Unit 1
What is Machine Learning?

EL-GY6143/CS-GY 6923: INTRODUCTION TO MACHINE LEARNING

PROF. PEI LIU

Learning Objectives

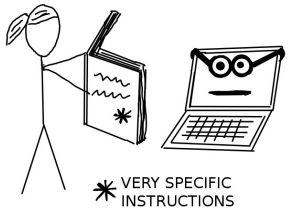
- ❑Identify data-driven learning vs. expert or domain knowledge-based approaches
- ❑Provide examples of machine learning used today
- ❑Given a new problem, qualitatively describe how machine learning can be used
  - Formulate a potential machine learning task
  - Identify the data needed for the task
  - Identify objectives
- ❑Classify a machine learning task:
  - Supervised vs. unsupervised, regression vs. classification
- ❑For supervised learning, identify the predictors and target variables

Outline

- What is Machine Learning?
- Types of machine learning algorithms
  - Classification
  - Regression
  - Unsupervised learning
- Why the hype today?
- Some slides from:
  - A. Zisserman, “Machine Learning Introduction”
  - Alpaydin, “Introduction to Machine Learning”

What is Machine Learning?

Learn to improve algorithms from data.



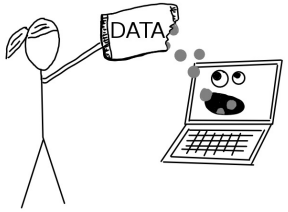


Image from Christoph Molnar,
https://christophm.github.io/interpretable-ml-book

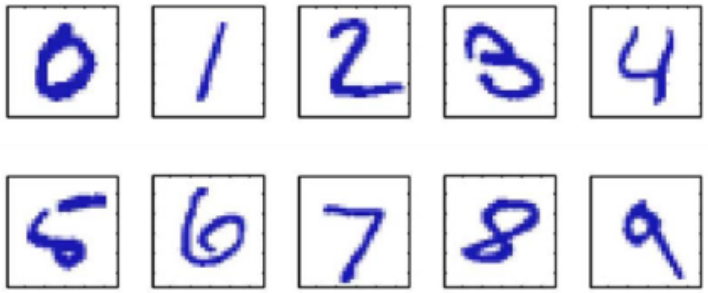
Traditional approach
Domain or expert knowledge

Machine Learning
Data-driven

Why?

- Human expertise does not exist (ex: complex medical processes we don't fully understand)
- Humans are unable to explain their expertise (speech recognition)
- Solution change or adapt in time (routing on a computer network)

Example 1: Digit Recognition

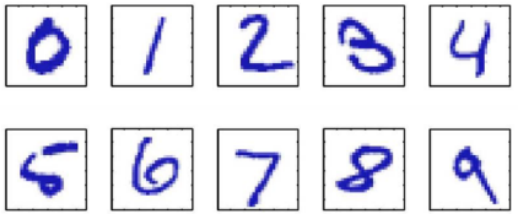


Images are 28 x 28 pixels

- Problem: Recognize a digit from the image
- MNIST dataset challenge
  - Dataset developed in 1990s to spur AI research on a challenging problem for the time
  - Data taken from census forms
  - Became a classic benchmark for machine vision problems
  - We will see this dataset extensively in this class

Classical "Expert" Approach

- Idea: Use your knowledge about digits
  - You are an "expert" since you can do the task
- Construct simple rules and code them
- Expert rule example: *"Image is a digit 7 if…"*:
  - There is a single horizontal line, and
  - There is a single vertical line
- Rule seems simple and reasonable
- But,…



Images are 28 x 28 pixels

```
def count_vert_lines(image):
    ...
def count_horiz_lines(image):
    ...

def classify(image):
    ...
    nv = count_vert_lines(image)
    nh = count_horiz_lines(image)
    ...

    if (nv == 1) and (nh == 1):
        digit = 7
    ...

    return digit
```

Problems with Expert Rules

- Simple expert rule breaks down in practice
  - Hard to define a “line” precisely
  - Orientation, length, thickness, …
  - May be multiple lines…

