bnclassify usage
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Abstract
This vignette gives detailed usage examples and shows how to combine the functions.

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1 Introduction

The bnclassify package implements state-of-the-art algorithms for learning discrete Bayesian network classifiers from data, as well as functions for using these classifiers for prediction, assessing their predictive performance, and inspecting and analyzing their properties. This vignette gives detailed usage examples and shows how to combine the functions. Other resources provide additional information:

- vignette("overview", package="bnclassify") provides an overview of the package and background on the implemented methods.
- ?bnclassify provides a concise overview of the functionalities, with pointers to relevant functions and their documentation.
- vignette("methods", package="bnclassify") provides details on the underlying methods and documents implementation specifics, especially where they differ from or are undocumented in the original paper.

2 Data

Throughout the vignette we will use the car evaluation data set. It has six discrete features, describing car properties such as buying price or the number of doors, and 1728 instances assigned to four different classes (unacc, acc, good, vgood). See ?car for more details.

```r
library(bnclassify)
data(car)
dim(car)
#> [1] 1728 7
head(car)
#>   buying maint doors persons lug_boot safety class
#> 1  vhigh vhigh  2   2  small  low unacc
#> 2  vhigh vhigh  2   2  small  med unacc
#> 3  vhigh vhigh  2   2  small  high unacc
#> 4  vhigh vhigh  2   2   med  low unacc
#> 5  vhigh vhigh  2   2   med  med unacc
#> 6  vhigh vhigh  2   2   med  high unacc
```

3 Workflow

Using bnclassify generally consists of four steps:

1. Learning network structure
2. Learning network parameters
3. Evaluating the model
4. Predicting with the model

In between those steps, you may also want to inspect the model's properties.

Below is an example of the four steps done in four lines.
nb <- nb('class', car)  # Learn a naive Bayes structure
nb <- lp(nb, car, smooth = 1)  # Learn parameters
cv(nb, car, k = 10)  # 10-fold Cross-validation estimate of accuracy
  #> [1] 0.8576045
head(predict(nb, car))  # Classify the entire data set
  #> [1] unacc unacc unacc unacc unacc unacc
  #> Levels: unacc acc good vgood

While there are multiple alternatives to nb for the first step, you are most likely to use lp, cv, and predict for steps 2-4. We will elaborate on all four steps throughout the rest of the vignette.

4 Network structure

4.1 Learning

bnclassify provides one function per each structure learning algorithm that it implements. Grouped according to algorithm type (see vignette("bnclassify-technical")), these are:

Naive Bayes:
  - nb
CL ODE:
  - tan_cl
Greedy wrapper:
  - tan_hc
  - tan_hcsp
  - fssj
  - bsej

They all receive the name of the class variable and the data set as their first two arguments, followed by optional arguments.

The following learns three different structures with three different algorithms.

# Naive Bayes
nb <- nb('class', car)
# ODE Chow-Liu with AIC score (penalized log-likelihood)
ode_cl_aic <- tan_cl('class', car, score = 'aic')
# Semi-naive Bayes with forward sequential selection and joining (FSSJ) and
# 5-fold cross-validation
fssj <- fssj('class', car, k = 5, epsilon = 0)

For details on the learning algorithms, see the corresponding functions (e.g., ?tan_cl) and vignette("bnclassify-technical").
4.2 Analyzing

The above {\texttt{nb}}, {\texttt{ode_cl_aic}}, and {\texttt{fssj}} are objects of class {\texttt{bnc_dag}}. There are a number of functions that you can perform on such objects.

Printing the object to console outputs basic information on structure:

```r
ode_cl_aic
#> Bayesian network classifier (only structure, no parameters)
#> class variable: class
#> num. features: 6
#> num. arcs: 9
#> learning algorithm: tan_cl
```

The above tells that the {\texttt{ode_cl_aic}} object is a network structure without any parameters, the name of the class variables is “class”, it has six feature nodes and nine arcs, and it was learned with the {\texttt{tan_cl}} function.

