

Machine Learning for Bioinformatics & Systems Biology

3. Feature selection and extraction

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Some material courtesy of Robert Duin and David Tax

- Dimensionality reduction
 - Feature extraction
 - Feature selection
 - Regularized classifiers



Feature extraction

- Linear:
 - PCA
 - Fisher
- Non-linear
 - MDS (Multi-dimensional scaling)
 - t-SNE
 - UMAP
 - ViVAE



Feature selection

- Criteria
- Search algorithms
 - n-best selection
 - Forward selection
 - Backward selection
 - ...



• Regularized classifiers

- PAM (Prediction Analysis of Micro-arrays = shrunken centroids)
- Ridge regression
- LASSO (Least Absolute Shrinkage and Selection Operator)



Dimensionality reduction

Aim of Feature Extraction and Selection: reduce dimensionality



Dimensionality reduction

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Why is reducing dimensionality useful?



Dimensionality reduction

Aim of Feature Extraction and Selection: reduce dimensionality

Why is reducing dimensionality useful?

- 1. **Fewer parameters**: faster, easier to estimate possibly better performance
- 2. Explain which measurements (features) are useful and which are not (reduce redundancy)
- 3. Visualisation



- Curse of dimensionality (# features / # samples):
 - for **fixed** sample size
 - and **increasing** number of features (number of parameters)
 - performance **decreases**
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 - 100-1000 times *fewer* samples than parameters!



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- But genomic data (e.g. RNAseq) is extreme:
 - 100-1000 times *fewer* samples than parameters!
- For example: nearest mean classifier on Golub data
 - p = 3051, $k = 2 \rightarrow$ number of parameters = 6102
 - Number of samples, n = 38



Feature selection vs. extraction

• Feature selection: select d out of p features





Feature selection vs. extraction

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Feature extraction:

map *p* features to *d* features (e.g. PCA)





Feature selection v extraction (2)

	Advantage	Disadvantage
Selection	cut in features	expensive
	easy interpretation	often approximate



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	Advantage	Disadvantage
Selection	cut in features	expensive
	easy interpretation	often approximate
Extraction	cheap linear and nonlinear not axis aligned	need all features criterion sub-optimal



Feature extraction (2)

- Linear, unsupervised (= no class labels):
 - Principal Component Analysis (PCA)
- Linear, supervised (= use class labels):
 - Linear Discriminant Analysis (LDA)



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 - which retain as much *variation* as possible
 - which minimise squared *reconstruction error*





Steps:

- 1. Center data
- 2. Compute covariance, C
- 3. Perform PCA on C

Output:

- 1. Eigenvectors: \mathbf{e}_1 , \mathbf{e}_2
- 2. Eigenvalues: λ_1 , λ_2

Reducing dimensions: Choosing 'd'





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Reducing dimensions:

- 1. Choosing *d* = 1
- 2. Project data on \mathbf{e}_1



Choosing reduced dimensionality

• To choose *d* inspect the retained variance,



• or the ratio of retained variance,

$$\sum_{i=1}^{d} \lambda_i \bigg/ \sum_{j=1}^{p} \lambda_j$$

- Rule of thumb: Select *d* for which 80-90% variance is retained
- Reduced dimensionality data set
 - $[\mathbf{x}_1^{\mathsf{T}}; \mathbf{x}_2^{\mathsf{T}}; \dots; \mathbf{x}_2^{\mathsf{T}}] [\mathbf{e}_1, \mathbf{e}_2, \dots, \mathbf{e}_d]$





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PCA example

• *e.g.* NIST digits: 2000 samples, *p* = 256 (16 X 16)







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 x' ← (x - μ)



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PCA conclusions

- PCA:
 - Is global and linear
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 - Is **unsupervised** (but we can do PCA on each class)
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PCA conclusions

- PCA:
 - Is global and linear
 - Criterion: maximizes the retained variance
 - Is **unsupervised** (but we can do PCA on each class)
 - Needs a lot of data to estimate the covariance matrix well.
- Danger:
 - Criterion is not necessarily related to the goal;
 - Might discard important directions



Supervised, linear feature extraction

- **Extraction**: mapping of features to new (sub)space (figure)
- Class label is given, hence **supervised** extraction
- Criterion: Reduce dimensionality and maximize class separation
- Examples: Fisher mapping; Linear Discriminant Analysis





Supervised feature extraction > Criteria

(supervised = we know the class labels)





Supervised feature extraction > Criteria

Within-class and between-class scatter matrices:

