

# Introduction to Neural Networks and Deep Learning

## Introduction to Neural Networks

Andres Mendez-Vazquez

May 1, 2025

# Outline

## 1 What are Neural Networks?

- Introduction
- Structure of a Neural Cell
- Pigeon Experiment
- Formal Definition of Artificial Neural Network
- Basic Elements of an Artificial Neuron
  - A Simple Example
  - A More Complex Example
- Types of Activation Functions
  - McCulloch-Pitts model
  - More Advanced Models
- The Problem of the Vanishing Gradient
  - Fixing the Problem, ReLu function

## 2 Neural Network As a Graph

- Introduction
- Neural Architectures
  - Single-Layer Feedforward Networks
  - Multilayer Feedforward Networks
  - Recurrent Networks
  - Deep Learning Architectures
- Knowledge Representation
- Design of a Neural Network
- Representing Knowledge in a Neural Networks



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# What are Neural Networks? [1]

## Basic Intuition

The human brain is a highly complex, nonlinear and parallel computer



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# What are Neural Networks? [1]

## Basic Intuition

The human brain is a highly complex, nonlinear and parallel computer

## It is organized as a

Network with (Ramon y Cajal 1911)

- 1 Basic Processing Units  $\approx$  Neurons
- 2 Connections  $\approx$  Axons and Dendrites



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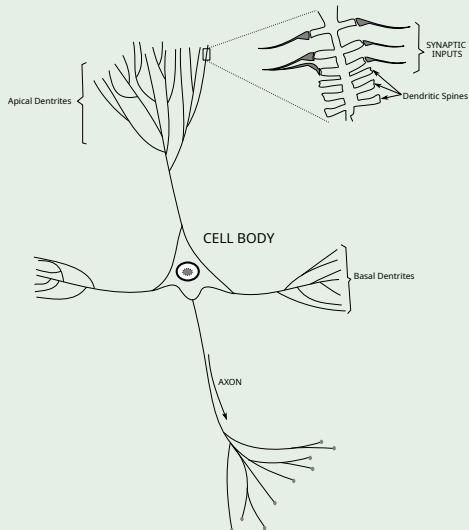
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# Example

## The Neural Structure



# Silicon Chip Vs Neurons

## Speed Differential

- ① Speeds in silicon chips are in the nanosecond range ( $10^{-9}$  s).
- ② Speeds in human neural networks are in the millisecond range ( $10^{-3}$  s).



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# Silicon Chip Vs Neurons

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## However

We have massive parallelism on the human brain

- ① 10 billion neurons in the human cortex.
- ② 60 trillion synapses or connections



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We have massive parallelism on the human brain

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## High Energy Efficiency

- ① Human Brain uses  $10^{-16}$  joules per operation.
- ② Best computers use  $10^{-6}$  joules per operation.

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# Pigeon Experiment

Watanabe et al. 1995 [2]

Pigeons as art experts



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# Pigeon Experiment

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Pigeons as art experts

## Experiment

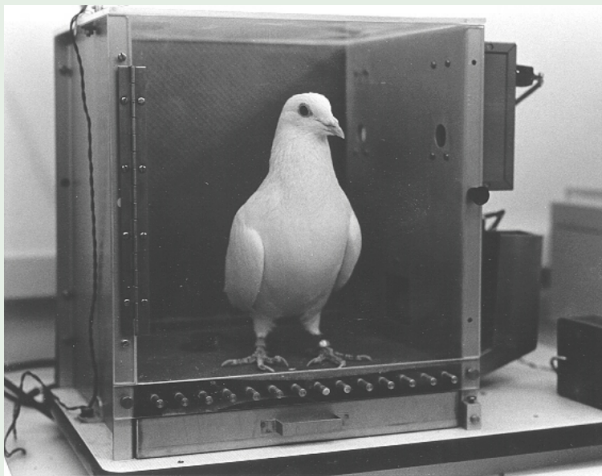
- Pigeon is in a Skinner box
- Then, paintings of two different artists (e.g. Chagall / Van Gogh) are presented to it.
- A Reward is given for pecking when presented a particular artist (e.g. Van Gogh).



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# The Pigeon in the Skinner Box

Something like this



## Something Notable

- Pigeons were able to discriminate between Van Gogh and Chagall with 95% accuracy (when presented with pictures they had been trained on).



## Something Notable

- Pigeons were able to discriminate between Van Gogh and Chagall with 95% accuracy (when presented with pictures they had been trained on).
- Discrimination still 85% successful for previously unseen paintings of the artists.

