BAD DATA SCIENCE CODING PRACTICES

Vi Ly 7 Jun 2023

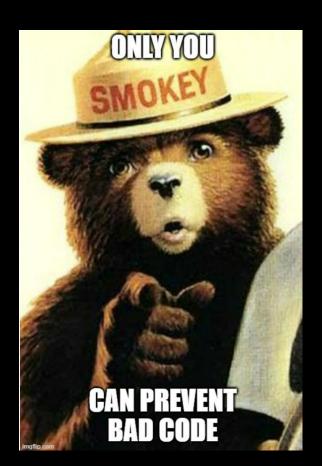
AGENDA

- Why Are Data Scientists Bad Coders?
- Technical Debt
- Bad Coding Practices
- Resources
- Self-Documenting Code
- Python Tricks

Data Scientist: Person who is better at statistics than any software engineering and better at software engineering than any statistician.



- All examples were egregiously committed by a Lead Data Scientist in a single project
- If it can happen to a Lead DS, it can happen to you!



WHY ARE DATA SCIENTISTS BAD CODERS?

- Clean code not "sexy"
- Most DS curriculum do not focus on clean code
 - Too much emphasis on what is the newest, most advanced algorithm
 - Too much emphasis on pandas, numpy, sklearn, etc.
 - Not enough emphasis on basic Python data structures (list, tuple, dict, set)
 - Do not cover Space / Time Complexity (Big O Notation)
 - No concept of Technical Debt
 - No coverage of PEP8
 - Too much emphasis on Notebooks
 - Not enough emphasis on using Integrated Development Environment (IDE)
- What changes between school DS vs. real world DS?
 - Individual sport → Team sport

TECHNICAL DEBT

- Tech Debt: implied cost of future reworking required when choosing an easy but limited solution instead of a better approach that could take more time (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technical_debt)
- Bad code incurs higher tech debt and higher cognitive load
- When do you pay Tech Debt?
 - Someone else on your team takes over your code
 - More time (higher chance for error) is required to understand bad code than good code
 - Someone on another team has to productionize your model
 - You look back at your own code X months later and forgot what it does
 - Data migration
 - Package changes
 - Lots more examples

BAD CODING PRACTICES

- DRY Violations
- Version Control by Naming
- Confounding / Similar names
- Inconsistent Naming Convention
- Commenting Out Unused / Dead Code
- Useless Comments
- Using Magic Numbers
- Verbose Conditionals
- Long Functions
- Crowded Code
- Wildcard Imports
- Mid Code Violations
- Out-of-Order Notebook Cells

DRY VIOLATIONS

- Don't Repeat Yourself (DRY)
- How does it happen?
 - Copy & Paste code blocks
 - Hard-coding values
- Why is it bad?
 - When change is required
 - Spend time finding all the different instances
 - Update code in multiple places higher chance of missing
- Fix
 - Use functions / classes (Vi's Rule of Thumb 2 Probably, 3 Definitely)
 - Use loops
 - Separate files for functions / classes
 - Use better naming / variables

DRY VIOLATION (BAD)

```
array1 = [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6]
numeric_array = array1
n = len(numeric_array)
mean = sum(numeric_array) / n
stdev_numerator = []
for x in numeric_array:
    stdev_numerator.append(
stdev = math.sqrt(
    sum(stdev_numerator) / (n - 1)
z_scores = []
for x in numeric_array:
    z_scores.append(
array1_zscores = z_scores
```

