



Why

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Definition

We want to estimate a random variable $x : \Omega \rightarrow \mathbf{R}^n$ from a random variable $y : \Omega \rightarrow \mathbf{R}^n$ using an estimator $\phi : \mathbf{R}^m \rightarrow \mathbf{R}^n$ which is affine.² In other words, $\phi(\xi) = A\xi + b$ for some $A \in \mathbf{R}^{n \times m}$ and $b \in \mathbf{R}^n$. We will use the mean squared error cost.

We want to find A and b to minimize

$$\mathbf{E} \|Ax + b - y\|^2.$$

Proof. Express $\mathbf{E}(\|Ax + b - y\|^2)$ as $\mathbf{E}((Ax + b - y)^\top (Ax + b - y))$

$$\begin{aligned} &+ \operatorname{tr}(A \mathbf{E}(xx^\top) A^\top) + \mathbf{E}(x)^\top A^\top b - \operatorname{tr}(A^\top \mathbf{E}(yx^\top)) \\ &+ b^\top A \mathbf{E}(x) + b^\top b - b^\top \mathbf{E}(y) \\ &- \operatorname{tr}(A \mathbf{E}(xy^\top)) - \mathbf{E}(y)^\top b + \mathbf{E}(yy^\top) \end{aligned}$$

The gradients with respect to b are

$$\begin{aligned} &+ 0 + A \mathbf{E}(x) - 0 \\ &+ A \mathbf{E}(x) + 2b - \mathbf{E}(y) \\ &- 0 - \mathbf{E}(y) + 0 \end{aligned}$$

so $2A \mathbf{E}(x) + 2b - 2 \mathbf{E}(y)$. The gradients with respect to A are

$$\begin{aligned} &+ \mathbf{E}(xx^\top) A^\top + \mathbf{E}(xx^\top)^\top A^\top + \mathbf{E}(x) b^\top - \mathbf{E}(yx^\top)^\top \\ &+ \mathbf{E}(x) b^\top + 0 - 0 \\ &- \mathbf{E}(xy^\top) - 0 + 0 \end{aligned}$$

¹Future editions will include an account.

²Actually, the development flips this. Future editions will correct.

so $2 E(xx^\top)A^\top + 2 E(x)b^\top - 2 E(xy^\top)$. We want A and b solutions to

$$A E(x) + b - E(y) = 0$$

$$E(xx^\top)A^\top + E(x)b^\top - E(xy^\top) = 0$$

so first get $b = E(y) - A E(x)$. Then express

$$E(xx^\top)A^\top + E(x)(E(y) - A E(x))^\top - E(xy^\top) = 0.$$

$$E(xx^\top)A^\top + E(x) E(y)^\top - E(x) E(x)^\top A^\top - E(xy^\top) = 0.$$

$$(E(xx^\top) - E(x) E(x)^\top)A^\top = E(xy^\top) - E(x) E(y)^\top.$$

$$\text{cov}(x, x)A^\top = \text{cov}(x, y).$$

So $A^\top = \text{cov}(x, x)^{-1} \text{cov}(x, y)$ means $A = \text{cov}(y, x) \text{cov}(x, x)^{-1}$ is a solution. Then $b = E(y) - \text{cov}(y, x) \text{cov}(x, x)^{-1} E(x)$. So to summarize, the estimator $\phi(x) = Ax + b$ is

$$\text{cov}(y, x) (\text{cov } x, x)^{-1} x + E(y) - \text{cov}(y, x) \text{cov}(x, x)^{-1} E(x)$$

or

$$E(y) + \text{cov}(y, x) (\text{cov } x, x)^{-1} (x - E(x))$$

□

