Personalized Marketing with Latent Confounders

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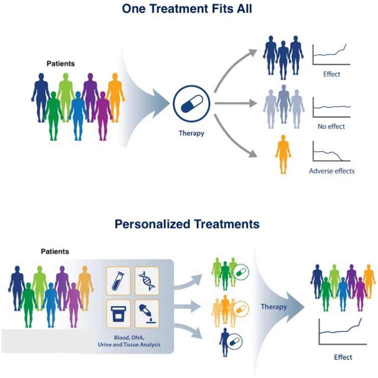
RBC Royal Bank

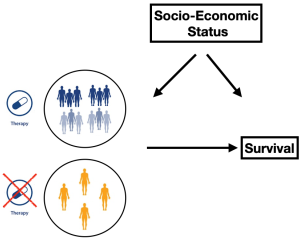
Inspiration for Personalized Marketing

- Personalization is founded on the premise that individuals have heterogenous response to actions.
- Personalization algorithms aim to improve decision-making by identifying and exploiting this heterogeneity.



Estimating Treatment Effects: **Non**-Personalized Paradigm

A/B Tests are 'gold standard' in the One-Treatment-Fits-All paradigm because they remove the influence of unobserved confounders (unmeasured variables that influence both the treatment and the outcome).



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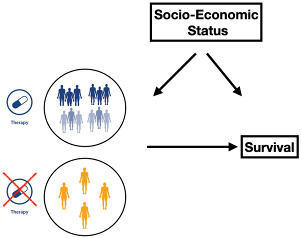
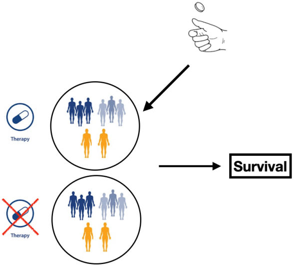


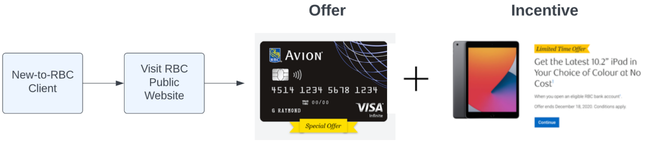


Estimating Treatment Effects: Personalized Paradigm

- In the presence of unobserved confounders (most plausible scenario), experimental data is likely not 'gold standard' for estimating heterogenous treatment effects.
- A coherent fusion of experimental and observational data that results from a *counterfactual*-based decision criterion is likely to outperform other approaches.
- In what follows, I'll use a Personalized Marketing problem as a motivating example to discuss the statements above.

The Business Setting

- **Business objective:** Sell a credit card to new-to-RBC clients.
- **Current campaign: One-Treatment-Fits-All paradigm**. All new-to-RBC clients who visited the RBC public site, get a credit card offer + iPad incentive.



- **Future campaign: Personalize the incentive**. Identify which new-to-RBC clients should receive an iPad incentive in the future to maximize the expected profitability of the campaign.

Data Generating Process

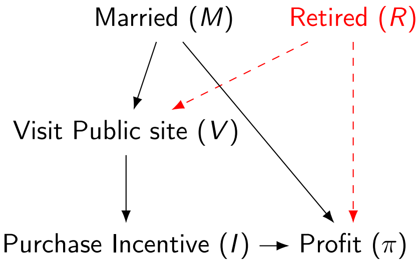


Figure: 'True' Causal Graph (current campaign).

Data Generating Process

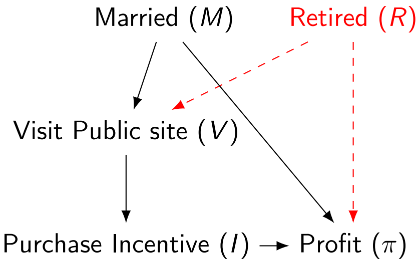


Figure: 'True' Causal Graph (current campaign).

$$P(R=1) = 0.5\ ,\ \ P(M=1) = 0.5$$

$$V := M \oplus \mathrm{R}$$

$$I := V$$

	$R=0$		$R=1$	
	$M=1$	$M=0$	$M=1$	$M=0$
$I=1$	0.25	0.50	0.45	0.05
$I=0$	0.50	0.10	0.05	0.30

Table: $E[\pi|M,R,I]$. Highlighted cells reflect (new-to-RBC) client's 'natural' choice to visit the Public site or not.