Plotting network structure can reveal probabilistic relationships among the variables:

```r
plot(ode_cl_aic)
```

If the network is not displaying properly, e.g., with node names overlapping in large networks, you may try different layout types and font sizes (see {\texttt{?plot.bnc_dag}}).

```r
plot(ode_cl_aic, layoutType = 'twopi', fontsize = 15)
```
An alternative to plotting, useful when the graph is large, is to query for the families that compose
the structure (a family of a node is itself plus its parents in the graph).

```r
families(ode_cl_aic)

# $buying
# [1] "buying" "class"
#
# $maint
# [1] "maint" "buying" "class"
#
# $doors
# [1] "doors" "class"
#
# $persons
# [1] "persons" "class"
#
# $lug.boot
# [1] "lug.boot" "safety" "class"
#
# $safety
# [1] "safety" "persons" "class"
#
# $class
# [1] "class"
```

`narcis` gives the number of arcs in a structure.
Functions such as `is_ode`, `is_nb`, or `id_semi` query the type of structure. For example:

```
#> [1] TRUE
#> [1] FALSE
```

For more functions to query a network structure, see `?inspect_bnc_dag`.

5 Network parameters

5.1 Learning

`bnclassify` provides three parameter estimation methods, all implemented with the `lp` function.

- Bayesian and maximum likelihood estimation
- AWNB
- MANB

The `lp` which takes the network structure and the dataset from which to learn parameters as its first two arguments.

To get Bayesian parameter estimates assuming a Dirichlet prior, provide a positive `smooth` argument to `lp`.

```
nb <- lp(nb, car, smooth = 0.01)
```

For AWNB or MANB parameter estimation, provide the appropriate arguments to `lp`, in addition to `smooth`.

```
awnb <- lp(nb, car, smooth = 0.01, awnb_trees = 10, awnb_bootstrap = 0.5)
manb <- lp(nb, car, smooth = 0.01, manb_prior = 0.5)
```

The `bnc` function is shorthand for learning both structure and parameters in a single step. Provide the name of the structure learning algorithm, as a character, and its optional arguments in `dag_args`.

```
ode_cl_aic <- bnc('tan_cl', 'class', car, smooth = 1, dag_args = list(score = 'aic'))
```

5.2 Analyzing

`lp` and `bnc` return objects of class `bnc_bn`, which are fully specified Bayesian network classifiers (i.e., with both structure and parameters).

Printing the `ode_cl_aic` object now also shows how many free parameters there are in the model (131).
ode_cl_aic

Bayesian network classifier

class variable: class
num. features: 6
num. arcs: 9
free parameters: 131
learning algorithm: tan_cl

params lets you access the conditional probability tables (CPTs). For example, the CPT of the buying feature in nb is:

params(nb)$buying
class
buying unacc acc good vgood
low 0.2132243562 0.2317727320 0.6664252607 0.5997847478
med 0.2214885458 0.2994740131 0.3332850521 0.3999077491
high 0.2677680077 0.2812467451 0.0001448436 0.0001537515
vhigh 0.2975190903 0.1875065097 0.0001448436 0.0001537515

nparams gives the number of parameters of the classifier.

nparams(nb)
[1] 63

For more functions for querying a bnc_bn object, see ?inspect_bnc_bn

5.3 Interface to bnlearn, gRain, and graph

You can convert a bnc_bn object to bnlearn (Scutari 2010), gRain (Højsgaard 2012) and graph (Gentleman et al. 2015) objects to leverage functionalities from those packages, such as Bayesian network querying or inference.

Use

- as_graphNEL for graph
- as_grain for gRain

For bnlearn, first convert to gRain and then convert the gRain object to a bnlearn one (see bnlearn docs for how to do this).