- General problem: We cannot easily code our knowledge
  - We can do the task
  - But, it is hard to translate to simple mathematical formula

```
def count_vert_lines(image):
    ...
def count_horiz_lines(image):
    ...

def classify(image):
    ...
    nv = count_vert_lines(image)
    nh = count_horiz_lines(image)
    ...

    if (nv == 1) and (nh == 1):
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    ...

    return digit
```
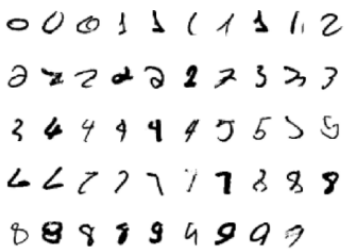

ML Approach: Learn from Data

Training inputs images $\boldsymbol{x}_i$ (ex. 5000 ex per class)



?

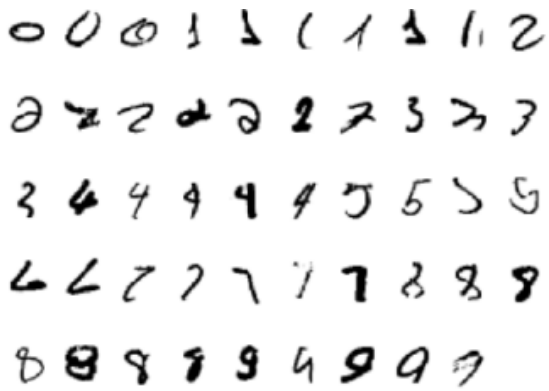
Learned classifier
$f(\boldsymbol{x})$

Training output labels $y_i \in \{0,1,\ldots,9\}$

- Do not use your "expert" knowledge
- Learn the function from data!
- Supervised learning:
  - Get many labeled examples $(\boldsymbol{x}_i, y_i), i = 1,\ldots,N$ (Called the training data)
  - Each example has an input $\boldsymbol{x}_i$ and output y_i
  - Learn a function $f(\boldsymbol{x})$ such that: $f(\boldsymbol{x}_i) = y_i$ for "most" training examples

ML Approach Benefits and Challenges

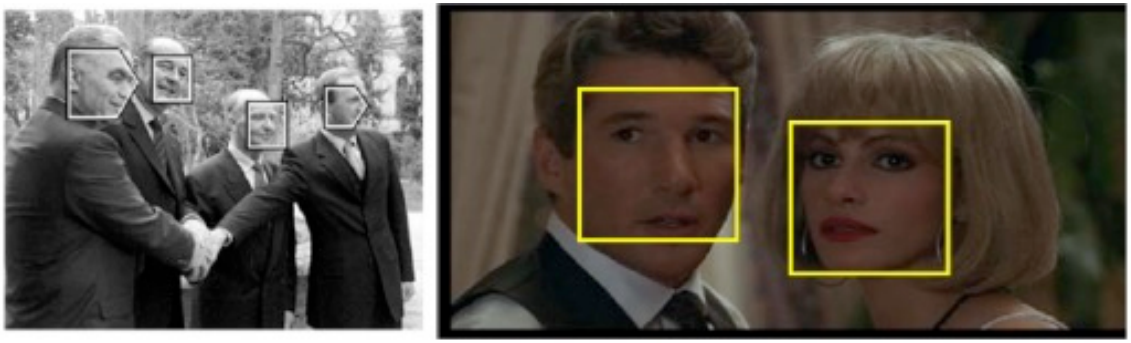
- Learned systems do very well on image recognition problems
  - On MNIST, current systems get <0.21% errors (as of 1/20/2018)
  - Used widely in commercial systems today (e.g. OCR)
  - Cannot match this performance with an expert system



- But, there are challenges:
  - How do we acquire data? Someone has to manually label examples.
  - How do we parametrize a set of functions $f(\boldsymbol{x})$ to search?
  - How do we fit the function to data?
  - If a function works on training example, will it generalize on new data?

