



Why

What if we restrict our hypothesis class to have finite size?¹

Definition

Let $\mathcal{D} = (\Omega, \mathcal{A}, \mathbf{Q})$ be a probability space. Let $x_i : \Omega \rightarrow \mathcal{X}$ be independent and identically distributed for $i = 1, \dots, n$. Let $f : \mathcal{X} \rightarrow \mathcal{Y}$ and define $y_i : \Omega \rightarrow \mathcal{Y}$ by $y_i = f(x_i)$. Define $S : \Omega \rightarrow (\mathcal{X} \times \mathcal{Y})^n$ by $S(\omega) = ((x_1(\omega), y_1(\omega)), \dots, (x_n(\omega), y_n(\omega)))$. Define the product space $(\Omega^n, \mathcal{A}^n, \mathbf{P})$.²

Let $\mathcal{H} \subset (\mathcal{X} \rightarrow \mathcal{Y})$ with $|\mathcal{H}| = m$. Then \mathcal{H} is *realizable* with respect to \mathcal{D} and f if there exists $h^* \in \mathcal{H}$ satisfying

$$\mathbf{Q}(\{\omega \in \Omega \mid h^*(x(\omega)) \neq f(x(\omega))\}) = 0.$$
³

This condition is natural because of its corollaries. First, there exists h^* whose probability of achieving zero empirical risk on S is 1. Second, a further implication is Second, all empirical risk minimizers will achieve zero empirical risk on the dataset, with probability one.

To see the first corollary, define $e_i : \Omega \rightarrow \{0, 1\}$ by $e_i(\omega_i) = 1$ if $h^*(x_i(\omega)) \neq f(x_i(\omega))$ and $e_i(\omega) = 0$ otherwise. In other

¹Future editions are likely to change the name of this sheet. Future editions will also discuss that this assumption is (in a sense) “mild,” and may include reference to discretization or floating point arithmetic.

²Future editions will expand.

³Future editions will comment on the measurability of this set. It is no object for finite \mathcal{X} .

words, $(1/n) \sum_i e_i$ is the empirical risk. The empirical risk is zero if and only if the sum is zero, and the set

$$A = \left\{ (\omega_1, \dots, \omega_n) \in \Omega^n \mid \sum_{i=1}^n e_i(\omega) = 0 \right\}$$

is $\prod_i \{\omega_i \in \Omega \mid e_i(\omega_i) = 0\}$ and so $\mathbf{P}(A) = \prod_i \mathbf{Q}(\{\omega \in \Omega \mid e_i(\omega) = 0\})$ where for each i , $\mathbf{Q}[e_i = 0] = 1 - \mathbf{Q}[e_i = 1] = 1 - 0 = 0$. In other words, for a realizable hypothesis class, there exists a hypothesis obtaining zero empirical risk with probability one.

In still other words, there exists a hypothesis that achieves zero empirical risk with probability one. In this event, every empirical risk minimizer achieves zero empirical risk. So, the set of empirical risk minimizers all achieve zero empirical risk with probability one, if the hypothesis class is realizable.⁴

There is a low probability to obtain a “nonrepresentative” dataset. This dataset may lead to selecting a hypothesis with low empirical

⁴Future editions may clarify this further.