## Thus

- 1 Pigeons do not simply memorize the pictures.
- 2 They can extract and recognize patterns (the 'style').
- 3 They generalize from the already seen to make predictions.
- 4 This is what neural networks (biological and artificial) are good at (unlike conventional computer).



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# Formal Definition [1]

## Definition

An **artificial neural network** is a massively parallel distributed processor made up of simple processing units. It resembles the brain in two respects:

- 1 Knowledge is acquired by the network from its environment through a learning process.
- 2 Inter-neuron connection strengths, known as synaptic weights, are used to store the acquired knowledge.

# Inter-neuron connection strengths?

How do the neuron collect this information?

Some way to aggregate information needs to be devised...



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## A Classic

Use a summation of product of weights by inputs!!!



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## Something like

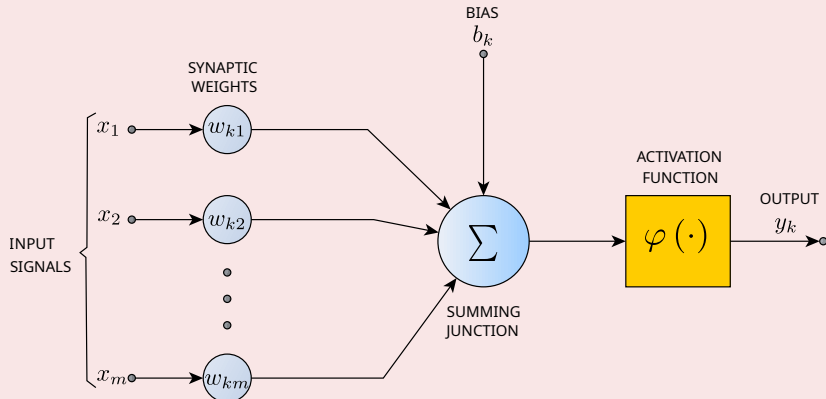
$$\sum_{i=1}^m w_i \times x_i$$

**Where:**  $w_i$  is the strength given to signal  $x_i$

**However:** We still need a way to regulate this “aggregation”  
(Activation function)

# The Model of a Artificial Neuron

## Graphical Representation for neuron $k$



# The use of Differential Equations in Neural Networks

It is not a well a known fact

- But the first proposed Neural Network was designed as combination of Differential Equations



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# The use of Differential Equations in Neural Networks

It is not a well a known fact

- But the first proposed Neural Network was designed as combination of Differential Equations

That McCulloch-Pitts model

- It is actually a discrete paraphrasing of such initial idea!!!



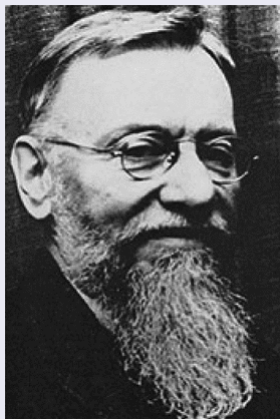
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# History

The study of Neurodynamics began in the 1930's

- With the work of **Nicolas Rashevsky** [3].



# Nicolas Rashevsky

## Who he was?

- American theoretical physicist who was one of the pioneers of mathematical biology.

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## He published one of the first books in Mathematical Biophysics

- “Mathematical Biophysics: Physico-Mathematical Foundations of Biology.”

## And in 1933

- He proposed the first neural network architecture



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# A simple Neural Network

Rashevsky proposed a Neural Network based in differential equations

$$\frac{de}{dt} = A\mathbf{x}(t) - ae$$

$$\frac{dj}{dt} = B\mathbf{x}(t) - bj$$

$$\text{Output} = \text{Heaviside}(e - j - \theta)$$



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$$Output = Heaviside(e - j - \theta)$$

## Something Notable

- Walter Pitts was his student, and together with Warren McCulloch rephrased the previous networks in a discrete version.



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# Into Big Data

He noticed something quite interesting [4]

- “in physics, one often averages over a large set of discrete events to obtain a continuous model”
  - ▶ This represents the large scale behavior of a system...

# Into Big Data

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- “in physics, one often averages over a large set of discrete events to obtain a continuous model”
  - ▶ This represents the large scale behavior of a system...

What do we do in Deep Learning with Big Data?

- **Our results are done over million of samples as training sets to get an average training!!!**



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# Basic Elements of an Artificial Neuron (AN) Model

## Set of Connecting links

- A signal  $x_j$ , at the input of synapse  $j$  connected to neuron  $k$  is multiplied by the synaptic weight  $w_{kj}$ .
- The weight may lie in a negative or positive range.
  - ▶ What about the real neuron? In classic literature you only have positive values.