Four Approaches to Personalizing the Incentive

DS #1: Empirical Decision Criterion (EDC)

Associational Inference

$$\text{EDC} \rightarrow \underset{I \in 0,1}{\operatorname{argmax}}\; E[\pi | I, M]$$

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$$E[\pi | I = 1, M = 1] = 0.25$$
$$E[\pi | I = 0, M = 1] = 0.05$$
$$E[\pi | I = 1, M = 0] = 0.05$$
$$E[\pi | I = 0, M = 0] = 0.10$$

	$R = 0$		$R = 1$	
	$M = 1$	$M = 0$	$M = 1$	$M = 0$
$I = 1$	0.25	0.50	0.45	0.05
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Table: $E[\pi | M, R, I]$.

DS #1: Empirical Decision Criterion (EDC)

Associational Inference

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$$E[\pi|I = 0, M = 1] = 0.05$$
$$E[\pi|I = 1, M = 0] = 0.05$$
$$E[\pi|I = 0, M = 0] = 0.10$$

	$R = 0$		$R = 1$	
	$M = 1$	$M = 0$	$M = 1$	$M = 0$
$I = 1$	0.25	0.50	0.45	0.05
$I = 0$	0.50	0.10	0.05	0.30

Table: $E[\pi|M, R, I]$.

Decision Rule:

- If Visit Site $\wedge$ Married $\rightarrow$ Purchase Incentive $\rightarrow$ $E[\pi] = \mathbf{0.25}$
- If Visit Site $\wedge$ Not Married $\rightarrow$ No Purchase Incentive $\rightarrow$ $E[\pi] = \mathbf{0.30}$

Expected profit $= \boxed{0.275} = (0.25+0.30)/2$.

DS #2: Post-Visit Randomization (PVR)

Interventional Inference

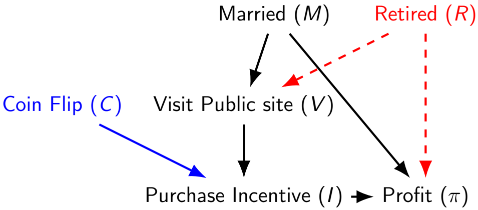

Figure: Causal DAG with post-visit randomization.

$$V := M \oplus \mathrm{R}$$
$$I := V \wedge C$$

DS #2: Post-Visit Randomization (PVR) - cont'd

Interventional Inference

$$\text{PVR} \rightarrow \underset{I \in 0,1}{\operatorname{argmax}} \; E[\pi | do(I), M, V = 1]$$

DS #2: Post-Visit Randomization (PVR) - cont'd

Interventional Inference

$$\text{PVR} \rightarrow \underset{I \in 0,1}{\text{argmax}}\ E[\pi | do(I), M, V = 1]$$

$$E[\pi | do(I = 1), M = 1, V = 1] = 0.25$$
$$E[\pi | do(I = 0), M = 1, V = 1] = 0.50$$
$$E[\pi | do(I = 1), M = 0, V = 1] = 0.05$$
$$E[\pi | do(I = 0), M = 0, V = 1] = 0.30$$

	$R = 0$		$R = 1$	
	$M = 1$	$M = 0$	$M = 1$	$M = 0$
$I = 1$	0.25	0.50	0.45	0.05
$I = 0$	0.50	0.10	0.05	0.30

Table: $E[\pi | M, R, I]$.

DS #2: Post-Visit Randomization (PVR) - cont'd

Interventional Inference

$$\text{PVR} \rightarrow \underset{I \in 0,1}{\operatorname{argmax}} \; E[\pi | do(I), M, V = 1]$$

$$E[\pi | do(I = 1), M = 1, V = 1] = 0.25$$
$$E[\pi | do(I = 0), M = 1, V = 1] = 0.50$$
$$E[\pi | do(I = 1), M = 0, V = 1] = 0.05$$
$$E[\pi | do(I = 0), M = 0, V = 1] = 0.30$$

	$R = 0$		$R = 1$	
	$M = 1$	$M = 0$	$M = 1$	$M = 0$
$I = 1$	0.25	0.50	0.45	0.05
$I = 0$	0.50	0.10	0.05	0.30

Table: $E[\pi | M, R, I]$.

