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STUDY BOOK 1

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Arissa Noordina Bahari

Module 2

Advanced AI Applications and Ethics

Chapter 7 Learning Recommender Systems

In an era of information overload, recommender systems have become an indispensable tool for steering people through the vast ocean of content and navigating the long tail of available products. Fueled by data and algorithms, recommender systems can analyze our behaviors and preferences and then deliver personalized recommendations tailored to our unique tastes and interests. By recommending movies, music, books, products, and other items, they save us valuable time while opening doors to new discoveries.

In this chapter, we'll delve into the exciting world of recommender systems, explore various approaches, and uncover strategies to maximize their performance. Before we get started, it's important to acknowledge that recommender systems are not built on a single technique or one family of algorithms. Instead, they represent a mismatch of techniques and algorithms united under one common goal: to make relevant recommendations. Whether it's machine learning, deep learning, or NLP, recommender systems use whatever algorithm they can to serve relevant items to end-users. There are, though, a number of design methodologies that are specific to recommender systems, including collaborative filtering, content-based filtering, and the hybrid approach, which form the core focus of this chapter.

Content-Based Filtering

Content-based filtering, also known as *item-based filtering*, provides recommendations based on similar item characteristics and the profile of an individual user's preferences. In effect, the system attempts to recommend items that are similar to those that a user has liked, browsed, or purchased in the past. After purchasing a book about machine learning, for example, Amazon's content- based filtering model is likely to serve you other books from the same author, series, or genre.

This approach relies heavily on descriptions of items as well as the profiling of individual user preferences. A book, for example, can be described by the following characteristics:

1. The author(s)
2. The genre, e.g., thriller, romance, historical fiction
3. The year of publication
4. The type of book, e.g., fiction, non-fiction
5. Book format, e.g., paperback, audiobook, e-book, hardback

Likewise, user preferences need to be collected and analyzed. Individual user preferences can be determined by examining:

1. Past purchasing/consumption behavior
2. Browsing history
3. Personal details, e.g., location, nationality, and hobbies
4. IP address (to determine location and time zone)

Using the information gathered, filtering techniques can then compare this data with the descriptions of available items to identify and recommend relevant items. If a user has shown a preference for thriller movies in the past and has rated several thriller movies positively, a content-based filtering model can identify these preferences and recommend other thriller movies with similar traits, such as genre, actors, and storyline, even if those movies weren't highly rated by other users.

Whether it's movies, books, or other items, the model aims to recommend items that align closely with the user's preferences, irrespective of their popularity among the overall user base. Let's now review the other advantages as well as some of the drawbacks of content-based filtering.

Advantages

1. Agnostic to crowd preferences

The first advantage of content-based filtering is that it aids the discovery of relevant but low-profile items. As content-based filtering doesn't take crowd preferences into account, relevant items with low exposure to the crowd can still be found and promoted.

2. Content items are stable

Items don't change over time as much as people do and they are generally more permanent. People, on the other hand, are fickle and our tastes change over time. We're all guilty of following fad diets, new exercise regimes, and content binges. However, an item will always be an item, making content-based filtering less vulnerable to short-term shifts in user preferences and reducing the need for regular retraining of the model. This, though, could prove a disadvantage over the long term as the model struggles to keep up with shifting consumption behavior.

3. Items are generally fewer than users

Most online platforms have fewer items than users, and content-based filtering can help to conserve computational resources by comparing a limited number of items rather than a larger volume of user relationships.

4. Compatible with new items

If there is insufficient rating data for a new or existing item (known as the cold-start problem), content-based filtering can be used to gather information regarding other items rated/purchased/consumed by the target user that share similar attributes. Items are therefore recommended based on the user's interaction with similar items despite the lack of existing data for certain products.

5. Mitigates cheating

The other notable benefit of content-based filtering is that it's generally more difficult to game the system because malicious actors have less power to manipulate or fabricate item-to-item relationships. This is not the case for item-to- user relationships, which can be easily manipulated with a flood of fake reviews and purchases or views.

Disadvantages

1. Low variety

The variety of recommended items can be limited and less diverse than other methods. This is because content-based filtering relies on matching a specific item with similar items. Thus, unique and novel items with low exposure to the target user are unlikely to surface, limiting the range of category discoverability.

2. Ineffective for new users

While content-based filtering methods excel at recommending new items, this isn't the case for new users. Without information about the user's preferences to construct a user profile, there's little way of recommending related items. To mitigate the cold-start problem, some online platforms attempt to extract relevant keywords when onboarding new users. Pinterest, for example, directs new users to specify a collection of over-arching interests that are used to establish a preliminary user profile and match these descriptions to content recommendations. Pinterest's machine learning-based models then refine the user's profile and their specific interests based on observing their pins and browsing behavior.

3. Mixed quality of results

Content-based filtering is generally accurate at selecting relevant items, but the quality of such items can sometimes be poor. As content-based filtering ignores the ratings of other users, the model is limited by an inability to decipher the quality of an item.

Demonstration

To explore how content-based filtering works, let's run through a simple demonstration that looks at recommending films to users according to their rating history.

For this demonstration, let's assume the films available are represented based on three features: genre, director, and production company.

Film	Genre	Director	Production
Oppenheimer	War/Drama	Christopher Nolan	Universal Pictures
Mary Poppins	Fantasy/Musical	Rob Marshall	Disney
Little Mermaid	Fantasy/Musical	Rob Marshall	Disney
Beauty & the Beast	Fantasy/Musical	Bill Condon	Disney
Dunkirk	War/Drama	Christopher Nolan	Warner Bros

Dataset: Film Metadata

Step 1: Profile Creation

For each user, we first need to create a profile based on the features of films they have already rated. For instance, if User 4 gave a high rating to films directed by Christopher Nolan, then Nolan's films would be a prominent feature in their profile.

Film/ User	Oppenheimer	Mary Poppins	Little Mermaid	Beauty & the Beast	Dunkirk
User 1	5	4		3	2
User 2	4		1	5	4
User 3		2		4	
User 4		2	2		5

Dataset: Film ratings (1-5 stars), blanks indicate that the user has not yet rated the film

Step 2: User 4 Profile

Create a profile for User 4 based on their known film ratings.

1. User 4 likes **War/Drama** genre and films directed by **Christopher Nolan** (because of their high rating for Dunkirk)
2. User 4 dislikes **Fantasy/Musical** genre and **Disney** films (because of low ratings for The Little Mermaid and Mary Poppins)

Step 3: Compute Scores

For the films that User 4 hasn't rated (Oppenheimer and Beauty and the Beast), we need to calculate a score based on their profile and the film's features. The score is derived from how many features of the film match the user's preferences.

Oppenheimer: Matches with **War/Drama** and **Christopher Nolan** (1 positive match)

Beauty and the Beast: Matches with **Fantasy/Musical** and **Disney** films (2 negative matches)

Step 4: Recommend

Compared to Beauty and the Beast, Oppenheimer appears to be a better film recommendation for User 4 based on 1 positive match.

Keep in mind that this is a highly simplified representation of content-based filtering. In real-world scenarios, you might use techniques like TF-IDF (Term Frequency-Inverse Document Frequency) to represent film features and cosine similarity or other metrics to determine the similarity between user profiles and film features. The idea, however, remains the same: understanding the content similarities between items and the user's preferences and making recommendations based on those relationships.

Collaborative Filtering

Reflecting the wisdom of the crowd, collaborative filtering recommends items to an individual based on the preferences and consumption trends of other users with shared interests. For instance, on TikTok, users who enjoy fitness content might also find personal finance content appealing. Under this scenario, the items (fitness and personal finance videos) may not share the same genre or title keywords. Despite this, the recommender system will still suggest personal finance videos to fitness enthusiasts based on the behavioral patterns of similar users.

Collaborative filtering, though, should not be mistaken as a popularity chart or a top ten list of popular items. Rather, it uses two distinct methods to match items that share popular associations among similar types of users. The first method is user-based collaborative filtering, which generates recommendations to a target user based on analyzing the historical preferences of users with similar tastes. In other words, people similar to you who buy x also buy y.

In practice, this works by identifying like-minded users. Their ratings or preferences are then collected and grouped to produce a weighted average. The group's general preferences are used to recommend items to individual users based on the ratings and preferences of their peer group. For instance, if a user has never watched Squid Games and their peers have all watched and rated it positively, the model will recommend Squid Games to the user based on peer observation.

The second method is item-based collaborative filtering. Rather than finding users with similar preferences, this method finds a set of items similar to the target item based on user preferences. For example, Star Wars movies rated highly by a similar audience of users will be matched together as a set and then recommended to other users who like and rate one of the movies in the set. Item-based filtering can therefore be thought of as *people who buy x also buy y.*

The main distinction between these two methods lies in the selection of input. Item-based collaborative filtering takes a given item, finds users who liked that item, and then retrieves other items that those users liked. Conversely, user-based collaborative filtering takes a selected user, finds users similar to that user based on similar item ratings or purchases, and then recommends items that similar users also liked.

In reality, both methods tend to produce similar item recommendations, but user-based collaborative filtering can be more accurate for datasets that have a large number of users with diverse or esoteric interests. Datasets that have less information regarding user characteristics and tastes, though, are generally more compatible with item-based collaborative filtering.

Advantages

1. Low knowledge of item characteristics

The first advantage of collaborative filtering is it doesn't rely on a sophisticated understanding of items and their attributes. This saves upfront effort because you don't need to spend time meticulously documenting items. This is especially convenient for online video and audio content items that are generated daily and are time-consuming to review and classify.

2. Flexible over the long-term

As collaborative filtering responds directly to user behavior and trends, this approach is generally more flexible than content-based filtering at reacting to changes in user/consumer behavior. Sudden short-term changes in fashion, pop culture, and other fads, though, can be difficult to respond to—at least initially—depending on when and how regularly the data is collected.

3. Discoverability

Collaborative filtering enables the discoverability of items outside the user's periphery as it synthesizes preferences from users they've never met but who share similar interests.

Disadvantages

1. Large-scale user data

One drawback of collaborative filtering is the significant amount of upfront information needed to understand user preferences. While Amazon and Netflix have enough user data to ride out sparsity problems in the data, new platforms without an established user base face limitations because collaborative filtering is largely ineffective without sufficient information. Obtaining or acquiring data from a third party, as Amazon did by partnering with AOL in the early 2000s, is one strategy to overcome the cold-start problem.

2. Malicious activity

Collaborative filtering is highly vulnerable to people gaming the system and doing the wrong thing. This includes driving fake traffic to target items, attacking competitor's items with negative reviews, fabricating online user personas, or creating a general

system of user actions to cheat the system, known in the industry as a *shilling attack*. One approach to minimize malicious activity is to limit the model's analysis to user purchases, rather than browsing habits, as the former is more difficult to fabricate. That said, fraudulent online transactions remain common, and unscrupulous actors are constantly developing their tactics to game recommender systems.

3. Negative reputation

As collaborative filtering relies on extracting users' personal information to generate recommendations, it inevitably raises questions regarding data privacy and social manipulation. Criticism has surfaced in recent times regarding the U.S. election and the alleged role Facebook has in sharing user data with third-party organizations as well as their content display algorithms that potentially reinforce political biases and disseminate news stories.

4. Consistency

Aside from different tastes and preferences, users have different standards—making it difficult to trust the consistency of rating data aggregated from multiple users. The meaning of a three-star can be interpreted differently among users based on their average rating history, for example. Based on personal experience, standards also vary between countries and types of users (i.e., e-book readers versus physical book readers). Readers of physical books, for example, rate negatively when there are delivery delays or printing issues, which doesn't affect e-book readers who receive a digital copy on demand. To improve consistency, some models may need to filter user ratings by additional criteria such as country and customer type.