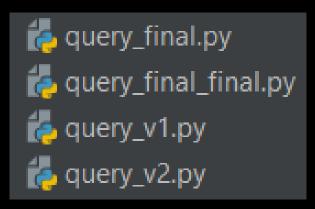
```
array2 = [7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12]
numeric_array = array2
n = len(numeric_array)
mean = sum(numeric_array) / n
stdev_numerator = []
for x in numeric_array:
    stdev_numerator.append(
        (x + mean) ** 2
stdev = math.sqrt(
    sum(stdev_numerator) / (n - 1)
z_scores = []
for x in numeric_array:
    z_scores.append(
        (x - mean) / stdev
array2_zscores = z_scores
```

```
array3 = [13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18]
numeric_array = array2
n = len(numeric_array)
mean = sum(numeric_array) / n
stdev_numerator = []
for x in numeric_array:
    stdev_numerator.append(
        (x + mean) ** 2
stdev = math.sqrt(
    sum(stdev_numerator) / (n - 1)
z_scores = []
for x in numeric_array:
    z_scores.append(
        (x - mean) / stdev
array3_zscores = z_scores
```

DRY VIOLATION (GOOD)

```
import math
|def calculate_zscore(numeric_array):
    n = len(numeric_array)
    mean = sum(numeric_array) / n
    stdev_numerator = [(x - mean) ** 2 for x in numeric_array]
    stdev = math.sqrt(
        sum(stdev_numerator) / (n - 1)
    return [(x - mean) / stdev for x in numeric_array]
array1 = [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6]
a_ray1_zscores = calculate_zscore(array1)
array2 = [7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12]
array2_zscores = calculate_zscore(array2)
array3 = [13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18]
array3_zscores = calculate_zscore(array3)
array1_zscores, array2_zscores, array3_zscores = [calculate_zscore(x) for x in (array1, array2, array3)]
```

VERSION CONTROL BY NAMING



- Why is it bad?
 - Increased cognitive load
 - For someone reading / inheriting your code, they will always think:
 - "Is this the latest version?"
 - "Am I using the right version?"
 - Spend more time searching through all files to ensure there are no other versions

- def train_test_split_v1(*args, **kwargs):
 ...

 def train_test_split_v2(*args, **kwargs):
 ...

 def train_test_split_v3(*args, **kwargs):
 ...
- Fix
 - Use actual version control like Git to track changes
 - If no access to version control:
 - Raise Error / Warning (https://docs.python.org/3/library/exceptions.html)
 - NotImplementedError
 - DeprecationWarning
 - As a last resort: add comment / doc string

CONFOUNDING SIMILAR NAMES

```
def split_train_test(data, test_size):
    ...

def train_test_splitting(data_indices, test_size, random_state):
    ...

def train_test(df_input, month_train, month_test, features):
    ...
```

- Actual Example
 - All 3 functions in the same file
 - Similar names
 - Similar functionality performs some type of train / test split
- Why is it bad?
 - Reader has more to remember
 - Duplication violates DRY principle
 - Harder to refactor
- Fix
 - Generalize function to handle multiple cases
 - Use better naming convention

INCONSISTENT NAMING CONVENTION

```
def calculate_total_amount(amts: List[float], discount: float, tax: float) → float:
    total_amnt = sum(amts)
    if discount is not None:
        discounted_amt = (total_amnt * discount)
        total_amnt -= discounted_amt
    return total_amnt * (1 + tax)
```

- How many versions of amount are used?
 - 4 (amount, amts, amt, amnt)
- Other Examples
 - Using different verb tenses: calculate vs calculating
- Why is it bad?
 - Users expect consistent naming convention
 - More cognitive load having to remember multiple conventions
 - Ctrl + F (Find) & Ctrl + R (Replace) become ineffective
 - Must manually find and replace
 - Higher chance something gets missed
- Fix
 - Use consistent naming convention (variables, function / method names, parameters)
 - When working with others, establish convention early on

COMMENTING OUT DEAD / USELESS CODE

- What is it?
 - You are experimenting and making changes to your code.
 - You comment out old code (so that it may be retrieved in case something goes wrong) during the updates, but never remove the commented code.
- Why is it bad?
 - Comment Hoarder No one ever removes commented code. Comments just stay in perpetuity, or worse, keeps increasing.
 - New people will wonder if they ever need that code
 - More lines of code for people to read
- Fix
 - Delete unused / dead code instead of commenting out
 - Remember: This is why you have version control

USELESS COMMENTS

- What are useless comments?
 - Commenting every line of code with what the code does
- Why is it bad?
 - Waste time / no added value
 - Cry wolf someone reviewing your code will skip critical comments because they think all comments are useless
 - DRY Violation what happens if your code changes?
 - 2 changes instead of 1 (code and in the comment higher chance for error)
- Fix
 - Delete useless comments
 - Use self-documenting code
 - Comments should describe why (and sometimes how) but not what.

