
Distance & Similarity

— Boston University CS 506 - Lance Galletti —

Data

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{n data} \\ \text{points} \end{array} \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} x_{11} & \dots & x_{1j} & \dots & x_{1m} \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots & & \vdots \\ x_{i1} & \dots & x_{ij} & \dots & x_{im} \\ \vdots & & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ x_{n1} & \dots & x_{nj} & \dots & x_{nm} \end{pmatrix} \right.$$

$\underbrace{\hspace{10em}}$
m features

Feature Space

From our data we can generate a **feature space** of all possible values for the set of features in our data.

name	age	balance
Jane	25	150
John	30	100

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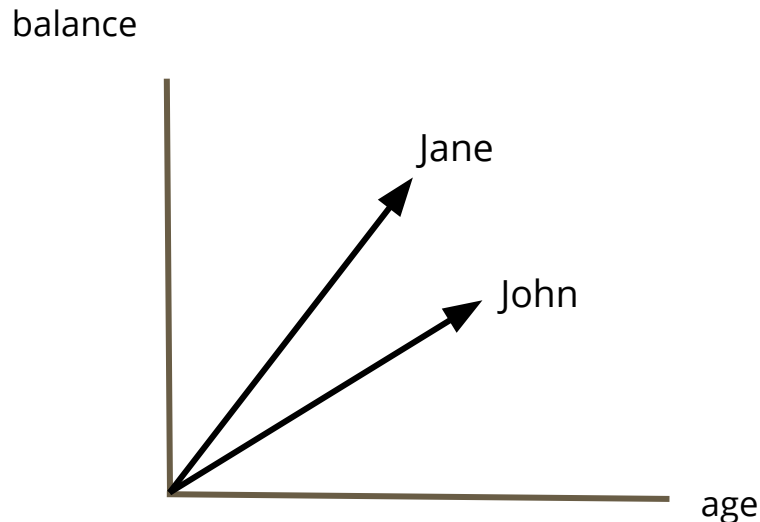
balance



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Our feature space is the Euclidean plane

Distance

In order to uncover interesting structure from our data, we need a way to **compare** data points.

A **dissimilarity function** is a function that takes two objects (data points) and returns a **large value** if these objects are **dissimilar**.

A special type of dissimilarity function is a **distance** function

Distance

d is a distance function if and only if:

- $d(i, j) = 0$ if and only if $i = j$
- $d(i, j) = d(j, i)$
- $d(i, j) \leq d(i, k) + d(k, j)$

We don't **need** a distance function to compare data points, but why would we prefer using a distance function?

Minkowski Distance

For \mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y} points in \mathbf{d} -dimensional real space

i.e. $\mathbf{x} = [\mathbf{x}_1, \dots, \mathbf{x}_d]$ and $\mathbf{y} = [\mathbf{y}_1, \dots, \mathbf{y}_d]$

$\mathbf{p} \geq 1$

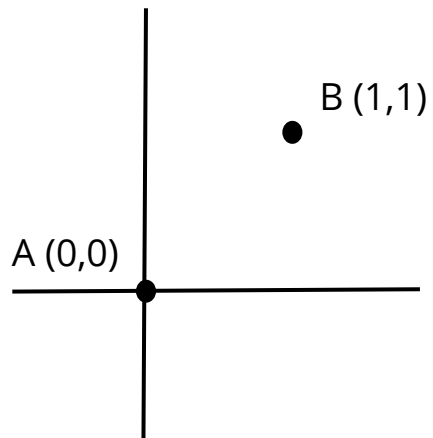
$$L_p(x, y) = \left(\sum_{i=1}^d |x_i - y_i|^p \right)^{\frac{1}{p}}$$