Demonstration

In this second demonstration, we will use user-based collaborative filtering to make a film recommendation to User 1.

Film/ User	Oppenheimer	Mary Poppins	Little Mermaid	Beauty & the Beast	Dunkirk
User 1	5	4		3	2
User 2	4		1	5	4
User 3		2		4	
User 4	3			1	5

Dataset: Film Ratings (1-5 stars)

Steps

1. Compute similarity: Calculate similarity scores between users. One common method is the Pearson correlation coefficient, which is a number between -1 (non-identical) and 1 (identical) indicating how closely two things are related.
2. Predict ratings: Predict the ratings of films that the target user hasn't watched by considering the ratings of similar users.
3. Recommend: Films with the highest predicted ratings are recommended to the user.

Example

1. Let's predict a rating for The Little Mermaid for User 1, who is yet to watch that film.
2. We notice that both User 1 and User 2 have rated Oppenheimer, Beauty & the Beast, and Dunkirk. Based on this, we can compute their similarity.
3. If their similarity score is high, we can use User 2's rating of The Little Mermaid to predict User 1's potential rating for that film.
4. As User 2 only rated it as 1-star, it's not worth recommending this film to User 1.

The Hybrid Approach

After exploring the advantages and disadvantages of content-based and collaborative filtering, you probably spotted some trade-offs between these two techniques. Content-based filtering, for example, tends to be less diverse than collaborative filtering in terms of the items it recommends but is, overall, more consistent than collaborative filtering. To reduce the effect of these various trade-offs, an alternative to collaborative and content-based filtering has been developed, which draws on a combination of techniques to deliver useful recommendations. This approach is aptly named the *hybrid approach* and can function either as a unified model or by separating content-based and collaborative filtering and then combining their predictions.

In addition to bridging the gap between content-based and collaborative filtering, the hybrid approach plays a crucial role in overcoming the cold-start problem, which occurs when there is insufficient user interaction data or item attributes needed to make accurate recommendations. Hybrid systems offer an elegant solution by capitalizing on the strengths of both collaborative filtering and content- based filtering, effectively mitigating the limitations that each technique faces individually. For new items that

lack user interaction data, the hybrid approach can prioritize content-based filtering. By analyzing the attributes, descriptions, or features of the item, it can generate relevant recommendations based on the item's characteristics. In the case of new users who haven't yet provided interaction data, user-based collaborative filtering can be used to analyze similar users based on attributes such as IP location, age, and gender to overcome the cold- start problem. As the interactions of the new user accumulate and the model learns their individual preferences, the hybrid model can gradually transition to an item-based collaborative filtering or content-based filtering approach.

Finally, the hybrid approach offers added flexibility to combine multiple data sources and data types. Ordinal data values such as item ratings (1-5 stars), for example, are generally used for collaborative filtering, whereas continuous variables such as item price and size are more suitable for content-based filtering. Using a hybrid solution, you can pipe both data inputs and then segment analysis through a curated selection of filtering techniques.

Training Recommender Systems

Understanding how recommender systems function, even if you aren't a machine learning developer, is worthwhile for creating a positive online experience or growing an audience on popular content platforms. In this section, we will look at how you can train recommender systems based on your behavior.

The first step is understanding what type of recommender system is being used to serve you recommendations. Skillshare, for example, typically recommends items using content-based filtering, whereas Spotify is more likely to utilize collaborative filtering to recommend music to users. However, the more advanced and established the platform, the more likely it is that the platform is using a hybrid approach. Platforms may also employ different techniques in isolation based on different user scenarios. The YouTube homepage, for instance, is more likely to use collaborative filtering to enhance discovery and emphasize variety on the platform, whereas the video page sidebar is more likely to use content-based filtering to keep you on that page with related content.

The next clue is how the platform labels its recommendations. On major platforms such as Amazon, you might see labels such as "See what other users bought" (collaborative filtering) or "We thought you might like these" (content-based filtering). However, in a lot of cases, distinguishing the use of one method over the other can be challenging due to the implementation of hybrid systems.

In practice, it's best to assume that both techniques are in use and to adapt your approach accordingly. This includes careful labeling of your product or content to train content-based filtering engines, such as the item's metadata, description, tags, and other labels.

The more relevant information you provide, the more likely the recommender system is to pick up your item and showcase it to the right audience. Having said that, it's vital to steer clear of adding irrelevant labels to items in a bid to deceive the system. Established platforms such as YouTube and Amazon closely monitor attempts to cheat the system and will penalize you accordingly. Additionally, disappointing users with deceptive titles or labels may impact your conversion metrics, which also feed into the recommender system as well as the organic search rankings.

In addition to accurate labeling of items, identifying opportunities to associate your item with popular items within the same category can be an effective strategy to capture spill-over traffic. This tactic is commonly used on platforms like YouTube, where creators know that producing new videos inspired by popular hits can help to capture traffic from related recommendations. As an example, if you create a popular video featuring a tour of your minimalist Tokyo apartment, then YouTube is likely to recommend the same viewers to other minimalist Tokyo apartment tours after watching your video.

Another way to train the recommender system on your product or content is to incorporate paid advertising. In the context of content-based filtering, you will need to focus on bidding for specific keywords relevant to your product, rather than opting for broad keywords with lower conversion rates. For example, if you want Amazon to associate your book with the keyword "machine learning", then you will need to target this keyword in your ad campaigns rather than using a broad keyword such as "computer science" or "technology". If the bid cost for your target keyword is too expensive, then you may need to try using long-tail keywords that are cheaper but still contain the desired keyword. For example, rather than paying 80 cents per click for the keyword "machine learning", you can target the long-tail keyword "machine learning for dummies", which only costs 40 cents per click and will still associate your book with the keyword "machine learning".

Another effective approach is driving paid traffic from an external platform, enabling you to reach a broad audience without disrupting the native recommender system. This way, Amazon's recommender system won't identify the specific keywords you are targeting when you advertise on other platforms like Google or BookBub, for example. It doesn't matter what keywords you are targeting on a third- party platform, because Amazon simply sees traffic coming to your product page. What's more, if the on-page conversion rate is high, this will help to enhance your book's discoverability on Amazon, as conversion and sales are key metrics for recommending books and other items on the platform.

While paid advertising shouldn't negatively affect the recommender system's ability to associate your book with specific keywords, this method is not as effective as targeting relevant keywords through paid advertising on the same platform. When you use Amazon Marketing Services to advertise, you are effectively training Amazon

to associate your product with specific words or audiences. Likewise, when you advertise through TikTok Ads Manager, you are helping to train your content on the powerful TikTok content algorithm.

In the context of collaborative filtering, it's essential to focus on the audience and consider segmenting them strategically to maintain relevance. This practice is often observed on YouTube, where creators operate multiple accounts to target specific audiences based on content preferences. Some football vloggers, for instance, may have one channel dedicated to their favorite team and another broader channel focused on the football league they follow. This approach helps to ensure highly engaged audiences for each channel, and this makes it easier for the recommender system to identify potential audiences.

The next important consideration is assessing what traffic you want to send to your product or content. If you want to promote your new romance novel to a niche audience on Amazon, it's crucial to avoid targeting family and friends who have no prior interest in the romance genre and who aren't likely to make relevant purchases in the future. By selling your book to a mix of readers, the recommender system will be unable to identify and profile the target audience of your book, hindering its ability to recommend your book to those genuinely interested in your niche.

To maximize the power of collaborative filtering, you also want to avoid sabotaging your items with irrelevant paid traffic. Delivering ad campaigns based on broad user targeting and low-cost clicks might lead to a positive return on ad investment, but the broad targeting hampers the recommender system's ability to profile connections between buyers. In addition, a low conversion rate (in terms of purchases or views) will negatively impact your item's visibility in the general search results on the platform and reduce the flow of recommendations. In general, you want to promote your item to a narrow audience with similar interests and accumulate a high conversion rate in order to maximize the power of collaborative filtering.

In summary, vigilance is key when handling traffic and keywords associated with your content or products. How you describe and advertise each item feeds into the training data for the recommender system and impacts future recommendations.

Chapter 8 Principles of Computer Vision

As human beings, we have an innate ability to recognize objects, read signs, and understand our surroundings as we move through the physical world. This effortless ability to comprehend depth, motion, and spatial layouts is a byproduct of our complex visual system, a system that has evolved over hundreds of millions of years. Naturally, as technology has advanced, humans have been determined to impart the same perception of digital and physical spaces to computers, which brings us to the exciting field of computer vision.

As an important subfield of artificial intelligence, computer vision enables machines to understand and interpret visual information. However, unlike human vision, which is based on our biological visual system, computer vision utilizes digital inputs, computational models, and deep learning to interpret and understand the content of visual inputs. This complex process involves various sub-tasks, including identifying objects within the image, understanding the context in which objects exist, recognizing patterns and anomalies, and even predicting future states based on past data.

To learn more about how computer vision works, this chapter will introduce and examine the following use cases: image classification, object detection, and image segmentation.

Image Classification

One of the most common computer vision use cases is image classification, which involves categorizing an image into one of several predefined classes. As a form of supervised learning, the image classification model learns from a training set of labeled images with descriptions of what's contained in each image. By training on many examples, often millions of images, the model gradually learns to recognize certain object classes such as whether the image contains a cat or a dog. However, using supervised learning, the model can only recognize object classes that are included and labeled in the training data. If the model encounters objects that weren't part of the training data, it will struggle to correctly classify or categorize them.

To overcome this limitation, there are a number of other approaches including transfer learning, data augmentation, zero-shot learning (i.e., using knowledge of horses and stripe patterns to classify a zebra), as well as detection and outlier handling. In the case of transfer learning, an existing model trained on a large dataset is fine-tuned and used on a smaller dataset. This approach leverages the general feature extraction capabilities learned from the large dataset and adapts them to the new classes. While it might not fully resolve the out-of-class problem, it can improve the model's ability to handle unseen classes.

Instead of trying to classify everything into predefined classes, anomaly detection and outlier handling focuses on identifying instances that deviate significantly from learned patterns in the training data. This can help the model detect and flag instances that don't belong to any known class, which may be useful for specific use cases such as fraud detection.

A different approach is data augmentation, which involves artificially expanding the training dataset by applying various transformations to the existing images, such as rotation, cropping, scaling, and flipping. This helps the model become more robust to variations in the input data and can improve its performance with difficult cases.

Object Detection

Object detection is a more complex use case than image classification, where the goal is to classify multiple objects and accurately determine their locations. This technique is widely used in applications that involve detecting and tracking objects in images and videos. This includes autonomous vehicles, surveillance systems, face detection, and defect detection in manufacturing, where the ability to identify and locate objects is crucial for navigation and decision-making. Additionally, object detection has paved the way for advancements in human-computer interaction, as it enables gesture recognition and tracking of body parts, facilitating immersive experiences in virtual reality and augmented reality applications.

Unlike image classification where the model checks if the image contains a single object class such as a cat or dog, object detection provides detailed information about where each target object is located within the image. It does this by generating bounding boxes that enclose individual objects before predicting the class of each object. As an example, suppose there is a photo containing a range of objects such as cars, pedestrians, and traffic signs. Rather than make a single classification, the model analyzes the image by placing bounding boxes around each car, pedestrian, and traffic sign, and then individually labels each object.

