
Project Presentation

Classification of news articles headlines

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Motivation

In many real-world scenarios, the ability to automatically classify documents into a fixed set of categories is highly desirable. This categorization of news articles poses a significant challenge to user-driven news aggregator applications interested in determining the interests of their users and thereby provide the most relevant content. We aim to use machine learning to automate this process of binning news articles into appropriate topics.

Problem Formulation

Given a news headline string, classify it into one of the following -

- 1) business
- 2) science and technology
- 3) entertainment
- 4) health

Data Set Details

Dataset: (Link : [UCI machine learning repository](#))

Key Characteristics of the data set-

- 1) It contains headlines, URLs, and categories for 422,937 news stories collected by a web aggregator between March 10th, 2014 and August 10th, 2014.
- 2) There are 152746 news of business category, 108465 news of science and technology category, 115920 news of entertainment category, 45615 news of health category.
- 3) 2076 clusters of similar news for entertainment category, 1789 clusters of similar news for science and technology category, 2019 clusters of similar news for business category, 1347 clusters of similar news for health category.

Procedural way to classify the data

We followed a systematic approach to classify the data which is given as follows:

- 1) Data Processing -
 - Punctuation Removal - replace punctuations and numbers with spaces
 - Stop Words Removal - based on a list of words or word frequency
 - Words Stemming - Reduce derived words to their word stem/root
- 2) Feature Extraction -
 - CountVectorizer
 - TfidfVectorizer

Procedural way to classify the data

3) Feature Selection (algorithms to avoid overfitting) -

- LSA (Latent Semantic Analysis)
- Chi Square Stats
- Variance threshold
- Mutual Information

4) Classification Techniques -

- Naive bayes
- SVM Classifier using different kernels
- Neural network

Data Processing

- Firstly, the data is converted into lowercase characters, and the punctuations and numbers are removed.
- Stop-words removal and stemming help in improving the accuracy of the classifier by removing unimportant words and details of a word.
- Stop-words are removed in the next step of processing. Stop-words are words that are very common (e.g. the) and can be ignored for our problem of classification.
- Stemming reduces the words to their word bases (word roots). This allows the classifier model to treat two different words with same word bases as the same and thus having the same effect on classification which is what we'd expect.

Feature Extraction

This task requires us to extract features in the form of matrices (usable data format and that can be later used by various feature selection and Machine learning algorithms to correctly classify data into different classes).

1. `TfidfVectorizer()` - Convert a collection of raw documents to a matrix of TF-IDF features. (Where TF-IDF stands for Term frequency Inverse document frequency).
2. `CountVectorizer()` - Convert a collection of text documents to a matrix of token counts. The number of features will be equal to the vocabulary size found by analyzing the data.

TF-IDF

tf-idf, short for **term frequency–inverse document frequency**, is a numerical statistic that is intended to reflect how important a word is to a document in a collection or corpus. (Source :- [wikipedia](#))

In our case we did not decide upon a fixed **corpus** (*a collection of words*) and allowed the algorithm to generate it's own corpus which in our case is all the unique words that have occurred so far.

(To check the functionality of TF-IDF,we counted the number of unique words and the dimension of the feature. For the case of 10,000 samples it turned out there were 9582 unique words and hence 9582 features.)

Countvectorizer

- Convert a collection of text documents to a matrix of token counts. The number of features in this case is also equal to the total number of unique words occurring in the whole dataset.
- But unlike TF-IDF it does not gives weights to each letter occurring in that sentence rather it just assigns a 1 if the number is there in that line and 0 otherwise.

Which one to use - CountVectorizer or TF-IDF

We decided to use CountVectorizer instead of TfidfVectorizer because of the following results that we got:

The accuracy obtained on a dataset of 10,000 samples was as follows-

1. TfidfVectorizer - 0.931
2. CountVectorizer - 0.9525

The accuracy obtained on a dataset of 1,00,000 samples was as follows-

1. TfidfVectorizer - 0.9378
2. CountVectorizer - 0.94155

Feature Selection

Due to huge number of words existence in news headlines, it becomes tough and much complex for classifiers to work smoothly and can in fact result in overfitting. For this, we carry out effective feature selection process and reduce dimensionality of news headlines data sets. Few of the feature selection algorithms that we implemented are as follows:

- Principal Component Analysis
- Variance threshold
- Chi Square with the help of SelectKbest
- Mutual info classification

Principal Component Analysis (PCA)

- It is most basic implementation of feature selection. In this, since the data set was sparse so we ended up using LSA (Latent Semantic Analysis)
- It is almost similar to PCA in the fact that both of them rely on Singular Value Decomposition but the former processes the data first before applying SVD to calculate most significant features and thus can be used with sparse matrices for which SVD is not defined(also called Truncated SVD) .
- Since features extracted from LSA contained negative values, we could not use Naive Bayes with it so we used Random Forest as ML Classifier

([source](#))

Variance Threshold

Variance Threshold is a simple baseline approach to feature selection. It removes all features whose variance does not meet some threshold. Hence we are able to remove all zero-variance features, i.e. features that have the same value in all samples.

