

Part 3: Interactive Constraint Learning

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Why interactive learning?

- In settings where **supervision** is expensive, select instances to be labelled carefully
- **Speed-up learning** by asking smart queries to a sufficiently knowledgeable oracle
- Learn a **model of an expert** by interacting with her
- Elicit the **preferences** of a customer by asking her to judge alternative products

Note related to *Active Learning* and *Preference Elicitation* (later)

From offline to interactive

There is a hidden, **target theory** C^* over domain \mathcal{X}

- **Offline**

Given instances x_i labelled by $y_i = \mathbb{1}\{x_i \models C^*\}$

Find a theory C s.t. $y_i = 1 \Leftrightarrow \mathbb{1}\{x_i \models C\}$ for all $i = 1, \dots, n$



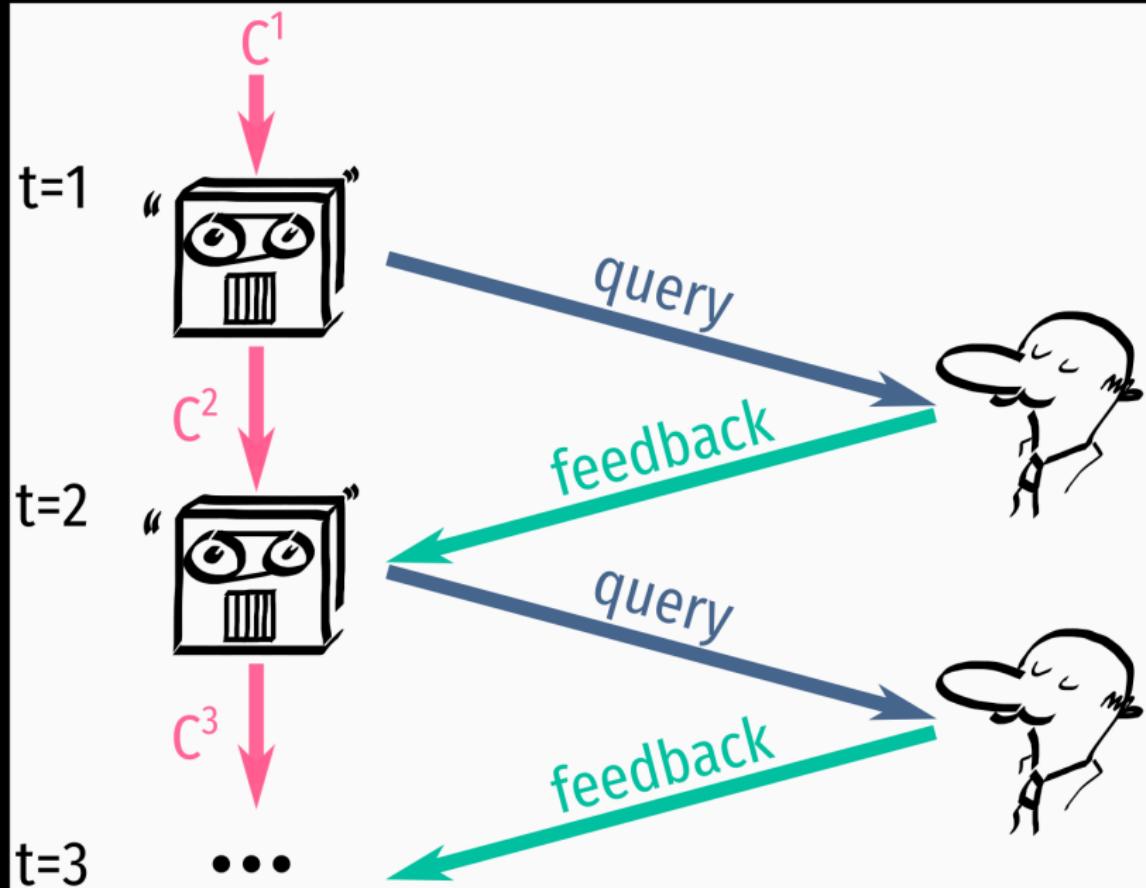
- **Interactive**

Given an oracle that answers queries by consulting C^*

Find a theory C consistent with all answers

(The soft constraints case changes analogously)

The generic learning loop



The generic learning loop

```
procedure LEARN (max iterations  $T$ )
     $C^1 \leftarrow$  initial theory
    for  $t = 1, \dots, T$  do
        Choose a query  $q$  (e.g. an instance  $x$ )
        Ask  $q$  to the oracle
        Receive feedback (e.g. whether  $x$  is a model of  $C^*$ )
         $C^{t+1} \leftarrow$  update  $C^t$  according to feedback
    return  $C^T$ 
```

Question what *kinds* of queries can be asked?

Question how to pick an *informative* query?

What kinds of questions?

Hard constraints

- Does x satisfy C^* ? (**membership**)
- Are C and C^* logically equivalent? If not, provide a counter-example (**equivalence**)
- Does $x[V]$ satisfy C^* ? (**partial membership**)

Soft constraints¹

- What is the score $f(x)$ of x ? (**scoring**)
- Is $f(x) \geq f(x')$? (**ranking**)
- Produce a configuration x' s.t. $f(x') > f(x)$ (**improvement**)

¹E.g., for wCSP the score is $f(x) = \sum_i w_i \mathbb{1}\{x \models c_i\}$

Outline

- Hard theories — version spaces
 - Membership queries
 - Partial membership queries
 - Equivalence queries
- Soft theories, weight learning
 - Scoring queries (regression)
 - Ranking queries
 - Improvement queries (coactive learning)
- Soft theories, weight and constraint learning
 - Critiquing
- Links to related fields

Hard Constraints

Hard constraints

Assumption: hypothesis space \mathcal{H} **contains** C^*

- C^* can be reconstructed perfectly

Assumption: the oracle is a **domain expert**

- Does *always* interpret/understand the queries
- Very dedicated, so *always* provides correct feedback

(Could also be a robot or a measurement apparatus)

⇒ *Realizable case:* enables **version space** approaches [Mit81]

Membership Queries: Monomials [BDH⁺16]