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## A Complex Aggregation Function

- An aggregation function for the input signals, weighted by the respective synapses of the neuron.



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## Activation function (Squashing function)

- It limits the amplitude of the output of a neuron.
- It maps the permissible range of the output signal to an interval.

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# Mathematically

## Adder

$$u_k = \sum_{j=1}^m w_{kj} x_j \quad (1)$$



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## Adder

$$u_k = \sum_{j=1}^m w_{kj} x_j \quad (1)$$

- ①  $x_1, x_2, \dots, x_m$  are the input signals.
- ②  $w_{k1}, w_{k2}, \dots, w_{km}$  are the synaptic weights.
- ③ It is also known as “Affine Transformation.”

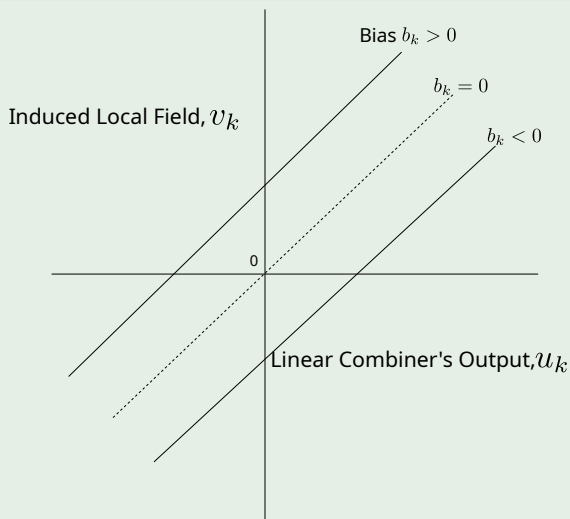
## Activation function

$$y_k = \varphi(u_k + b_k) \quad (2)$$

- ①  $y_k$  output of neuron.
- ②  $\varphi$  is the activation function.

# Integrating the Bias

## The Affine Transformation





Thus

## Final Equation

$$v_k = \sum_{j=0}^m w_{kj} x_j$$
$$y_k = \varphi(v_k)$$



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Thus

## Final Equation

$$\begin{aligned}v_k &= \sum_{j=0}^m w_{kj} x_j \\ y_k &= \varphi(v_k)\end{aligned}$$

## With

$$x_0 = 1 \text{ and } w_{k0} = b_k$$



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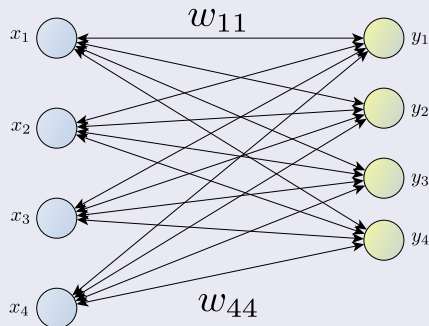
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# Energy Based Network

## Bidirectional Associative Memory (BAM) [5]



# A Little of Linear Algebra

Here, we can denote the weights as  $n \times k$  matrix  $W$

- The  $n$  corresponds to the  $n$  dimensional vector  $x_0$
- The  $k$  corresponds to the  $k$  dimensional vector  $y_0$



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# A Little of Linear Algebra

Here, we can denote the weights as  $n \times k$  matrix  $\mathbf{W}$

- The  $n$  corresponds to the  $n$  dimensional vector  $\mathbf{x}_0$
- The  $k$  corresponds to the  $k$  dimensional vector  $\mathbf{y}_0$

Therefore the mapping is build in the following way given the feedback

$$\mathbf{y}_0 = \text{sgn}(\mathbf{x}_0 \mathbf{W})$$

$$\mathbf{x}_1^T = \text{sgn}(\mathbf{W} \mathbf{y}_0)$$

$$\mathbf{y}_1 = \text{sgn}(\mathbf{x}_1 \mathbf{W})$$

...