USING MAGIC NUMBERS

- What is a Magic Number?
 - A unique value with unexplained meaning or multiple occurrences which could (preferably) be replaced with a named constant
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic_number_(programming)
- Why is it bad?
 - Does not provide context on significance of the number
 - Potential DRY Violation
 - What happens if you have that number hard-coded in multiple places and it changes?
- Fix
 - Use self-documenting code / variable (aka better naming convention)
 - Use comments

MAGIC NUMBER EXAMPLE

• In this example, 1944 is the Magic Number

```
def was_olympics_held_bad(year: int) → bool:
    return ((year % 4) = 0) and (year ≠ 1944)

def was_olympic_held_good(year: int) → bool:
    year_olympics_cancelled_worldwar2 = 1944
    return ((year % 4) = 0) and (year ≠ year_olympics_cancelled_worldwar2)
```

```
def was_olympics_held_verbose(year: int) → bool:
   if ((year % 4) = 0) and (year \neq 1944):
        return True
        return False
def was_olympics_held_notverbose(year: int) → bool:
   return ((year % 4) = 0) and (year \neq 1944)
def is_list_empty_verbose(some_list: List) → bool:
    if len(some\_list) = 0:
        return True
 def is_list_empty_better(some_list: List) → bool:
    return len(some_list) = 0
 def is_list_empty_best(some_list: List) → bool:
    return bool(some_list)
```

VERBOSE CONDITIONALS

- Why is it bad?
 - More lines of code for reader
- Fix
 - Just use the condition
 - For native Python data structures, use their natural 'truthiness' value

```
def get_email_domain_bad1(email: str, case: str) → str:
   domain = email.split('@')[-1]
   return domain.upper() if case.lower() = 'upper' else domain
get_email_domain_bad1('bdsc@gmail.com', 'upper')
'GMAIL.COM'
get_email_domain_bad1('bdsc@gmail.com', 'up')
 'gmail.com'
def get_email_domain_bad2(email: str, upper_case: str) → str:
   domain = email.split('@')[-1]
    if upper_case.upper()[0] = 'Y':
        return domain.upper()
        return domain
get_email_domain_bad2('bdsc@gmail.com', 'yes')
'GMAIL.COM'
get_email_domain_bad2('bdsc@gmail.com', 'y')
'GMAIL.COM'
get_email_domain_bad2('bdsc@gmail.com', 'no')
'qmail.com'
def get_email_domain_better(email: str, upper_case: bool) → str:
   domain = email.split('@')[-1]
   return domain.upper() if upper_case else domain
get_email_domain_better('bdsc@gmail.com', True)
'GMAIL.COM'
get_email_domain_better('bdsc@gmail.com', False)
'qmail.com'
```

VERBOSE CONDITIONALS (CONT'D)

- Don't use str for binary arguments
- Why is it bad?
 - More code to "standardize" argument (i.e. lower, strip)
 - Makes both reader and user think there are more than 2 possible values
- Fix
 - Use boolean argument

LONG FUNCTIONS

- "Brevity is the soul of wit" William Shakespeare (Hamlet)
- "Simple is better than complex" Zen of Python
- Why is it bad?
 - Harder to debug
 - Harder to test
 - May need portions of code in other functions (DRY Violation)
 - Much higher cognitive load
 - Red flag: Do you have to put comments to remind you of what the code is doing?
- Fix
 - Break into smaller functions
 - Define large function from smaller functions