- Current hypothesis (conjunction)

$$C^t = \{\neg X_1, X_2, \neg X_3, X_4, \neg X_5\}$$

- To check whether $\neg X_1$ is really necessary, generate instance

$$x = \{X_1, X_2, \neg X_3, X_4, \neg X_5\}$$

- Ask membership query “ $x \models C^*$?”
 - if **positive**, $\neg X_1$ is not necessary, delete it from C^t
 - if **negative**, $\neg X_1$ is necessary, keep it

Only $n + 1$ questions needed to recover C^*

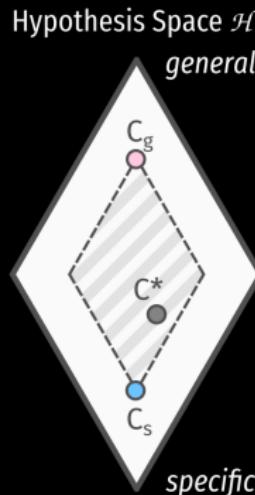
Membership Queries: ConAcq [BDH⁺16]

Bi-directional search

version space identified by

- most general candidate C_g
- most specific candidate C_s

C^* always within version space

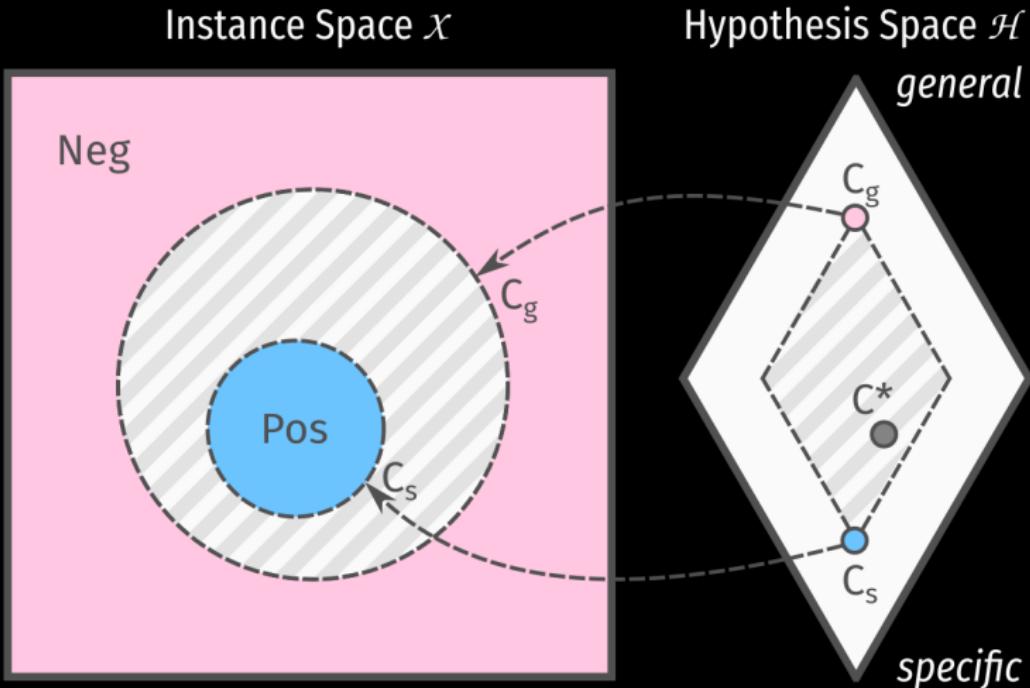


Idea pick instance $x \in \text{Sol}(C_g) \setminus \text{Sol}(C_s)$

- If x is **positive**, generalize most specific candidate
- If x is **negative**, specialize most generic candidate

where $\text{Sol}(C) = \{x : x \models C\}$

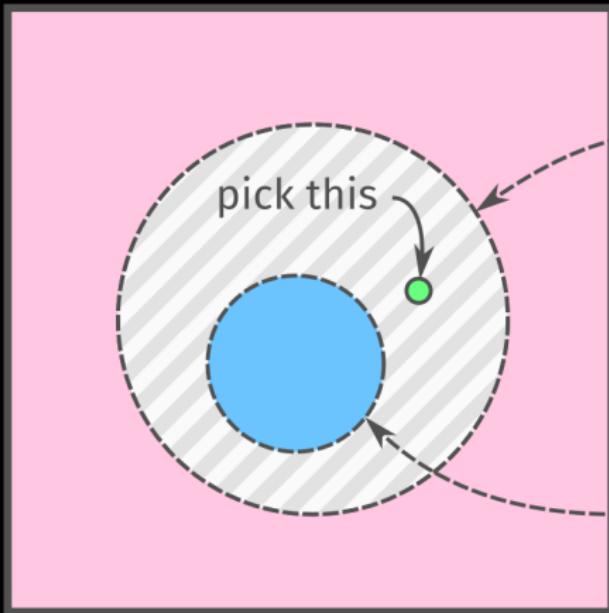
Version space and Instances



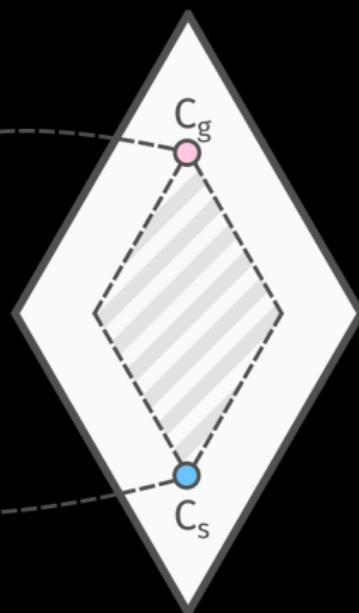
Left: $\text{Sol}(C)$ is *inside* the circle

