Final Peer Review

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Going through others' codes and presentations is really helpful. I learned a lot from my classmates in this course. I'd like to give special thanks to the following people for their great contributions.

Jennifer, Evan and Giorgio did an excellent job for all the exercises. Their codes are easy to read with clear explanation. They are my to-go person whenever I am stuck with problems. Jennifer also included a write-up for each exercise, which again facilitates my understanding of her code and what results she got. I actually adopted her method to include a write for each exercise. It is a good habit to make it easy not only for others, but also for myself to understand my code.

I was impressed by Amelia and Su's presentations as well. Amelia gave an introduction of various matrix factorizations at the very beginning. She compared each method in terms of how it works, how it is stored, how it is implemented, and how fast it runs. I like the way she presented it, which is clear, logic and illuminating. Su gave a talk on how ADMM algorithm works. She explained it step by step in a neat and clear way.

Finally, I would like to thank Dongguan Yu for his kind help. We partnered on our final project. We applied spatial smoothing under a context of recommendation based on geographic locations. One key step in doing spatial smoothing is to construct the first difference matrix, I wrote a R program, but it was rather slow due to the size of the data. Then he suggested use C++ and run it in R via Rcpp package. Unfamiliar with C++, I came across many problems when writing the code, and Dongguan was really helpful. The code ran on the fly in the end. I think the point of teamwork is to learn from each other and to contribute fairly. I feel we achieve the goal. He is very collaborative and considerate. We met frequently to discuss the code and assign our job to finish the work before the deadline.

Overall, I like the course and will recommend it to other students (In fact, I've already recommended to my friends!). It is probably my first coding course with so much workload. But I do benefit a lot from it and believe that it will definitely help my research in the future.