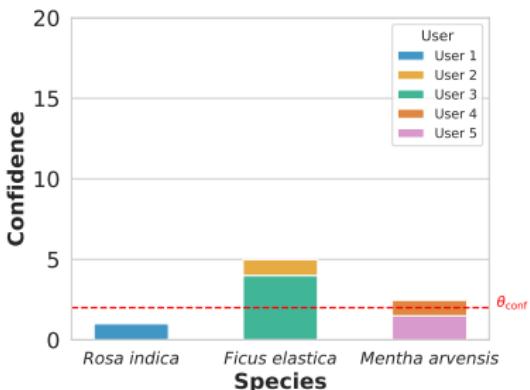
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Take into account 4 users out of 6

WEIGHTS EXAMPLE

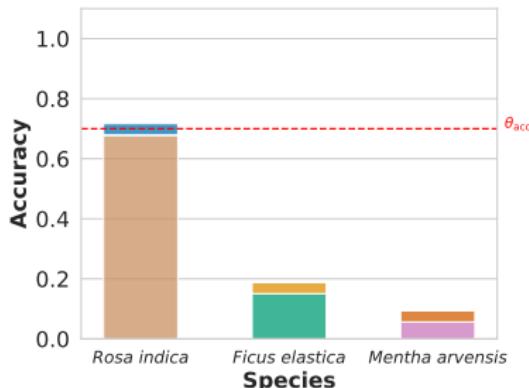
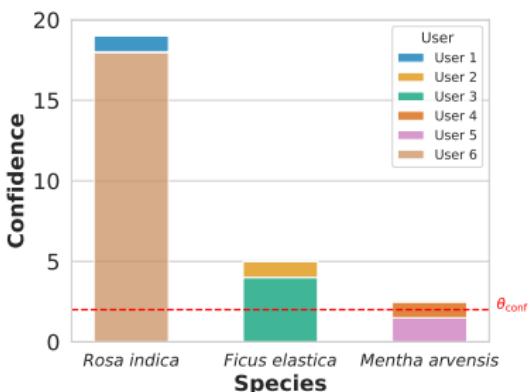
- $n_{\text{user}} = 6, K = 3 : \text{Rosa indica}, \text{Ficus elastica}, \text{Mentha arvensis}$
- $\theta_{\text{conf}} = 2$ and $\theta_{\text{acc}} = 0.7$
- Users weights as follows:



Invalidated label: Adding User 5 reduces accuracy

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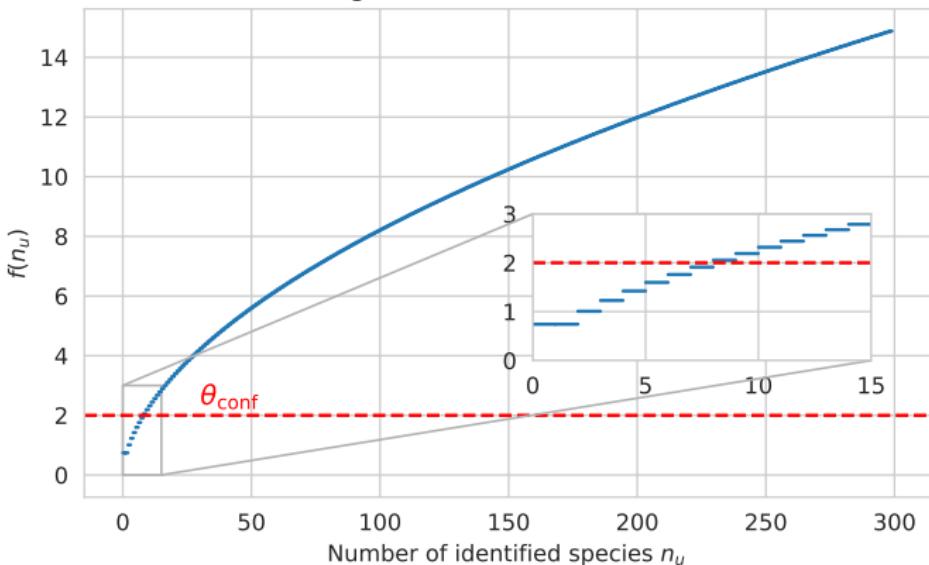
Label switched: User 6 is an expert

CHOICE OF WEIGHT FUNCTION



$$f(n_u) = n_u^\alpha - n_u^\beta + \gamma \text{ with } \begin{cases} \alpha = 0.5 \\ \beta = 0.2 \\ \gamma = \log(1.7) \simeq 0.74 \end{cases}$$