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This is done until a stable state is reached

## Meaning

$$\mathbf{y} = \text{sgn}(\mathbf{x}\mathbf{W})$$

$$\mathbf{x}^T = \text{sgn}(\mathbf{W}\mathbf{y})$$



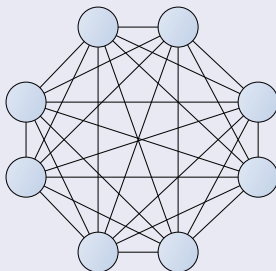
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## Meaning

$$\mathbf{y} = \text{sgn}(\mathbf{x}\mathbf{W})$$
$$\mathbf{x}^T = \text{sgn}(\mathbf{W}\mathbf{y})$$

## A Notable Example

- The Hopfield Networks





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# Types of Activation Functions I

## Threshold Function

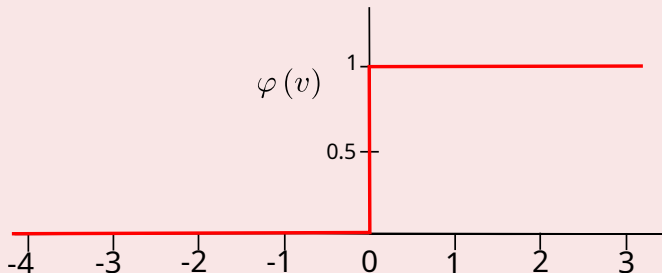
$$\varphi(v) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } v \geq 0 \\ 0 & \text{if } v < 0 \end{cases} \quad (\text{Heaviside Function}) \quad (3)$$

# Types of Activation Functions I

## Threshold Function

$$\varphi(v) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } v \geq 0 \\ 0 & \text{if } v < 0 \end{cases} \quad (\text{Heaviside Function}) \quad (3)$$

In the following picture



Thus

We can use this activation function

- To generate the first Neural Network Model



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# Thus

We can use this activation function

- To generate the first Neural Network Model

Clearly

- The model uses the summation as aggregation operator and a threshold function.



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# McCulloch-Pitts model [6]

McCulloch-Pitts model (Pioneers of Neural Networks in the 1940's)

$$\text{Output } y_k = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } v_k \geq \theta \\ 0 & \text{if } v_k < \theta \end{cases} \quad (4)$$



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# McCulloch-Pitts model [6]

McCulloch-Pitts model (Pioneers of Neural Networks in the 1940's)

$$\text{Output } y_k = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } v_k \geq \theta \\ 0 & \text{if } v_k < \theta \end{cases} \quad (4)$$

with induced local field  $\mathbf{w}_k = (1, 1)^T$

$$v_k = \sum_{j=1}^m w_{kj} x_j + b_k \quad (5)$$

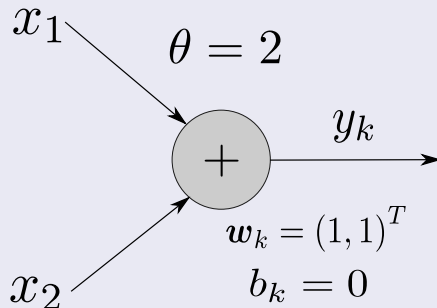


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# It is possible to do classic operations in Boolean Algebra

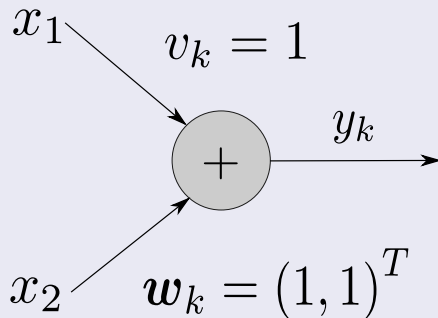
## AND Gate



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In the other hand

## OR Gate

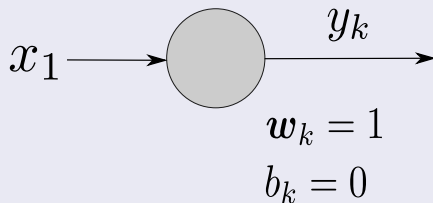


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# Finally

## NOT Gate

$$y_k = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } v_k \leq \theta = 0 \\ 0 & \text{if } v_k > \theta = 0 \end{cases}$$



And the impact is further understood if you look at this paper

## Claude Shannon

- “A Symbolic Analysis of Relay and Switching Circuits”
  - ▶ Shannon proved that his switching circuits could be used to simplify the arrangement of the electromechanical relays
  - ▶ These circuits could solve all problems that Boolean algebra could solve.



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## Basically, he proved that computer circuits

- They can solve computational complex problems... then neural networks can simulate them...