Within-class:

$$\boldsymbol{S}_{w} = \sum_{i=1}^{C} \frac{n_{i}}{n} \boldsymbol{\Sigma}_{i}$$





Supervised feature extraction > Criteria

Within-class and between-class scatter matrices:

Within-class:

$$\boldsymbol{S}_{w} = \sum_{i=1}^{C} \frac{n_{i}}{n} \boldsymbol{\Sigma}_{i}$$

• Between-class: $S_B = \sum_{i=1}^{C} \frac{n_i}{n} (m_i - m)(m_i - m)^T$





Fisher mapping: finding the direction (subspace) to project onto for the best class separation
















Fisher mapping

- Find basis vector a₁ for {x} such that in the projections, the classes are maximally separated
- Choose a_1 to maximise Fisher criterion:

$$J_F(\boldsymbol{a}_1) = \frac{\boldsymbol{a}_1^T \boldsymbol{S}_B \boldsymbol{a}_1}{\boldsymbol{a}_1^T \boldsymbol{S}_W \boldsymbol{a}_1}$$

- Maximize between class variance
 Minimize within class variance
- Solution:
 - eigen-analysis on $S_W^{-1}S_B$
 - select c-1 (# classes 1) dimensions for final classifier



oSB

Fisher mapping (3)

- Map down to a maximum of *c* - 1 dimensions
- Example: NIST digits





Fisher mapping (4)

- To avoid fitting noise, can do PCA first
- If system is underdetermined $(n \le p)$, first doing PCA is required, otherwise matrix inversion results in singularity
- But then...?



Fisher mapping (4)

- To avoid fitting noise, can do PCA first
- If system is underdetermined $(n \le p)$, first doing PCA is required, otherwise matrix inversion results in singularity
- But then we might be destroying the class separation as PCA is *unsupervised*



Summary

- Discussed:
 - Linear feature extraction
 - Unsupervised: Principal Component Analysis (PCA)
 - Supervised: Fisher mapping



Nonlinear, unsupervised feature extraction

• Multidimensional scaling (MDS):

- Nonlinear:
 - Sammon mapping
 - t-SNE / UMAP / ViVAE



Nonlinear feature extraction (3)

Example: embedding

 Find new representation such that distances between samples are preserved as well as possible





Multidimensional scaling (MDS)

- Criterion: preserve all inter-sample distances
- Needed: *n* x *n* distance matrix between all samples
- Map samples to a new (lower dimensional) space



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 - easy to introduce nonlinearity
- Algorithms should find:
 - new, low-dimensional coordinates for each object
 - the number of dimensions to embed the data in



- d_{ij}: distance || x_i x_j || in original space (? dimensional)
- δ_{ij} : distance $||y_i y_j||$ in new space (d dimensional)



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- δ_{ij} : distance $||y_i y_j||$ in new space (*d* dimensional)

$$Stress(\mathbf{y}) = \frac{1}{\sum_{i} \sum_{j > i} d_{ij}^{(q+2)}} \sum_{i} \sum_{j > i} d_{ij}^{q} (\delta_{ij} - d_{ij})^{2}$$

• weight factor q = ..., -2, -1, 0, 1, 2,...

q > 0: emphasise large distances

q < 0: de-emphasise large distances (smaller more important)

Sammon mapping: q = -1



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- Compute derivative of the stress with respect to positions of samples in new space
- Adapt the positions of samples in lower dimensional space

$$\mathbf{y}' = \mathbf{y} - \alpha \frac{\partial Stress(\mathbf{y})}{\partial \mathbf{y}}$$



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$$\mathbf{y}' = \mathbf{y} - \alpha \frac{\partial Stress(\mathbf{y})}{\partial \mathbf{y}}$$

• Repeat till convergence (positions of samples do not change)



Embedding new points

- Problematic: re-run entire algorithm...
- Sub-optimal solution: triangulation
 - Embed new point D
 - **D** has **A** and **B** as neighbors in original space
 - Preserve distance to two embedded neigbours A', B' exactly
 - Use C' to decide which of the two candidates D₁', D₂' to use





MDS example



- Neuroblastoma (NB)
 Rhabdomyosarcoma (RMS)
 Burkitt lymphoma (BL)
- Ewing family of tumors (EWS),





Khan et al, Nature Medicine, 2001

t-SNE (t-distributed stochastic neighbor embedding) (van der Maaten et al, 2008)