- This is what you will learn in this class

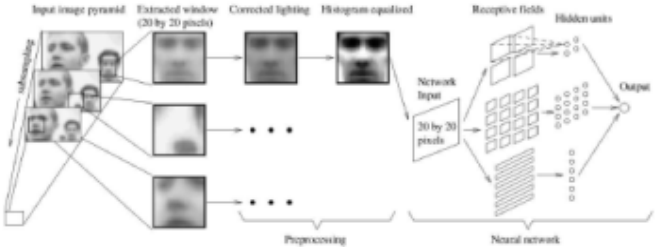
Example 2: Face Detection



- Problem: For each image region, determine if face or non-face
- More challenging than digit recognition
  - Even harder to describe a face via “rules” in a robust way

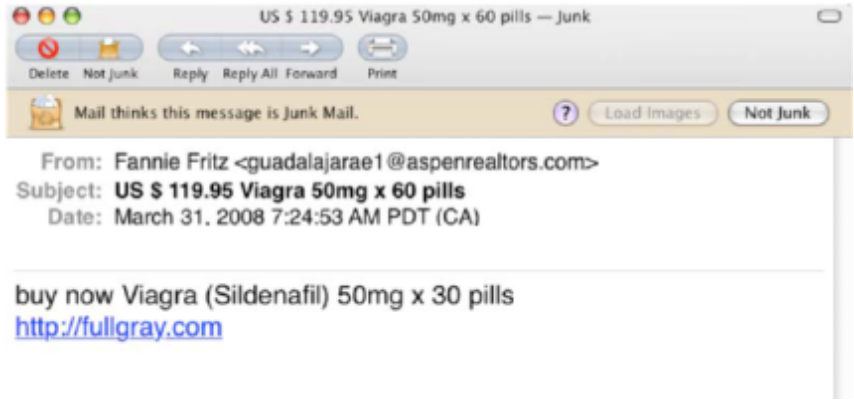
Supervised Learning Approach

- Data: Get large number of face and non-face examples
- Typical early dataset
  - 5000 faces (all near frontal, vary age, race, gender, lighting)
  - 10^8 non faces
  - Faces are normalized (scale, translation)
- Learn a classifier from a class of functions
  - Each function maps image to binary value “face” or “non-face”
  - Select function that works well on training data
  - For good performance, functions may be complex
  - Many parameters
- Many more datasets are available now:
  - See http://www.face-rec.org/databases/
  - You can use this for your project!



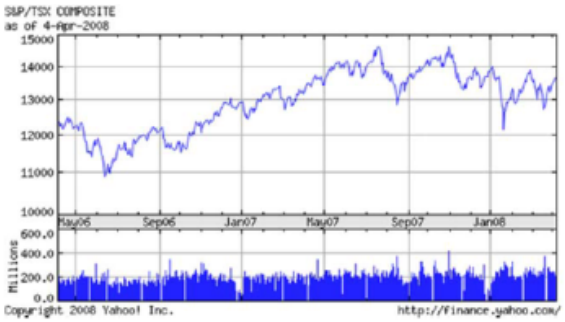
Rowley, Baluja and Kanade, 1998

Example 3: Spam Detection



- Classification problem:
  - Is email junk or not junk?
- For ML, must represent email numerically
  - Common model: bag of words
  - Enumerate all words, $i = 1, \ldots, N$
  - Represent email via word count
    x_i = num instances of word i
- Challenge:
  - Very high-dimensional vector
  - System must continue to adapt (keep up with spammers)

Example 4: Stock Price Prediction



- Can you predict the price of a stock?
- What variables would you use?
- What is a non-machine learning approach?

Machine Learning in Many Fields

- Retail: Market basket analysis, Customer relationship management (CRM)
- Finance: Credit scoring, fraud detection
- Manufacturing: Control, robotics, troubleshooting
- Medicine: Medical diagnosis
- Telecommunications: Spam filters, intrusion detection
- Bioinformatics: Motifs, alignment
- Web mining: Search engines
- ...