Query Selection

Instance Space \mathcal{X}



Hypothesis Space \mathcal{H}

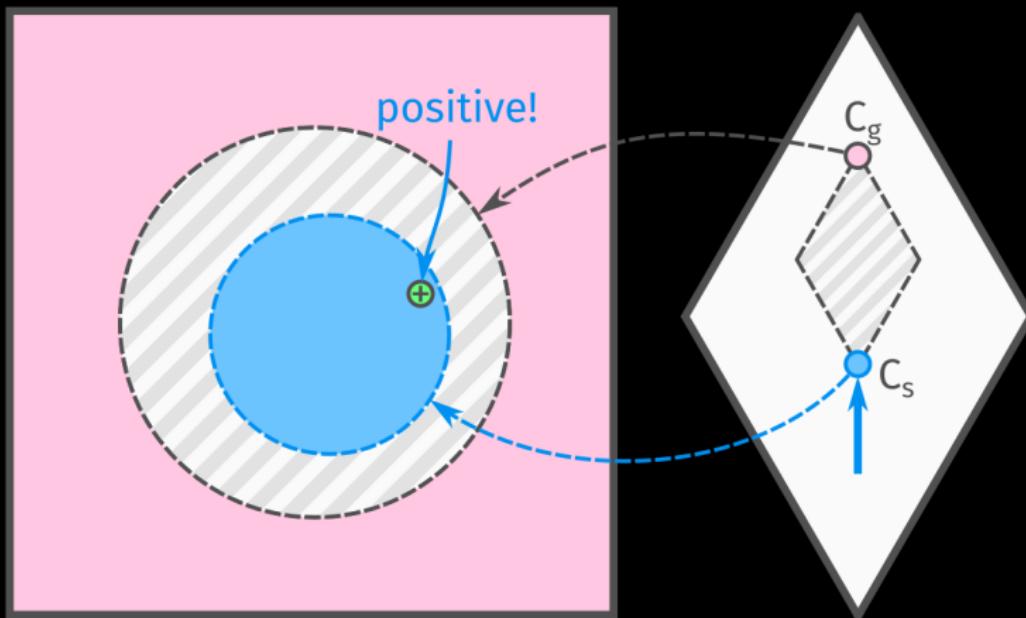


Select instance $x \in \text{Sol}(C_g) \setminus \text{Sol}(C_s)$

Positive \Rightarrow generalize C_s

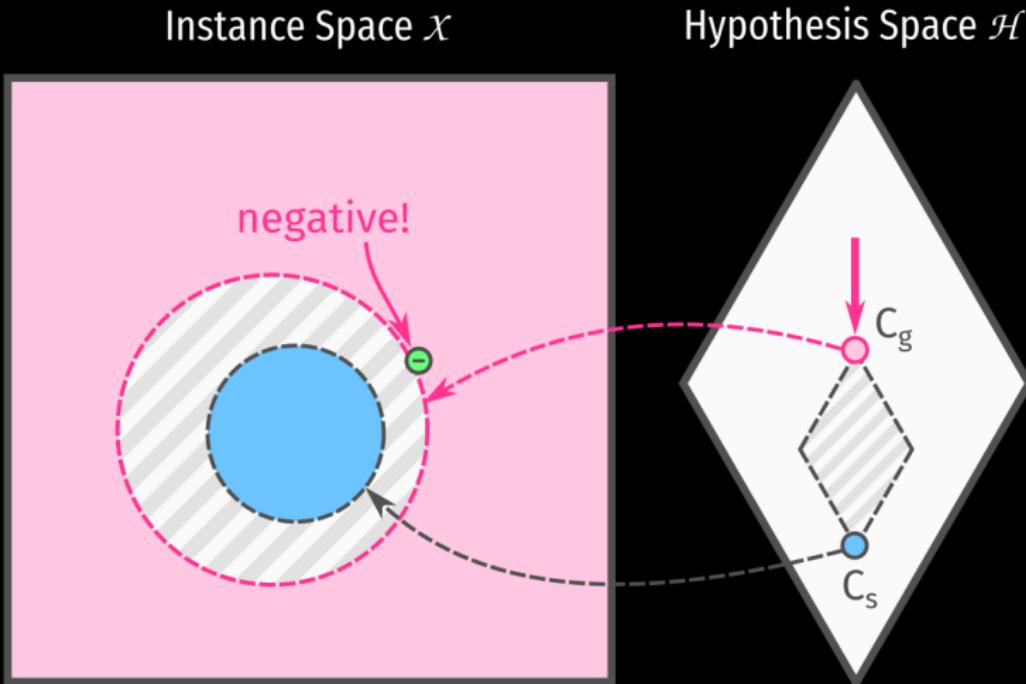
Instance Space X

Hypothesis Space \mathcal{H}



Generalizing C_s = removing constraints from it

Negative \Rightarrow specialize C_g



Specializing C_g = adding constraints to it

Partial Queries: Quacq [BDH⁺16]

Consider learning the 8-queens constraints

- Membership: does the board x satisfy **all** constraints, i.e., is it a solution?
- Partial membership: does a partial board (e.g. a 2×2 sub-board) violate at least **one** constraint?

The latter provides more information and more convergence: **all** completions of the partial configuration are also negative!

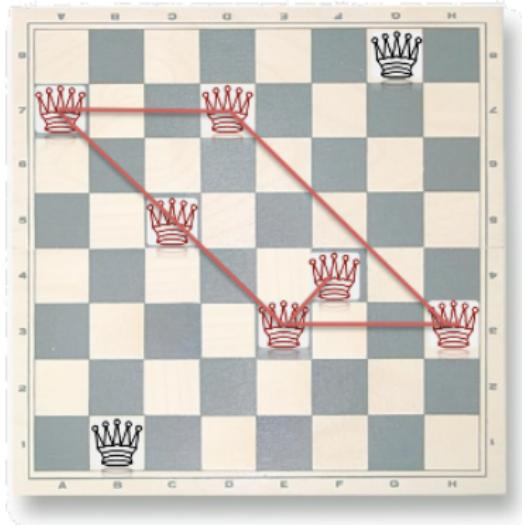
(It is also easier to answer from the oracle's perspective)

Partial Queries



ask(2, 8, 4, 2, 6, 5, 1, 6)

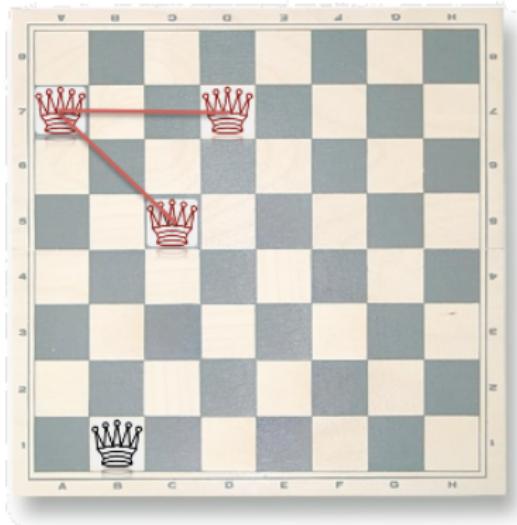
Partial Queries



$\text{ask}(2, 8, 4, 2, 6, 5, 1, 6) = \text{No}$

Example (C. Bessiere)

Partial Queries



$\text{ask}(2, 8, 4, 2, -, -, -, -, -) = \text{No}$

Partial Queries



ask(2, 8, -, -, -, -, -, -) = Yes

Equivalence Queries [Ang88]

Ask whether C^t is the same as C^*

If not, the oracle provides a **counter-example** x such that

$$x \models C^* \wedge x \not\models C$$

or vice-versa.

