

# Graph neural networks

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TZN-04, Monday 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2025

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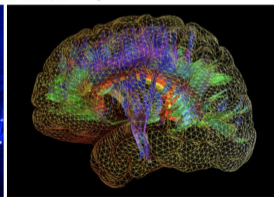
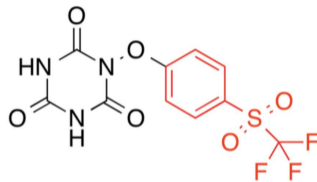
- Motivation
- Tasks
- GNN
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- node2vec
- GCN
- GraphSAGE

# Motivation

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# Motivation

- Graphs are a natural way to represent many different mathematical problems
- Examples: social networks, molecules, transportation networks, knowledge graphs, computer networks...



<sup>1</sup>Veličković et al., 2020.

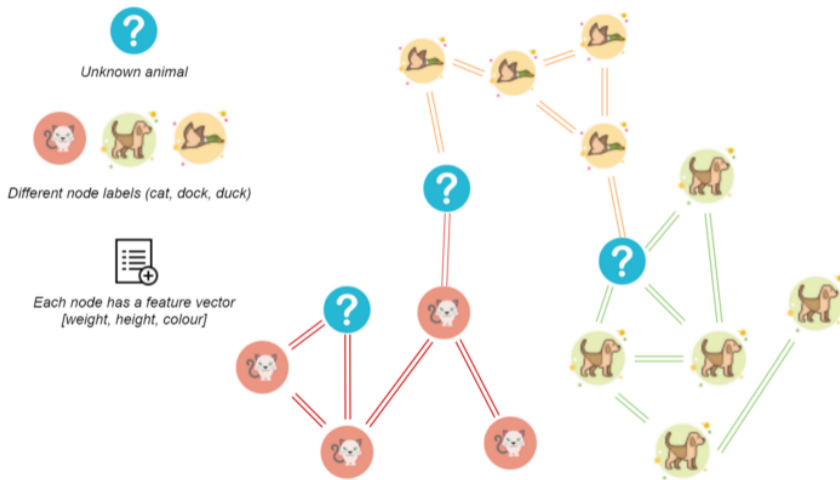
# Definitions

- Graph  $G = (V, E)$
- $ne[v]$  is the set of nodes connected to  $v$  by an edge
- $co[v]$  is the set of edges leading to or from  $v$
- $x_v$  are features of a node  $v$
- $x_e$  are features of an edge  $e$

# Tasks

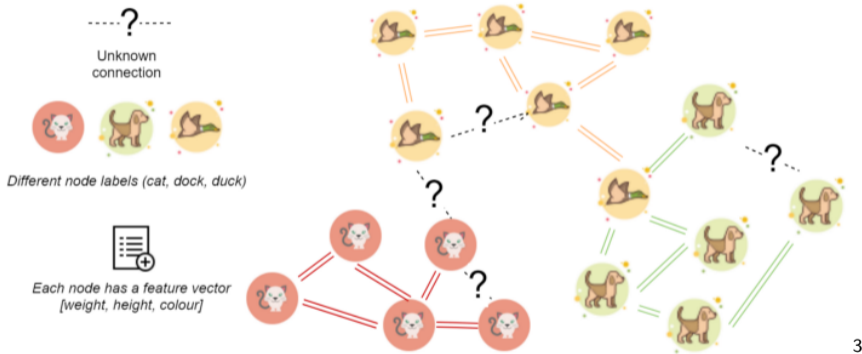
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# Node classification



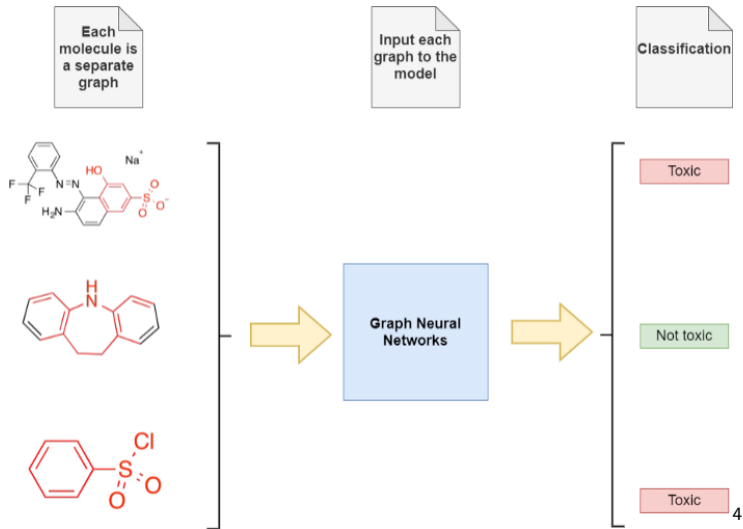
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# Link prediction