In-Class Exercise 1

For each of the proposed algorithms below, indicate whether the use a machine learning (i.e. data driven) approach or not (e.g. expert or domain knowledge)

Num	Algorithm	ML Approach?	
		Yes	No
1	A robot determines its route in a room using a shortest path algorithm combined with data on the obstacle locations.		
2	You predict the weather tomorrow using data on how whether has changed in the past.		
3	A computer program playing poker decides to fold or not fold in a game by calculating the probability that its poker hand is the best.		
4	A program estimates whether a customer will purchase a product from sales records of past customers and their attributes.		

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- Types of machine learning algorithms
  - Classification
  - Regression
  - Unsupervised learning
  - Reinforcement learning
- Why the hype today?

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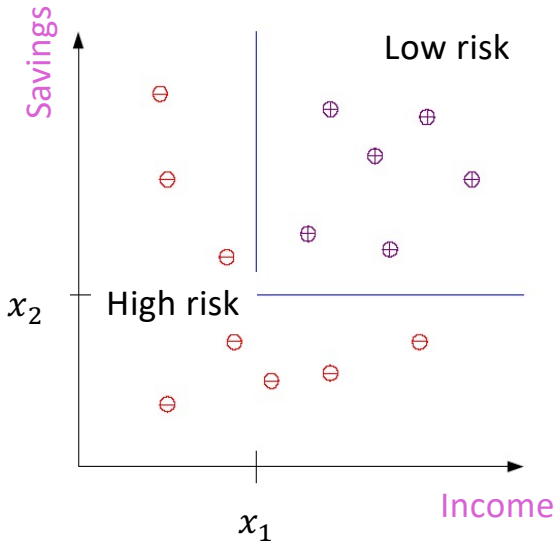
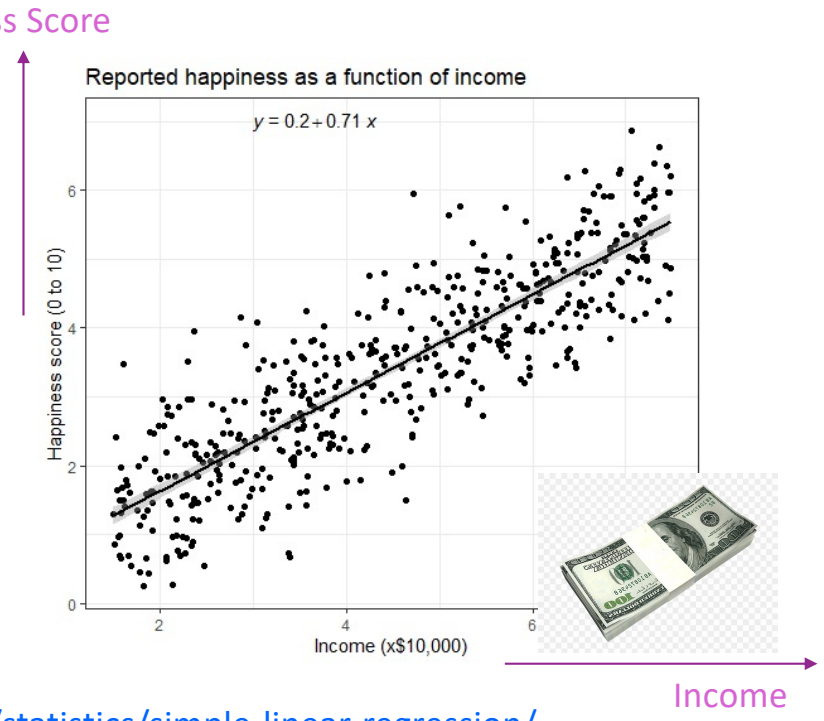
Classification

- Supervised learning
  - Learn mapping from features $\boldsymbol{x}$ to target y
- Classification:
  - Target is discrete. One of a finite number of values
  - Ex: Binary $y \in \{0,1\}$
- Example: Credit assessment
  - Target: customer is high-risk or low-risk
  - Features: income & saving $\boldsymbol{x} = (x_1, x_2)$
- Learn a function from features to target
  - Use past training data
  - Need to get this data
- The function on the right is an example of a decision tree.