Equivalence queries can be simulated by poly-many membership queries.

More **powerful** than membership queries [BKLO17]:

All target concepts can be learned with eq. queries!

(Alas, impractical: even domain experts may have trouble answering them.)

Soft Constraints

Weighted Constraint Satisfaction Problems (wCSP)

Definition (same as before)

Given

- A set of pairs $\{(c_i, w_i)\}_{i=1}^n$ where:
 - c_i is a (soft) constraint
 - $w_i \in \mathbb{R}$ is a weight
- An indicator function $\mathbb{1}\{x \models c\}$ evaluating to one if c is satisfied by x , and zero otherwise

Find

$$x^* = \operatorname{argmax}_{x \in \mathcal{X}} f(x) = \operatorname{argmax}_{x \in \mathcal{X}} \sum_{i=1}^n w_i \cdot \mathbb{1}\{x \models c_i\}$$

Note hard constraints can be incorporated in \mathcal{X}

A user wishes to buy a custom PC. The PC is assembled from individual components: CPU, HDD, RAM, etc. Valid PC configurations must satisfy constraints, e.g. CPUs only work with compatible motherboards [TDP17]



Hard: “Intel CPUs are **incompatible** with AMD motherboards”

Soft: “The user **prefers** one CPU over another”

Interactive learning of soft theories

Assumption: hypothesis space \mathcal{H} **contains** (C^*, w^*)

- For weight learning, we can reconstruct w^* perfectly

Depending on application: the oracle is not a **domain expert**

- May **not interpret/understand** the queries
- May provide **noisy** feedback

(For instance, a *customer* on an e-commerce website)

As a consequence, the **version space** may be empty!

The generic weight learning loop

procedure LEARNWEIGHTS (C , max iterations T)

$\mathbf{w}^1 \leftarrow$ initial weights

for $t = 1, \dots, T$ **do**

 Choose a query q (e.g. an instance x)

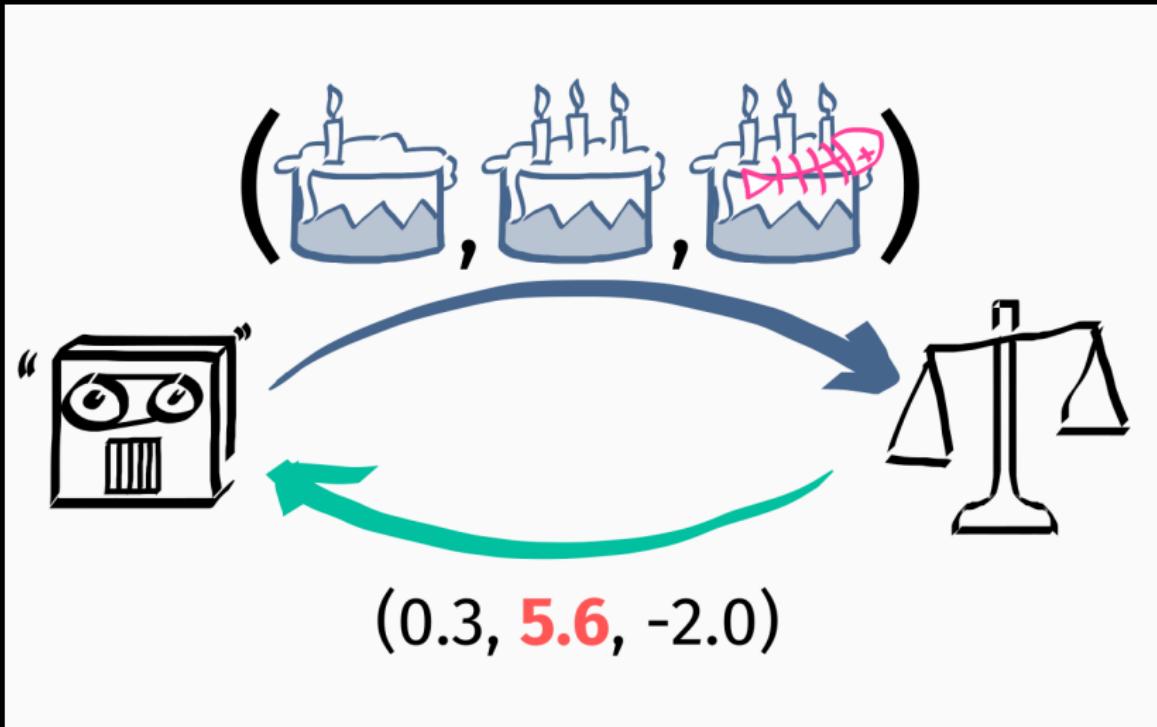
 Ask q to the oracle

 Receive feedback (e.g. what is the score of x w.r.t. f^*)

$\mathbf{w}^{t+1} \leftarrow$ update \mathbf{w}^t according to feedback

return \mathbf{w}^T

Scoring Queries (for a wCSP about cakes!)



A pretty ideal setup — can observe $\{f^*(x_i)\}_i$ directly!