Weight function determination



OTHER EXISTING STRATEGIES



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 - ▶ Weight users by how much they agree with the majority
 - ▶ Weighted majority vote
- ▶ **TwoThird (iNaturalist)**
 - ▶ Need 2 votes
 - ▶ 2/3 of agreements

OUTLINE



Pl@nNet description

Aggregating votes

Vote in Pl@ntNet

Weighted Majority Vote (WMV)

Dataset release for the community: **Pl@ntNet South Western European flora**

EXTRACTING A SUBSET OF A PL@NTNET DESIGN AND SOME NUMBERS



- ▶ South Western European flora obs since 2017
- ▶ 800K users answered more than 11K+ species
- ▶ 9M+ votes casted
- ▶ **Imbalance:** 80% of observations are represented by 10% of total votes

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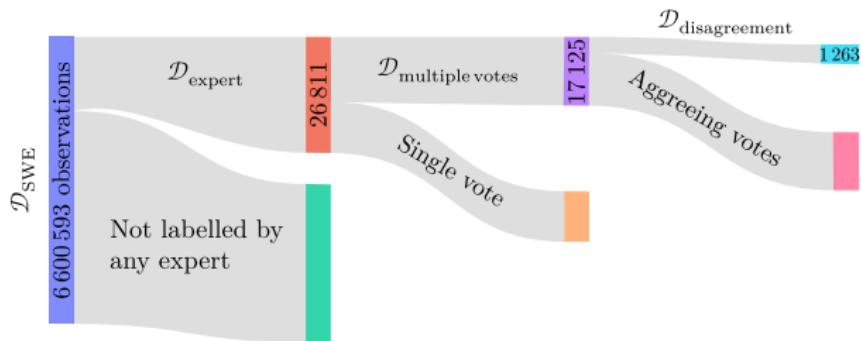
No ground truth available to evaluate the strategies

EXTRACTING A SUBSET OF A PL@NTNET CREATION OF TEST SETS



- ▶ Extract 98 experts : Tela Botanica + prior knowledge (P. Bonnet)

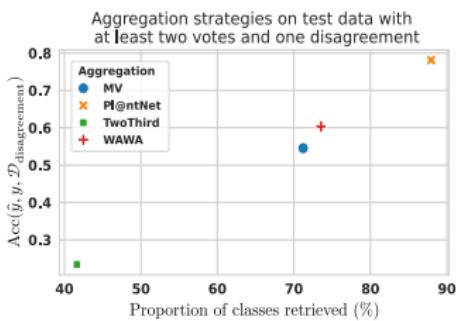
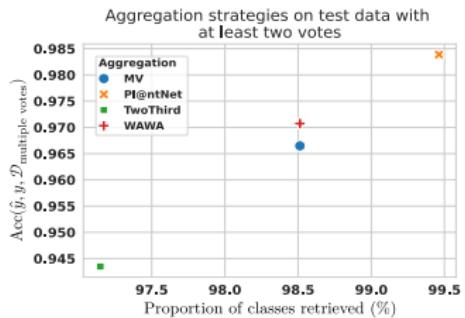
PL@ntnet South-Western Europe flora dataset



<https://zenodo.org/records/10782465>

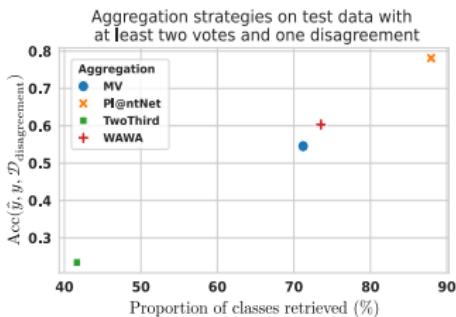
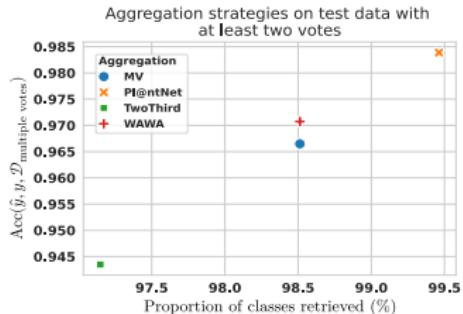
PERFORMANCE