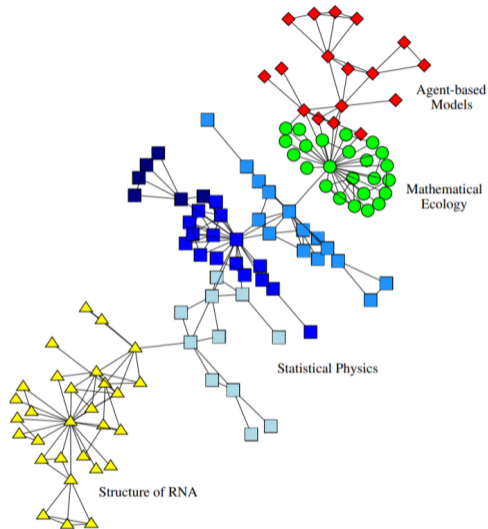
<sup>3</sup>Kubara, 2020.

# Graph learning



<sup>4</sup>Kubara, 2020.

# Community detection



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<sup>5</sup>Girvan et al., 2002.

- Motivation
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- We're solving “node classification”
- We adapt neural networks to graph data
- Formally, classification on the space  $\mathcal{G} \times \mathcal{N}$  – pairs graph + one of its nodes
- We assume features  $\mathbf{x}_v$  and  $\mathbf{x}_e$  for each node  $v$  and edge  $e$
- We model for each node  $v$  a hidden state  $\mathbf{h}_v$  capturing information about  $v$  and its neighbourhood

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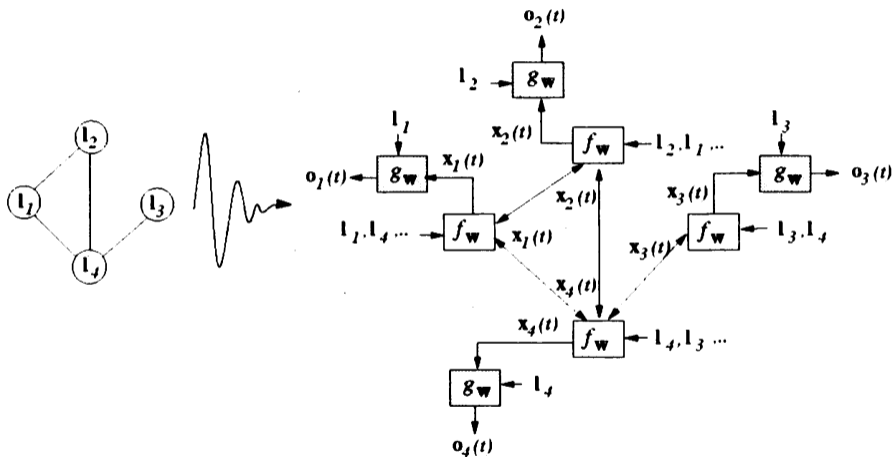
$$\mathbf{h}_v = f(\mathbf{x}_v, \mathbf{x}_{co[v]}, \mathbf{h}_{ne[v]}, \mathbf{x}_{ne[v]})$$

- ...and an output for node  $v$  as

$$\mathbf{o}_v = g(\mathbf{h}_v, \mathbf{x}_v)$$

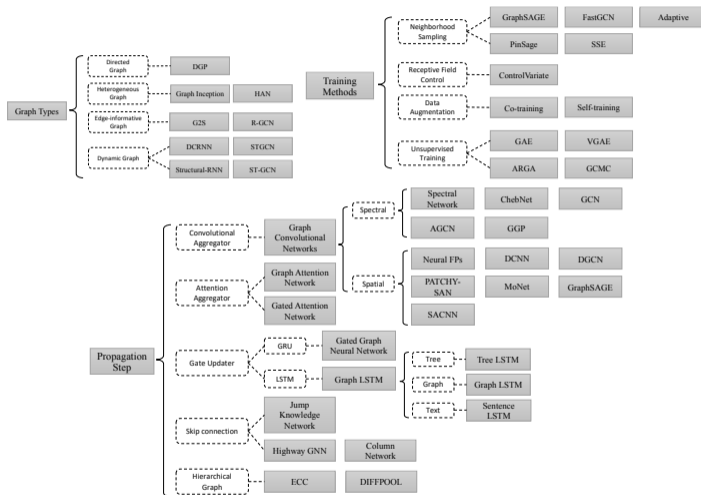
- We can calculate the hidden state  $\mathbf{h}_v$  iteratively for all nodes as