CROWDED CODE

```
|bad = '''
|good = '''
```

- Why is it bad?
 - Harder to read
 - Higher cognitive load
- Fix
 - Use line breaks and indentations liberally (code permitting)

WILDCARD IMPORTS

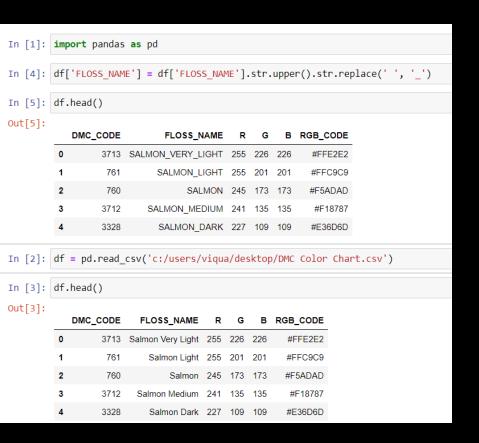
from sklearn import *

- Why is it bad?
 - Violates PEP8
 - Naming collision
 - Spend more time tracing object / variable origin
 - Becomes bigger problem when version changes break compatibility
- Fix
 - Follow PEP8
 - Use namespaces

MID-CODE VIOLATIONS

- Mid-Code Violations
 - Imports & Function / Class Definitions placed in the middle of code instead of at the beginning
 - Violates PEP 8
- Why is it bad?
 - Tech debt More work to productionize code / notebook
 - Forces others to go through all of code looking for imports / definitions
 - Higher chance something gets missed
- Fix
 - Follow PEP8

OUT OF ORDER NOTEBOOK CELLS



- Why is it bad?
 - Not reproducible
 - Creates errors when run
 - Code expected to run top to bottom
 - More time to debug
 - More time to reorder
- Fix
 - Use IDE
 - Re-run notebook after completion
 - Should run error-free

Python PEP 8

- https://peps.python.org/pep-0008/
- Zen of Python
 - https://peps.python.org/pep-0020/
- Ottinger's Rules for Variable and Class Naming
 - https://exelearning.org/wiki/OttingersNaming/
- The Mental Game of Python Raymond Hettinger
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UANN2Eu6ZnM
- Refactoring by Martin Fowler
 - https://martinfowler.com/books/refactoring.html
- Clean Code by Robert C. Martin
 - https://learning.oreilly.com/library/view/clean-code-a/9780136083238/
- Fluent Python by Luciano Ramalho
 - https://learning.oreilly.com/library/view/fluent-python-2nd/9781492056348/

RESOURCES

BAD

```
def do_something(], c, y, h):
    z = y / l

if h or (c ≥ 780) or (z ≥ 10):
    return True

if c ≥ 650:
    return z ≥ 5
else:
    return z ≥ 10
```

BAD

```
def do_something(], c, y, h):

    z = y / l

    if h or (c ≥ 780) or (z ≥ 10):
        return True

    if c ≥ 650:
        return z ≥ 5
    else:
        return z ≥ 10
```

BETTER

```
Jdef approve_loan(loan_amount, credit_score, yearly_income, has_cosigner):
    excellent_credit_threshold = 780
    good_credit_threshold = 650
    excellent_income_amount_ratio_threshold = 10
    good_income_amount_ratio_threshold = 5
    income_amount_ratio = yearly_income / loan_amount
    if any([
        has_cosigner,
        credit_score ≥ excellent_credit_threshold,
        income_amount_ratio ≥ excellent_income_amount_ratio_threshold
    1):
        return True
        if credit_score ≥ good_credit_threshold:
            return income_amount_ratio ≥ good_income_amount_ratio_threshold
        else:
            return income_amount_ratio ≥ excellent_credit_threshold
```