Weight learning of wCSP via regression [RS04]

Idea same as offline case, except \mathcal{D} is built interactively

procedure LEARN (max iterations T , sample set size k)

$\mathcal{D} \leftarrow \emptyset$

$\mathbf{w} \leftarrow$ initial weights

for $t = 1, \dots, T$ **do**

 Sample $x_1, \dots, x_k \in \operatorname{argmax}_{x \in \mathcal{X}} f(x; \mathbf{w})$

 Present $\{x_1, \dots, x_k\}$ to the oracle

$\mathcal{D} \leftarrow \mathcal{D} \cup \{(x_j, y_j)\}_{j=1}^k \quad (y_j = f^*(x_j) + \text{noise})$

$\mathbf{w}^{t+1} \leftarrow$ solve regression over \mathcal{D}

return \mathbf{w}^T

Regression amounts to solve, e.g.,

$$\mathbf{w}^{t+1} \leftarrow \operatorname{argmin}_{\mathbf{w}} \sum_{(x,y) \in \mathcal{D}} (f(x; \mathbf{w}) - y)^2$$

A scoring oracle may not be available

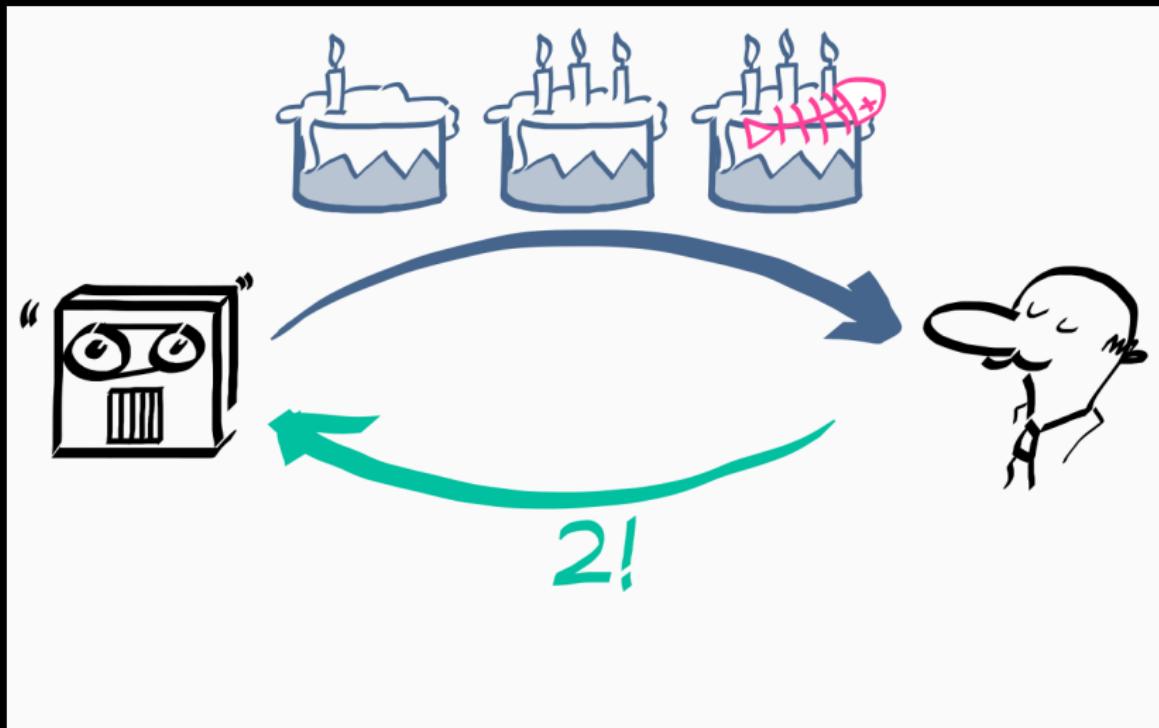
$$f^*(\text{birthday cake}) = ?$$

	7-8	17-19	19-20
Mon	running	--	swimming
Tue	--	--	gym
Wed	running	--	--
Thur	swimming	--	gym
Fri	--	soccer	soccer

$$f^*(\text{schedule}) = ?$$

even experts may not be able to provide absolute scores reliably

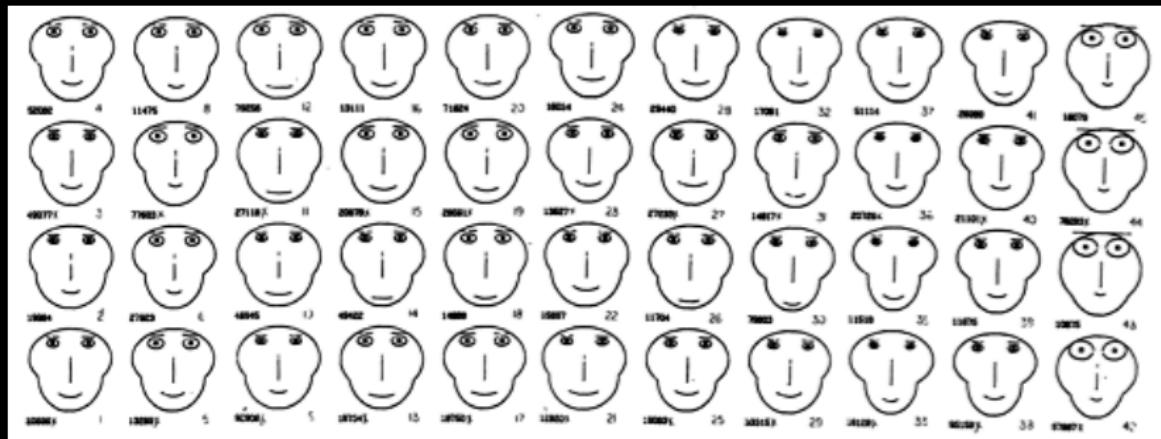
Ranking Queries



relative judgements only — no more pesky absolute scores

Ranking does not solve everything

What if it is hard to compare alternatives, e.g. they are **too similar** or **too diverse**? What if there are just **too many**?



From <https://eagereyes.org/criticism/chernoff-faces>

Preference learning for wCSP via ranking²

Offline case: SVM ranking

$$\begin{aligned} \min_w \quad & ||w||^2 + \lambda \sum_{j=1}^m \xi_j \\ \text{s.t.} \quad & f(x_j) - f(x'_j) \geq 1 - \xi_j \quad \forall j \in [1, n] \end{aligned}$$

where:

- $f(x) = \sum_{i=1}^n w_i \cdot \mathbb{1}\{x \models c_i\}$
- ξ_j is a penalty for not ranking x_j higher than x'_j with a large enough margin
- $||w||^2$ is a regularization term (margin is $2/||w|| \rightarrow$ large margin separation)
- $\lambda \in R^+$ trades off margin and correct rankings

²Slide: Andrea Passerini

Ranking for weight learning of wCSP [?]

