**Making intelligent decisions with Decision Trees**

Introduction :

In this blog we will discuss a Machine Learning Algorithm called Decision Tree. The goal of the blogpost is to get the beginners started with fundamental concepts of a Decision Tree and quickly help them to develop their first tree model in no time.

A decision tree is a decision support tool that uses a tree-like graph or model of decisions and their possible consequences. It is one way to display an algorithm that only contains conditional control statements.

A decision tree is a flowchart-like structure in which each internal node represents a "test" on an attribute , each branch represents the outcome of the test, and each leaf node represents a class label (decision taken after computing all attributes). The paths from root to leaf represent classification rules.

Decision tree is a type of supervised learning algorithm (having a pre-defined target variable) that is mostly used in classification problems.

It works for both categorical and continuous input and output variables.

## **Types of Decision Trees**

Types of decision tree is based on the type of target variable we have. It can be of two types:

#### **Categorical Variable Decision Tree:**

Decision Tree which has categorical target variable then it called as categorical variable decision tree.

**Continuous Variable Decision Tree:**

Decision Tree which has continuous target variable then it is called as Continuous Variable Decision Tree.

##### ***Example:-***

Let’s say we have a problem to predict whether a bike is good or not . This can be judged by using decision tree classifier.

However to qualify the bike into good or bad category mileage is an important factor. Mileage is measured using a contiguous value hence it can be measured using the decision tree regressor.

## **Important Terminology related to Decision Trees**

Let’s look at the basic terminology used with Decision trees:

### **Root Node:**

It represents entire population or sample and this further gets divided into two or more homogeneous sets.

### **Splitting:**

It is a process of dividing a node into two or more sub-nodes.

### **Decision Node:**

When a sub-node splits into further sub-nodes, then it is called decision node.

### **Leaf/ Terminal Node:**

Nodes do not split is called Leaf or Terminal node.

### **Pruning:**

When we remove sub-nodes of a decision node, this process is called pruning. You can say opposite process of splitting.

### **Branch / Sub-Tree:**

A sub-section of entire tree is called branch or sub-tree.

### **Parent and Child Node:**

A node, which is divided into sub-nodes is called parent node of sub-nodes where as sub-nodes are the child of parent node.

# **How to split nodes**

The decision of making strategic splits heavily affects a tree’s accuracy. The decision criteria is different for classification and regression trees. Decision trees use multiple algorithms to decide to split a node in two or more sub-nodes. The creation of sub-nodes increases the homogeneity of resultant sub-nodes. In other words, we can say that purity of the node increases with respect to the target variable. Decision tree splits the nodes on all available variables and then selects the split which results in most homogeneous sub-nodes.

There are few algorithms to find optimum split. Let's look at the following to understand the mathematics behind.

## **Gini Index**

Gini index says, if we select two items from a population at random then they must be of same class and probability for this is 1 if population is pure.

It works with categorical target variable “Success” or “Failure”. It performs only Binary splits **Higher the value of Gini higher the homogeneity.** CART (Classification and Regression Tree) uses Gini method to create binary splits.

#### **Steps to Calculate Gini for a split**

1. Calculate Gini for sub-nodes, using formula sum of square of probability for success and failure (p^2+q^2).
2. Calculate Gini for split using weighted Gini score of each node of that split

## **Information gain**

## We can derive information gain from entropy as **1- Entropy.** Entropy is a way measuring the amount of impurity in a given set of data. It is represented by a formula :

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ID3 algorithm uses entropy to calculate the homogeneity of a sample. If the sample is completely homogeneous the entropy is zero and if the sample is an equally divided it has entropy of one.

Enough of theory now let’s dive into the implementation logistic regression .

We will use implementation provided by the python machine learning framework known as scikit-learn.

**Problem Statement :**

To build a Decision Tree model for prediction of car quality given other attributes about the car.