- In the input (high-D) space, X: compute dissimilarities between all pairs of points using a gaussian dissimilarity measure, pij
- In the output (low-D) space, Y: compute dissimilarities between all pairs of points using a t-distribution (with 1 d.o.f. (Cauchy)) dissimilarity measure, qij
- Minimize the Kullback-Leibler distance between these two distributions



t-SNE: Cauchy and Gaussian distribution





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- Minimize the Kullback-Leibler distance between these two distributions (P and Q)
- t-SNE faithfully retains small distances



t-SNE: Sammon map of digit data (q = -1; de-emphasis of large distances)





t-SNE: t-SNE map of digit data





UMAP (Uniform Manifold Approximation and Projection)

• As t-SNE constructs a high-D graph representation of the data then optimizes a low-D graph to be as structurally similar


UMAP

(Uniform Manifold Approximation and Projection)

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- High-D graph:
 - "fuzzy simplicial complex"
 - weighted graph: edge weights representing the likelihood that two points are connected.
 - Connects points within a certain radius
 - Radius includes nth neighbor
 - "Fuzzy" likelihood of connection decreases with radius



UMAP

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- As t-SNE constructs a high-D graph representation of the data then optimizes a low-D graph to be as structurally similar
- High-D graph:
 - "fuzzy simplicial complex"
 - weighted graph: edge weights representing the likelihood that two points are connected.
 - Connects points within a certain radius
 - Radius includes nth neighbor
 - "Fuzzy" likelihood of connection decreases with radius
- Low-D graph:
 - optimizes layout of a low-D graph to be as similar as possible
 - This process is essentially the same as in t-SNE
 - Using a few clever tricks for speed



n_neighbors

- # approximate nearest neighbors used to construct the initial high-D graph.
- controls how UMAP balances local versus global structure

min_dist:

- minimum distance between points in low-D space.
- controls how tightly UMAP clumps points together
 - low values = tightly packed embeddings.



Original 3D Data

2D UMAP Projection

Local structure emphasized Tightly packed low-D

n_neighbors: 3 min_dist: 0.0

Original 3D Data 2D UMAP Projection

Global structure emphasized Tightly packed low-D

n_neighbors: 200 min_dist: 0.0

Original 3D Data

2D UMAP Projection

Global structure emphasized Loosely packed low-D

n_neighbors: 200 min_dist: 0.99

ViVAE (Novak et al. bioRxiv, 2024)

- Imposes a structure-preserving (Quartet loss):
 - Preserve relative distances within quartets (groups of 4) of points that are randomly (repeatedly) drawn



(joint intra-quartet distance preservation)

BioSB

Novak et al. bioRxiv, 2024

ViVAE (Novak et al. bioRxiv, 2024)

- Uses a variational autoencoder (VAE), to optimise both local and global distances between points.
- VAE is trained to optimise all the intra-quartet distances jointly at each iteration.



Comparison of approaches (zebrafish embryo)



MDS conclusions

- Experts or measurements provide distances
- Optimise a stress-function (MDS) or KL distance (t-SNE)
- Important:
 - *the distance measure used:* is it representative?
 - Parameter choices can influence outcome heavily.
- Remaining problem: embedding new data points
- t-SNE (and now UMAP, ViVAE) are modern techniques to perform representation of data in high-D space in 2D
- Use multiple methods (or multiple parameter settings) to prevent over-interpretation



Supervised Feature selection

- For supervised feature selection, we need:
 - A criterion function

e.g. error, class overlap, information loss

• A search algorithm

e.g. pick the best single feature at each time





Feature selection > Criteria > Wrapper

- 1. Wrapper: exact performance measure
 - base performance estimate on classifier;
 - estimate performance using cross-validation:
 - very expensive!



Feature Selection > Criteria > Wrapper

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Note:

we should never use the training set to calculate performance; this will give a biased estimate!



Feature Selection > Criteria

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 - base performance estimate on classifier;
 - estimate performance using cross-validation:
 - very expensive!

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- 2. Filter: approximate performance predictors:
 - calculate the performance of an easy-to-use/'cheap' model
 - indication of how well a more powerful model may perform
 - is much faster to compute.



Feature Selection > Criteria > Filter

- Example
 - Simple measure of the 'separability' of classes given a feature
 - 1D case: Signal-to-Noise Ratio (SNR) or Fisher criterion:

$$J_{F} = \frac{|m_{1} - m_{2}|^{2}}{(\sigma_{1}^{2} + \sigma_{2}^{2})}$$





Feature Selection > Criteria > Filter

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 - Simple measure of the 'separability' of classes given a feature
 - 1D case: Signal-to-Noise Ratio (SNR) or Fisher criterion:

$$J_{F} = \frac{\left|m_{1} - m_{2}\right|^{2}}{\left(\sigma_{1}^{2} + \sigma_{2}^{2}\right)}$$