By capturing the coordinates and dimensions of each bounding box, object detection provides insights into the size, orientation, and proximity of different objects. This information is valuable in applications such as self-driving cars, where precise localization of pedestrians, vehicles, and obstacles is essential for making real-time navigation decisions. Object detection also extends to scenarios where objects might partially occlude or overlap each other.

Image Segmentation

In the case of image segmentation, the goal is to partition an image into multiple segments or regions based on pixel groupings, each of which corresponds to a different object or part of an object. Rather than classify one or multiple discrete objects, it segments the image into regions. This means that instead of isolating a pedestrian by drawing a big rectangular box around them and classifying the object that way, image segmentation will isolate the pedestrian pixel by pixel and assign an object label to that selected group of pixels. This division is based on certain criteria and different levels of granularity, such as color, texture, intensity, or other visual properties, which are used to differentiate different regions. For example, if there is an image of a person, image segmentation can be used to divide it into segments representing the person's face, hair, clothing, and background. By assigning different labels to each segment, we can distinguish and analyze the different regions separately.

Image segmentation therefore aids in understanding images in finer detail than object detection. This makes it useful for tasks requiring meticulous image understanding, including precise boundary determination and accurate analysis of specific components within an image, which is essential for tasks such as image editing or medical image analysis to detect and track tumors.

How it Works

Whether it's image classification, object detection, or image segmentation, computer vision involves a clear sequence of steps that center on taking digital inputs and extracting high-dimensional data to generate numerical information that can be used to analyze and classify objects.

High-dimensional data refers to data with many features, known also as dimensions. In the context of computer vision, this refers to data containing a multitude of features from visual inputs such as images or videos. Within an image, each pixel can be considered a variable or dimension. If the image has a resolution of 1000x1000 pixels, this means there are one million features or dimensions associated with that one image. Further, each pixel contains values representing color intensity, which further

adds to the dimensionality of the data. To decipher the details contained in an image or video with millions of features, computer vision involves a series of complex tasks, which we'll examine in this section.

The first step is image acquisition, the process by which an image is captured through a camera sensor. Here, the captured image is digitized and stored as a grid of pixels, each with different color and intensity values (also referred to as grayscale values, which represent the brightness or luminance of a pixel in an image).

Once the image has been acquired and digitized, the next step is image preprocessing. This involves improving the image quality and extracting useful features. This might include noise reduction, contrast enhancement, edge detection, and other relevant operations.

The next step is feature extraction in which the goal is to identify and extract important characteristics from the processed image. Features might include edges, corners, textures, or more complex structures such as shapes or objects. The exact features that are extracted depend on the specific problem being solved.

Once the features are extracted, they can be converted into numerical representations and used to perform various tasks. In the case of object recognition, the features can be used to identify specific objects within the image. Typically, this is done by comparing the extracted features to those stored in a database. In the case of image segmentation, the features might be used to partition the image into different regions corresponding to different objects or parts of objects based on pixel groupings.

The final step is decision-making, whereby the results of the previous steps are used to make some determination about the image. For example, in object recognition, the system might decide which objects are present in the image. In image segmentation, the system might decide how to divide the image into different segments.

To put this entire process into perspective, let's imagine that we have an image of a person's face and we want to develop an image classification system that can automatically identify the individual in that image. The system would go through the following steps.

1. **Acquisition:** The system acquires the image of the person's face either through a camera or by loading a pre- existing image.
2. **Preprocessing:** The image is preprocessed to enhance its quality and normalize any variations in lighting, orientation, or scale. This step helps to improve the accuracy of the subsequent analysis.
3. **Feature extraction:** The system extracts relevant and distinctive high-dimensional data from the image by identifying key facial features such as eyes, nose, mouth, and facial contours.

4. **Numerical representation:** The extracted facial features are converted into numerical representations, such as vectors, based on numerical values with each corresponding to a specific feature or characteristic of a facial feature.
5. **Training and recognition:** Using a dataset encompassing known facial images of various individuals, the system learns to associate the extracted numerical features with specific identities. This training facilitates the system's ability to recognize and differentiate between different individuals.
6. **Identification:** To identify an image of a person, the system compares the numerical representation of the unknown face with the trained representations of known individuals. It computes the similarity or distance between the numerical representations and determines the closest match, thereby identifying the person in the image.

As outlined, by extracting and analyzing high-dimensional data related to facial features, such as the arrangement of eyes, nose, and mouth, the system can generate numerical information that enables it to recognize and identify individuals in images.

Next, to carry out this sequence of complex tasks, computer vision relies heavily on machine learning and deep learning techniques. Deep learning, and specifically convolutional neural networks, discussed in an earlier chapter, have proven particularly effective at handling computer vision tasks as they can learn to recognize complex patterns and features in images, allowing them to achieve high accuracy on tasks such as image classification, object detection, and image segmentation.

In terms of human input, computer vision projects generally involve a large team with a diverse range of skills and expertise. This includes individuals with backgrounds in computer science, machine learning, and possibly fields such as cognitive science and optics. General software developers or engineers are also needed to integrate the computer vision system into larger software systems or applications.

For supervised learning projects, the team might need data annotators who can label images to create training data for the models. This process often requires a meticulous and detail-oriented approach but can be outsourced using services such as Amazon MTurk or another crowdsourced service. Also, depending on the specific application of the computer vision system, having team members with expertise in the relevant domain can be advantageous. For example, having a team member with experience in healthcare or medical technology can provide important insights for a project related to medical imaging.

Lastly, having team members who are up to date with the latest research in the field can be beneficial as they can guide the team in adopting the latest technology as well as other best practices.

Challenges

Navigating the field of computer vision involves addressing various challenges and potential risks. In terms of technical challenges, one of the biggest challenges is data. The performance of computer vision systems depends on the quality and diversity of the data used for training the model. Amassing a large and diverse dataset that reflects the wide spectrum of scenarios the system will encounter in real-world applications can be a daunting and costly process. This is because real-world scenarios are filled with complexities, including variations in lighting, viewpoint or camera angles, object orientations (which refer to the different possible orientations or poses that an object can take in three-dimensional space), and objects obstructed from view, also known as *occlusions*.

To succeed, the model must contend with these many different variations along with feature similarity. Feature similarity refers to the degree of resemblance or likeness between different features extracted from data points within a dataset. An example of this problem arose when a Scottish football club began using AI to broadcast their matches in 2020, before receiving a public lesson in feature similarity.

After the COVID pandemic prevented fans from attending live matches in the Scottish Championship, Inverness Caledonian Thistle FC made a strategic decision to livestream its matches online. With external support, they arranged an automated camera system equipped with built- in AI technology for tracking the match ball's movement. By tracking the ball, the objective was to ensure that viewers at home always had an optimal view of the game. Instead, the AI camera repeatedly confused the linesman's head for the ball, whose bald head shared visual similarities to the yellow match ball. The camera angle contributed to the confusion, creating the perception that the linesman's head was inside the boundaries of the football pitch.

Pixellot, the company responsible for the technology, had to swiftly update its system after the match, as the incident attracted widespread attention and fed into memes on social media. While this unfortunate example presents a more amusing demonstration of the brittleness of AI and computer vision, the potential cost of a mistake is far more severe when the AI is behind the wheel of a self-driving vehicle. Tesla's Autopilot software has been at fault for multiple fatal crashes over the years, including one case where the Tesla Model 3 collided with a tractor-trailer that crossed its path, shearing off the Model 3's roof.

These case studies underscore the challenges posed by feature similarity and general data complexity. Building capable models that can understand and interpret intricate details across diverse scenarios requires extensive testing as well as the expert knowledge of skilled human teams. In addition, computer vision demands substantial processing power and memory, especially in the context of deep learning. This demand can pose significant challenges for applications that require real-time processing or

when deploying systems on devices with limited resources. Thus, balancing the need for sophisticated models with the practical constraints of computational resources does require careful planning and execution.

Alongside the considerable technical challenges, it's important to acknowledge the non-technical challenges as well. These span from financial to legal risk, and organizations must be cognizant of them when entering this field.

First, developing computer vision technologies can be an expensive venture. The quest for large amounts of training data and computational resources leads to significant upfront costs and the return on investment often takes longer than expected due to the technical challenges mentioned. Second, as with many emerging technologies, computer vision raises a number of legal and ethical dilemmas.

One of the primary dilemmas is privacy. With the ability to analyze images and videos, computer vision applications have the potential to infringe on individuals' privacy rights. Applications such as facial recognition have been a subject of controversy in recent years. In one notable case, Clearview AI, a facial recognition software company, faced multiple lawsuits and backlash after it was revealed that they were scraping billions of images from social media platforms without users' consent.

Similarly, computer recognition is at risk of infringing intellectual property. For instance, accidentally using images or videos protected by copyright to train computer vision models could result in copyright infringement.

In regard to potential legal regulations, various jurisdictions have different regulations regarding the use of computer vision systems, particularly concerning surveillance and data protection. The European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), in particular, places strict requirements on the use of personal data, which includes images and videos analyzed by computer vision systems. Failure to comply with these regulations can result in significant penalties.

In light of the various compliance requirements and ethical challenges, it is vital for organizations working on computer vision projects to have robust strategies in place to manage these issues. This includes implementing strict data privacy and ethical guidelines, engaging in regular bias and fairness audits of their systems, and closely following the legal regulations of the jurisdictions in which they operate.

Despite the various challenges, computer vision remains a vital area of AI development, revolutionizing numerous fields from self-driving cars and automated surveillance to medical imaging, augmented reality, and virtual reality, making it an exciting and rapidly evolving subfield of AI.

Chapter 9 Responsible and Ethical AI

While artificial intelligence brings innumerable benefits and promises of a technologically advanced future, it poses numerous challenges too. As we've touched upon in previous chapters, one of the common challenges is bias and fairness. The concept of bias refers to an unfair and prejudicial inclination or favor towards or against a person or group. In the context of AI, the concern is that prediction models, particularly those involved in decision-making processes, inadvertently replicate and amplify biases present in the training data or the biases of their human creators, leading to unfair outcomes.

These biases can manifest in numerous ways, from racial and gender bias in facial recognition software to socioeconomic bias in credit scoring models. Bias has substantial real-world implications as it can lead to systematic discrimination, marginalization of certain groups, and exacerbation of societal inequalities. This poses not only ethical and social problems but legal ones too, including anti-discrimination laws in many jurisdictions.

One example gaining widespread attention is the application of facial recognition technology. Studies, including the Gender Shades project led by Joy Buolamwini at the MIT Media Lab in the U.S., have found that some commercial facial-analysis systems had lower accuracy rates for darker-skinned and female individuals compared to white males. The reason for this discrepancy lies in the dataset used to train these AI models. If the dataset is predominately composed of light-skinned male faces, the resulting AI model will be better equipped to recognize and analyze individuals from that group, consequently demonstrating bias.

The project thispersondoesnotexist.com, which generates a hyper-realistic portrait of a person who never existed, has also been criticized for failing to generate people with black skin color, which alludes to issues with the training data used to create the model. (It's worth noting that the project was spun up as an online stunt to build awareness regarding the powerful capabilities of AI rather than as a fully polished software product.)

A different instance of AI bias involves decision-making in the criminal justice system. An investigative report by ProPublica revealed that software used to predict future criminal behavior was biased against African-American defendants. The software, designed to aid in decisions involving bail and sentencing, was more likely to incorrectly label black defendants as future criminals, while white defendants were more often mislabeled as low risk.

It's important to recognize that bias in AI can manifest in other forms as well, such as socioeconomic background, age, gender, and disability, making it vital to address a broader spectrum of potential biases to create more inclusive and fair AI systems.