When $\mathbf{p} = 2$ -> Euclidean Distance

When $\mathbf{p} = 1$ -> Manhattan Distance

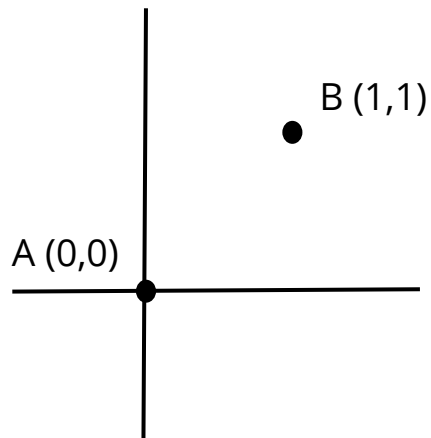
Example

$d = 2$



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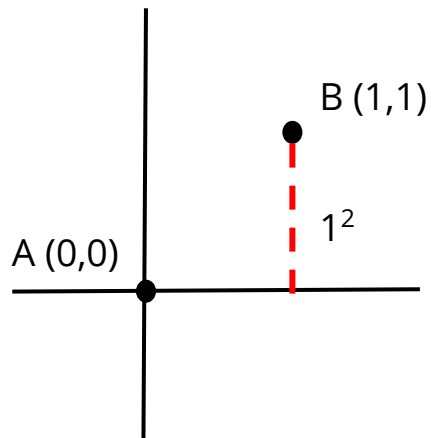


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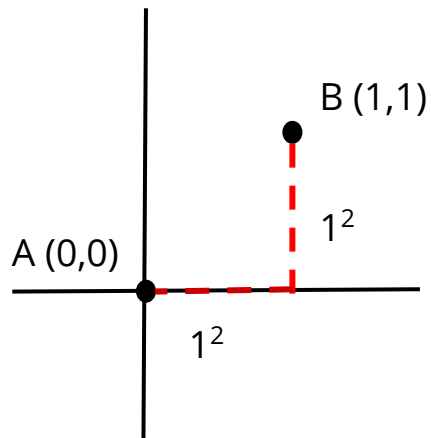


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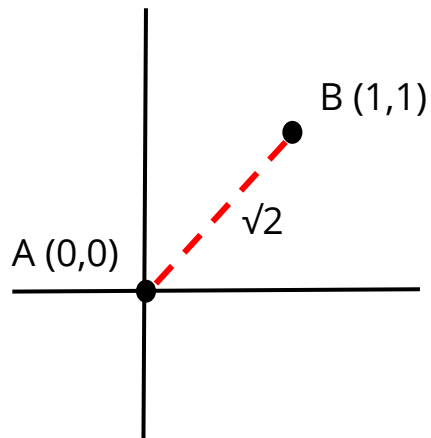


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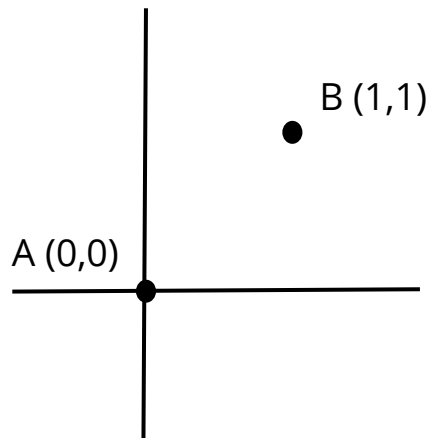


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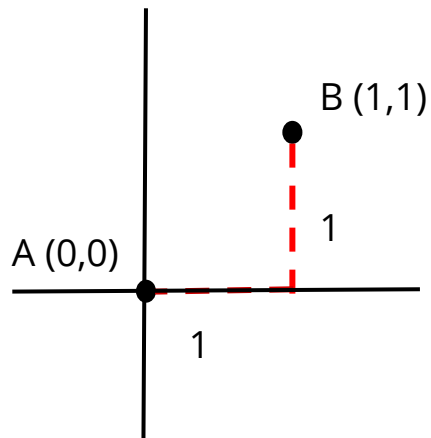


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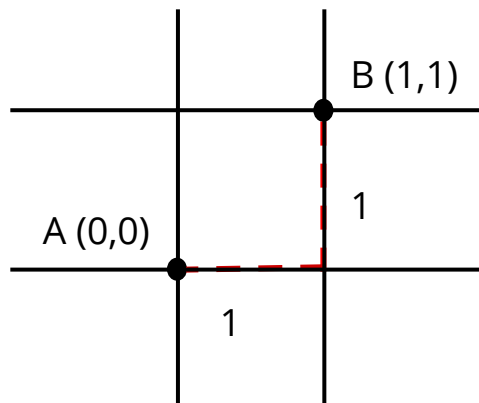