BETTER

```
def approve_loan(loan_amount, credit_score, yearly_income, has_cosigner):
    excellent_credit_threshold = 780
    good_credit_threshold = 650
    excellent_income_amount_ratio_threshold = 10
    good_income_amount_ratio_threshold = 5
    income_amount_ratio = yearly_income / loan_amount
    if any([
        has_cosigner,
        credit_score ≥ excellent_credit_threshold,
        income_amount_ratio ≥ excellent_income_amount_ratio_threshold
    1):
        if credit_score ≥ good_credit_threshold:
            return income_amount_ratio ≥ good_income_amount_ratio_threshold
            return income_amount_ratio ≥ excellent_credit_threshold
```

EVEN BETTER (Even better with Doc Strings)

```
excellent_credit_threshold = 780
good_credit_threshold = 650
excellent_income_amount_ratio_threshold = 10
good_income_amount_ratio_threshold = 5
\mathsf{Idef} approve_immediately(credit_score: int, income_amount_ratio: float, has_cosigner: bool) 	o bool:
        has_cosigner,
        credit_score ≥ excellent_credit_threshold,
        income_amount_ratio ≥ excellent_income_amount_ratio_threshold
\mathsf{Idef} approve_based_on_ratio(credit_score: int, income_amount_ratio: float) 	o bool:
    if credit_score ≥ good_credit_threshold:
        return income_amount_ratio ≥ good_income_amount_ratio_threshold
        return income_amount_ratio ≥ excellent_credit_threshold
def approve_loan(loan_amount: int, credit_score: int, yearly_income: int, has_cosigner: bool) \rightarrow bool:
    income_amount_ratio = yearly_income / loan_amount
        approve_immediately(credit_score, income_amount_ratio, has_cosigner)
        or approve_based_on_ratio(credit_score, income_amount_ratio)
```

```
VΙ
```

Refactor this code:

```
def do_something(I, c, y, h):

z = y / I

if h or (c >= 780) or (z >= 10):
    return True

if c >= 650:
    return z >= 5
    else:
    return z >= 10
```

Bad Code Example

```
Sure, here's a refactored version of the code:
                                                                  Copy code
 python
 def should_do_something(1, c, y, h):
     z = y / 1
     if should_perform_action(h, c, z):
         return True
     return should_perform_alternative_action(c, z)
 def should_perform_action(h, c, z):
     return h or c >= 780 or z >= 10
 def should_perform_alternative_action(c, z):
     if c >= 650:
         return z >= 5
     return z >= 10
                             G Regenerate response
```

My Refactored Code (Before Checking Out ChatGPT)

```
excellent_credit_threshold = 780
good_credit_threshold = 650
excellent_income_amount_ratio_threshold = 10
good_income_amount_ratio_threshold = 5
def approve_immediately(credit_score: int, income_amount_ratio: float, has_cosigner: bool) 
ightarrow bool:
       has_cosigner,
       credit_score ≥ excellent_credit_threshold,
        income_amount_ratio ≥ excellent_income_amount_ratio_threshold
def approve_based_on_ratio(credit_score: int, income_amount_ratio: float) <math>
ightarrow bool:
    if credit_score ≥ excellent_credit_threshold:
       raise ValueError(f'credit_score should be < {excellent_credit_threshold}')</pre>
   if credit_score ≥ good_credit_threshold:
       return income_amount_ratio ≥ good_income_amount_ratio_threshold
        return income_amount_ratio ≥ excellent_credit_threshold
def approve_loan(loan_amount: int, credit_score: int, yearly_income: int, has_cosigner: bool) \rightarrow bool:
    income_amount_ratio = yearly_income / loan_amount
        approve_immediately(credit_score, income_amount_ratio, has_cosigner)
        or approve_based_on_ratio(credit_score, income_amount_ratio)
```

VI

Refactor the code which is delimited by triple quotes.

```
Replace the original variables with new variable names using this mapping:

I: loan_amount
c: credit_score
y: yearly_income
h: has_cosigner

"""

def do_something(I, c, y, h):

z = y / I

if h or (c >= 780) or (z >= 10):
    return True

if c >= 650:
    return z >= 5
else:
    return z >= 10
```



Send a message.