Decision Rule:

- If Visit Site $\wedge$ Married $\rightarrow$ No Purchase Incentive $\rightarrow$ $E[\pi] = \mathbf{0.50}$
- If Visit Site $\wedge$ Not Married $\rightarrow$ No Purchase Incentive $\rightarrow$ $E[\pi] = \mathbf{0.30}$

Expected profit $= \boxed{0.40} = (0.50+0.30)/2.$

DS #3: A/B Test on All New-to-RBC Clients

Interventional Inference

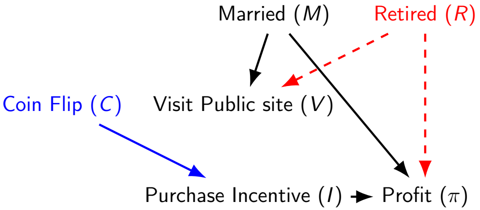

Figure: Causal DAG with A/B Test on all New-to-RBC clients.

$$V := M \oplus \mathrm{R}$$

$$I := C$$

DS #3: A/B Test on All New-to-RBC Clients - cont'd

Interventional Inference

$$\text{ABT} \rightarrow \underset{I \in 0,1}{\operatorname{argmax}} \; E[\pi | do(I), M]$$

$$E[\pi|do(I=1), M=1] = 0.350 = (0.25 + 0.45)/2$$
$$E[\pi|do(I=0), M=1] = 0.275 = (0.50 + 0.05)/2$$
$$E[\pi|do(I=1), M=0] = 0.275 = (0.50 + 0.05)/2$$
$$E[\pi|do(I=0), M=0] = 0.200 = (0.10 + 0.30)/2$$

	$R=0$		$R=1$	
	$M=1$	$M=0$	$M=1$	$M=0$
$I=1$	0.25	0.50	0.45	0.05
$I=0$	0.50	0.10	0.05	0.30

Table: $E[\pi|M, R, I]$.

DS #3: A/B Test on All New-to-RBC Clients - cont'd

$$\text{ABT} \rightarrow \underset{I \in 0,1}{\operatorname{argmax}} \; E[\pi | do(I), M]$$

$$E[\pi|do(I=1), M=1] = 0.350 = (0.25 + 0.45)/2$$
$$E[\pi|do(I=0), M=1] = 0.275 = (0.50 + 0.05)/2$$
$$E[\pi|do(I=1), M=0] = 0.275 = (0.50 + 0.05)/2$$
$$E[\pi|do(I=0), M=0] = 0.200 = (0.10 + 0.30)/2$$

	$R=0$		$R=1$	
	$M=1$	$M=0$	$M=1$	$M=0$
$I=1$	0.25	0.50	0.45	0.05
$I=0$	0.50	0.10	0.05	0.30

Table: $E[\pi|M,R,I]$.

Decision Rule:

- If Married $\rightarrow$ Purchase Incentive $\rightarrow$ $E[\pi] = \mathbf{0.35}$
- If Not Married $\rightarrow$ Purchase Incentive $\rightarrow$ $E[\pi] = \mathbf{0.275}$

Expected profit $= \boxed{0.315} = (0.35+0.275)/2.$

DS #4: Regret Decision Criterion (RDC)

Counterfactual Inference

$$\text{RDC} \rightarrow \underset{a' \in \ 0,1}{\operatorname{argmax}} \ E[\pi_{a'} | I = a, M]$$

DS #4: Regret Decision Criterion (RDC)

Counterfactual Inference

$$\text{RDC} \rightarrow \underset{a' \in \ 0,1}{\operatorname{argmax}} \ E[\pi_{a'}|I = a, M]$$

$$\begin{aligned} P(\pi_{a'}, M) &= P(\pi_{a'}, M, a') + P(\pi_{a'}, M, a) \\ &= P(\pi_{a'}|M, a')P(M, a') + P(\pi_{a'}|M, a)P(M, a) \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} P(\pi_{a'}|M) &= P(\pi_{a'}|M, a')P(a'|M) + P(\pi_{a'}|M, a)P(a|M) \\ &= P(\pi|M, a')P(a'|M) + P(\pi_{a'}|M, a)P(a|M) \ \text{(Consistency)} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} P(\pi_{a'}|M, a) &= \frac{1}{P(a|M)}\Big[P(\pi_{a'}|M) - P(\pi|M, a')P(a'|M)\Big] \\ &= \boxed{\underbrace{\frac{1}{P(a|M)}}_{\textbf{observational}} \overbrace{\Big[P\Big(\pi|M, do(a')\Big)}^{\textbf{experimental}} - \underbrace{P(\pi|M, a')P(a'|M)\Big]}_{\textbf{observational}}} \end{aligned}$$