As an example, suppose that we have a dataset with boolean features, and we want to remove all features that are either one or zero in more than 80% of the samples. Boolean features are Bernoulli random variables, and the variance of such variables is given by $p(1-p)$ so we can select using the threshold $.8 * (1 - .8)$

In our project we have used the default value of threshold as present in sklearn.

Chi Square Test

- Compute chi-squared stats between each non-negative feature and class.
- This score can be used to select the `n_features` with the highest values for the test chi-squared statistic from `X`, which must contain only non-negative features such as booleans or frequencies (e.g., term counts in document classification), relative to the classes.
- The chi-square test measures dependence between stochastic variables, so using this function “weeds out” the features that are the most likely to be independent of class and therefore irrelevant for classification.

[Source](#))

Mutual Info

- Estimate mutual information for a discrete target variable.
- Mutual information (MI) between two random variables is a non-negative value, which measures the dependency between the variables.
- It is equal to zero if and only if two random variables are independent, and higher values mean higher dependency.
- The function relies on nonparametric methods based on entropy estimation from k-nearest neighbors distances. Thus it is later used with K-means clusterization

Word2Vec

- We have also implemented word2vec as an option for the feature extraction + feature constrained technique.
- Word2vec uses two-layer neural networks that are trained to reconstruct linguistic contexts of words. Word2vec takes as its input a large corpus of predefined text and produces a vector space, with each unique word in the corpus being assigned a corresponding vector in the space.
- In our implementation we were able to get an accuracy of 0.72 on a dataset of 10,000 and using a corpus of less words ([glove.6B.50d](#)).
- But we were not able to do this on a bigger sized corpus([glove.6B.300d](#)) because it was requiring too much computation power which our machines were not able to handle.

Algorithms for classification

So to classify the data we have used the following standard off the shelf libraries from Sklearn.

- 1) Naive bayes
- 2) SVM Classifier using different kernels - linear, polynomial, rbf.
- 3) Neural network

Among these the best results were given by SVM classifier using linear kernel.