Regression

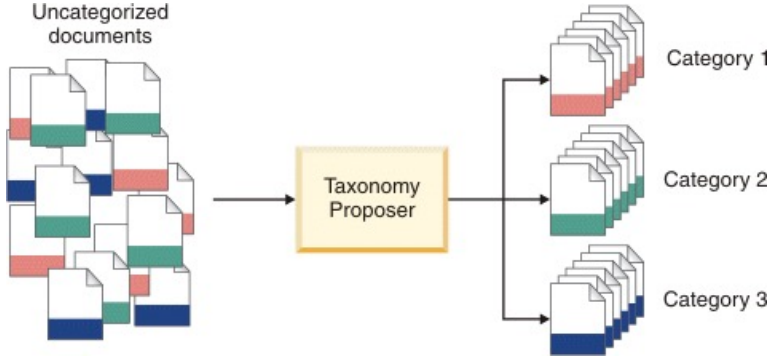
- Also supervised learning
- Predicting a continuous-valued target
- Example:
  - Predict y = happiness score (e.g. from surveys)
  - From x = income, country, age, …
  - Can use multiple predictors
- Assume some form of the mapping
  - Ex. Linear: $y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x$
  - Find parameters β_0, β_1 from data



https://www.scribbr.com/statistics/simple-linear-regression/

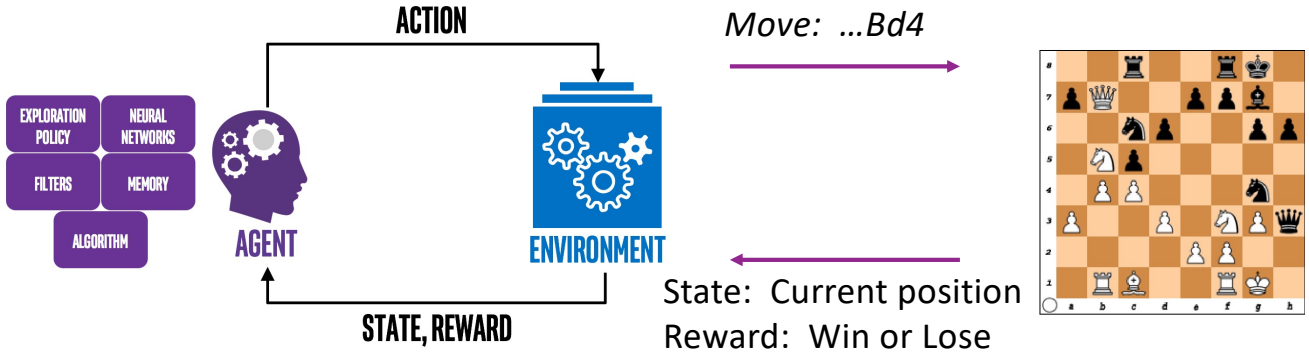
Unsupervised Learning

- Learning "what normally happens"
- No output
  - Just values $\boldsymbol{x}$. No target y
- Clustering: Grouping similar instances
- Example applications
  - Customer segmentation
  - Image compression: Color quantization
  - Bioinformatics: Learning motifs