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# More advanced activation function

## Piecewise-Linear Function

$$\varphi(v) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } v_k \geq \frac{1}{2} \\ v & \text{if } -\frac{1}{2} < v_k < \frac{1}{2} \\ 0 & \text{if } v \leq -\frac{1}{2} \end{cases} \quad (6)$$

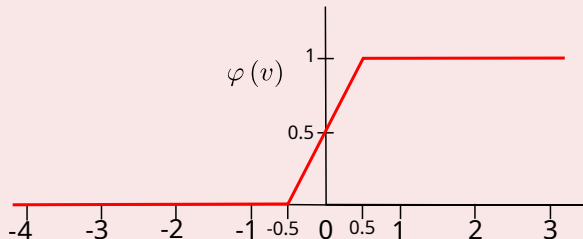


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## Example





## Notes about Piecewise-Linear function

The amplification factor inside the linear region of operation is assumed to be unity.



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## Special Cases

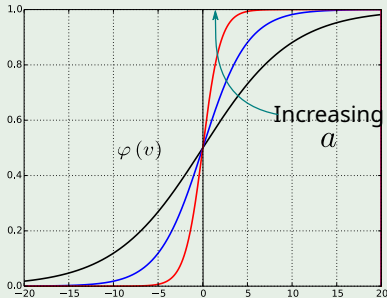
- A linear combiner arises if the linear region of operation is maintained without running into saturation.
- The piecewise-linear function reduces to a threshold function if the amplification factor of the linear region is made infinitely large.

## A better choice!!!

### Sigmoid function

$$\varphi(v) = \frac{1}{1 + \exp\{-av\}} \quad (7)$$

Where  $a$  is a slope parameter.



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# The Problem of the Vanishing Gradient

## When using a non-linearity

- However, there is a drawback when using Back-Propagation (As we saw in Machine Learning) under a sigmoid function

$$s(x) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-x}}$$



# The Problem of the Vanishing Gradient

## When using a non-linearity

- However, there is a drawback when using Back-Propagation (As we saw in Machine Learning) under a sigmoid function

$$s(x) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-x}}$$

Because if we imagine a Deep Neural Network as a series of layer functions  $f_i$

$$y(A) = f_t \circ f_{t-1} \circ \cdots \circ f_2 \circ f_1(A)$$

- With  $f_t$  is the last layer.



Then, using the Chain Rule

Therefore, we finish with a sequence of derivatives

$$\frac{\partial y(A)}{\partial w_{1i}} = \frac{\partial f_t(f_{t-1})}{\partial f_{t-1}} \cdot \frac{\partial f_{t-1}(f_{t-2})}{\partial f_{t-2}} \cdot \dots \cdot \frac{\partial f_2(f_1)}{\partial f_2} \cdot \frac{\partial f_1(A)}{\partial w_{1i}}$$



# Therefore

Given the commutativity of the product

- You could put together the derivative of the sigmoid's

$$f'(x) = \frac{ds(x)}{dx} = \frac{e^{-x}}{(1 + e^{-x})^2}$$



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Given the commutativity of the product

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$$f(x) = \frac{ds(x)}{dx} = \frac{e^{-x}}{(1 + e^{-x})^2}$$

Therefore, deriving again

$$\frac{df(x)}{dx} = -\frac{e^{-x}}{(1 + e^{-x})^2} + \frac{2(e^{-x})^2}{(1 + e^{-x})^3}$$



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# Therefore

Given the commutativity of the product

- You could put together the derivative of the sigmoid's

$$f(x) = \frac{ds(x)}{dx} = \frac{e^{-x}}{(1 + e^{-x})^2}$$

Therefore, deriving again

$$\frac{df(x)}{dx} = -\frac{e^{-x}}{(1 + e^{-x})^2} + \frac{2(e^{-x})^2}{(1 + e^{-x})^3}$$

After making  $\frac{df(x)}{dx} = 0$

- We have the maximum is at  $x = 0$

# Therefore

The maximum for the derivative of the sigmoid

- $f'(0) = 0.25$



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# Therefore

The maximum for the derivative of the sigmoid

- $f'(0) = 0.25$

Therefore, Given a **Deep** Convolutional Network

- We could finish with

$$\lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} \left( \frac{ds(x)}{dx} \right)^k = \lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} (0.25)^k \rightarrow 0$$



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A Vanishing Derivative or Vanishing Gradient

- Making quite difficult to do train a deeper network using this activation function for Deep Learning and even in Shallow Learning



