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# Prioritizing What to Work On

## System Design Example:

Given a data set of emails, we could construct a vector for each email. Each entry in this vector represents a word. The vector normally contains 10,000 to 50,000 entries gathered by finding the most frequently used words in our data set. If a word is to be found in the email, we would assign its respective entry a 1, else if it is not found, that entry would be a 0. Once we have all our  $x$  vectors ready, we train our algorithm and finally, we could use it to classify if an email is a spam or not.

## Building a spam classifier

Supervised learning.  $x$  = features of email.  $y$  = spam (1) or not spam (0).

Features  $x$ : Choose 100 words indicative of spam/not spam.

E.g. deal, buy, discount, andrew, now, ...

$$x = \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \\ 1 \\ 0 \\ \vdots \\ 1 \\ \vdots \end{bmatrix} \begin{matrix} \text{andrew} \\ \text{buy} \\ \text{deal} \\ \text{discount} \\ \vdots \\ \text{now} \\ \vdots \end{matrix} \quad x \in \mathbb{R}^{100}$$

$x_j = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if word } j \text{ appears in email} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$

↓

From: cheapsales@buystufffromme.com  
To: ang@cs.stanford.edu  
Subject: Buy now!

Deal of the week! Buy now!

So how could you spend your time to improve the accuracy of this classifier?

- Collect lots of data (for example "honeypot" project but doesn't always work)
- Develop sophisticated features (for example: using email header data in spam emails)
- Develop algorithms to process your input in different ways (recognizing misspellings in spam).

It is difficult to tell which of the options will be most helpful.

[Mark as completed](#)