The following uses gRain to get the marginal probability of the buying feature: (NOTE: not currently working due to recent changes in the gRain package)

```r
# a <- lp(nb('class', car), car, smooth = 1)
# g <- as_grain(a)
# gRain::querygrain.grain(g)$buying
```
6 Selecting features

Some structure and parameter learning methods perform feature selection:

- `fssj` and `bsej`: embedded wrapper
- MANB: Bayesian model averaging
- AWNB: weighting

`fssj` and `bsej` perform feature selection while learning structure. On the car evaluation data they both select all features.

```r
length(features(fssj))
#> [1] 5
suppressWarnings(RNGversion("3.5.0"))
set.seed(0)
bsej <- bsej('class', car, k = 5, epsilon = 0)
length(features(bsej))
#> [1] 6
```

MANB has computed zero posterior probability for the arc from `class` to `doors` and 100% probability for arcs to the other features.

```r
manb_arc_posterior(manb)
#> buying maint doors persons lug_boot safety
#> 1.000000e+00 1.000000e+00 3.937961e-20 1.000000e+00 9.980275e-01
#> 1.000000e+00
```

This means that it has effectively omitted `doors` from the model, rendering it independent from the class.

```r
params(manb)$doors
#> class
doors unacc acc good vgood
#> 2 0.25 0.25 0.25 0.25
#> 3 0.25 0.25 0.25 0.25
#> 4 0.25 0.25 0.25 0.25
#> 5more 0.25 0.25 0.25 0.25
```

It has left the other features' parameters unaltered.

```r
all.equal(params(manb)$buying, params(nb)$buying)
#> [1] TRUE
```

The AWNB method has decreased the effect of each feature on the class posterior, especially `doors`, `lug_boot`, and `maint`, also modifying their local distributions towards independence from the class.

```r
awnb_weights(awnb)
#> buying maint doors persons lug_boot safety
#> 0.5773503 0.5000000 0.3931064 0.8535534 0.4355240 0.8535534
```
6.1 External feature selection

You can use R packages such as mlr (Bischl et al. 2015) or caret (Kuhn 2008) to select features prior to learning a classifier with bnclassify. See Section 10 for how to do it with mlr.

7 Evaluating

7.1 Network scores

There are three functions for computing penalized log-likelihood network scores of bnc_bn objects.

- logLik
- AIC
- BIC

In addition to the model, provide them the dataset on which to compute the score.

```
logLik(ode_cl_aic, car)
#> 'log Lik.' -13307.59 (df=131)
AIC(ode_cl_aic, car)
#> [1] -13438.59
BIC(ode_cl_aic, car)
#> [1] -13795.87
```

7.2 Predictive accuracy

accuracy lets you compute the classifier’s predictive accuracy on a given data set. You need to provide the vectors of predicted and true labels.

```
p <- predict(nb, car)
accuracy(p, car$class)
#> [1] 0.8738426
```

cv estimates predictive accuracy with stratified cross-validation. Indicate the desired number of folds with k.

```
suppressWarnings(RNGversion("3.5.0"))
set.seed(0)
cv(ode_cl_aic, car, k = 10)
#> [1] 0.9386636
```

Each bnc_bn object records the structure and parameter learning methods that were used to produce it. cv just reruns these methods. Hence, the above is the accuracy estimate for tan_cl with the AIC score and Bayesian parameter estimation with smooth = 0.01.

To keep the structure fixed and evaluate just the parameter learning method, set dag = FALSE:

```
suppressWarnings(RNGversion("3.5.0"))
set.seed(0)
```
To get the accuracy for each of the folds, instead of the mean accuracy, set `mean = FALSE`.

```r
cv(ode_cl_aic, car, k = 10, dag = FALSE, mean = FALSE)
#> [1] 0.9386636
```

Finally, to cross-validate multiple classifiers at once pass a list of `bnc_bn` objects to `cv`.

```r
accu <- cv(list(nb = nb, ode_cl_aic = ode_cl_aic), car, k = 5, dag = TRUE)
accu
#> nb ode_cl_aic
#> 0.8582303 0.9345913
```

### 7.3 More

General-purpose machine learning packages such as `mlr` or `caret` provide additional options for evaluating a model, including bootstrap resampling and performance measures such as the area under the curve. See Section 10 for how that could be done with `mlr`.