Simple extension of offline ranking SVM

procedure LEARN (max iterations T)

$C^1, \mathbf{w}^1 \leftarrow$ initial theory, initial weights

for $t = 1, \dots, T$ **do**

 Choose x, x' to be high scoring and reasonably diverse

 Present (x, x') to the oracle

 Add oracle ranking $x \succsim x'$ to \mathcal{D}

$\mathbf{w}^{t+1} \leftarrow$ learn ranking from \mathcal{D}

return \mathbf{w}^T

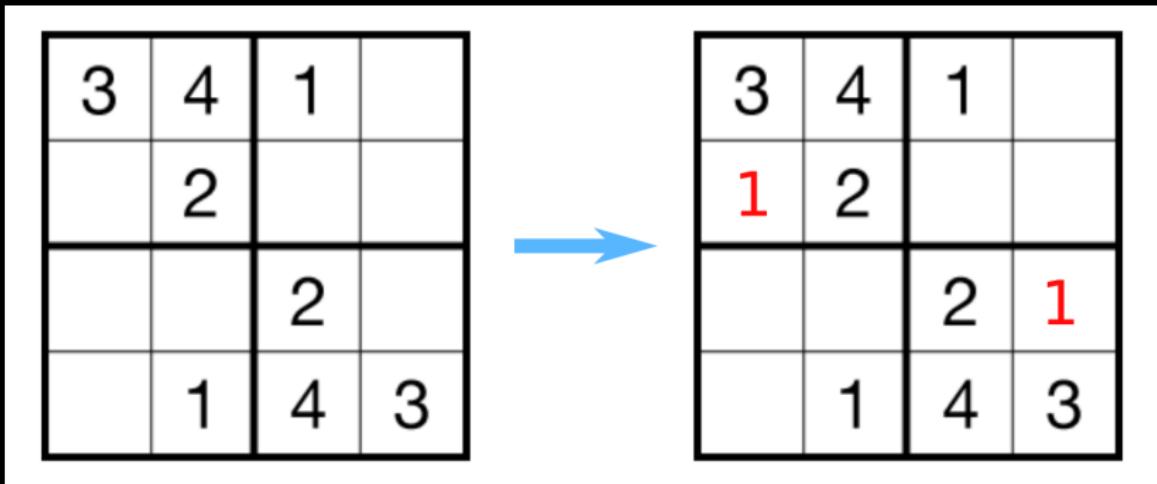
High score and reasonably diverse means solving, e.g.

$$\operatorname{argmax}_{x, x'} f(x; \mathbf{w}) + f(x'; \mathbf{w}) + \alpha \cdot d(x, x')$$

$$\text{s.t. } d(x, x') \leq d_{\max}$$

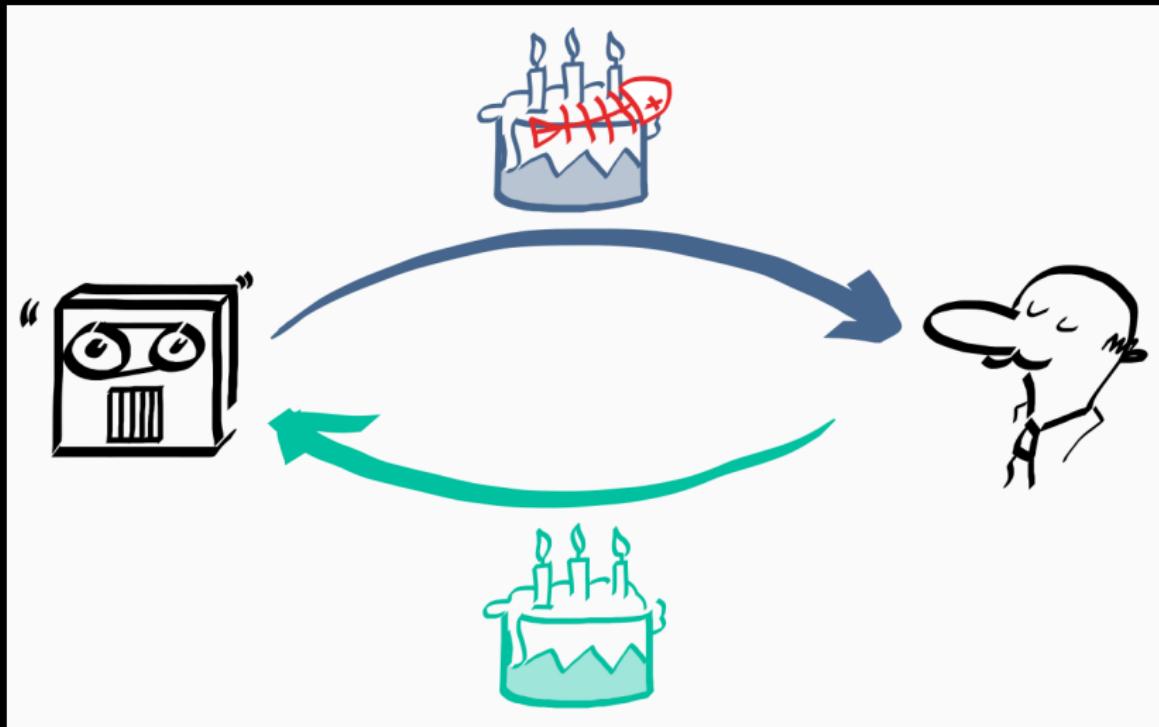
Issues

What if it is easy to manipulate the configurations?



