fn make_noisy_top_k

Michael Shoemate

October 18, 2025

Proves soundness of make_noisy_top_k in mod.rs at commit f5bb719 (outdated¹). make_noisy_top_k returns a Measurement that noisily selects the indices of the greatest scores from a vector of input scores.

1 Hoare Triple

Precondition

Compiler-verified

- MO is a type with trait TopKMeasure
- TIA (atomic input type) is a type with trait Number

Caller-verified

None

Pseudocode

```
def make_noisy_top_k(
      input_domain: VectorDomain[AtomDomain[TIA]],
      input_metric: LInfDistance[TIA],
      privacy_measure: MO,
      k: usize,
      scale: f64,
      negate: bool,
  ) -> Measurement:
      if input_domain.element_domain.nan(): #
9
          raise "input domain elements must be non-nan"
10
11
      if input_domain.size is not None:
          if k > input_domain.size:
13
14
              raise "k must not exceed the number of candidates"
15
      if not scale.is_finite() or scale.is_sign_negative(): #
16
          raise "scale must be finite and non-negative"
17
18
      monotonic = input_metric.monotonic
19
20
      def privacy_map(d_in: TIA): #
21
22
          # convert to range distance
          d_in = d_in if monotonic else d_in.inf_add(d_in)
23
          d_in = f64.inf_cast(d_in) #
```

¹See new changes with git diff f5bb719..05d7909 rust/src/measurements/noisy_top_k/mod.rs

```
25
           if d_in.is_sign_negative(): #
26
               raise "sensitivity must be non-negative"
27
28
29
           if d_in.is_zero(): #
               return 0.0
30
31
           if scale.is_zero(): #
32
               return f64.INFINITY
33
34
35
           return MO.privacy_map(d_in, scale).inf_mul(f64.inf_cast(k))
36
37
      return Measurement.new(
38
           input_domain=input_domain,
39
40
           input_metric=input_metric,
41
           output_measure=privacy_measure,
           function=lambda x: noisy_top_k(x, scale, k, negate, MO.REPLACEMENT),
42
           privacy_map=privacy_map,
44
```

Postcondition

Theorem 1.1. For every setting of the input parameters input_domain, input_metric, output_measure, k, scale, negate, MO, TIA to make_noisy_top_k such that the given preconditions hold, make_noisy_top_k raises an error (at compile time or run time) or returns a valid measurement. A valid measurement has the following properties:

- 1. (Data-independent runtime errors). For every pair of members x and x' in input_domain, invoke(x) and invoke(x') either both return the same error or neither return an error.
- 2. (Privacy guarantee). For every pair of members x and x' in input_domain and for every pair (d_in,d_out), where d_in has the associated type for input_metric and d_out has the associated type for output_measure, if x,x' are d_in-close under input_metric, privacy_map(d_in) does not raise

output_measure, if x, x are d_in-close under input_metric, privacy_map(d_in) does not raise an error, and privacy_map(d_in) = d_out, then function(x), function(x') are d_out-close under output_measure.

Proof of data-independent errors. By the postcondition of noisy_top_k, the only source of error is due to entropy exhaustion, which could be data-dependent, due to differing number of expected random draws depending on the input dataset.

Therefore, the mechanism only satisfies the requirement for data-independent errors when conditioned on entropy not being exhausted. \Box

Proof of privacy guarantee. When d_in is zero, by line 29, the privacy loss is zero, satisfying the postcondition. Otherwise when scale is zero, by line 32, the privacy loss is infinite, also satisfying the postcondition.

By the checks on lines 9 and 16, the preconditions for noisy_top_k are satisfied. Additionally by the checks on lines 26, 29 and 32, the preconditions for TopKMeasureprivacy_map are satisfied.

By the postcondition of TopKMeasure and adaptive composition, the d_outon line 35 satisfies the postcondition.