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Thus

The need to introduce a new function

$$f(x) = x^+ = \max(0, x)$$



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Thus

The need to introduce a new function

$$f(x) = x^+ = \max(0, x)$$

It is called ReLu or Rectifier

With a smooth approximation (Softplus function)

$$f(x) = \frac{\ln(1 + e^{kx})}{k}$$

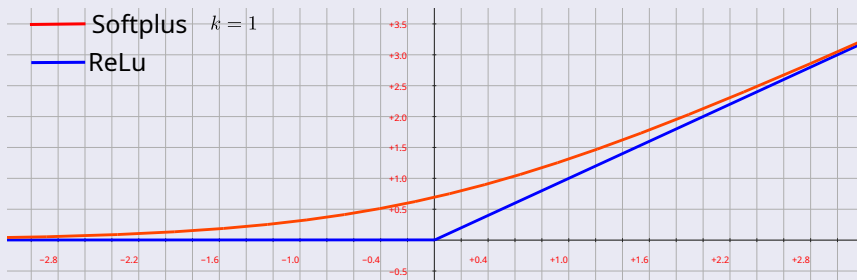


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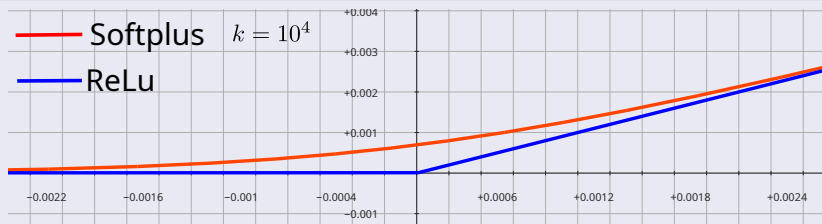
We have

When  $k = 1$



# Increase $k$

When  $k = 10^4$

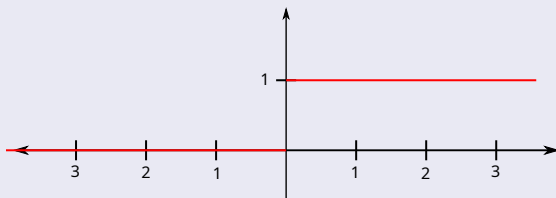


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However, it seems to be

People are using the following derivative

$$\frac{d}{dx} \text{ReLU}(x) = \begin{cases} 0 & x < 0 \\ 1 & x \geq 0 \end{cases}$$



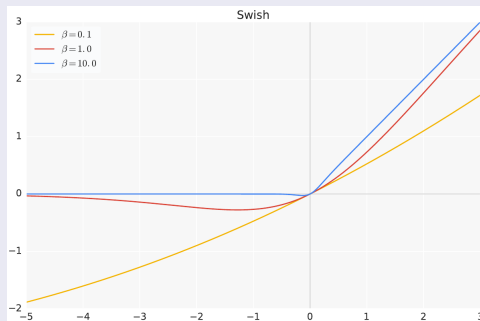
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# Example at Google Brain

## “SWISH: A SELF-GATED ACTIVATION FUNCTION” [7]

$$S(x) = \frac{x}{1 + \exp\{-\beta x\}}$$

- Here  $\beta$  is a trainable parameter



# Some Properties of the Swish

If  $\beta = 1$

- We have the Sigmoid-weighted Linear Unit (SiL), proposed in reinforcement learning



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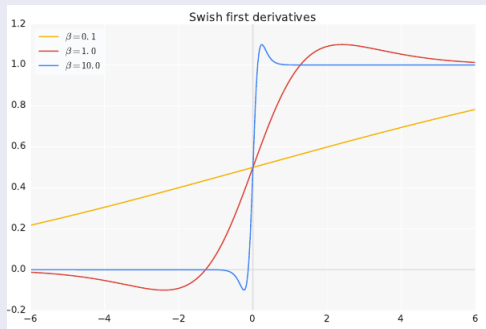
$$S(x) = \frac{x}{2}$$



Thus

## Swish interpolate Between the linear function and the ReLU function

- Not only that but at the derivatives



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# However

We need to analyze more activation functions

- So, we reach the objective of finding one that has smooth derivatives.



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However

We need to analyze more activation functions

- So, we reach the objective of finding one that has smooth derivatives.

And Several Derivatives

- It is going to be nice...



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# Final Remarks

## Although, ReLu functions

- They can handle the problem of vanishing problem



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# Final Remarks

## Although, ReLu functions

- They can handle the problem of vanishing problem

## However, as we will see, saturation starts to appear as a problem

- As in Hebbian Learning!!!

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# Neural Network As a Graph [1]

## Definition

A neural network is a directed graph consisting of nodes with interconnecting synaptic and activation links.



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# Neural Network As a Graph [1]

## Definition

A neural network is a directed graph consisting of nodes with interconnecting synaptic and activation links.