$$\mathbf{H}^{t+1} = F(\mathbf{H}^t, \mathbf{X})$$



- We can view the iterative application of function  $F$  as an RNN
- We may replace the iterative process with an MLP
- A GNN doesn't use edge hidden states, only node hidden states

# GNN – modifications



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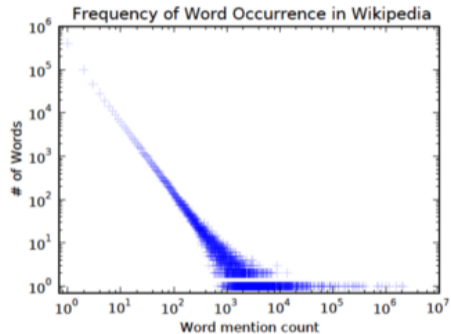
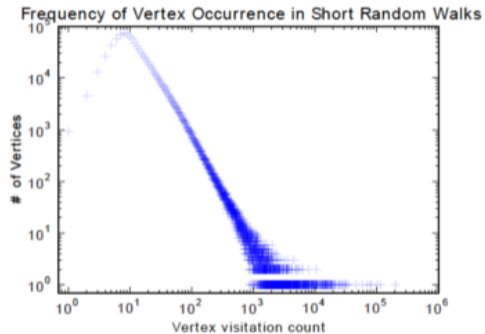
<sup>7</sup>Zhou et al., 2019.

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# DeepWalk 1

- Inspired by word2vec and skip-gram methods from NLP
- $M$  random walks of length  $L$  from a given node to generate sequences of nodes, analogous to sentences

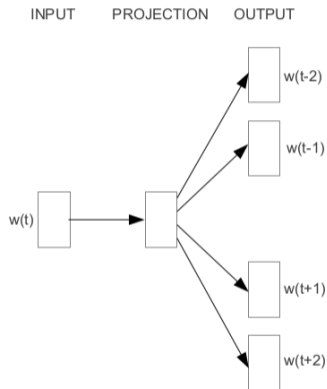
# DeepWalk 2



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<sup>8</sup>Perozzi et al., 2014.

# DeepWalk – skip-gram



**Skip-gram**

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<sup>9</sup>Mikolov et al., 2013.

- For each vector  $v$  we learn its representation  $f : \mathcal{V} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^{|\mathcal{V}| \times d}$
- We try to maximize the value

$$P(\{v_{i-w}, \dots, v_{i+w}\} \setminus v_i | f(v_i))$$

- Assuming independence, we simplify

$$P(\{v_{i-w}, \dots, v_{i+w}\} \setminus v_i | f(v_i)) = \prod_{\substack{j=i-w \\ j \neq i}}^{i+w} P(v_j | f(v_i))$$

- This is a problem solved by word2vec
- It's further necessary to optimize using hierarchical softmax

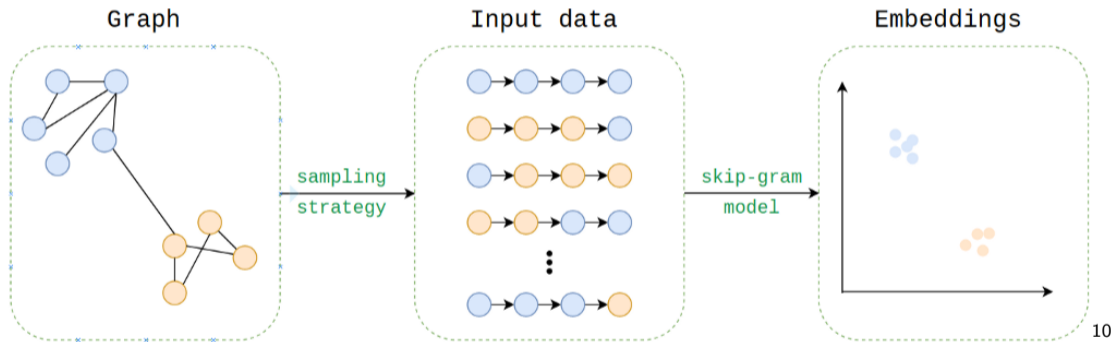
# DeepWalk – conclusion

- Using ideas from word2vec to learn on graphs
- DeepWalk cannot classify new nodes – it is necessary to retrain the model

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- Also inspired by word2vec, but in a different way
- We are looking for an embedding  $\text{node2vec} : \mathcal{G} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^n$

# node2vec 2



<sup>10</sup>Cohen, 2018.

