STAT 391
Homework 4
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Due May 5, 2020

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Problem 1 – Rescuing Rob

Rob is a robot that roams in the basement of the new CSE building. The basement is fairly crowded and Rob has to detect and recognize several kinds of obstacles. For this he has a sonar that works in the following way: the sonar sends an ultrasound beam towards the obstacle, and then records the times at which it receives the returning echos. Then Rob's brain computes the distribution of the echos and matches it against it's "directory" of distribution signatures. There are three types of obstacles in Rob's catalog:

People When the "obstacle" is a person, Rob has to stop and let them pass by. A person has a sonar signature in the shape of a Gaussian (normal) density.

Furniture These obstacles have to be detoured. Furniture appears on Rob's sonar as having a logistic CDF given by

$$F(x; a, b) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-ax-b}} \tag{1}$$

$$f(x; a, b) = \frac{ae^{-ax-b}}{[1 + e^{-ax-b}]^2} \tag{2}$$

Trash When Rob encounters trash, he has to pick it up. Trash is represented by a uniform density over interval $[\alpha, \beta]$.

This week, Rob walked too close to the picture of the Steam Powered Turing Machine[1] and a stream of boiling hot bits hit his memory circuits erasing the precious signature directory. Luckily, Rob still recalls that the last things he "saw" before the accident were: an undergraduate student, a chair and an empty can of coke and he still has their signatures stored in the files `hw4-ugrad.dat, hw4-chair.dat, hw4-coke.dat` whose copies are linked to the STAT 391 Assignments web page. Help Rob recover his memory:

a. Estimate the parameters μ and σ^2 of the normal density that best fits the data in the file `hw4-ugrad.dat` by the Maximum Likelihood method. The data is in ASCII format, with spaces as separators. Make a plot of the estimated density f_{ugrad}.

b. Estimate the parameters a, b of the logistic density that best fits the data in the file `hw4-chair.dat` by the Maximum Likelihood method. The data is in ASCII format, with spaces as separators. Make a plot of the log-likelihood of the data at each iteration. Also, plot of the estimated density f_{chair}, on the same plot with f_{ugrad} from **a.**

Hint on doing the gradient ascent: Use the gradient formulas in the notes. Be careful chosing the step-size (and try a wide range of step-sizes to find a good one)! Plot the values of your parameters, and gradient, in addition to the log-likelihood. These plots are not required as part of the homework, but they are useful diagnostic tools. If you notice that the values oscillate, this is usually a sign that

[1] `https://www.cs.washington.edu/art/SPTM`

the step size is too large. If the values change too slowly, you can try increasing the step size. By the way, the step sizes that you try should be in a geometric not arithmetic progression (for example $\ldots\ 10^0\ 10^{-1}\ 10^{-2}\ 10^{-3}\ 10^{-4}\ 10^{-5}\ \ldots$ and not $\ldots 0.1\ 0.95\ 0.90\ 0.85\ \ldots$).

c. Compute the Maximum Likelihood estimates for the parameters α, β of the uniform distribution from the data in the file `hw4-coke.dat`. The data is in ASCII format, with spaces as separators.

Of course, it is dangerous to use the ML estimate for a uniform distribution without correction, so extend the length of the interval by

$$\frac{0.1(\beta^{ML} - \alpha^{ML})}{n}$$

at each end. Plot the resulting uniform density f_{coke} on the same graph as f_{ugrad} and f_{chair}.

d. After having had his memory restored, Rob suddenly finds himself facing an unknown object whose signature is given in the file `hw4-unknown.dat`. Help Rob once more: tell him what is the object in front of him! For this, you need to compute the log-likelihood of the new data $\mathcal{D}_{unknown}$ under each of the three models. Print these log-likelihood values. The model that best predicts $\mathcal{D}_{unknown}$ (i.e gives it the highest log-likelihood) is Rob's guess of the identity of the object.

e. Plot the data $\mathcal{D}_{unknown}$ on the same graph as the densities from **a,b,c**. [Hint: to plot a density $f(x)$, choose a dense enough grid of points $x_{g1}, x_{g2}, \ldots x_{gN}$ and compute f at those points. Then plot $(x_{g1}, f(x_{g1}))$, $(x_{g2}, f(x_{g2}))$, …, etc.]

For this problem no proofs are required, but show the formulas that you use and the numerical results. In general, you should freely use the results from the lecture + course notes without proof. Submit the code through Canvas.

The task that you just performed for Rob is another example of *classification* – identifying an object as belonging to one of several *classes*. Rob's classes are people, furniture and trash. There are many methods of doing classification, not all of them statistical. The method that Rob is using, i.e comparing the likelihoods of the new data under the different class models, is a *likelihood ratio* method.

In the past robots used sonars for navigation, but these days they use lasers, GPS and cameras. They still use statistical methods to identify the shape of their environment.

Problem 2 – Maximum Likelihood with censored data

You are given samples $\{x_1, \ldots x_n\}$ from an exponential distribution with unknown parameter γ. But, by mistake, you store the data in the wrong format, which only preserves whether the data point was greater than 1 or not.

$$y_i \;=\; \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } x_i \in [0,1] \\ 1 & \text{if } x_i > 1 \end{cases} \qquad \text{for } i = 1:n. \tag{3}$$

We say that the y_i observations are *censored* observations of the data x_i. With only the censored data $\{y_1, \ldots y_n\}$ you will estimate γ.

a. Write the probability that $y_i = 1$ as a function of γ.

b. Derive the expression of the log-likelihood $l(\gamma) = \ln P(y_{1:n}|\gamma)$ as a function of γ.

c. Maximize l w.r.t. γ and obtain the expression for γ^{ML}. [**Hint:** You may find it helpful to denote $\theta = e^{-\gamma}$ and use this variable in your maximization problem.]

d. Does this problem have sufficient statistics? How many and what are they?

[e. Not graded]… *but you are encouraged to answer or just think of this: Is the estimate of γ you are obtaining "better", "worse", "the same" as you would have obtained had you not lost the original data $x_{1:n}$? Can you give a formal meaning to "better"?*

[f. Extra credit] Sample $n = 100$ points from an exponential distribution with $\gamma = 1$, censor them, and estimate γ^{ML} from $x_{1:n}$ and γ^c from $y_{1:n}$. Compare the accuracy of the values obtained.

Note that if you only do this experiment once, the values γ^{ML}, γ^c are random, hence they can be (almost) anything. Therefore... For more credit, repeat the experiment N times, and display histograms of the N

values γ^{ML}, γ^{c} obtained and comment on what you find. *This is a reasonable use of histograms. Submit your code for* **f.** *if you solve it*