ACCURACY AND VOLUME OF CLASSES KEPT



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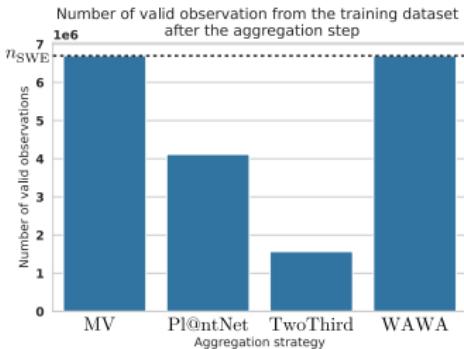
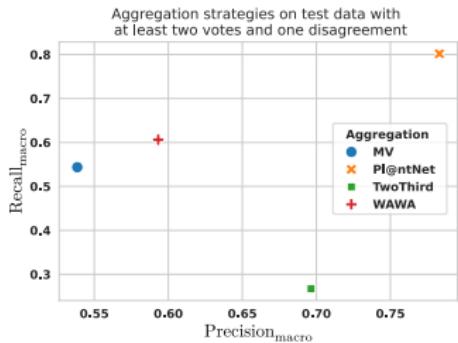


In short

- ▶ PI@ntNet aggregation performs better overall
- ▶ iNaturalist is highly impacted by their reject threshold
- ▶ In ambiguous settings (right), strategies weighting users are better

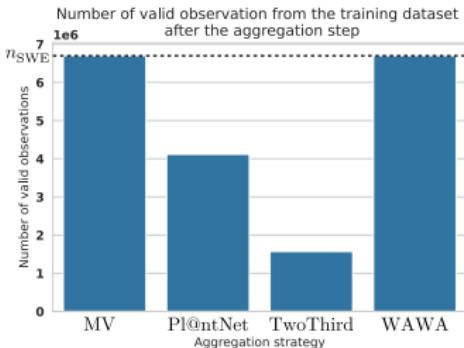
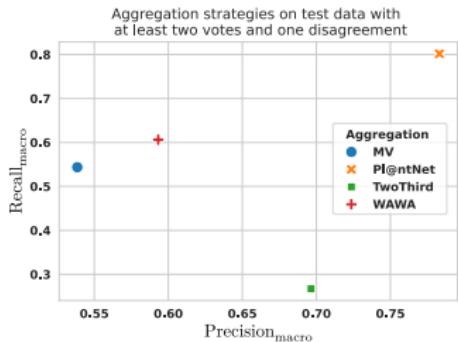
PERFORMANCE

PRECISION, RECALL AND VALIDITY



PERFORMANCE

PRECISION, RECALL AND VALIDITY



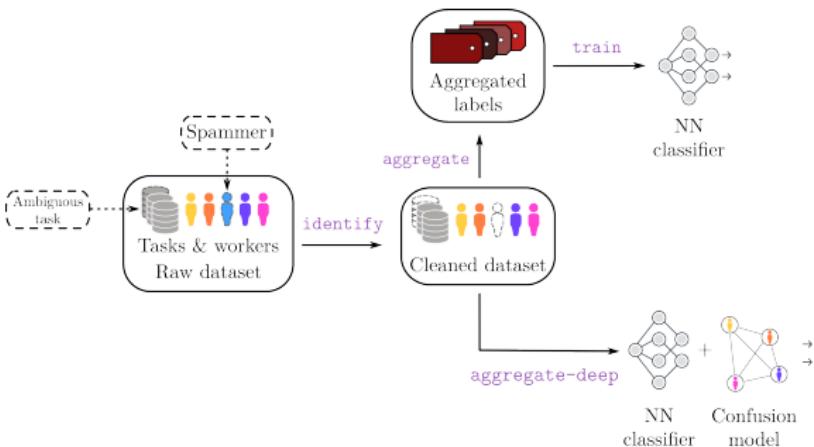
In short

- ▶ PI@ntNet aggregation performs better overall
- ▶ TwoThird has good precision but bad recall
- ▶ We indeed remove some data but less than TwoThird

AGGREGATING LABELS: A NEW OPEN SOURCE TOOLS



Peerannot: Python library to handle crowdsourced data



CONCLUSION



Take home message(s)

- Citizen science challenges: many and varied (need more attention)

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- ▶ Pl@ntNet-300K: <https://zenodo.org/record/5645731>
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Future work

- ▶ Uncertainty quantification
- ▶ Improve robustness to adversarial users
- ▶ Leverage gamification for more quality labels theplantgame.com

Contact:

Joseph Salmon

✉️ joseph.salmon@umontpellier.fr

🌐 <https://josephsalmon.eu>



Github: [@josephsalmon](https://github.com/josephsalmon)



Mastodon: [@josephsalmon@sigmoid.social](https://sigmoid.social/@josephsalmon)



-  Garcin, C., A. Joly, et al. (2021). "Pl@ntNet-300K: a plant image dataset with high label ambiguity and a long-tailed distribution". *Proceedings of the Neural Information Processing Systems Track on Datasets and Benchmarks*.
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