It's possible to avoid “ k -way inference” by asking the user to improve the current best configuration

Improvement Queries



boils down to a pairwise preference $f^*(\bar{x}^t) \geq f^*(x^t)$

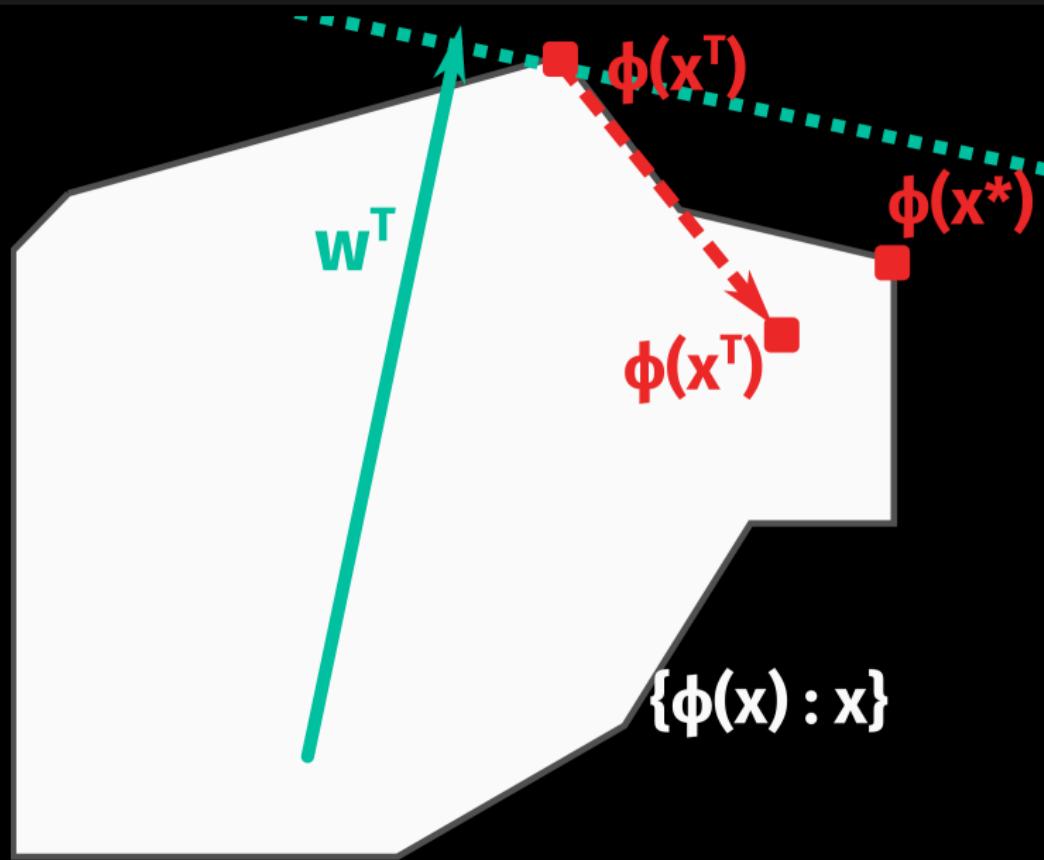
Coactive Learning for weight learning of wCOP [SJ15]

Perceptron-based preference learning from improvement queries

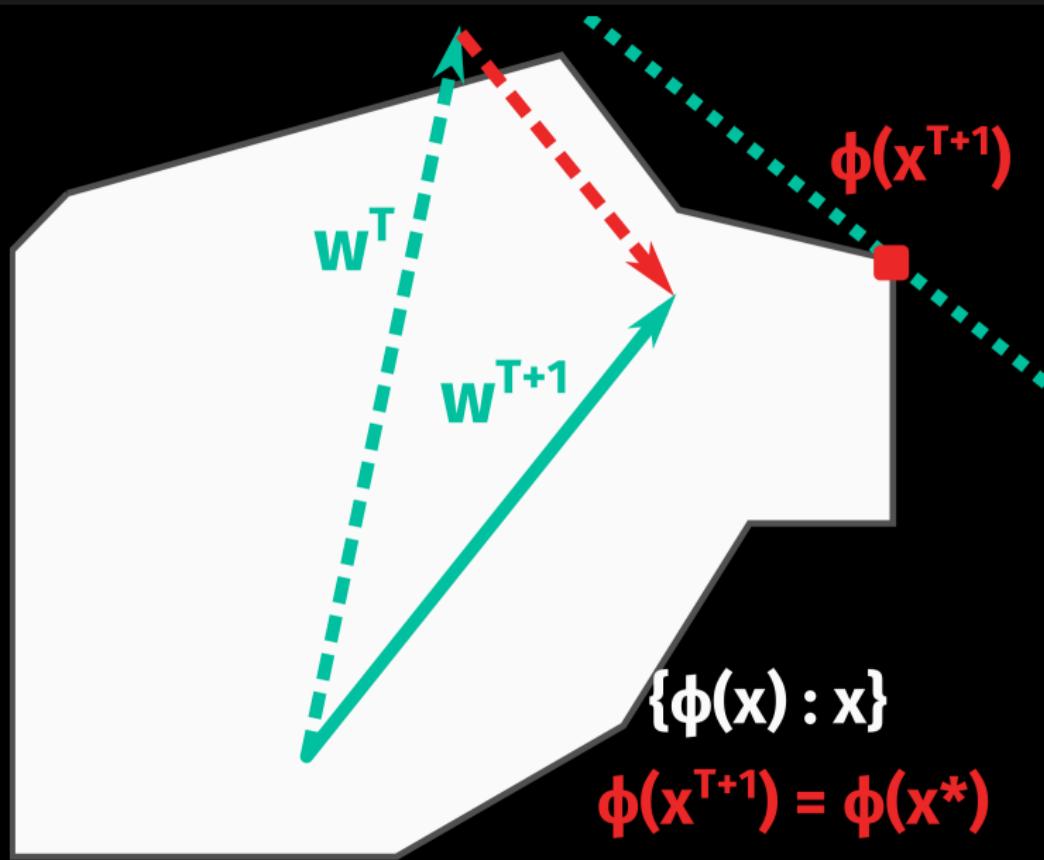
```
procedure LEARN (max iterations  $T$ )
     $C^1, \mathbf{w}^1 \leftarrow$  initial theory, initial weights
    for  $t = 1, \dots, T$  do
         $x^t \leftarrow \operatorname{argmax}_{x \in \mathcal{X}} \sum_i w_i \phi_i(x)$ 
        Present  $x^t$  to the oracle
        Obtain improved configuration  $\bar{x}^t$ 
         $\mathbf{w}^{t+1} \leftarrow \mathbf{w}^t + \phi(\bar{x}^t) - \phi(x^t)$ 
    return  $C^T$ 
```