**Data details**

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| ========================================== 1. Title: Car Evaluation Database  ==========================================  The dataset is available at “<http://archive.ics.uci.edu/ml/datasets/Car+Evaluation>”  2. Sources:  (a) Creator: Marko Bohanec  (b) Donors: Marko Bohanec (marko.bohanec@ijs.si)  Blaz Zupan (blaz.zupan@ijs.si)  (c) Date: June, 1997  3. Past Usage:   The hierarchical decision model, from which this dataset is  derived, was first presented in    M. Bohanec and V. Rajkovic: Knowledge acquisition and explanation for  multi-attribute decision making. In 8th Intl Workshop on Expert  Systems and their Applications, Avignon, France. pages 59-78, 1988.   Within machine-learning, this dataset was used for the evaluation  of HINT (Hierarchy INduction Tool), which was proved to be able to  completely reconstruct the original hierarchical model. This,  together with a comparison with C4.5, is presented in   B. Zupan, M. Bohanec, I. Bratko, J. Demsar: Machine learning by  function decomposition. ICML-97, Nashville, TN. 1997 (to appear)  4. Relevant Information Paragraph:   Car Evaluation Database was derived from a simple hierarchical  decision model originally developed for the demonstration of DEX  (M. Bohanec, V. Rajkovic: Expert system for decision  making. Sistemica 1(1), pp. 145-157, 1990.). The model evaluates  cars according to the following concept structure:   CAR car acceptability  . PRICE overall price  . . buying buying price  . . maint price of the maintenance  . TECH technical characteristics  . . COMFORT comfort  . . . doors number of doors  . . . persons capacity in terms of persons to carry  . . . lug\_boot the size of luggage boot  . . safety estimated safety of the car   Input attributes are printed in lowercase. Besides the target  concept (CAR), the model includes three intermediate concepts:  PRICE, TECH, COMFORT. Every concept is in the original model  related to its lower level descendants by a set of examples (for  these examples sets see<http://www-ai.ijs.si/BlazZupan/car.html).>   The Car Evaluation Database contains examples with the structural  information removed, i.e., directly relates CAR to the six input  attributes: buying, maint, doors, persons, lug\_boot, safety.   Because of known underlying concept structure, this database may be  particularly useful for testing constructive induction and  structure discovery methods.  5. Number of Instances: 1728  (instances completely cover the attribute space)  6. Number of Attributes: 6  7. Attribute Values:   buying v-high, high, med, low  maint v-high, high, med, low  doors 2, 3, 4, 5-more  persons 2, 4, more  lug\_boot small, med, big  safety low, med, high  8. Missing Attribute Values: none  9. Class Distribution (number of instances per class)   class N N[%]  -----------------------------  unacc 1210 (70.023 %)   acc 384 (22.222 %)   good 69 ( 3.993 %)   v-good 65 ( 3.762 %) |

Tools to be used :

Numpy,pandas,scikit-learn

**Python Implementation with code :**

**1. Import necessary libraries**

Import the necessary modules from specific libraries.

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**2. Load the data set**

Use pandas module to read the bike data from the file system. Check few records of the dataset.

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1. **Check few information about the data set**

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The train data set has 1728 rows and 7 columns.

There are no missing values in the dataset

1. **Identify the target variable**

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The target variable is marked as class in the dataframe. The values are present in string format. However the algorithm requires the variables to be coded into its equivalent integer codes. We can convert the string categorical values into a integer code using factorize method of the pandas library.

1. **Let’s check the encoded values now.**

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As we can see the values has been encoded into 4 different numeric labels.

1. **Identify the predictor variables and encode any string variables to equivalent integer codes**

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Check the data types now:

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Everything is now converted in integer form.

1. **Select the predictor feature and select the target variable**

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1. **Train test split:**

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1. **Training / model fitting**

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1. **Model parameters study:**

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As you can see the algorithm was able to achieve classification accuracy of 82% on the held out set. Only 96 samples were misclassified.

1. **Visualization of the decision graph:**

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