To ensure fairness in AI, it's crucial to take steps in the design, development, and deployment stages. This includes careful selection and scrutiny of training data, implementing fairness metrics, transparency about the limitations of the AI system, and continuous auditing of AI models for bias. These steps, however, are not foolproof, especially as fairness is a complex and context-dependent concept. Like eliminating all forms of bias from schools and businesses, it's not always possible to remove bias completely from AI models.

Privacy and AI

The expansion of artificial intelligence into many aspects of our lives poses significant privacy concerns. AI models, especially those involved in computer vision and recommender systems, are voracious consumers of personal data, which includes sensitive and personal information regarding individuals.

The rise of AI has created a paradox because while these systems rely heavily on data to function effectively and potentially improve our lives, they also infringe on our privacy. Privacy, in this context, refers to the right of an individual to keep their personal information and activities secluded from or inaccessible to others, particularly those who are unauthorized to view them.

Consider social media platforms, which employ sophisticated models to curate and recommend personalized content. While this personalization enhances the overall user experience, it is often based on the collection and analysis of vast amounts of personal data, including our likes, dislikes, location, political affiliations, or even our different moods. This precise targeting ability has profound privacy implications and raises questions about user consent and control over the collection and use of personal data.

Another use case raising concerns is facial recognition. While it can enhance security and streamline verification processes, it can also be used for continuous surveillance, leading to potential misuse. Without proper regulations and safeguards, it can pose a serious threat to individual privacy.

Likewise, AI's predictive capabilities can be complicated when it comes to user privacy. Machine learning models, for example, can analyze large datasets and infer sensitive information, even if that data was not explicitly provided. Prediction models, for instance, have been found to unintentionally expose a person's sexual orientation or political affiliation based on their online activity. These inferences can be disturbingly accurate, leading to potential invasions of privacy that are hard to anticipate and control.

The risks of privacy breaches and unintended data exposure became evident in 2009 when a woman in America sued Netflix over the disclosure of her sexual preferences in the 2007 Netflix Prize dataset. The lawsuit was filed after academic research at the University of Texas demonstrated privacy flaws in the design of the dataset Netflix used for the public competition. Despite Netflix's best attempts to remove personal identifiers from the data, including the names of individuals, the identities were revealed by matching the competition's dataset with film ratings from the publicly available Internet Movie Database. The researchers found that an anonymous user's rating of six obscure movies could be used to identify an individual Netflix user with an 84% success rate. Moreover, accuracy rose to 99% when the date of a movie review was known.

Legal Frameworks

In recent years, new legal frameworks have come into effect, including the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) in the European Union and the CCPA (California Consumer Privacy Act) in the United States. Designed to give individuals more control over their personal data, these frameworks encompass rights such as the right to access personal data, the right to be forgotten, and the right to data portability. GDPR, for example, enforces added transparency for users regarding how their data is processed and the use of cookies on web applications, as well as a clarified "right to be forgotten" when users no longer wish their data to be retained (given there are no legitimate grounds for keeping it). GDPR also requires the encryption of users' stored personal data and the right of users to accept or reject the use of their personal information for the application of online recommendations.

While such legal frameworks raise the bar for privacy and data protection, AI poses unique challenges to these frameworks due to its complexity and the often-opaque nature of deep learning models. In the face of these challenges, various practical strategies are being developed to reconcile AI with data privacy. Techniques like

differential privacy, for example, offer a way to glean useful insights from data while providing robust privacy guarantees. Differential privacy adds controlled noise or randomness to the data before performing any computations or analysis. By introducing noise, the algorithm obscures individual contributions and makes it difficult to determine specific information about any individual in the dataset.

Another approach is federated learning, which makes it possible to train models on local devices rather than using a central server or the cloud under a centralized approach. The latter raises privacy and security concerns as the raw data needs to be shared with a central entity, potentially exposing sensitive information. By using a federated learning approach, model training is performed locally on individual devices or servers, such as edge devices or local servers without the need for data to leave the device and be shared externally.

Another important consideration is the software used to store and process data. To fulfill legal and privacy standards, it's imperative to evaluate different software based on their security measures, data anonymization features as well as data encryption tools to protect sensitive information. Examples of data anonymization include replacing specific values with more generalized values (e.g., age ranges instead of exact ages), replacing identifiers with pseudonyms, and adding random noise to the data to make it difficult to identify individuals while preserving statistical integrity. Regarding data security, the software should offer permissions based on roles to restrict data access to authorized personnel or implement multiple forms of user verification to safeguard access to sensitive data. Also, from an operations perspective, data retention policies are useful for ensuring that sensitive data is not kept longer than necessary.

Finally, there is a need for professionals who can address the ethical and legal implications of AI and abide by the law and industry guidelines. Here, larger organizations should consider the need for hiring AI ethicists and AI policy advocates, who are responsible for conducting internal audits, monitoring best practices, hosting internal training, and working with the government and other companies or industry organizations to establish industry practices.

In conclusion, the issue of privacy in the age of AI is a complex one, requiring a multifaceted approach. It touches not just technological solutions but also robust legal frameworks, ethical guidelines, software controls, and human resources. However, the overall goal should be to create an environment in which AI technologies can evolve without compromising the privacy rights of individuals.

Chapter 10 Data Strategies in Machine Learning

As an ML solutions architecture practitioner, I often receive requests for guidance on designing data management platforms for ML workloads. Although data management platform architecture is typically treated as a separate technical discipline, it plays a crucial role in ML workloads. To create a comprehensive ML platform, ML solutions architects must understand the essential data architecture considerations for ML and be familiar with the technical design of a data management platform that caters to the needs of data scientists and automated ML pipelines.

Data management considerations for ML

Data management is a broad and complex topic. Many organizations have dedicated data management teams and organizations to manage and govern the various aspects of a data platform. Historically, data management primarily revolved around fulfilling the requirements of transactional systems and analytics systems. However, as ML solutions gain prominence, there are now additional business and technological factors to consider when it comes to data management platforms. The advent of ML introduces new requirements and challenges that necessitate an evolution in data management practices to effectively support these advanced solutions.

To understand where data management intersects with the ML workflow, let's bring back the ML lifecycle, as illustrated in the following figure:

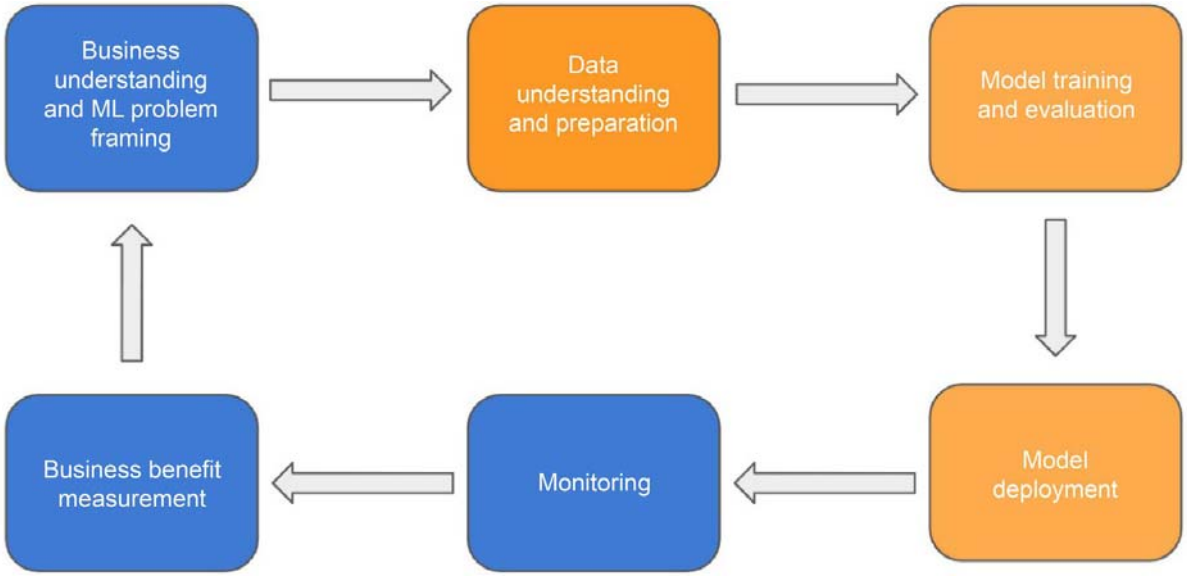

Figure 10.1: Intersection of data management and the ML lifecycle

At a high level, data management intersects with the ML lifecycle in three stages: *data understanding and preparation*, *model training and evaluation*, and *model deployment*.

During the *data understanding and preparation* stage, data scientists undertake several essential tasks. They begin by identifying relevant data sources that contain datasets suitable for their modeling tasks. Exploratory data analysis is then performed to gain insights into the dataset, including data statistics, correlations between features, and data sample distributions. Additionally, data preparation for model training and validation is crucial, involving a series of steps that typically include the following:

- **Data validation**: The data is checked for errors and anomalies to ensure its quality. This includes verifying the data range, distribution, and data types and identifying missing or null values.
- **Data cleaning**: Any identified data errors are fixed or corrected to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the dataset. This may involve removing duplicates, handling missing values, or resolving inconsistencies.
- **Data enrichment**: Additional value is derived from the data through techniques like joining different datasets or transforming the data. This helps generate new signals and insights that can enhance the modeling process.

- **Data labeling**: For supervised ML model training, training and testing datasets need to be labeled by human annotators or the ML model accurately. This critical step is necessary to guarantee the development and validation of high-quality models.

The data management capabilities needed during this stage encompass the following aspects:

- **Dataset discovery**: The capability to search and locate curated datasets using relevant metadata like dataset name, description, field name, and data owner.
- **Data access**: The ability to access both raw and processed datasets to perform exploratory data analysis. This ensures data scientists can explore and analyze the data effectively.
- **Querying and retrieval**: The capability to run queries against selected datasets to obtain details such as statistical information, data quality metrics, and data samples. Additionally, it includes the ability to retrieve data from the data management platform to a data science environment for further processing and feature engineering.
- **Scalable data processing**: The ability to execute data processing operations on large datasets efficiently. This ensures that data scientists can handle and process substantial amounts of data during model development and experimentation.

During the stage of model training and validation, data scientists are responsible for generating a training and validation dataset to conduct formal model training. To facilitate this process, the following data management capabilities are essential:

- **Data processing and automated workflows**: A data management platform should provide robust data processing capabilities along with automated workflows. This enables the conversion of raw or curated datasets into training and validation datasets in various formats suitable for model training.
- **Data repository and versioning**: An efficient data management platform should offer a dedicated data repository to store and manage the training and validation datasets. Additionally, it should support versioning, allowing data scientists to keep track of different iterations and modifications made to the datasets, along with the versions of the code and trained ML models.
- **Data labeling**: For supervised ML model training, training and testing datasets need to be labeled by human annotators or the ML model accurately. This critical step is necessary to guarantee the development and validation of high-quality models. This is a highly labor-intensive task, requiring purpose-built software tools to do it at scale.

- **ML features/embeddings generation and storage**: Some ML features/embeddings (e.g., averages, sums, and text embeddings) need to be pre-computed for one or more downstream model training tasks. These features/embeddings often need to be managed using purpose-built tools for efficient access and reuse.
- **Dataset provisioning for model training**: The platform should provide mechanisms to serve the training and validation datasets to the model training infrastructure. This ensures that the datasets are accessible by the training environment, allowing data scientists to train models effectively.