- For each vector  $v$  we learn its representation  $f : \mathcal{V} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^{|\mathcal{V}| \times d}$
- We try to maximize the value

$$P(ne[v]|f(v))$$

- Assuming independence, we can simplify

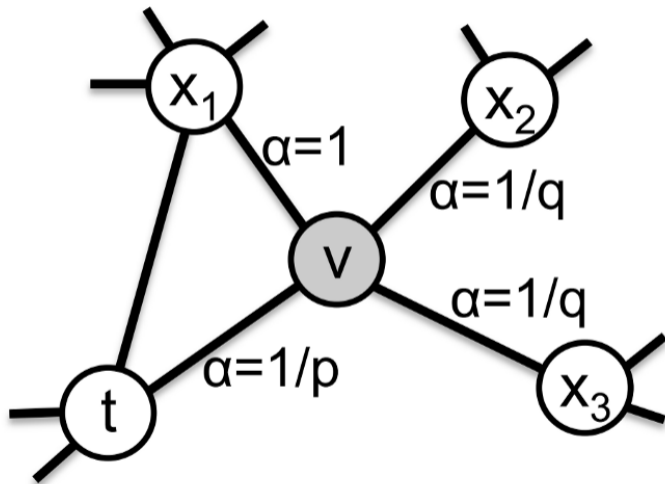
$$P(ne[v]|f(v)) = \prod_{v_i \in ne[v]} P(v_i|f(v))$$

- It's further necessary to optimize using hierarchical softmax and negative sampling

- How to find  $ne[v]$ ?
- 2 extrema: BFS, DFS
- Regular random walk: If I'm at node  $v$ , I go to some node connected to  $v$  with equal probability for all such nodes
- We modify the random walk to interpolate between BFS and DFS
- If coming to  $v$  from  $t$ , we assign weights to candidates for the next node  $x$  as

$$\alpha(t, x) = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{p} & \text{for } d_{tx} = 0 \\ 1 & \text{for } d_{tx} = 1 \\ \frac{1}{q} & \text{for } d_{tx} = 2 \end{cases}$$

where  $d_{tx}$  is the length of the shortest path from  $t$  to  $x$  and  $p, q$  are model parameters



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<sup>11</sup>Grover et al., 2016.

# node2vec – conclusion

- Using ideas from word2vec to learn on graphs
- An improvement over DeepWalk
- node2vec cannot classify new nodes – it is necessary to retrain the model

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- We are solving “node classification”
- Inspired by CNNs

- Expressed as a neural network operating on the whole graph, similar to GNN
- Each layer has the form

$$\mathbf{H}^{l+1} = f\left(\mathbf{H}^{(l)}, \mathbf{A}\right)$$

where  $\mathbf{A}$  is the adjacency matrix

- We can express a simple layer as

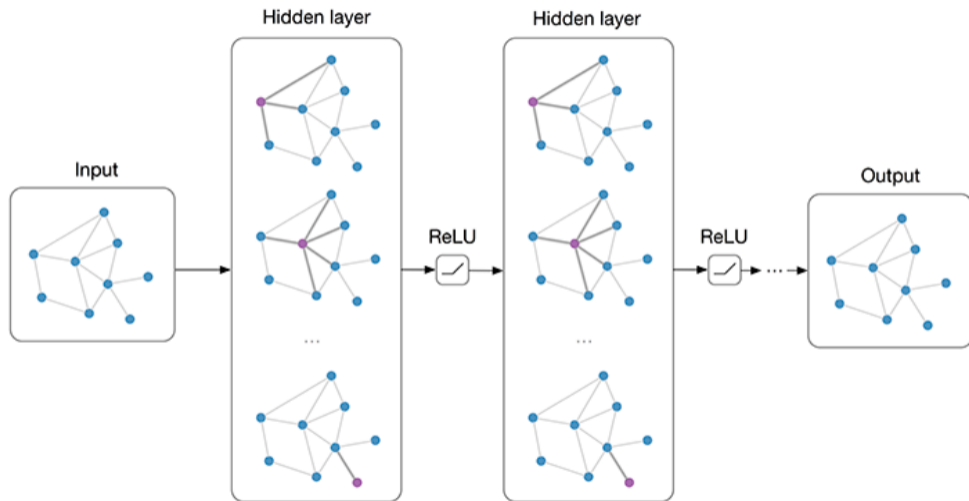
$$f\left(\mathbf{H}^{(l)}, \mathbf{A}\right) = \sigma\left(\mathbf{A}\mathbf{H}^{(l)}\mathbf{W}^{(l)}\right)$$