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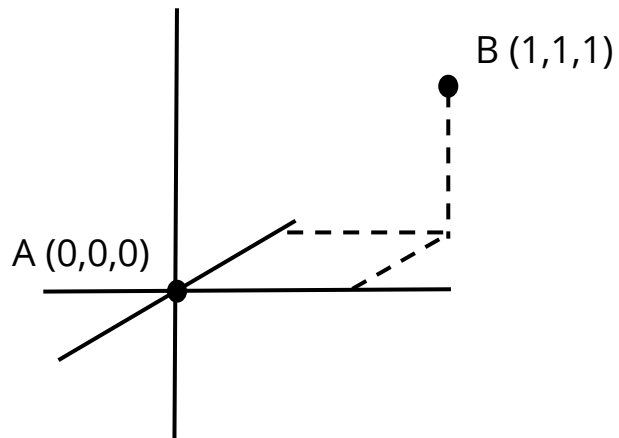


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Example

$d = 3$

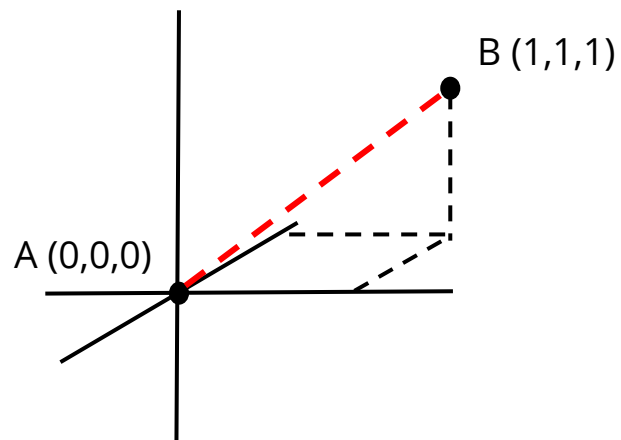


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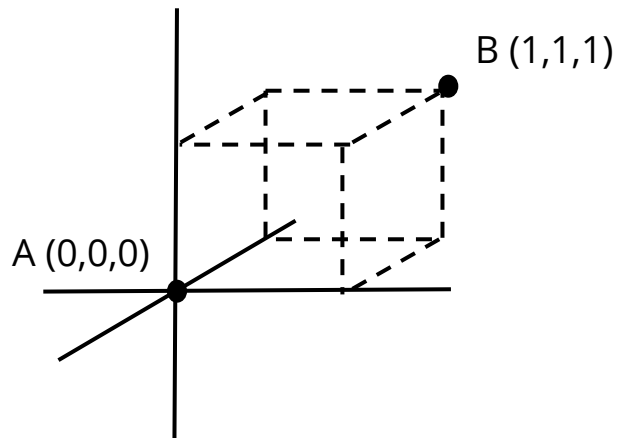


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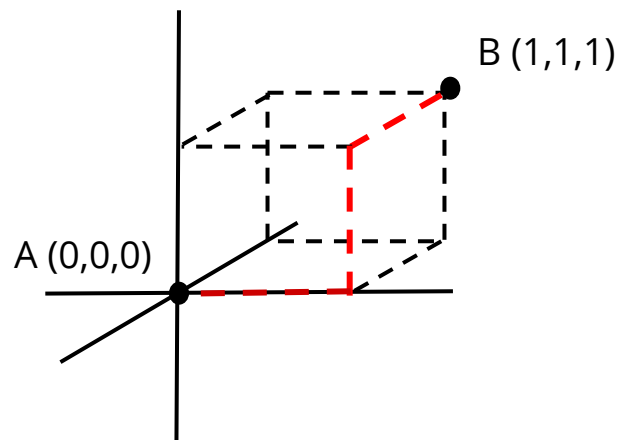


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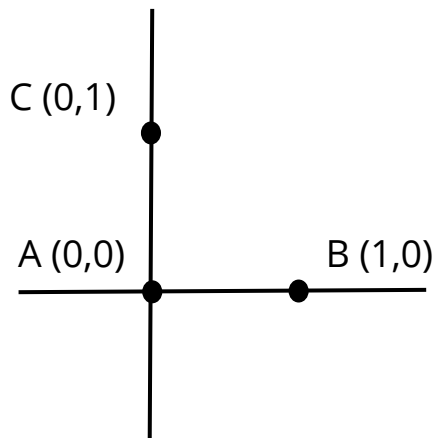
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Minkowski Distance

Is L_p a distance function when $0 < p < 1$?

