

fn make_noisy_top_k

Michael Shoemate

December 22, 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

- `M0` is a type with trait `TopKMeasure`
- `TIA` (atomic input type) is a type with trait `Number`

Caller-verified

None

Pseudocode

```
1 def make_noisy_top_k(
2     input_domain: VectorDomain[AtomDomain[TIA]],
3     input_metric: LInfDistance[TIA],
4     privacy_measure: M0,
5     k: usize,
6     scale: f64,
7     negate: bool,
8 ) -> Measurement:
9     if input_domain.element_domain.nan(): #
10         raise "input domain elements must be non-nan"
11
12     if input_domain.size is not None:
13         if k > input_domain.size:
14             raise "k must not exceed the number of candidates"
15
16     if not scale.is_finite() or scale.is_sign_negative(): #
17         raise "scale must be finite and non-negative"
18
19     monotonic = input_metric.monotonic
20
21     def privacy_map(d_in: TIA): #
22         # convert to range distance
23         d_in = d_in if monotonic else d_in.inf_add(d_in)
24         d_in = f64.inf_cast(d_in) #
```

¹See new changes with git diff f5bb719..fe1abca rust/src/measurements/noisy_top_k/mod.rs

```

25     if d_in.is_sign_negative(): #
26         raise "sensitivity must be non-negative"
27
28     if d_in.is_zero(): #
29         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
38     return Measurement.new(
39         input_domain=input_domain,
40         input_metric=input_metric,
41         output_measure=privacy_measure,
42         function=lambda x: noisy_top_k(x, scale, k, negate, MO.REPLACEMENT),
43         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 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. \square

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 `TopKMeasure``privacy_map` are satisfied.

By the postcondition of `TopKMeasure` and adaptive composition, the `d_out` on line 35 satisfies the post-condition. \square