where  $\mathbf{W}$  are the weights and  $\sigma$  is the activation function

- If we multiplied by  $\mathbf{A}$ , we would forget the information in the given node at each step. We solve this by using instead the matrix  $\hat{\mathbf{A}} = \mathbf{A} + \mathbf{I}$
- Because the matrix  $\mathbf{A}$  is not normalized, the scale would change after each layer. To prevent this, we use instead the symmetrically normalized matrix  $\mathbf{D}^{-\frac{1}{2}}\mathbf{A}\mathbf{D}^{-\frac{1}{2}}$  where  $\mathbf{D}$  is the diagonal matrix of degrees of individual nodes
- We thus obtain one layer of the network as

$$f\left(\mathbf{H}^{(l)}, \mathbf{A}\right) = \sigma\left(\hat{\mathbf{D}}^{-\frac{1}{2}}\hat{\mathbf{A}}\hat{\mathbf{D}}^{-\frac{1}{2}}\mathbf{H}^{(l)}\mathbf{W}^{(l)}\right)$$

# GCN 4



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<sup>12</sup>Kipf, 2016.

- Using ideas from CNNs to learn on graphs
- GCNs are a first-order approximation of localized spectral filters on graphs – see Kipf; Welling, 2017

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# GraphSAGE 1

- GraphSAGE is an inductive framework for generating node embeddings – there is no need to have the whole graph during training
- We learn a representation for each node  $v$  using the representations of its neighbors, i.e.

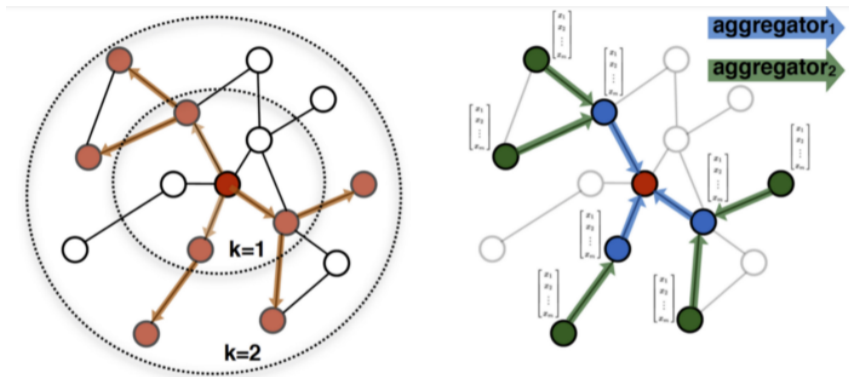
$$\mathbf{h}_v^{(l+1)} = \sigma \left( \mathbf{W}^{(l)} \cdot \text{concat} \left( \mathbf{h}_v^{(l)}, \mathbf{h}_{ne[v]}^{(l)} \right) \right)$$

where

$$\mathbf{h}_{ne[v]}^{(l)} = \text{AGGREGATE}_l \left( \left\{ \mathbf{h}_u^{(l)} \mid u \in ne[v] \right\} \right)$$

- We need a special loss function

## GraphSAGE 2



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<sup>13</sup>Hamilton et al., 2017.

- We can choose an aggregator for each layer independently
- The mean aggregator yields a GCN-like layer
- An LSTM aggregator can capture more complex relationships (we need to randomly permute the neighbors)
- Pooling:

$$\text{AGGREGATE}_l = \max \left\{ \sigma \left( \mathbf{W}_{\text{pool}} \mathbf{h}_u^{(l)} + \mathbf{b} \right) \mid u \in \text{ne}[v] \right\}$$

# GraphSAGE – conclusion

- An inductive approach is suitable for graphs where nodes are added after training
- We don't need to re-train the model, it will work with new data



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