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CSCI4230 Computational Learning Theory
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Based on Rocco Servedio's notes

Notes 2: Online Mistake Bound Model

1. ONLINE MISTAKE BOUND MODEL

A sequence of trials/rounds, each being:

- (1) An unlabeled example $x \in X$ arrives
- (2) Algorithm maintains hypothesis $h : X \rightarrow \{0, 1\}$ and outputs $h(x)$
- (3) Algorithm is told the correct value of $c(x)$
- (4) Algorithm may update its hypothesis

Goal: minimize number of mistakes (i.e. $h(x) \neq c(x)$) on the worst sequence of examples and $c \in \mathcal{C}$

Trivial mistake bounds:

- If X finite, $\# \text{mistakes} \leq |X|$ (memorize $c(x)$)
 - If \mathcal{C} finite, $\# \text{mistakes} \leq |\mathcal{C}| - 1$ (try all $c \in \mathcal{C}$)
-

2. MONOTONE CONJUNCTIONS

A conjunction is **monotone** if all its literals are positive, e.g. $c(x) = x_2 \wedge x_4 \wedge x_5$

Elimination Algorithm

- Initialize: $h(x) = \text{conjunction of all literals} = x_1 \wedge x_2 \wedge \dots \wedge x_n$
 - False negative ($h(x) = 0, c(x) = 1$): remove all literals that are false in x
 - False positive ($h(x) = 1, c(x) = 0$): output FAIL

[else no need to update h](#)

Invariant: h always contains all literals in c

Corollary: Algorithm never fails

#Mistakes $\leq n$: Each mistake removes at least one literal from h

We will see later that this bound is tight!

Variant 1: Monotone disjunction — same idea

Variant 2: non-monotone conjunction

Initial hypothesis begins with $2n$ literals $h(x) = x_1 \wedge \bar{x}_1 \wedge x_2 \wedge \bar{x}_2 \wedge \dots \wedge x_n \wedge \bar{x}_n$

First mistake removes n literals, then at most n more mistakes ($n + 1$ total)

Variant 3: k -DNF for fixed constant k — same elimination idea

3. DECISION LISTS

A 1-decision list (1-DL) has the form

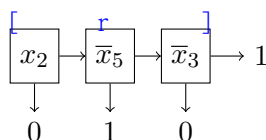
if y_1 then output b_1
else if y_2 then output b_2
 \vdots
else if y_r then output b_r
else output b_{r+1}

[example:](#)

[if email title contains products, then spam](#)
[if email](#)

where y_i are literals, $b_i \in \{0, 1\}$ are bits

e.g.



[disjunction and conjunction can be reduced as decision](#)

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is 1-DL of length 3

Every 1-DNF is 1-DL, so is every 1-CNF

Can assume no variable appears twice in 1-DL \Rightarrow length at most n

How many 1-DL of length r are there? about $(4n + 2)^r$

$(4n + 2)$ rules: $4n$ “ $y_i \rightarrow b_i$ ” and two “ $\rightarrow b_i$ ”

Algorithm to learn 1-DL of length r with $O(nr)$ mistakes:

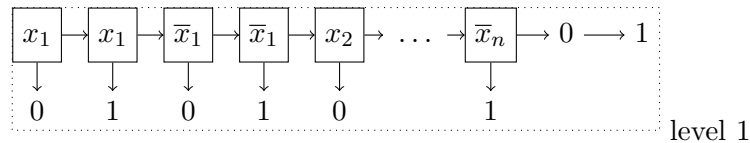
Hypothesis has several “levels”. It has all $4n + 2$ rules, each belonging to one of the levels

Rules of the same level are ordered arbitrarily, say lexicographically

Initially all rules are at level 1

eg: 0010

~x1 is mis-classify



All rules of lower level come before rules of higher level

On every sample x :

hypothesis h classifies x by the first rule whose condition is satisfied by x

if h misclassifies x (i.e. $h(x) \neq c(x)$), move that rule to the next level

e.g. if $x = 101$, $c(x) = 1$, initial hypothesis misclassifies x due to “ $x_1 \rightarrow 0$ ”

Move this rule to level 2 after the mistake

Claim 3.1. This algorithm makes $\leq (4n + 2)(r + 1) = O(nr)$ mistakes on any 1-DL of length r

Observation: 1st rule in c (call it r_1) is never moved above level 1

Reason: if h classifies x based on r_1 , h agrees with c since c also classifies x based on r_1

Observation: 2nd rule in c (call it r_2) is never moved above level 2

Reason: if h classifies x based on r_2 while r_2 is at level 2, r_1 must remain at level 1 by previous observation, thus x violates r_1 's condition, and h agrees with c since they both classify x based on r_2

Inductively, i th rule in c is never moved above level i

Conclusion: no rule is moved above level $r + 2$, because the last rule in c (which is unconditional) stays within level $r + 1$ in h , and h never classifies samples using any rule at level $r + 2$

Each rule is moved at most $r + 1$ times, proving the claim

k -decision list (k -DL): like a decision list, but each condition y_i is a conjunction of at most k literals

Algorithm to learn k -DL of length r — same idea

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