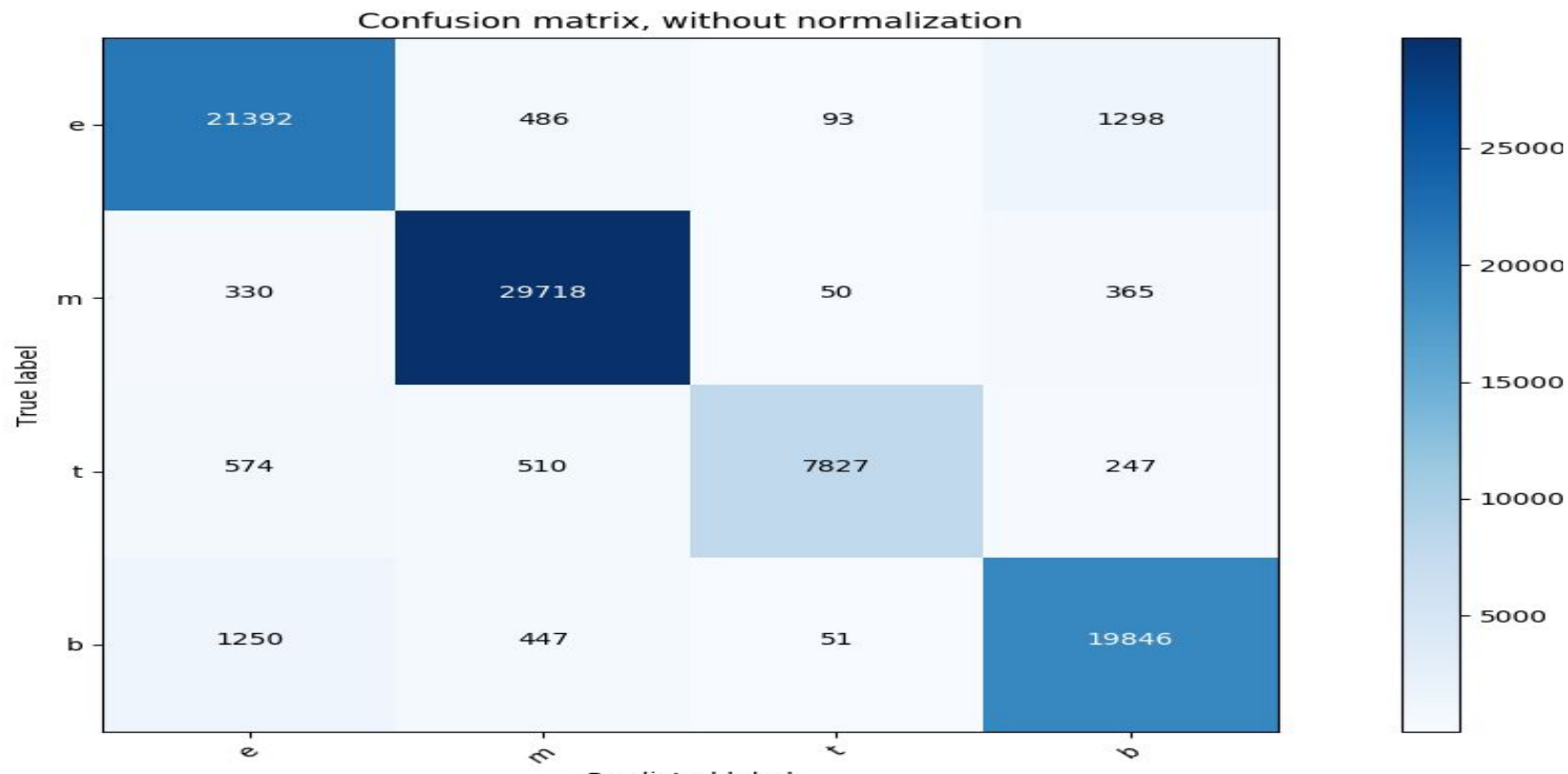
Results

Scores obtained with different feature extraction techniques on training dataset of 4 lakh samples (implementation took around 12 hours!):

- 1) Naive bayes:
 - Without feature selection : 0.93815 (Basic naive bayes implementation)
 - With Chi square : 0.94175
 - With Mutual Information (MI) Gain: 0.9404
 - With Variation Threshold : 0.9373
- 2) Linear SVM without MI : 0.935
- 3) Linear SVM with MI : 0.946
- 4) With RBF Kernel without MI: 0.74365
(we did not implemnt RBF Kernel with MI as it was taking too much time)
- 5) Neural Network without MI - 0.360
- 6) Neural Network with MI - 0.8062

**(Numerical values are precision)

Results of Confusion Matrix (On a train set of 1,00,000)



Sample predictions

We then used the above trained dataset to predict the top few recent news results on google news to classify them into respective categories and the results are given below. As you can see, only a couple of results were wrongly binned

```
Big rate changes unlikely under GST: Finance minister Arun Jaitley - business
Industry not doing its bit in creating jobs: NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Arvind Panagariya - business
Tata-DoCoMo dispute: Delhi High Court approves $1.18 billion settlement - business
7th Pay Commission: Lavasa panel suggests changes in allowances for government employees - science and technology
GST to push India GDP growth rate above 8 but bad loans a concern: IMF - business
Movie Name: Baahubali 2: The Conclusion - entertainment
State report predicts sea levels rising due to polar ice melting - science and technology
AIDS control programme running blind without enough testing kits - science and technology
Beware! Diet Food Products Can Make You Gain Weight - health
Drinking Coffee Can Reduce Prostate Cancer Risk - health
Damning testimonies of the women scarred by rogue surgeon - health
Rising levels of carbon dioxide may change crucial marine process - science and technology
To colonize space, start closer to Earth - science and technology
Time travel is 'possible' -- mathematically anyway - business
NASA is running out of spacesuits and it could jeopardize future missions - science and technology
```

Conclusions

So on the basis of various functionalities that we tried and tested we were able to conclude the following best algorithms to do their respective jobs for classifying news headlines to different classes.

- Feature Extraction - CountVectorizer
- Feature Selection - Mutual Info implemented using K-means (although it works best when data set is really big otherwise variance threshold works fine)
- ML Classifier - Linear SVM

Shortcomings

Our project has some shortcomings

- The dataset has just 4 categories and so news headlines of other categories (like sports) cannot be classified.
- The dataset is primarily of US news headlines and so classifications of other countries news headlines will not optimal due to mention of US agencies, states etc in the dataset.
- We have not classified the news headlines based on semantics and have only used words and their patterns of occurrence to decide

Thank you