During the stage of model deployment, the focus shifts toward utilizing the trained models to serve predictions. To support this stage effectively, the following data management capabilities are crucial:

- **Serving data for feature processing**: The data management platform should be capable of serving the data required for feature processing as part of the input data when invoking the deployed models. This ensures that the models receive the relevant data inputs required for generating predictions.
- **Serving pre-computed features/embeddings**: In some cases, pre-computed features/embeddings are utilized as inputs when invoking the deployed models. The data management platform should have the capability to serve these pre-computed features seamlessly, allowing the models to incorporate them into the prediction process.

In contrast to traditional data access patterns for transactional or business intelligence solutions, where developers can utilize non-production data in lower environments for development purposes, data scientists typically require access to production data for model development.

Having explored the considerations for ML data management, we will now delve deeper into the data management architecture specifically designed for ML. It is important to understand that effective data management is crucial for success in applied ML. Organizations fail with ML not just due to poor algorithms or inaccurate models, but also due to problems with real-world data and production systems. Data management shortcomings can sink ML projects despite brilliant modeling.

Data management architecture for ML

Depending on the scale of your ML initiatives, it is important to consider different data management architecture patterns to effectively support them. The right architecture depends on the scale and scope of the ML initiatives within an organization in order to balance the business needs with engineering efforts.

For *small-scale ML projects* characterized by limited data scope, a small team size, and minimal cross-functional dependencies, a purpose-built data pipeline tailored to meet specific project requirements can be a suitable approach. For instance, if your project involves working with structured data sourced from an existing data warehouse and a publicly available dataset, you can consider developing a straightforward data pipeline. This pipeline would extract the necessary data from the data warehouse and public domain and store it in a dedicated storage location owned by the project team. This data extraction process can be scheduled as needed to facilitate further analysis and processing. The following diagram illustrates a simplified data management flow designed to support a small-scale ML project:

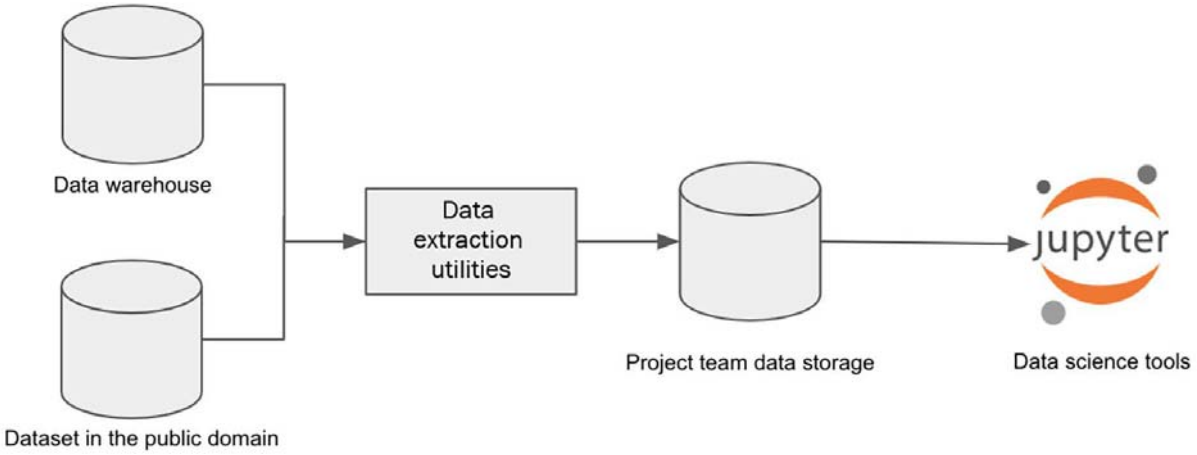

Figure 10.2: Data architecture for an ML project with limited scope

For *large-scale ML initiatives* at the enterprise level, the data management architecture closely resembles that of enterprise analytics. Both require robust support for data ingestion from diverse sources and centralized management of data for various processing and access requirements. While analytics data management primarily deals with structured data and often relies on an enterprise data warehouse as its core backend, ML data management needs to handle structured, semi-structured, and unstructured data for different ML tasks. Consequently, a data lake architecture is commonly adopted. ML data management is typically an integral part of the broader enterprise data management strategy, encompassing both analytics and ML initiatives.

The following diagram illustrates a logical enterprise data management architecture comprising key components such as data ingestion, data storage, data processing, data catalog, data security, and data access:

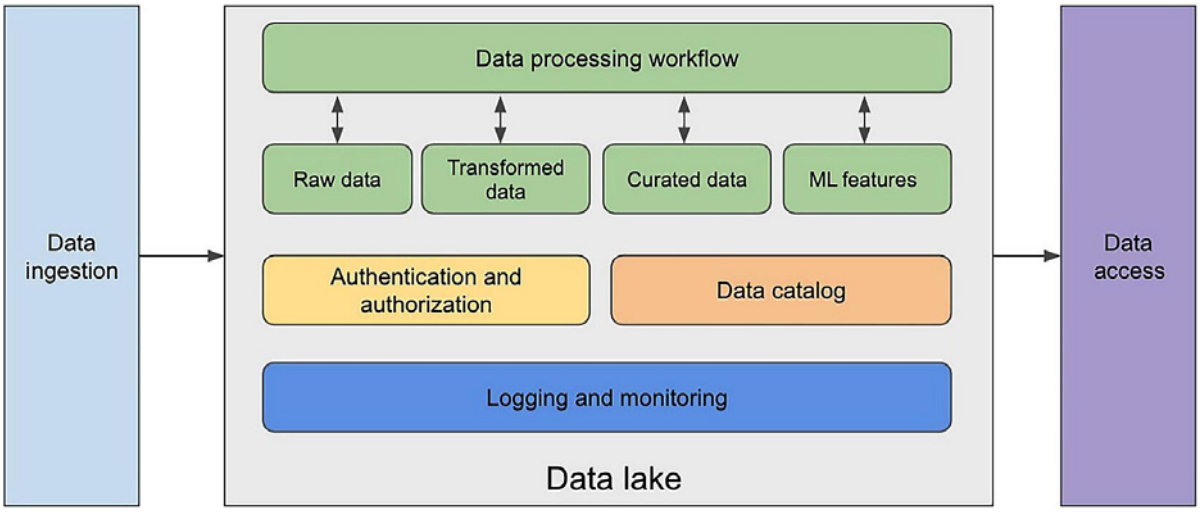

Figure 10.3: Enterprise data management

In the following sections, we will delve into a detailed analysis of each key component of enterprise data management, providing an in-depth understanding of their functionalities and implications within a data management architecture built using AWS native services in the cloud. By exploring the specific characteristics and capabilities of these components, we will gain valuable insights into the overall structure and mechanics of an AWS-based data management architecture.

Data storage and management

Data storage and management is a fundamental component of the overall ML data management architecture. ML workloads often require data from diverse sources and in various formats, and the sheer volume of data can be substantial, particularly when dealing with unstructured data.

To address these requirements, cloud object data storage solutions like Amazon S3 are commonly employed as the underlying storage medium. Conceptually, cloud object storage can be likened to a file storage system that accommodates files of different formats. Moreover, the storage system allows for the organization of files using prefixes, which serve as virtual folders for enhanced object management. It is important to note that these prefixes do not correspond to physical folder structures. The term "object storage" stems from the fact that each file is treated as an independent object, bundled with metadata, and assigned a unique identifier. Object storage boasts features such as

virtually unlimited storage capacity, robust object analytics based on metadata, API-based access, and cost-effectiveness.

To efficiently handle the vast quantities of data stored in cloud object storage, it is advisable to implement a data lake architecture that leverages this storage medium. A data lake, tailored to encompass the entire enterprise or a specific line of business, acts as a centralized hub for data management and access. Designed to accommodate limitless data volumes, the data lake facilitates the organization of data across various lifecycle stages, including raw, transformed, curated, and ML feature data. Its primary purpose is to consolidate disparate data silos into a singular repository that enables centralized management and access for both analytics and ML requirements. Notably, a data lake can house diverse data formats, such as structured data from databases, unstructured data like documents, semi-structured data in JSON and XML formats, as well as binary formats encompassing images, videos, and audio files. This capability proves particularly invaluable for ML workloads, as ML often involves working with data in multiple formats.

The data lake should be organized into different zones. For example, a *landing zone* should be established as the target for the initial data ingestion from different sources. After data preprocessing and data quality management processing, the data can be moved to the raw data zone. Data in the *raw data zone* can be further transformed and processed to meet different business and downstream consumption needs. To further ensure the reliability of the dataset for usage, the data can be curated and stored in the *curated data zone*. For ML tasks, ML features often need to be pre-computed and stored in an ML feature zone for reuse purposes.

AWS Lake Formation

AWS Lake Formation is a comprehensive data management service offered by AWS, which streamlines the process of building and maintaining a data lake on the AWS platform. The following figure illustrates the core components of AWS Lake Formation:

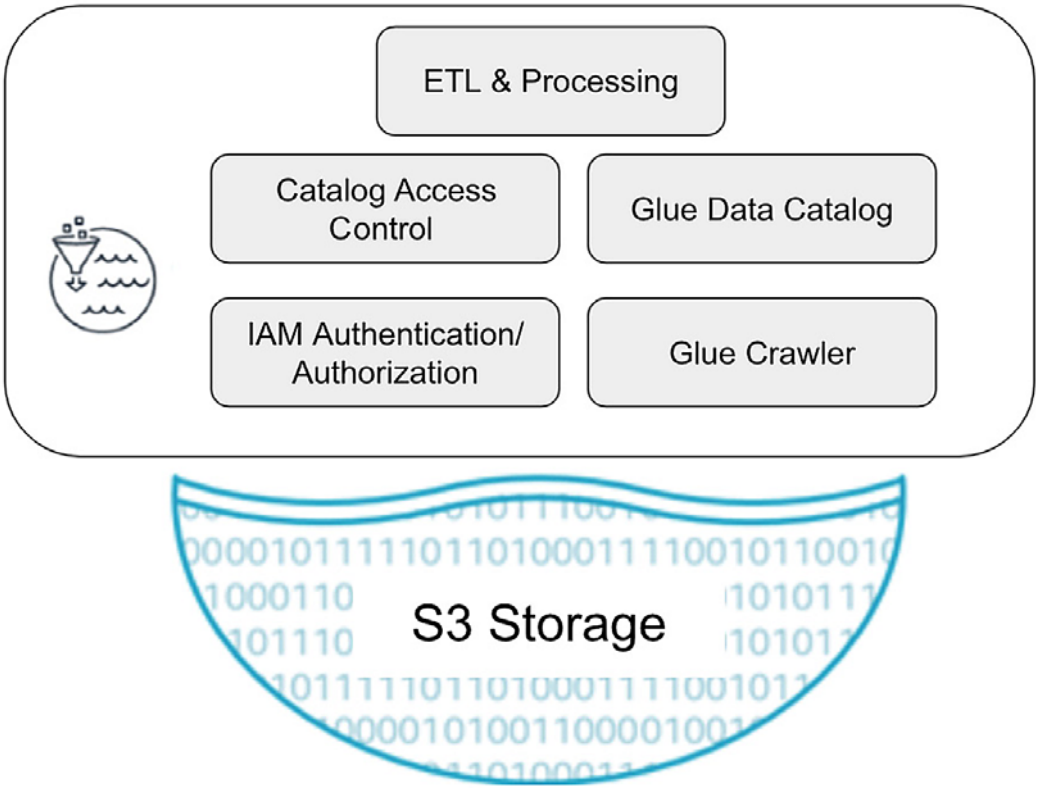

Figure 10.4: AWS Lake Formation

Overall, AWS Lake Formation offers four fundamental capabilities to enhance data lake management:

- **Data source crawler**: This functionality automatically examines data files within the data lake to infer their underlying structure, enabling efficient organization and categorization of the data.
- **Data catalog creation and maintenance**: AWS Lake Formation facilitates the creation and ongoing management of a data catalog, providing a centralized repository for metadata, enabling easy data discovery and exploration within the data lake.
- **Data transformation processing**: With built-in data transformation capabilities, the service allows for the processing and transformation of data stored in the data lake, enabling data scientists and analysts to work with refined and optimized datasets.
- **Data security and access control**: AWS Lake Formation ensures robust data security by providing comprehensive access control mechanisms and enabling fine-grained permissions management, ensuring that data is accessed only by authorized individuals and teams.

