

Measures of Variability: Takeaways

by Dataquest Labs, Inc. - All rights reserved © 2019

Syntax

- Writing a function that returns the range of an array:

```
def find_range(array):  
    return max(array) - min(array)
```

- Writing a function that returns the mean absolute deviation of an array:

```
def mean_absolute_deviation(array):  
    reference_point = sum(array) / len(array)  
  
    distances = []  
    for value in array:  
        absolute_distance = abs(value - reference_point)  
        distances.append(absolute_distance)  
  
    return sum(distances) / len(distances)
```

- Finding the variance of an array:

```
### If the the array is a `Series` object ###  
sample_variance = Series.var(ddof = 1)  
population_variance = Series.var(ddof = 0)  
  
### If the array is not a `Series` object ###  
from numpy import var  
sample_variance = var(a_sample, ddof = 1)  
population_variance = var(a_population, ddof = 0)
```

- Finding the standard deviation of an array:

```
### If the array is a `Series` object ###
sample_stdev = Series.std(ddof = 1)
population_stdev = Series.std(ddof = 0)

### If the array is not a `Series` object ###
from numpy import std
sample_stdev = std(a_sample, ddof = 1)
population_stdev = std(a_population, ddof = 0)
```

Concepts

- There are many ways we can measure the **variability** of a distribution. These are some of the measures we can use:
 - **The range.**
 - **The mean absolute deviation.**
 - **The variance.**
 - **The standard deviation.**
- Variance and standard deviation are the most used metrics to measure variability. To compute the standard deviation and the variance for a **population**, we can use the formulas:

- To compute the standard deviation and the variance for a **sample**, we need to add the **Bessel's correction** to the formulas above:

- **Sample variance** is the only unbiased estimator we learned about, and it's unbiased only when we sample with replacement.

Resources

- [An intuitive introduction to variance and standard deviation.](#)
- Useful documentation:
 - `numpy.var()`
 - `numpy.std()`
 - `Series.var()`
 - `Series.std()`



Takeaways by Dataquest Labs, Inc. - All rights reserved © 2019