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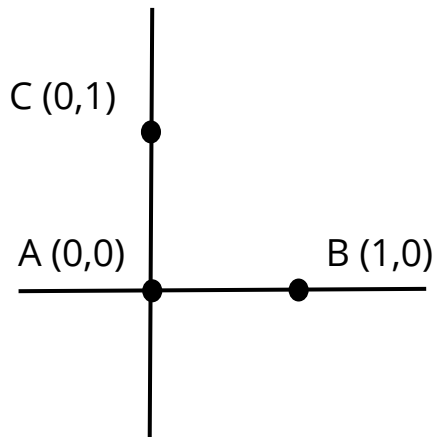


Minkowski Distance

Is L_p a distance function when $0 < p < 1$?

$$D(B,A) = D(A, C) = 1$$

$$D(B, C) = 2^{1/p}$$



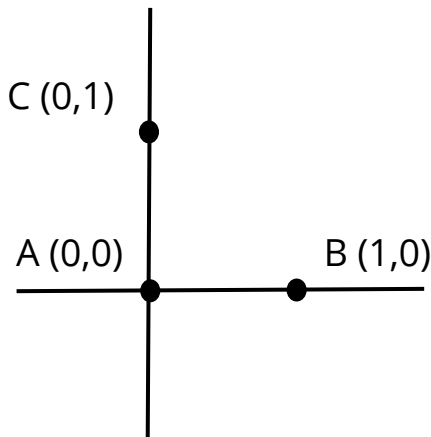
Minkowski Distance

Is L_p a distance function when $0 < p < 1$?

$$D(B,A) + D(A, C) = 2$$

$$D(B, C) = 2^{1/p}$$

But... if $p < 1$ then $1/p > 1$

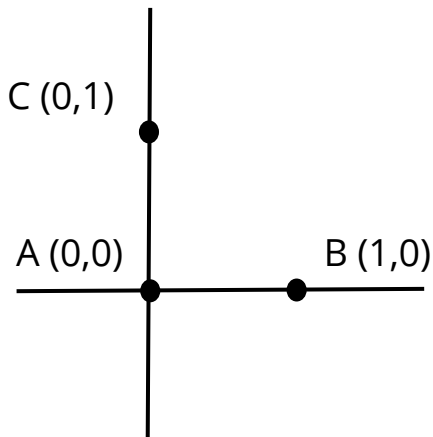


Minkowski Distance

Is L_p a distance function when $0 < p < 1$?

$$D(B,A) + D(A, C) = 2$$

$$D(B, C) = 2^{1/p}$$



So $D(B, C) > D(B, A) + D(A, C)$ which violates the triangle inequality

Cosine Similarity

A **similarity** function is a function that takes two objects (data points) and returns a **large value** if these objects are **similar**.

$$s(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}) = \cos(\theta)$$

where θ is the angle between \mathbf{x} and \mathbf{y}

Cosine Similarity

To get a corresponding **dissimilarity** function, we can usually try

$$d(x, y) = 1 / s(x, y)$$

or

$$d(x, y) = k - s(x, y) \text{ for some } k$$

Here, we can use

$$d(x, y) = 1 - s(x, y)$$

Cosine Similarity

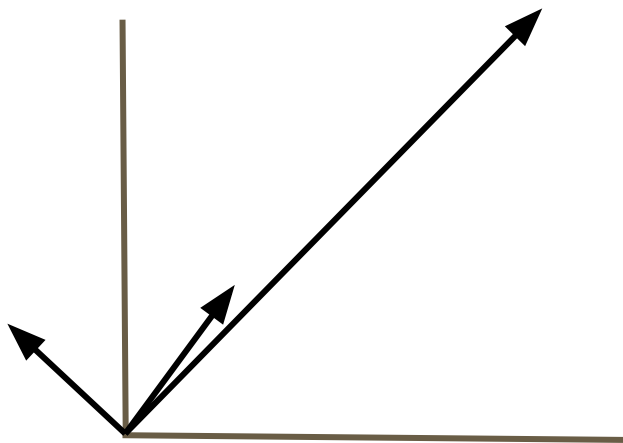
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When **direction** matters more than **magnitude**