Lake Formation integrates with AWS Glue, a serverless **Extract, Transform, Load** (**ETL**) and data catalog service, to provide data catalog management and data ETL processing functionality. We will cover ETL and data catalog components separately in later sections.

Lake Formation provides a centralized data access management capability for managing data access permissions for databases, tables, or different registered S3 locations. For databases and tables, the permission can be granularly assigned to individual tables and columns and database functions, such as creating tables and inserting records.

Data ingestion

Data ingestion is the bridge between data sources and data storage. It plays a crucial role in acquiring data from diverse sources, including structured, semi-structured, and unstructured formats, such as databases, knowledge graphs, social media, file storage, and IoT devices. Its primary responsibility is to store this data persistently in various storage solutions like object data storage (e.g., Amazon S3), data warehouses, or other data stores. Effective data ingestion patterns should incorporate both real-time streaming and batch ingestion mechanisms to cater to different types of data sources and ensure timely and efficient data acquisition.

Various data ingestion technologies and tools cater to different ingestion patterns. For streaming data ingestion, popular choices include Apache Kafka, Apache Spark Streaming, and Amazon Kinesis/Kinesis Firehose. These tools enable real-time data ingestion and processing. On the other hand, for batch-oriented data ingestion, tools like **Secure File Transfer Protocol** (**SFTP**) and AWS Glue are commonly used. AWS Glue, in particular, offers support for a wide range of data sources and targets, including Amazon RDS, MongoDB, Kafka, Amazon DocumentDB, S3, and any databases that support JDBC connections. This flexibility allows for seamless ingestion of data from various sources into the desired data storage or processing systems.

When making decisions on which tools to use for data ingestion, it is important to assess the tools and technologies based on practical needs. The following are some of the considerations when deciding on data ingestion tools:

- **Data format, size, and scalability**: Take into account the various data formats, data size, and scalability needs. ML projects could be using data from different sources and different formats (e.g., **CSV**, **Parquet**, JSON/XML, documents, or image/audio/video files). Determine whether the infrastructure can handle large data volumes efficiently when necessary and scale down to reduce costs during periods of low volume.

- **Ingestion patterns**: Consider the different data ingestion patterns that need to be supported. The tool or combination of several tools should support both batch ingestion patterns (transferring bulk data at specific time intervals) and real-time streaming (processing data such as sensor data or website clickstreams in real time).
- **Data preprocessing capability**: Evaluate whether the ingested data needs to be preprocessed before it is stored in the target data repository. Look for tools that offer built-in processing capability or seamless integration with external processing tools.
- **Security**: Ensure that the selected tools provide robust security mechanisms for authentication and authorization to protect sensitive data.
- **Reliability**: Verify that the tools offer failure recovery mechanisms to prevent critical data loss during the ingestion process. If recovery capability is lacking, ensure there is an option to rerun ingestion jobs from the source.
- **Support for different data sources and targets**: The chosen ingestion tools should be compatible with a wide range of data sources, including databases, files, and streaming sources. Additionally, they should provide an API for easy data ingestion.
- **Manageability**: Another important factor to consider is the level of manageability. Does the tool require self-management, or is it a fully managed solution? Consider the trade-offs between cost and operational complexity before making a decision.

AWS provides several services for data ingestion into a data lake on their platform. These services include Kinesis Data Streams, Kinesis Firehose, AWS Managed Streaming for Kafka, and AWS Glue Streaming, which cater to streaming data requirements. For batch ingestion, options such as AWS Glue, SFTP, and AWS **Data Migration Service** (**DMS**) are available. In the upcoming section, we will delve into the usage of Kinesis Firehose and AWS Glue to manage data ingestion processes for data lakes. We will also discuss AWS Lambda, a serverless compute service, for a simple and lightweight data ingestion alternative.

Kinesis Firehose

Kinesis Firehose is a service that streamlines the process of loading streaming data into a data lake. It is a fully managed solution, meaning you don't have to worry about managing the underlying infrastructure. Instead, you can interact with the service's API to handle the ingestion, processing, and delivery of your data.

Kinesis Firehose provides comprehensive support for various scalable data ingestion requirements, including:

- Seamless integration with diverse data sources such as websites, IoT devices, and video cameras. This is achieved using an ingestion agent or ingestion API.
- Versatility in delivering data to multiple destinations, including Amazon S3, Amazon Redshift (an AWS data warehouse service), Amazon OpenSearch (a managed search engine), and Splunk (a log aggregation and analysis product).
- Seamless integration with AWS Lambda and Kinesis Data Analytics, offering advanced data processing capabilities. With AWS Lambda, you can leverage serverless computing to execute custom functions written in languages like Python, Java, Node.js, Go, C#, and Ruby. For more comprehensive information on the functionality of Lambda, please refer to the official AWS documentation.

The following figure illustrates the data flow with Kinesis Firehose:

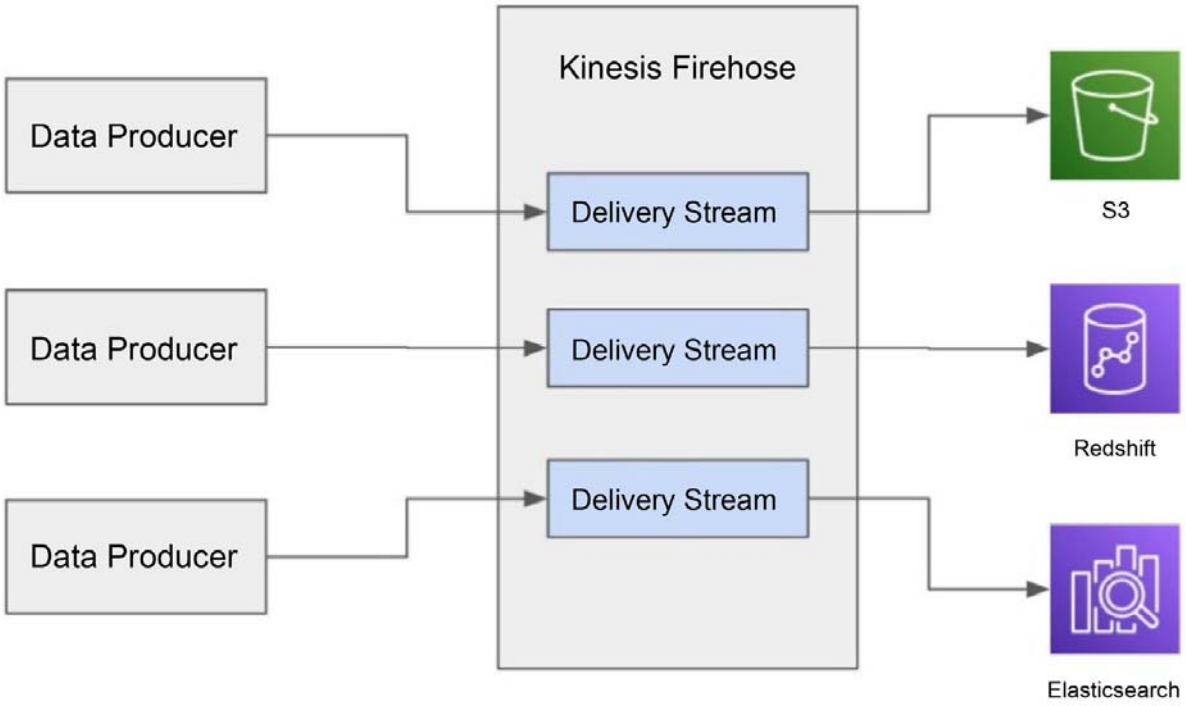

Figure 10.5: Kinesis Firehose data flow

Kinesis operates by establishing delivery streams, which are the foundational components in the Firehose architecture responsible for receiving streaming data from data producers. These delivery streams can be configured with various delivery destinations, such as S3 and Redshift. To accommodate the data volume generated by the producers, you can adjust the throughput of the data stream by specifying

the number of shards. Each shard has the capacity to ingest 1 MB/sec of data and can support data reading at a rate of 2 MB/sec. Additionally, Kinesis Firehose offers APIs for increasing the number of shards and merging them when needed.

AWS Glue

AWS Glue is a comprehensive serverless ETL service that helps manage the data integration and ingestion process for data lakes. It seamlessly connects with various data sources, including transactional databases, data warehouses, and NoSQL databases, facilitating the movement of data to different destinations, such as Amazon S3. This movement can be scheduled or triggered by events. Additionally, AWS Glue offers the capability to process and transform data before delivering it to the target. It provides a range of processing options, such as the Python shell for executing Python scripts and Apache Spark for Spark-based data processing tasks. With AWS Glue, you can efficiently integrate and ingest data into your data lake, benefiting from its fully managed and serverless nature.

AWS Lambda

AWS Lambda is AWS's serverless computing platform. It seamlessly integrates with various AWS services, including Amazon S3. By leveraging Lambda, you can trigger the execution of functions in response to events, such as the creation of a new file in S3. These Lambda functions can be developed to move data from different sources, such as copying data from a source S3 bucket to a target landing bucket in a data lake.

It's important to note that AWS Lambda is not specifically designed for large-scale data movement or processing tasks, due to limitations such as memory size and maximum execution time allowed. However, for simpler data ingestion and processing jobs, it proves to be a highly efficient tool.

Data cataloging

A data catalog plays a crucial role in enabling data analysts and scientists to discover and access data stored in a central data storage. It becomes particularly important during the data understanding and exploration phase of the ML lifecycle when scientists need to search and comprehend available data for their ML projects. When evaluating a data catalog tool, consider the following key factors:

- **Metadata catalog**: The technology should support a central data catalog for effective management of data lake metadata. This involves handling metadata such as database names, table schemas, and table tags. The Hive metastore catalog is a popular standard for managing metadata catalogs.

- **Automated data cataloging**: The technology should have the capability to automatically discover and catalog datasets, as well as to infer data schemas from various data sources like Amazon S3, relational databases, NoSQL databases, and logs. Typically, this functionality is implemented through a crawler that scans data sources, identifies metadata elements (e.g., column names, data types), and adds them to the catalog.
- **Tagging flexibility**: The technology should have the ability to assign custom attributes or tags to metadata entities like databases, tables, and fields. This flexibility supports enhanced data search and discovery capabilities within the catalog.
- **Integration with other tools**: The technology should allow seamless integration of the data catalog with a wide range of data processing tools, enabling easy access to the underlying data. Additionally, native integration with data lake management platforms is advantageous.
- **Search functionality**: The technology should have a robust search capability across diverse metadata attributes within the catalog. This includes searching by database, table, and field names, custom tags or descriptions, and data types.

When it comes to building data catalogs, there are various technical options available. In this section, we first explore how AWS Glue can be utilized for data cataloging purposes. We will also discuss a **Do-It-Yourself** (**DIY**) option for a data catalog using standard AWS services such as Lambda and OpenSearch.