- If J_F is large: good separability
- If J_F is small: poor separability





Feature Selection > Criteria > Filter

- The multi-variate equivalent of the Fisher criterion is the
- Mahalanobis distance:
 - assumes
 - Gaussian distributions with
 - equal covariance matrix Σ:

$$D_{M} = (m_{1} - m_{2})^{T} \Sigma^{-1} (m_{1} - m_{2})$$
$$\Sigma = \sum_{i=1}^{C} \frac{n_{i}}{n} \Sigma_{i}$$



- Feature selection: select a subset of *d* out of *p* features which optimises the criterion
- Brute force solution: consider all possible subsets

• Problem: there are
$$\binom{p}{d} = \frac{p!}{(p-d)!d!}$$
 subsets

• e.g. p = 50 features,

d = 2 : 1225 subsets d = 5 : 2.1 x 10⁶ subsets d = 25: 1.3 x 10¹⁴ subsets



- Sub-optimal algorithms:
 - Simplest: d best (individually evaluated)
 but these are not necessarily the best d ! ("dB not Bd")
 - Demonstration: two Gaussians; select 2 features out of 3 for classification







































- Other sub-optimal algorithms:
 - Forward selection (for when *d* is low)
 - start with empty set
 - keep adding one feature at a time so that the entire subset so far performs best



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 - Backward selection (for when *d* is high)
 - start with entire set
 - keep removing one feature at a time so that the entire subset so far performs best
 - Plus-*l*-takeaway-*r* (may be slightly better)
 - start with empty set (if l > r) or entire set (if l < r)
 - keep adding best *l* and removing worst *r*



Feature Selection > Search algorithms > Stopping

- When should we stop?
 - Due to estimation problems (*e.g.* covariance matrix), we may be overtraining on training set
 - This is revealed by increasing error on the test set



 Otherwise (with very large sample sizes), we will have to specify a desired number of measurements



Example: Recursive feature elimination (RFE)

Wrapper, Backward search



What can go wrong?

Selection bias...

- Guyon et al. (2002). Machine Learning **46**, 389 422.
- Ambroise and McLachlan (2002). PNAS **99**, 6562-6566.



Biased selection





Unbiased selection





Ambroise & McLachlan experiments




Ambroise & McLachlan experiments

Colon vs. normal data





Ambroise & McLachlan experiments

Random data





Cross-validation

• Remember:

Note:

we should never use the training set to calculate performance; this will give a biased estimate!

- for small sample size: use cross-validation
- Cross-validation should be applied to every choice made, including:
 - the number of features to use
 - the features to use
 - the type of classifier to use

• ...



Feature selection: summary

- Feature selection can improve performance and help interpretation
- Requirements: a criterion and a search algorithm
- Methodology (cross-validation) is very important, especially for 'p >> n' problems, e.g. RNAseq data
- There seems to be some evidence that the simplest methods (individual selection) work best



Shrinkage

- Feature selection: selects a subset of features (1/0)
- Feature extraction: combinations of features are constructed based on variance and accuracy arguments
- Regularization 1: control contribution of genes to classifier based on individual quality and control degree of contribution with cross-validated classification error
- Regularization 2: combines accuracy (error) and penalty on large weights (= simple models) in one criterion.



Shrunken centroids

- Same principle as forward filtering
- Genes are evaluated *individually*
- BUT, do not start with the best and keep adding;
- RATHER, start removing worst genes from the back
- In PAM* genes can participate 'partially', in forward filtering a gene is either 100% in or out.

* PAM: Prediction analysis of micro-arrays; R. Tibshirani, T. Hastie, B. Narasimhan and G. Chu. Diagnosis of multiple cancer types by shrunken centroids of gene expression. PNAS 99(10):6567 6572, 2002.



Shrunken centroids (1) Step 1: Compute class centroids per gene



Shrunken centroids (2) Step 1: Compute class centroids per gene



Shrunken centroids (3) Step 2: Compute overall centroids per gene



Shrunken centroids (4) Step 3: Compute d per gene



Shrunken centroids (4) Step 3: Compute d per gene



Shrunken centroids (5) Step 3: Compute d per gene



Shrunken centroids (6) Step 4: Shrink the centroids



Shrunken centroids (7) Step 5: Classify with shrunken centroids / perf.