## Properties

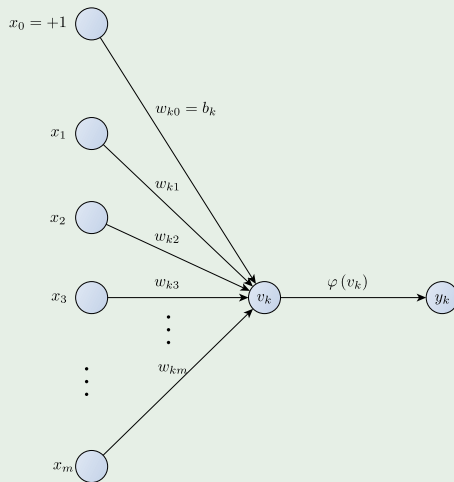
- 1 Each neuron is represented by an function
- 2 Each link represent a weight.
- 3 The weighted sum of the input signals defines the local field.
- 4 The activation function maps local field to an output.



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# Example

## Simple Perceptron





# Some Observations

## Observation

- A partially complete graph describing a neural architecture has the following characteristics:
  - ▶ Source nodes supply input signals to the graph.
  - ▶ Each neuron is represented by a single node called a computation node.
  - ▶ The communication links provide directions of signal flow in the graph.



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Other Representations exist!!!



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## However

Other Representations exist!!!

## Three main representations ones

- Block diagram, providing a functional description of the network.
- Signal-flow graph, providing a complete description of signal flow in the network.
  - ▶ Then one we plan to use.
- Architectural graph, describing the network layout.

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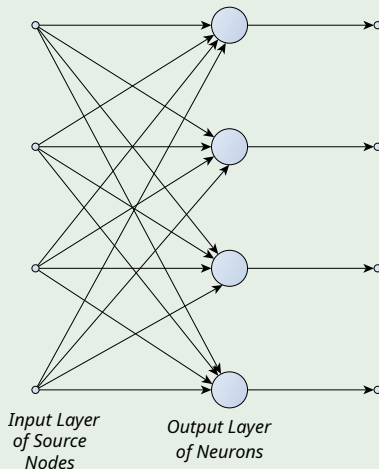
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# Single-Layer Feedforward Networks

We begin with something quite simple



# Observations

## Observations

This network is known as a strictly feed-forward or acyclic type.



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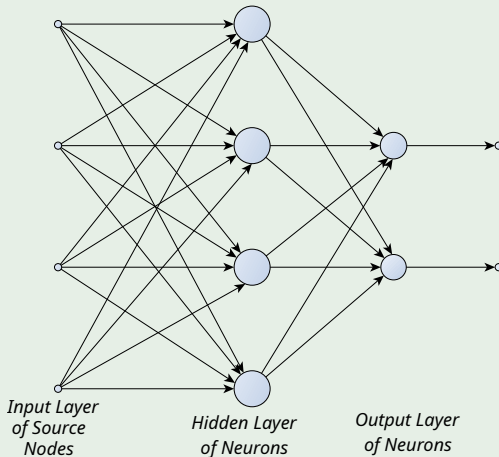


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# Multilayer Feedforward Networks

## Stacking Layers



# Observations

## Observations

- 1 This network contains a series of hidden layer.



# Observations

## Observations

- ① This network contains a series of hidden layer.
- ② Each hidden layers allows for classification of the new output space of the previous hidden layer.



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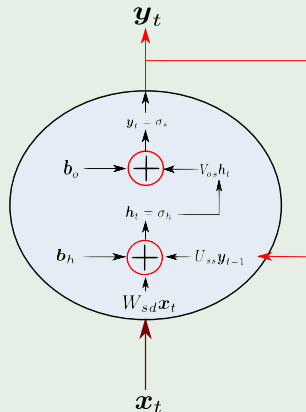
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# Recurrent Networks

## Connecting the back with the front



# Observations

## Observations

- 1 This network has not self-feedback loops.



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# Observations

## Observations

- 1 This network has not self-feedback loops.
- 2 It has something known as unit delay operator  $B = z^{-1}$ .