Here's the refactored code using the new variable names:

```
def check_loan_eligibility(loan_amount, credit_score, yearly_income, has_cos
income_loan_ratio = yearly_income / loan_amount

if has_cosigner or (credit_score >= 780) or (income_loan_ratio >= 10):
    return True

if credit_score >= 650:
    return income_loan_ratio >= 5

else:
    Regenerate response
    return income_loan_ratio >= 10
```

- ChatGPT inferred 2 new variable names based on the context:
 - check_loan_eligibility
 - income_loan_ratio

```
- bool: True if the certain action should be performed, False otherwise.
Write the docstrings for each of the Python functions. Functions are delimited by triple
                                                                                                                                                          Copy code
backticks
                                                                                   def should_perform_alternative_action(c, z):
def should_do_something(l, c, y, h):
z = y / I
 if should_perform_action(h, c, z):
  return True
 return should_perform_alternative_action(c, z)
def should_perform_action(h, c, z):
                                                                                        bool: True if the alternative action should be performed, False otherw
 return h or c >= 780 or z >= 10
                                                                                          return z >= 5
defshould\_perform\_alternative\_action(c,z):
                                                                                       return z >= 10
 if c >= 650:
   return z >= 5
 return z >= 10
                                                                                                                                                          Copy code
                                                                                   def should_do_something(1, c, y, h):
                                                                                      """Determine whether a certain action should be performed or an alternat
```

def should_perform_action(h, c, z):

if should_perform_action(h, c, z):

return should_perform_alternative_action(c, z)

Copy code

```
Copy code
def approve_immediately(credit_score: int, income_amount_ratio: float, has_
   return any([
       has cosigner,
       credit_score >= excellent_credit_threshold,
        income_amount_ratio >= excellent_income_amount_ratio_threshold
                                                                Copy code
def approve_based_on_ratio(credit_score: int, income_amount_ratio: float)
   if credit_score >= excellent_credit_threshold:
       raise ValueError(f'credit_score should be < {excellent_credit_thres
    if credit_score >= good_credit_threshold:
       return income_amount_ratio >= good_income_amount_ratio_threshold
       return income_amount_ratio >= excellent_credit_threshold
                            S Regenerate response
                                                                Copy code
def approve_loan(loan_amount: int, credit_score: int, yearly_income: int, ha
    income_amount_ratio = yearly_income / loan_amount
       approve_immediately(credit_score, income_amount_ratio, has_cosigner)
        or approve_based_on_ratio(credit_score, income_amount_ratio)
```

```
Write the docstrings for each of the Python functions. Functions are delimited by triple
def approve_immediately(credit_score: int, income_amount_ratio: float, has_cosigner: bool) -
> bool:
  return any([
   has_cosigner,
   credit_score >= excellent_credit_threshold,
    income_amount_ratio >= excellent_income_amount_ratio_threshold
def approve_based_on_ratio(credit_score: int, income_amount_ratio: float) -> bool:
  if credit_score >= excellent_credit_threshold:
   raise ValueError(fcredit_score should be < {excellent_credit_threshold}')
  if credit_score >= good_credit_threshold:
   return income_amount_ratio >= good_income_amount_ratio_threshold
   return income_amount_ratio >= excellent_credit_threshold
def approve_loan(loan_amount: int, credit_score: int, yearly_income: int, has_cosigner: bool)
  income_amount_ratio = yearly_income / loan_amount
    approve_immediately(credit_score, income_amount_ratio, has_cosigner)
    or approve_based_on_ratio(credit_score, income_amount_ratio)
```

PYTHON TRICKS

PYTHON TRICKS

- Number Underscore
- Tuple Unpacking
- Collections
- Set
- Mapping
- Itertools
- Functools
- Type Hints
- Jinja2
- Black