Shrunken centroids: selecting the genes Normal Cancer CV Performance Gene 1 Gene 2 Gene 3 Gene 4 Gene 5 # Gene 6 genes Gene 7 Gene 8

Train classifier on all 8 genes; estimate CV performance

BIOSE

Shrink all d by $\Delta = 1$: reduce length by 1



Shrink all d by Δ =2: reduce length by 2



Shrink all d by Δ =3: reduce length by 3



Shrink all d by Δ =7: reduce length by 7



Determining the optimal $\boldsymbol{\Delta}$

- 1. Split the data (X) in 10 equal parts (x_1, \dots, x_{10})
- 2. For each of the 10 folds (i=1,2,...,10)
- 3. On the training set $(X \setminus x_i)$
 - 1. Compute the class and overall centroids
 - **2.** For a range of Δ (Δ = [0,0.5,...,7])
 - i. Shrink d for all genes
 - ii. Compute 'shrunken centroids' on training set

ii. Test the resulting classifier on the test set (x_i)

3. Result: 10 Curves of performance vs. Δ

- 4. Average all 10 curves and compute std. dev. at each Δ
- 5. Pick the Δ where the performance is maximal (error min.)







PAM

- For the Khan datat set*; 4 classes of small round blue cell tumors (SRBCT): BL, EWS, NB, RMS
- At optimal Δ : 43 genes *not* shrunk away



4 classes:

Neuroblastoma (NB) Rhabdomyosarcoma (RMS) Burkitt lymphoma (BL) Ewing family of tumors (EWS),



*R. Tibshirani *et al.* (2002) PNAS 99(10):6567-6572, 2002.

PAM (2)











At optimal Δ : 43 genes *not* shrunk away



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- Burkitt lymphoma (BL)
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Scoring samples by posterior prob's





Shrinkage

- PAM: controls contribution of genes to classifier based on individual quality (d-measure) and controls degree of contribution with cross-validated classification error
- Other approach: regularisation, combine error and penalty for number of genes explicitly



Regularization

- Regularization 1: control contribution of genes to classifier based on individual quality and control degree of contribution with cross-validated classification error
- Regularization 2: combines accuracy (error) and penalty on large weights (= simple models) in one criterion.



Shrinkage (2)

• Model:
$$y = \beta_0 + \sum_{i=1}^p \beta_i x_i + \varepsilon$$

- Penalised (*aka* regularised) least squares:
 - Ridge regression:

$$\hat{\boldsymbol{\beta}} = \arg\min_{\boldsymbol{\beta}} \left[\sum_{j=1}^{n} \left(y_j - \beta_0 - \sum_{i=1}^{p} \beta_i x_{j,i} \right)^2 + \lambda \sum_{i=1}^{p} \beta_i^2 \right]$$

• LASSO: minimise

$$\hat{\boldsymbol{\beta}} = \arg\min_{\boldsymbol{\beta}} \left[\sum_{j=1}^{n} \left(y_j - \beta_0 - \sum_{i=1}^{p} \beta_i x_{j,i} \right)^2 + \lambda \sum_{i=1}^{p} |\beta_i| \right]$$



LASSO

• Difference seems small, but effect of LASSO is that genes are no longer used (like in PAM!)





Final summary

- Feature extraction:
 - Linear:
 - PCA,
 - Fisher
 - Non-linear
 - MDS
- Feature selection:
 - Criteria
 - search algorithms
 - forward,
 - backward,
 - branch & bound.
- Sparse classifiers:
 - Ridge,
 - LASSO



Practical session: Feature selection

- All datasets are called a
- fsel creates a mapping w which can be applied to a data set.
- Example, select d = 5 features from a:
 - w = fsel(a,'individual','NN',5)
 - b = a*w will give you a dataset b with 5 features
 - To return a list of ranked features, call it like this
 - [w,list] = fsel(a);
 - Then create a dataset b with the best d features like this:
 - b = a*w(:,1:d);



Practical session: feature selection

- [W,LIST] = fsel (DATA, ALGORITHM, CRITERION, P)
- Defaults: ALGORITHM = 'individual', CRITERION = 'NN'
- Smarter ALGORITHMs are:
 - forward selection: 'forward'
 - backward selection: 'backward'
 - (Ignore rest)
- CRITERION: (only use these)
 - 'maha-s': sum of estimated Mahalanobis distances.
 - 'NN' : 1-NN leave-one-out classification performance
 - (Ignore rest)


Exercises

- Exercise 3.1
 - Only use the iris dataset (not biomed)
- Exercise 3.3
 - Script on next page
- Exercise 3.7d onwards: 2 modes of calling PCA
 - load housing
 - [W,FRAC] = pca(a,1); % get a mapping W
 - W.data.rot(:,1);
 - figure(1); plot(W.data.rot(:,1));
 - v = pca(a,0); % get the variance retained v
 - figure(2);plot(v);
 - figure(3); plot(var(a));