DS #4: Regret Decision Criterion (RDC) - cont'd

Counterfactual Inference

$$\boxed{E(\pi_{I=\mathbf{1}}|M=1, I=0)} =$$

$$\frac{1}{P(I=0|M=1)}\Big[E\Big(\pi|M=1, do(I=1)\Big) -$$

$$E(\pi|M=1, I=1)P(I=1|M=1)\Big].$$

$$= \frac{1}{1/2}(0.350 - 0.25 \times \frac{1}{1/2}) = \mathbf{0.45}$$

$$\boxed{E(\pi_{I=\mathbf{1}}|M=0, I=0)} = \mathbf{0.50}$$

$$\boxed{E(\pi_{I=\mathbf{0}}|M=1, I=1)} = \mathbf{0.50}$$

$$\boxed{E(\pi_{I=\mathbf{0}}|M=0, I=1)} = \mathbf{0.30}$$

	$R=0$		$R=1$	
	$M=1$	$M=0$	$M=1$	$M=0$
$I=1$	0.25	0.50	0.45	0.05
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Table: $E[\pi|M, R, I]$.

DS #4: Regret Decision Criterion (RDC) - cont'd

Counterfactual Inference

$\boxed{E(\pi_{I=\mathbf{1}}|M=1, I=0)} =$

$$\frac{1}{P(I=0|M=1)}\Big[E\Big(\pi|M=1, do(I=1)\Big) - E(\pi|M=1, I=1)P(I=1|M=1)\Big].$$

$$= \frac{1}{1/2}(0.350 - 0.25 \times \frac{1}{1/2}) = \mathbf{0.45}$$

	$R=0$		$R=1$	
	$M=1$	$M=0$	$M=1$	$M=0$
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Table: $E[\pi|M, R, I]$.

$\boxed{E(\pi_{I=\mathbf{1}}|M=0, I=0)} = \mathbf{0.50}$

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$\boxed{E(\pi_{I=\mathbf{0}}|M=0, I=1)} = \mathbf{0.30}$

Decision Rule:

- If Visit Site $\wedge$ Married $\rightarrow$ No Purchase Incentive $\rightarrow$ $E[\pi] = \mathbf{0.50}$
- If Visit Site $\wedge$ Not Married $\rightarrow$ No Purchase Incentive $\rightarrow$ $E[\pi] = \mathbf{0.30}$
- If Not Visit Site $\wedge$ Married $\rightarrow$ Purchase Incentive $\rightarrow$ $E[\pi] = \mathbf{0.45}$
- If Not Visit Site $\wedge$ Not Married $\rightarrow$ Purchase Incentive $\rightarrow$ $E[\pi] = \mathbf{0.50}$

Expected profit $= \boxed{0.4375} = (0.50 + 0.30 + 0.45 + 0.50)/4.$

Summary of Methods

Criterion	Decision Rule	$E[\pi]$
EDC	• If Visit Site $\wedge$ Married $\rightarrow$ **Purchase Incentive** • If Visit Site $\wedge$ Not Married $\rightarrow$ **No Purchase Incentive**	.2750
PVR	**Never Purchase Incentive**	.4000
ABT	**Always Purchase Incentive**	.3150
RDC	• If Visit Site $\wedge$ Married $\rightarrow$ **No Purchase Incentive** • If Visit Site $\wedge$ Not Married $\rightarrow$ **No Purchase Incentive** • If Not Visit Site $\wedge$ Married $\rightarrow$ **Purchase Incentive** • If Not Visit Site $\wedge$ Not Married $\rightarrow$ **Purchase Incentive**	**.4375**
Oracle		**.4375**

Remarks

- If the goal is to learn personalized actions, experimental data alone is sub-optimal in the presence of unobserved confounders.
- Combining experimental and observational data under a Regret Decision Criterion (RDC) can provide information about the unobserved confounders, and hence outperform alternative optimization criteria.
- The expression derived from RDC works only in the binary treatment case. RDC-type randomization (Forney et al., 2017) was proposed to estimate counterfactual expressions empirically from an arbitrary number of treatments.

References

- Elias Bareinboim, Andrew Forney, and Judea Pearl. 2015. Bandits with unobserved confounders: a causal approach. In Proceedings of the 28th International Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems - Volume 1 (NIPS'15).
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- Forney, A., Pearl, J. ; Bareinboim, E.. (2017). Counterfactual Data-Fusion for Online Reinforcement Learners. Proceedings of the 34th International Conference on Machine Learning, in Proceedings of Machine Learning Research 70:1156-1164