### 8 Predicting

We can use a `bnc_bn` object to classify data instances, with `predict`.

Here we use the naive Bayes to predict the class for our entire data set.

```r
p <- predict(nb, car)
# We use head() to print the first elements of vector p
head(p)
#> [1] unacc unacc unacc unacc unacc unacc
#> Levels: unacc acc good vgood
```

You can also get the class posterior probabilities.
pp <- predict(nb, car, prob = TRUE)
head(pp)
#>      unacc    acc   good  vgood
#> [1,] 1.000000 2.171346e-10 8.267214e-16 3.536615e-19
#> [2,] 0.9999937 6.306269e-06 5.203338e-12 5.706038e-19
#> [3,] 0.9999908 9.211090e-06 5.158884e-12 4.780777e-15
#> [4,] 1.000000 3.204714e-10 1.084552e-15 1.015375e-15
#> [5,] 0.9999907 9.307467e-06 6.826088e-12 1.638219e-15
#> [6,] 0.9999864 1.359469e-05 6.767760e-12 1.372573e-11

9 Miscellaneous

You can compute the (conditional) mutual information between two variables with cmi. Mutual information of maint and buying:

cmi('maint', 'buying', car)
#> [1] 0

Mutual information of maint and buying conditioned to class:

cmi('maint', 'buying', car, 'class')
#> [1] 0.07199921

10 Complementing bnclassify with mlr

General-purpose machine learning packages, such as mlr and caret, provide many options for feature selection and model evaluation. For example, the provide resampling methods other than cross-validation and performance measures other than accuracy. Here we use mlr to:

1. Perform and evaluate wrapper feature selection using tan_cl
2. Estimate the accuracy of tan_cl and random forest

To use a bnclass object with mlr, call the as_mlr function.

library(mlr)
ode_cl_aic_mlr <- as_mlr(ode_cl_aic, dag = TRUE, id = "ode_cl_aic")

The obtained node_cl_aic_mlr behaves like any other classifier supported by mlr.

10.1 Wrapper feature selection

Set up sequential forward search with 2-fold cross validation and ode_cl_aic_mlr as the classifier.

# 5-fold cross-validation
rdesc = makeResampleDesc("CV", iters = 2)
# sequential floating forward search
ctrl = makeFeatSelControlSequential(method = "sfs", alpha = 0)
# Wrap ode_cl_aic_mlr with feature selection
ode_cl_aic_mlr_fs = makeFeatSelWrapper(ode_cl_aic_mlr, resampling = rdesc, control = ctrl, show.info = FALSE)

t <- makeClassifTask(id = "car", data = car, target = 'class', fixup.data = "no", check.data = FALSE)

Select features:

suppressWarnings(RNGversion("3.5.0"))
set.seed(0)

# Select features
mod <- train(ode_cl_aic_mlr_fs, task = t)
sfeats <- getFeatSelResult(mod)
sfeats

mlr makes it easy to evaluate the predictive performance of the combination of feature selection plus classifier learning. The following estimates accuracy with 2-fold cross-validation:

suppressWarnings(RNGversion("3.5.0"))
set.seed(0)
r = resample(learner = ode_cl_aic_mlr_fs, task = t,
resampling = rdesc, show.info = FALSE, measure = mlr::acc)

10.2 Comparing to random forest

With mlr you can compare the predictive performance of bnclassify models to those of different classification paradigms, such as random forests.

rf <- makeLearner("classif.randomForest", id = "rf")
classifiers <- list(ode_cl_aic_mlr, rf)
suppressWarnings(RNGversion("3.5.0"))
set.seed(0)
benchmark(classifiers, t, rdesc, show.info = FALSE, measures = mlr::acc)

References


Gentleman, R., Elizabeth Whalen, W. Huber, and S. Falcon. 2015. *Graph: A Package to Handle Graph Data Structures.*