AWS Glue Data Catalog

AWS Glue offers a comprehensive solution for data cataloging, integrating seamlessly with AWS Lake Formation and other AWS services. The AWS Glue Data Catalog can be a drop-in replacement for the Hive metastore catalog, so any Hive metastore-compatible applications can work with the AWS Glue Data Catalog. With AWS Glue, you can automatically discover, catalog, and organize your data assets, making them easily searchable and accessible to data analysts and scientists. Here are some key features and benefits of using AWS Glue for data cataloging:

- **Automated data discovery**: AWS Glue provides automated data discovery capabilities. By using data crawlers, Glue can scan and analyze data from diverse structured and semi-structured sources such as Amazon S3, relational databases, NoSQL databases, and more. It identifies metadata information, including table schemas, column names, and data types, that is stored in the AWS Glue Data Catalog.

- **Centralized metadata repository**: The AWS Glue Data Catalog serves as a centralized metadata repository for your data assets. It provides a unified view of your data, making it easier to search, query, and understand the available datasets.
- **Metadata management**: AWS Glue allows you to manage and maintain metadata associated with your data assets. You can define custom tags, add descriptions, and organize your data using databases, tables, and partitions within the Data Catalog.

The metadata hierarchy of the AWS Glue Data Catalog is organized using databases and tables. Databases serve as containers for tables, which hold the actual data. Like traditional databases, a single database can house multiple tables, which can be sourced from various data stores. However, each table is exclusively associated with a single database. To query these databases and tables, one can utilize Hive metastore-compatible tools such as Amazon Athena to execute SQL queries. When collaborating with AWS Lake Formation, access permissions to the catalog's databases and tables can be controlled through the Lake Formation entitlement layer.

Custom data catalog solution

Another option for building a data catalog is to create your own with a set of AWS services. Consider this option when you have specific requirements that are not met by the purpose-built products. The architecture for this DIY approach involves leveraging services like DynamoDB and Lambda, as depicted in the accompanying diagram:

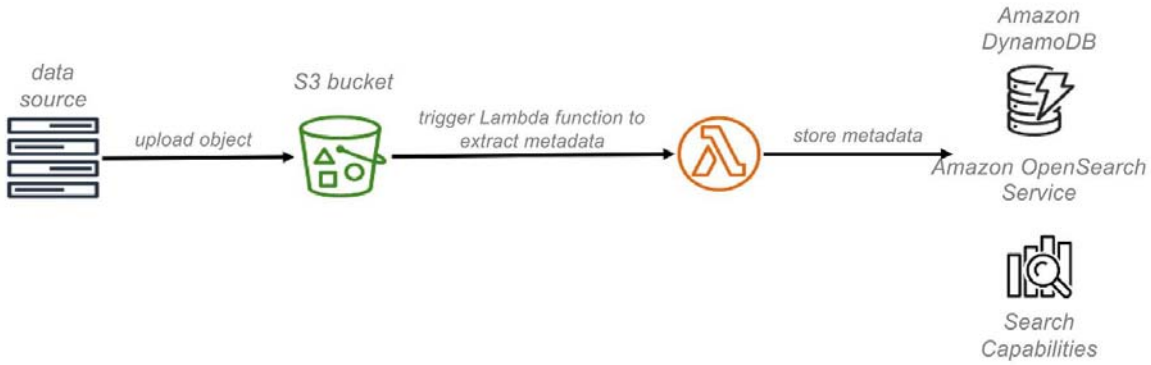

Figure 10.6: Custom data catalog solution

At a high level, AWS Lambda triggers are used to populate DynamoDB tables with object names and metadata when those objects are put into S3; Amazon OpenSearch Service is used to search for specific assets, related metadata, and data classifications.

Data processing

The data processing functionality of a data lake encompasses the frameworks and compute resources necessary for various data processing tasks, such as data correction, transformation, merging, splitting, and ML feature engineering. This component is a key step in the ML lifecycle as it helps prepare the data for downstream model training and inference steps. Common data processing frameworks include Python shell scripts using libraries such as pandas, NumPy, and Apache Spark. The essential requirements for data processing technology are as follows:

- **Integration and compatibility with the underlying storage technology**: The ability to seamlessly work with the native storage system simplifies data access and movement between the storage and processing layers.
- **Integration with the data catalog**: The capability to interact with the data catalog's metastore to query databases and tables within the catalog.
- **Scalability**: The capacity to scale compute resources up or down to accommodate changing data volumes and processing velocity requirements.
- **Language and framework support**: Support for popular data processing libraries and frameworks, such as Python and Spark.
- **Batch and real-time processing capabilities**: The capability to handle both real-time data streams and bulk data processing in batch mode.

Now, let's examine a selection of AWS services that offer data processing capabilities within a data lake architecture:

- **AWS Glue ETL**: In addition to supporting data movement and data catalogs, the ETL features of AWS Glue can be used for ETL and general-purpose data processing. AWS Glue ETL provides several built-in functions for data transformation, such as dropping the `NULL` field (the `NULL` field represents new data) and data filtering. It also provides general processing frameworks for Python and Spark to run Python scripts and Spark jobs. Glue ETL works natively with the AWS Glue Data Catalog to access the databases and tables in the catalog. Glue ETL can also access the Amazon S3 storage directly.
- **Amazon Elastic MapReduce (EMR)**: **Amazon EMR** is a fully managed big data processing platform on AWS. It is designed for large-scale data processing using the Spark framework and other Apache tools, such as **Apache Hive**, **Apache Hudi**, and **Presto**. It integrates with the Glue Data Catalog and Lake Formation natively to access databases and tables in Lake Formation.

- **AWS Lambda**: AWS Lambda can be used for lightweight data processing tasks or as part of a larger data processing pipeline within the data lake architecture. Lambda can be triggered by real-time events, so it is a good option for real-time data processing.

While efficient data processing prepares raw data for model training and consumption, robust data management must also ensure ML teams can track data provenance and access historical versions as needed through capabilities like data versioning.

ML data versioning

To establish a lineage for model training across training data and ML models, it is crucial to implement version control for the training, validation, and testing datasets. Data versioning control presents challenges as it necessitates the use of appropriate tools and adherence to best practices by individuals. During the model building process, it is common for data scientists to obtain a copy of a dataset, perform cleansing and transformations specific to their needs, and save the modified data as a new version. This poses significant challenges in terms of data management, including duplication and establishing links between the data and its various upstream and downstream tasks.

Data versioning for the entire data lake is out of the scope of this book. Instead, we will focus on discussing a few architectural options specifically related to versioning control for training datasets.

S3 partitions

In this approach, each newly created or updated dataset is stored in a separate S3 partition with a unique prefix, typically derived from the name of the S3 folder. While this method can lead to data duplication, it offers a clear and simple approach to differentiate between different datasets intended for model training. To maintain data integrity, it is advisable to generate datasets through a controlled processing pipeline that enforces naming standards. The processing pipeline should also track data provenance and record the processing scripts used for data manipulation and feature engineering. Furthermore, the datasets should be configured as read-only for downstream applications, ensuring their immutability.

Versioned S3 buckets

Amazon S3 offers versioning support for S3 buckets, which can be leveraged to manage different versions of training datasets when enabled. With this approach, each newly created or updated dataset is assigned a unique version ID at the S3 object level. Additionally, it is recommended to utilize a database to store all relevant metadata associated with each version of the training dataset. This enables the establishment of lineage, tracking the journey from data processing to ML model training. The metadata should capture essential information to facilitate comprehensive tracking and analysis.

Purpose-built data version tools

Instead of developing custom solutions for data version control, there are purpose-built tools available for efficient data version management. For example, these tools can be used to track and store different versions of ML training and validation datasets, which are important for repeatable experimentations and model training tasks. Here are a few notable options:

- **Git LFS (Large File Storage)**: Git LFS extends Git's capabilities to handle large files, including datasets. It stores these files outside the Git repository while retaining versioning information. Git LFS seamlessly integrates with Git and is commonly used to version large files in data-centric projects.
- **DataVersionControl (DVC)**: DVC is an open-source tool designed specifically for data versioning and management. It integrates with Git and provides features for tracking and managing large datasets. DVC enables lightweight links to actual data files stored in remote storage, such as Amazon S3 or a shared file system. This approach maintains a history of changes and allows easy switching between different dataset versions, eliminating the need for data duplication.
- **Pachyderm**: Pachyderm is an open-source data versioning and data lineage tool. It offers version control for data pipelines, enabling tracking of changes to data, code, and configuration files. Pachyderm supports distributed data processing frameworks like Apache Spark and provides features like reproducibility, data lineage, and data lineage-based branching.

These purpose-built tools streamline the process of data versioning, ensuring efficient tracking and management of datasets.

ML feature stores

In large enterprises, it is beneficial to centrally manage common reusable ML features like curated customer profile data and standardized product sales data. This practice helps reduce the ML project lifecycle, particularly during the data understanding and data preparation stages. To achieve this, many organizations have built central ML feature stores, an architectural component for storing common reusable ML features, as part of the ML development architecture to meet the downstream model development, training, and model inference needs. Depending on the specific requirements, there are two main options for managing these reusable ML features.

Firstly, you can build custom feature stores that fulfill the fundamental requirements of inserting and looking up organized features for ML model training. These custom feature stores can be tailored to meet the specific needs of the organization.

Alternatively, you can opt for commercial-grade feature store products, such as Amazon SageMaker Feature Store, a ML service offered by AWS, which we will delve into in later chapters. It provides advanced capabilities such as online and offline functionality for training and inference, metadata tagging, feature versioning, and advanced search. These features enable efficient management and utilization of ML features in production-grade scenarios.

Data serving for client consumption

The central data management platform should offer various methods, such as APIs or Hive metastore-based approaches, to facilitate online access to the data for downstream tasks such as data discovery and model training. Additionally, it is important to consider data transfer tools that support the movement of data from the central data management platform to other data-consuming environments, catering to different data consumption patterns such as local access to the data in the consuming environment. It is advantageous to explore tools that either have built-in data serving capabilities or can be seamlessly integrated with external data serving tools, as building custom data serving features could be a challenging engineering undertaking.

When supplying data to data science environments, there are multiple data serving patterns to consider. In the following discussion, we will explore two prominent data access patterns and their characteristics.

Consumption via API

In this data serving pattern, consumption environments and applications have the capability to directly access data from the data lake. This can be achieved using Hive metastore-compliant tools or through direct access to S3, the underlying storage of

the data lake. Amazon provides various services that facilitate this pattern, such as Amazon Athena, a powerful big data query tool, Amazon EMR, a robust big data processing tool, and Amazon Redshift Spectrum, a feature of Amazon Redshift.

By leveraging these services, data lake data indexed in Glue catalogs can be queried without the need to make a separate copy of the data. This pattern is particularly suitable when only a subset of the data is required for downstream data processing tasks. It offers the advantage of avoiding data duplication while enabling efficient selection and processing of specific data subsets as part of the overall data workflow.

Consumption via data copy

In this data serving pattern, a specific portion of the data stored in the data lake is replicated or copied to the storage of the consumption environment. This replication allows for tailored processing and consumption based on specific needs. For instance, the latest or most relevant data can be loaded into a data analytics environment such as Amazon Redshift. Similarly, it can be delivered to S3 buckets owned by a data science environment, enabling efficient access and utilization for data science tasks. By replicating the required data subsets, this pattern provides flexibility and optimized performance for different processing and consumption requirements in various environments.

