

Linear Regression: Loss function

Fitting an estimator/predictor/model involves solving for the Θ that minimizes the Loss function.

For a Regression task: our goal is to make the discrepancy (error) between \mathbf{y} and $\hat{\mathbf{y}}$ "small".

- The discrepancy between $\mathbf{y}^{(i)}$ and $\hat{\mathbf{y}}^{(i)}$ is referred to as the *residual*, usually denoted by ϵ

$$\epsilon^{(i)} = \mathbf{y}^{(i)} - \hat{\mathbf{y}}^{(i)}$$

So

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbf{y} &= \hat{\mathbf{y}} + \epsilon \\ &= \mathbf{X}\Theta + \epsilon\end{aligned}$$

We define the per-example loss to be the residual *squared*

$$\mathcal{L}_{\Theta}^{(i)} = (\mathbf{y}^{(i)} - \hat{\mathbf{y}}^{(i)})^2$$

so that the average loss

$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{L}_{\Theta} &= \frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m \mathcal{L}_{\Theta}^{(i)} \\ &= \frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m (\mathbf{y}^{(i)} - \hat{\mathbf{y}}^{(i)})^2\end{aligned}$$

This expression on the right is called the *Mean Squared Error (MSE)*.

$$\text{MSE}(\mathbf{y}, \hat{\mathbf{y}}) = \frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m (\mathbf{y}^{(i)} - \hat{\mathbf{y}}^{(i)})^2$$

- You will sometimes see *Root Mean Squared Error (RMSE)* which is the square root of the MSE

Notice that the Performance Metric and Loss Functions are identical in this case.

This will not always be true.

R^2 versus RMSE: Absolute versus relative error

One often sees the term R^2 in the context of Linear Regression.

Whereas RMSE is absolute error (in same units as \mathbf{y}), R^2 is a relative error (in units of percent).

The relationship is:

$$\begin{aligned} R^2 &= 1 - \left(\frac{\sum_{i=1}^m (\mathbf{y}_i - \hat{\mathbf{y}}_i)^2}{\sum_{i=1}^m (\mathbf{y}_i - \bar{\mathbf{y}}_i)^2} \right) \\ &= 1 - \left(\frac{m \cdot \text{MSE}(\mathbf{y}, \hat{\mathbf{y}})}{\sum_{i=1}^m (\mathbf{y}_i - \bar{\mathbf{y}}_i)^2} \right) \\ &= 1 - \left(\frac{m \cdot \text{RMSE}(\hat{\mathbf{y}}, \mathbf{y})^2}{\sum_{i=1}^m (\mathbf{y}_i - \bar{\mathbf{y}}_i)^2} \right) \end{aligned}$$

In addition to changing the units of error, the R^2 metric has an interesting interpretation.

Consider a naive "baseline" model for prediction

- predict \bar{y} for every value of \mathbf{x}
 - where \bar{y} is the average (over the training examples) of the target

The loss for the naive model is

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{naive}} = \text{MSE}(\mathbf{y}, \bar{\mathbf{y}})$$

Then

$$\begin{aligned} R^2 &= 1 - \left(\frac{m \cdot \text{MSE}(\mathbf{y}, \hat{\mathbf{y}})}{m \cdot \text{MSE}(\mathbf{y}, \bar{\mathbf{y}})} \right) \\ &= 1 - \frac{\mathcal{L}}{\mathcal{L}_{\text{naive}}} \end{aligned}$$

Thus, R^2 is the *percent reduction in loss* achieved by our model compared to the naive model that always predicts \bar{y} .

We now know our Loss function for the Linear Regression model.

Fitting the Linear Regression model solves for the Θ^* that minimizes average loss

$$\Theta^* = \underset{\Theta}{\operatorname{argmin}} \mathcal{L}_{\Theta}$$

which are the parameter values that minimizes MSE.

In [3]: `print("Done")`

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