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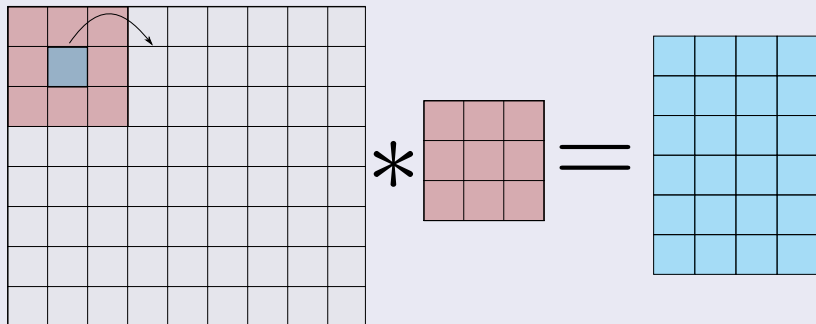




# Convolutional Deep Learners

Using the principle of locality [8, 9]

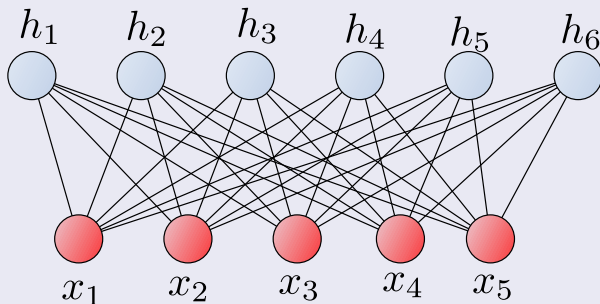
Horizontal Stride  $r = 2$



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# Restricted Boltzmann Machines

## Energy Based Architectures [10]



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# Knowledge Representation

## Definition

- By Fischler and Firschein, 1987
  - ▶ “Knowledge refers to stored information or models used by a person or machine to interpret, predict, and appropriately respond to the outside world. ”



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## It consists of two kinds of information:

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- 2 Observations (measurements) of the world, obtained by means of sensors.



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## Observations can be

- 1 Labeled
- 2 Unlabeled

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# Set of Training Data

## Training Data

- It consist of input-output pairs  $(x, y)$ 
  - ▶  $x$ = input signal
  - ▶  $y$ = desired output





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## Thus, we have the following phases of designing a Neuronal Network

- 1 Choose appropriate architecture
- 2 Train the network - learning.
  - 1 Use the Training Data!!!
- 3 Test the network with data not seen before
  - 1 Use a set of pairs that where not shown to the network so the  $y$  component is guessed.
- 4 Then, you can see how well the network behaves - Generalization Phase.

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# Representing Knowledge in a Neural Networks

## Notice the Following

The subject of knowledge representation inside an artificial network is very complicated.



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# Representing Knowledge in a Neural Networks

## Notice the Following

The subject of knowledge representation inside an artificial network is very complicated.

## However: Pattern Classifiers Vs Neural Networks

- 1 Pattern Classifiers are first designed and then validated by the environment.
- 2 Neural Networks learns the environment by using the data from it!!!
  - 1 However, they are even designed!!!



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## Notice the Following

The subject of knowledge representation inside an artificial network is very complicated.

## However: Pattern Classifiers Vs Neural Networks

- ① Pattern Classifiers are first designed and then validated by the environment.
- ② Neural Networks learns the environment by using the data from it!!!
  - ① However, they are even designed!!!

## Kurt Hornik et al. proved (1989)

“Standard multilayer feedforward networks with as few as one hidden layer using arbitrary squashing functions are capable of approximating any **Borel measurable function**” (Basically many of the known ones!!!)

# Rules Knowledge Representation

## Rule 1

- Similar inputs from similar classes should usually produce similar representation.
  - ▶ We can use a Metric to measure that similarity!!!



# Rules Knowledge Representation

## Rule 1

- Similar inputs from similar classes should usually produce similar representation.
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## Examples

- 1  $d(\mathbf{x}_i, \mathbf{x}_j) = \|\mathbf{x}_i - \mathbf{x}_j\|$  (Classic Euclidean Metric).
- 2  $d_{ij}^2 = (\mathbf{x}_i - \boldsymbol{\mu}_i)^T \Sigma^{-1} (\mathbf{x}_j - \boldsymbol{\mu}_j)$  (Mahalanobis distance) where
  - 1  $\boldsymbol{\mu}_i = E[\mathbf{x}_i]$ .
  - 2  $\Sigma = E[(\mathbf{x}_i - \boldsymbol{\mu}_i)(\mathbf{x}_i - \boldsymbol{\mu}_i)^T] = E[(\mathbf{x}_j - \boldsymbol{\mu}_j)(\mathbf{x}_j - \boldsymbol{\mu}_j)^T]$ .



## Rule 2

- Items to be categorized as separate classes should be given widely different representations in the network.





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## Rule 3

- If a particular feature is important, then there should be a large number of neurons involved in the representation.



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## Rule 3

- If a particular feature is important, then there should be a large number of neurons involved in the representation.

## Rule 4

- Prior information and invariance should be built into the design:
  - ▶ Thus, simplify the network by not learning that data.



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