Special databases for ML

Considering emerging ML paradigms like graph neural networks and generative AI, specialized databases have been developed to cater to ML-specific tasks such as link prediction, cluster classification, and retrieval-augmented generation. In the following section, we will delve into two types of databases—vector databases and graph databases—and examine how they are utilized in ML tasks. We will explore their unique characteristics and applications in the context of ML.

Vector databases

Vector databases, also known as vector similarity search engines or vector stores, are specialized databases designed to efficiently store, index, and query high-dimensional vectors. Examples of high-dimensional vectors include numerical vectors' representation of images or text. These databases are particularly well suited for ML applications that rely on vector-based computations.

In ML, vectors are commonly used to represent data points, embeddings, or feature representations. These vectors capture essential information about the underlying data, enabling similarity search, clustering, classification, and other ML tasks. Vector databases provide powerful tools for handling these vector-based operations at scale.

One of the key features of vector databases is their ability to perform fast similarity searches, allowing efficient retrieval of vectors that are most similar to a given query vector. This capability is essential in various ML use cases, such as recommender systems, content-based search, and anomaly detection.

There are several vector database providers on the market, each offering its own unique features and capabilities. Some of the prominent ones include:

- **Facebook AI Similarity Search (FAISS)**: Developed by **Facebook AI Research** (**FAIR**), FAISS is an open-source library for efficient similarity search and clustering of dense vectors. It provides highly optimized algorithms and data structures for fast and scalable vector search.
- **Milvus**: Milvus is an open-source vector database designed for managing and serving large-scale vector datasets. It offers efficient similarity search, supports multiple similarity metrics, and provides scalability through distributed computing.
- **Pinecone**: Pinecone is a cloud-native vector database service that specializes in high-performance similarity search and recommendation systems. It offers real-time indexing and retrieval of vectors with low latency and high throughput.
- **Elasticsearch**: Although primarily known as a full-text search and analytics engine, Elasticsearch also provides vector similarity search capabilities using plugins for efficient vector indexing and querying.
- **Weaviate**: Weaviate is an open-source vector database. It allows you to store data objects and vector embeddings from your favorite ML models, and scale seamlessly into billions of data objects.

These are just a few examples of vector database providers, and the landscape is continuously evolving with new solutions and advancements in the field. When choosing a vector database provider, it's important to consider factors such as performance, scalability, ease of integration, and the specific requirements of your ML use case.

Graph databases

Graph databases are specialized databases designed to store, manage, and query graph-structured data. In a graph database, data is represented as nodes (entities) and edges (relationships) connecting these nodes, forming a graph-like structure. Graph databases excel at capturing and processing complex relationships and dependencies between entities, making them highly relevant for ML tasks.

Graph databases offer a powerful way to model and analyze data in domains where relationships play a crucial role, such as social networks, recommendation systems, fraud detection, knowledge graphs, and network analysis. They enable efficient traversal of the graph, allowing for queries that explore connections and patterns within the data.

In the context of ML, graph databases have multiple applications. One key use case is graph-based feature engineering, where graphs are used to represent relationships between entities, and the graph structure is leveraged to derive features that can enhance the performance of ML models. For example, in a recommendation system, a graph database can represent user-item interactions and graph-based features can be derived to capture user similarities, item similarities, or collaborative filtering patterns.

Graph databases also enable graph-based algorithms, such as **graph convolutional networks** (**GCNs**), for tasks like node classification, link prediction, and graph clustering. These algorithms leverage the graph structure to propagate information across nodes and capture complex patterns in the data.

Furthermore, graph databases can be used to store and query graph embeddings, which are low-dimensional vector representations of nodes or edges. These embeddings capture the structural and semantic information of the graph and can be input to ML models for downstream tasks, such as node classification or recommendation.

Some of the notable graph databases include **Neo4j**, a popular and widely used graph database that allows for efficient storage, retrieval, and querying of graph-structured data, and Amazon Neptune, a fully managed graph database service provided by AWS.

Data pipelines

Data pipelines streamline the flow of data by automating tasks such as data ingestion, validation, transformation, and feature engineering. These pipelines ensure data quality and facilitate the creation of training and validation datasets for ML models. Numerous workflow tools are available for constructing data pipelines, and many data management tools offer built-in capabilities for building and managing these pipelines:

- **AWS Glue workflows**: AWS Glue workflows provide a native workflow management feature within AWS Glue, enabling the orchestration of various Glue jobs like data ingestion, processing, and feature engineering. Comprised of trigger and node components, a Glue workflow incorporates schedule triggers, event triggers, and on-demand triggers. Nodes within the workflow can be either crawler jobs or ETL jobs. Triggers initiate workflow runs, while event triggers are emitted after the completion of crawler or ETL jobs. By structuring a series of triggers and jobs, workflows facilitate the seamless execution of data pipelines within AWS Glue.
- **AWS Step Functions**: AWS Step Functions is a powerful workflow orchestration tool that seamlessly integrates with various AWS data processing services like AWS Glue and Amazon EMR. It enables the creation of robust workflows to execute diverse steps within a data pipeline, such as data ingestion, data processing, and feature engineering, ensuring smooth coordination and execution of these tasks.
- **AWS Managed Workflows for Apache Airflow**: AWS **Managed Workflows for Apache Airflow** (**MWAA**) is a fully managed service that simplifies the deployment, configuration, and management of Apache Airflow, an open-source platform for orchestrating and scheduling data workflows. This service offers scalability, reliability, and easy integration with other AWS services, making it an efficient solution for managing complex data workflows in the cloud.

Having explored the fundamental elements of ML data management architecture, the subsequent sections will delve into subjects related to security and governance.

Authentication and authorization

Authentication and authorization are crucial for ensuring secure access to a data lake. Federated authentication, such as AWS **Identity and Access Management** (**IAM**), verifies user identities for administration and data consumption purposes. AWS Lake Formation combines the built-in Lake Formation access control with AWS IAM to govern access to data catalog resources and underlying data storage.

The built-in Lake Formation permission model utilizes commands like grant and revoke to control access to resources such as databases and tables, as well as actions like table creation. When a user requests access to a resource, both IAM policies and Lake Formation permissions are evaluated to verify and enforce access before granting it. This multi-layered approach enhances data lake security and governance.

There are several personas involved in the administration of the data lake and consumption of the data lake resources, including:

- **Lake Formation administrator**: A Lake Formation administrator has permission to manage all aspects of a Lake Formation data lake in an AWS account. Examples include granting/revoking permissions to access data lake resources for other users, registering data stores in S3, and creating/deleting databases. When setting up Lake Formation, you will need to register as an administrator. An administrator can be an AWS IAM user or IAM role. You can add more than one administrator to a Lake Formation data lake.
- **Lake Formation database creator**: A Lake Formation database creator is granted permission to create databases in Lake Formation. A database creator can be an IAM user or IAM role.
- **Lake Formation database user**: A Lake Formation database user can be granted permission to perform different actions against a database. Example permissions include create table, drop table, describe table, and alter table. A database user can be an IAM user or IAM role.
- **Lake Formation data user**: A Lake Formation data user can be granted permission to perform different actions against database tables and columns. Example permissions include insert, select, describe, delete, alter, and drop. A data user can be an IAM user or an IAM role.

Accessing and querying the database and tables in Lake Formation is facilitated through compatible AWS services like Amazon Athena and Amazon EMR. When performing queries using these services, Lake Formation verifies the principals (IAM users, groups, and roles) associated with them to ensure they have the necessary access permissions for the database, tables, and corresponding S3 data location. If access is granted, Lake Formation issues a temporary credential to the service, enabling it to execute the query securely and efficiently. This process ensures that only authorized services can interact with Lake Formation and perform queries on the data.

Data governance

Having secure access to trustworthy data is essential to the success of an ML initiative. Data governance encompasses essential practices to ensure the reliability, security, and accountability of data assets. Trustworthy data is achieved through the identification and documentation of data flows, as well as the measurement and reporting of data quality. Data protection and security involve classifying data and applying appropriate access permissions to safeguard its confidentiality and integrity. To maintain visibility of data activities, monitoring and auditing mechanisms should be implemented, allowing organizations to track and analyze actions performed on data, ensuring transparency and accountability in data management.

A data catalog is one of the most important components of data governance. On AWS, the Glue Data Catalog is a fully managed service for data catalog management. You also have the option to build custom data catalogs using different foundational building blocks. For example, you can follow the reference architecture at `https://docs.aws.amazon.com/whitepapers/latest/enterprise-data-governance-catalog/implementation-reference-architecture-diagrams.html` for building a custom data catalog on AWS.

Data lineage

To establish and document data lineage during the ingestion and processing of data across different zones, it is important to capture specific data points. When utilizing data ingestion and processing tools like AWS Glue, AWS EMR, or AWS Lambda in a data pipeline, the following information can be captured to establish comprehensive data lineage:

- **Data source details**: Include the name of the data source, its location, and ownership information to identify the origin of the data.
- **Data processing job history**: Capture the history and details of the data processing jobs involved in the pipeline. This includes information such as the job name, unique **identifier** (**ID**), associated processing script, and owner of the job.
- **Generated artifacts**: Document the artifacts generated because of the data processing jobs. For example, record the S3 URI or other storage location for the target data produced by the pipeline.
- **Data metrics**: Track relevant metrics at different stages of data processing. This can include the number of records, data size, data schema, and feature statistics to provide insights into the processed data.

To store and manage data lineage information and processing metrics, it is recommended to establish a central data operational data store. AWS DynamoDB, a fully managed NoSQL database, is an excellent technology choice for this purpose. With its capabilities optimized for low latency and high transaction access, DynamoDB provides efficient storage and retrieval of data lineage records and processing metrics. By capturing and documenting these data points, organizations can establish a comprehensive data lineage that provides a clear understanding of the data's journey from its source through various processing stages. This documentation enables traceability, auditability, and better management of the data as it moves through the pipeline.

Other data governance measures

In addition to managing data lineage, there are several other important measures for effective data governance, including:

- **Data quality**: Automated data quality checks should be implemented at different stages, and quality metrics should be reported. For example, after the source data is ingested into the landing zone, an AWS Glue quality check job can run to check the data quality using tools such as the open-source `Deequ` library. Data quality metrics (such as counts, schema validation, missing data, the wrong data type, or statistical deviations from the baseline) and reports can be generated for reviews. Optionally, manual or automated operational data cleansing processes should be established to correct data quality issues.
- **Data cataloging**: Create a central data catalog and run Glue crawlers on datasets in the data lake to automatically create an inventory of data and populate the central data catalog. Enrich the catalogs with additional metadata to track other information to support discovery and data audits, such as the business owner, data classification, and data refresh date. For ML workloads, data science teams also generate new datasets (for example, new ML features) from the existing datasets in the data lake for model training purposes. These datasets should also be registered and tracked in a data catalog, and different versions of the data should be retained and archived for audit purposes.
- **Data access provisioning**: A formal process should be established for requesting and granting access to datasets and Lake Formation databases and tables. An external ticketing system can be used to manage the workflow for requesting access and granting access.
- **Monitoring and auditing**: Data access should be monitored, and access history should be maintained. Amazon S3 server access logging can be enabled to track access to all S3 objects directly. AWS Lake Formation also records all accesses to Lake Formation datasets in **AWS CloudTrail** (AWS CloudTrail provides event history in an AWS account to enable governance, compliance, and operational auditing). With Lake Formation auditing, you can get details such as event source, event name, SQL queries, and data output location.

By implementing these key data governance measures, organizations can establish a strong foundation for data management, security, and compliance, enabling them to maximize the value of their data assets while mitigating risks.

End of Book 1