Lecture 6: Probabilistic graphical models



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Outline

Probabilistic graphical models (also known as Bayesian networks) combine probability theory and graph theory to represent large domains of random variables.

We will tackle two tasks: inference and learning.

In inference, we assume we have the conditional probability tables and focus on estimating the probability of a group of variables given the other variables. We will derive the celebrated HMM filter as part of this.

In learning, we compute the conditional probability tables from data.

Let **x** denote two random variables $\mathbf{x} = (x_1, x_2)$, each taking 3 possible values. That is, $x_i \in E = \{1, 2, 3\}$. We can represent the marginal, conditional and joint distributions with the following tables:







Directed probabilistic graphs

We can exploit conditional independencies and graph theory to replace large tables by a group of smaller tables.

A **directed graph** is a pair G = (x, e) with nodes $x_{1:n}$ and directed edges $e = \{(x_i, x_j) : i \neq j\}$. The nodes will correspond to r.v.s and the edges to conditional probabilities. We assume that G is acyclic.





Efficient inference in DAGs $P(x_{1}, x_{g}^{-1}) = \sum_{x_{2:5}} P(x_{1}) P(x_{2}|x_{1}) P(x_{3}|x_{2}) P(x_{4}|x_{2}) P(x_{5}|x_{3}) P(x_{5}|x_{4}) P(x_{5}|x_{5}) P(x_{$ CPSC 340 11 Efficient inference in DAGs $P(x_1 | x_6 = 1) = \frac{P(x_1) \Omega(x_1)}{\sum P(x_1) \Omega(x_1)}$

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Junction tree algorithm

The idea of replacing sums of products (ac+ab) by products of sums (a(b+c)) is at the heart of most inference algorithms. For exact inference, in Gaussian and discrete networks of reasonable size, we use the **junction tree algorithm**. This algorithm involves two steps:

- 1. Converting the directed graph to an undirected graph called the junction tree.
- 2. Running belief propagation. That is, replace sums of products by products of sums.

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Parameter learning in DAGs







Bayesian model choice

The current approach has a few short-comings:

- There is no mechanism for incorporating *a priori* knowledge.
- The model selection strategy is very dependent on the parameter estimates. If we have few data points, the parameter estimates can be misleading.
- Model selection requires extra data (the test dataset).

The Bayesian learning paradigm helps surmount these difficulties.