Note quality of configurations approaches optimum as $O(1/\sqrt{T})$ under assumptions on the improvements

Coactive learning: iteration T



Coactive learning: iteration $T + 1$



Coactive Critiquing [TDP17]

Recall that constraints \approx features in wCSP

$$\phi_i(x) = \mathbb{1}\{x \models c_i\} \quad \forall i = 1, \dots, n$$

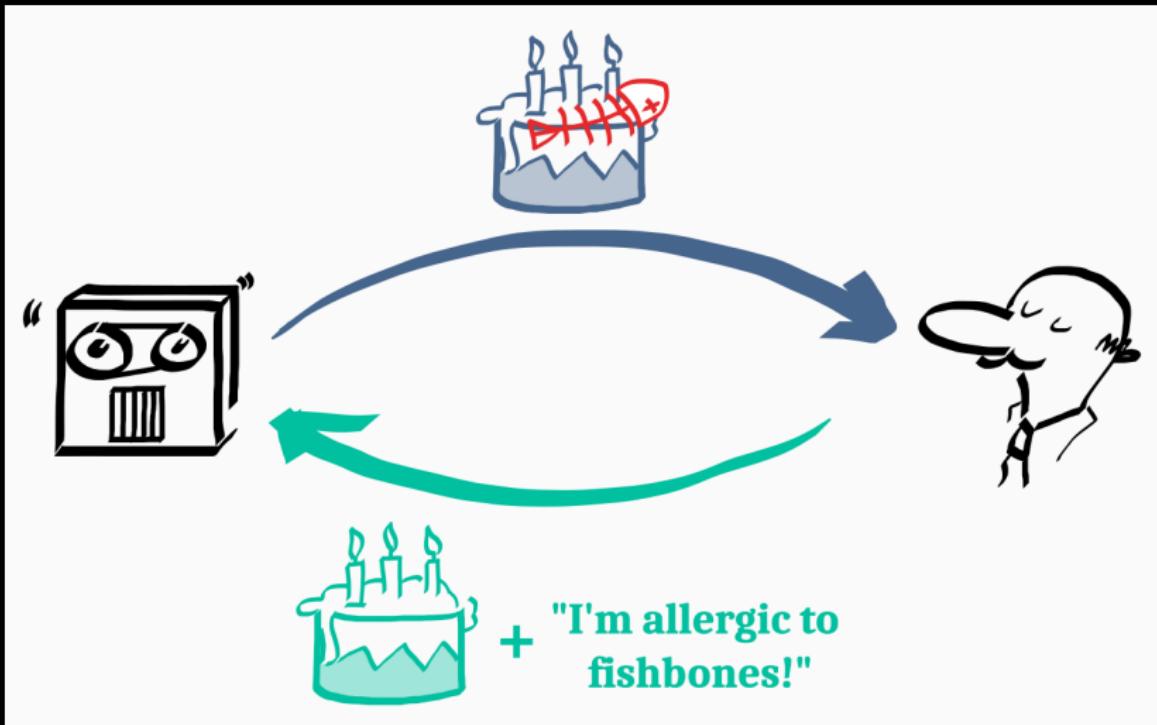
What if we don't have all of the constraints/features?

Idea

- If oracle improvement can't be explained by the learner (e.g. by linear spearability), a constraint is missing
- Ask for the missing constraint, acquire c_{n+1}

Add $\phi_{n+1} = \mathbb{1}\{x \models c_{n+1}\}$ to the pool of features, proceed as usual with Coactive Learning

Critiquing Queries



add the critique to the constraints, update the feature space

Critiquing Queries

A few remarks

- Can be proven to converge under assumptions, even if most constraints are acquired on-the-fly
- Not really “learning”
 - Critiquing queries provide the missing constraints

Once more: **powerful oracles make learning easier**

Still much work to do!

- How to combine learning of hard **and** soft constraints?
- What are the “**best**” **queries** in the soft setting?
- How to properly deal with **rationally bounded** oracles?
e.g. how to combine technology and human interaction?
- How far can we **push** and/or **guide** the oracle?
e.g. how to best exploit and control human abilities?

(and much more)

Related frameworks

Many topics related to interactive constraint learning

- Pool-based **Active Learning**
- **Preference Elicitation** (for interactive recommendation)
- Inverse Combinatorial Optimization [Heu04]
- Programming by Feedback [ASSS14]
- ...

We briefly overview the connection to CL; details in the references

Pool-based Active Learning [Set12, Han14]

Given hidden decision function $f^* : \mathcal{X} \rightarrow \{\pm 1\}$, instances $x_1, \dots, x_n \in \mathcal{X}$, and an oracle that labels instances with f^*

Find a good estimate f of f^* with *as few queries as possible*

Remarks

- Like CP, focuses on quality of learned model loss(f^*, f)
- ... but geometrical flavor: SVMs, Gaussian Processes
- **Many strategies in common** (e.g. version spaces)

Query types: labeling queries (\approx membership), search queries (\approx equivalence), rationales and explanations, ...

Preference Elicitation [Bou02, PTV16]

Given products $x_1, \dots, x_n \in \mathcal{X}$ and a user who ranks alternatives by relative preferrability

Find a good item $x \in \mathcal{X}$ with *the least cognitive effort*

If we knew the true user' scoring function $f(x)$, it would be easy!
But we don't, so we estimate it iteratively by asking queries

Remarks

- Must model **preferences**, similar to wCSP/wCOP
- wCSP/wCOP useful for recommending **combinatorial** items
- Unlike CP, **only quality of recommendation \times matters**
- Learns approximation f of f^* only as byproduct

Methods: Bayesian, minimax regret, online learning

Wrapping up

Take-away

- Interactive acquisition can cut labeling cost and speed up learning
- Many classes of hard CSPs can be learned (also) interactively in the realizable setting via version space approaches
- Interactive weight learning of wCSP/wCOP can be cast as interactive regression/ranking + smart query selection
- Different kinds of queries affect both
 - theoretical learning efficiency [Ang88, BDH⁺16]
 - ability to learn from human (non-)experts
- Plenty of applications, like extracting knowledge from experts and preferences from customers
- Plenty of interesting related areas

Thank you!

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