Cosine Similarity

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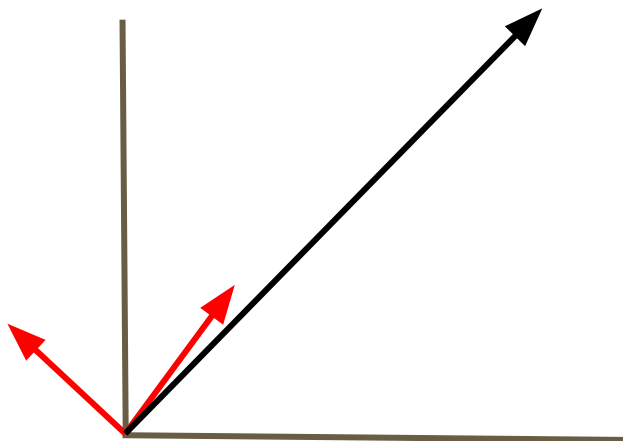
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Cosine Similarity

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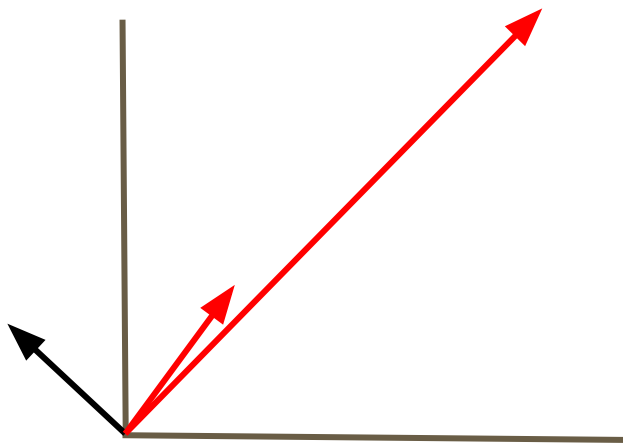


Close under
Euclidean distance

Cosine Similarity

When should you use **cosine (dis)similarity** over **euclidean distance**?

When **direction** matters more than **magnitude**



Close under Cosine
Similarity

Jaccard Similarity

How similar are the following documents?

	w_1	w_2	...	w_d
x	1	0	...	1
y	1	1	...	0

Jaccard Similarity

One way is to use the Manhattan distance which will return the size of the set difference

	w_1	w_2	...	w_d
x	1	0	...	1
y	1	1	...	0

$$L_1(x, y) = \sum_{i=1}^d |x_i - y_i|$$

Jaccard Similarity

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	w_1	w_2	...	w_d
x	1	0	...	1
y	1	1	...	0

$$L_1(x, y) = \sum_{i=1}^d |x_i - y_i|$$

Will only be 1 when $x_i \neq y_i$

Jaccard Similarity

But how can we distinguish between these two cases?

	w_1	w_2	...	w_{d-1}	w_d
x	1	1	1	0	1
y	1	1	1	1	0

Only differ on the last two words

	w_1	w_2
x	0	1
y	1	0

Completely different

Jaccard Similarity

But how can we distinguish between these two cases?

	w_1	w_2	...	w_{d-1}	w_d
x	1	1	1	0	1
y	1	1	1	1	0

Only differ on the last two words

Both have Manhattan distance of 2

	w_1	w_2
x	0	1
y	1	0

Completely different

Jaccard Similarity

We need to account for the size of the intersection!

$$JSim(x, y) = \frac{|x \cap y|}{|x \cup y|}$$

$$JDist(x, y) = 1 - \frac{|x \cap y|}{|x \cup y|}$$

**Implement these distance functions in the CS506
python package**