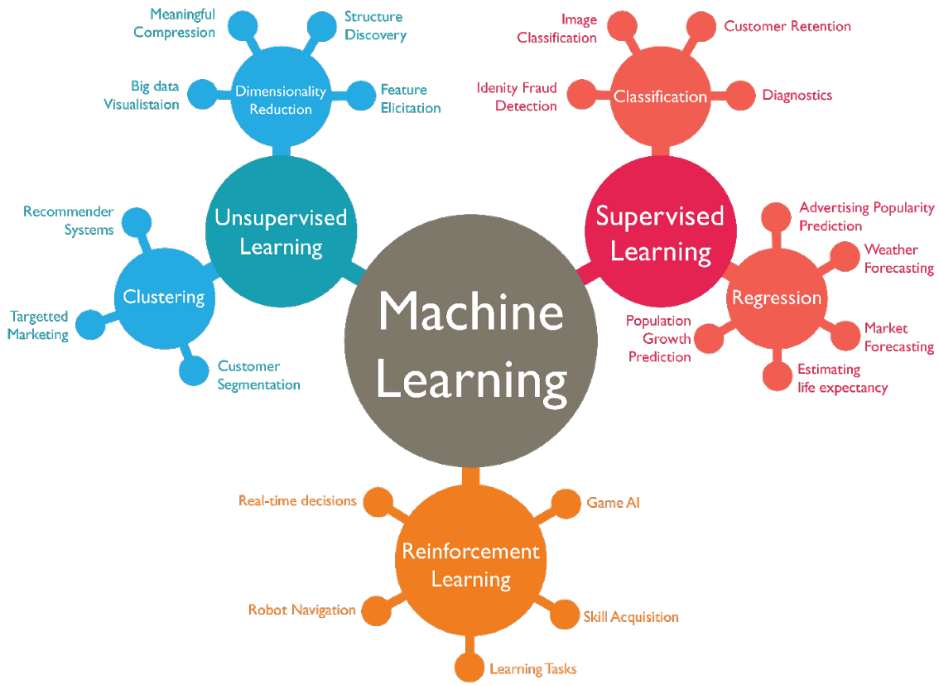
Example: Document classification
http://www.ibm.com/support/knowledgecenter/SSBRAM_8.7.0/com.ibm.classify.ccenter.doc/c_WBG_Taxonomy_Proposer.htm

Reinforcement Learning



- Agent learns to make actions that interact with an environment to maximize a reward
  - Agent typically acts in a closed loop system
- Key tradeoffs:
  - Exploitation (Learn from past actions) vs. exploration (try new choices)
  - Credit assignment: Which actions in the past led to the current reward?

Types of Machine Learning



https://www.7wdata.be/visualization/types-of-machine-learning-algorithms-2/

In-Class Exercise 2

For each machine learning problem below (Problem 1 to 5), determine which type of ML algorithm would be best:

- A. Supervised learning: Classification
- B. Supervised learning: Regression
- C. Unsupervised learning
- D. Reinforcement learning

For supervised learning problems, state possible predictors and target (There is no single correct solution).

Num	ML Problem	Algorithm: A to D
1	Estimate the increase in sales from attributes of an advertising campaign.	
2	Predict if a tissue sample is cancerous or not from an image of the tissue.	
3	Train a computer to steer a car from camera data. For training, you have recorded the steering actions of an expert human driver along with the camera data that the human saw.	
4	Train a computer to steer a car from camera data. In this case, there is no labeled data. The computer must learn how the steering affects the motion of the car.	
5	Classify survey data into groups with similar responses.	

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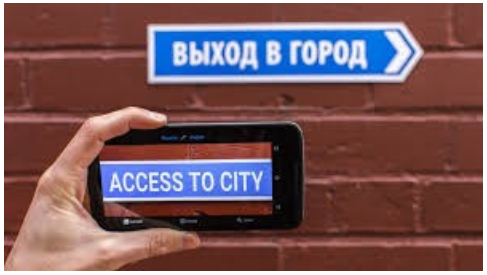
What ML is Doing Today?

- Autonomous driving
- Jeopardy
- Very difficult games: Alpha Go
- Machine translation

- Many, many others…



Why Now?

- Machine learning is an old field
  - Much of the pioneering statistical work dates to the 1950s
- So what is new now?
- Big Data:
  - Massive storage. Large data centers
  - Massive connectivity
  - Sources of data from Internet and elsewhere
- Computational advances
  - Distributed machines, clusters
  - GPUs and hardware

Google Tensor Processing Unit (TPU)

Exercise

- Break into small groups
- Take a field that interests you:
  - Ex. Driving a car, social networks, recommend a movie to watch, …
- Identify a specific task that can be done with machine learning
  - What is the objective of the task?
  - What is the data you need?
  - What type of ML problem is this? Classification, regression, …
  - How would your approach compare to an expert-driven method?