

Concentration Inequalities

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Tail bounds

Z a real random variable. We look for bounds of the form

$$\Pr \{Z - E[Z] > t\} \leq \Xi(t)$$

where we hope that Ξ exponentially decreasing

Applications

- Statistics
- Mathematical physics
- Learning Theory
- Economy
- Computer science

Problem setup

$(\Omega, \Sigma, \mu) = \prod_{i=1}^n (\Omega_i, \Sigma_i, \mu_i)$ a product of probability spaces
 \mathcal{A} = the algebra of bounded measurable functions $f : \Omega \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$

X_i a random variable distributed as μ_i , so

$\mathbf{X} = (X_1, \dots, X_n)$ is a vector of independent variables

Objective: for $f \in \mathcal{A}$ and $t > 0$, bound

$$\Pr \{f(\mathbf{X}) - E[f(\mathbf{X})] > t\} = \Pr \{f - E[f] > t\}$$

Markov inequality and exponential moment method

Theorem (*Markov inequality*): If $f \in L_1(\mu)$, $f \geq 0$ and $t > 0$ then

$$\Pr \{f > t\} \leq \frac{E[f]}{t}.$$

Theorem (*Chebychev inequality*): If $f \in L_2(\mu)$ and $t > 0$ then

$$\Pr \{|f - E[f]| > t\} \leq \frac{\sigma^2(f)}{t^2}.$$

Theorem (*Exponential moment method*): If $f \in L_\infty[\mu]$ and $t > 0$ then

$$\Pr \{f - E[f] > t\} \leq \inf_{\beta \geq 0} \exp \left(\ln E \left[e^{\beta(f - E[f])} \right] - \beta t \right).$$

$\ln E \left[e^{\beta(f - E[f])} \right]$ is called the *moment generating function (mgf)*.

Entropy and the moment generating function

Theorem : If $f \in \mathcal{A}$ and $\beta \in \mathbb{R}$ then

$$\ln E \left[e^{\beta f} \right] = \sup_{\rho = \text{p-density on } \Omega} \beta E [\rho f] - E [\rho \ln \rho]$$

and the supremum is attained by the density

$$\rho_{\beta f} = \frac{e^{\beta f}}{E \left[e^{\beta f} \right]}.$$

Terminology:

Partition function	$Z_{\beta f} = E \left[e^{\beta f} \right]$
Thermal measure	$d\mu_{\beta f} = \rho_{\beta f} d\mu = e^{\beta f} d\mu / Z_{\beta f}$
Thermal expectation	$E_{\beta f} [g] = E \left[g e^{\beta f} \right] / Z_{\beta f}$
Entropy	$\text{Ent}_f (\beta) = E \left[\rho_{\beta f} \ln \rho_{\beta f} \right] = \beta E_{\beta f} [f] - \ln Z_{\beta f}$

Entropy and concentration

Theorem: For $f \in \mathcal{A}$ and $\beta \geq 0$

$$\ln E \left[e^{\beta(f - E[f])} \right] = \beta \int_0^\beta \frac{\text{Ent}_f(\gamma)}{\gamma^2} d\gamma$$
$$\Pr \{ f - E[f] > t \} \leq \inf_{\beta \geq 0} \exp \left(\beta \int_0^\beta \frac{\text{Ent}_f(\gamma)}{\gamma^2} d\gamma - \beta t \right).$$

This is the reason why we want to bound the entropy!

Entropy, thermal variance and fluctuations

$$\sigma_{\beta f}^2(g) = E_{\beta f} \left[\left(g - E_{\beta f} [g] \right)^2 \right].$$

Formulas:

$$\frac{d}{d\beta} \ln E \left[e^{\beta f} \right] = E_{\beta f} [f]$$

$$\frac{d}{d\beta} E_{\beta f} [g] = E_{\beta f} [fg] - E_{\beta f} [f] E_{\beta f} [g].$$

Theorem (fluctuation representation of entropy): For $f \in \mathcal{A}$ and $\beta \geq 0$

$$\text{Ent}_f(\beta) = \int_0^\beta \int_t^\beta \sigma_{sf}^2(f) ds dt.$$

Product spaces

$$f : \Omega = \prod_{i=1}^n \Omega_i \mapsto f(\mathbf{x}) = f(x_1, \dots, x_n) \in \mathbb{R}.$$

$\mathcal{A}_k = \{\text{functions in } \mathcal{A} \text{ which don't depend on the } k\text{-th argument}\}$

Substitution operator $S_y^k : \mathcal{A} \rightarrow \mathcal{A}_k$

$$S_y^k f(\mathbf{x}) = f(x_1, \dots, x_{k-1}, y, x_{k+1}, \dots, x_n)$$

Conditional expectation $E_k : \mathcal{A} \rightarrow \mathcal{A}_k$ defined by $E_k[g] = E_{y \sim \mu_k} [S_y^k f]$

Conditional quantities

$Z_{k,\beta f} = E_k [e^{\beta f}]$	conditional partition function
$E_{k,\beta f} [g] = Z_{k,\beta f}^{-1} E_k [g e^{\beta f}]$	conditional thermal expectation
$\text{Ent}_{k,f} (\beta) = \beta E_{k,\beta f} [g] - \ln Z_{k,\beta f}$	conditional entropy
$\sigma_{k,\beta f}^2 [g] = E_{k,\beta f} \left[(g - E_{k,\beta f} [g])^2 \right]$	conditional thermal variance
$\sigma_k^2 [g] = E_k \left[(g - E_k [g])^2 \right]$	conditional variance

Lemma: For $g \in \mathcal{A}$, $E_{\beta f} [E_{k,\beta f} [g]] = E_{\beta f} [g]$.

Thermal subadditivity of entropy

Lemma: If $h, g > 0$ then

$$E[h] \ln \frac{E[h]}{E[g]} \leq E \left[h \ln \frac{h}{g} \right].$$

Lemma: If $\rho \in \mathcal{A}$ and $\rho > 0$ then

$$E \left[\rho \ln \frac{\rho}{E[\rho]} \right] \leq \sum_k E \left[\rho \ln \frac{\rho}{E_k[\rho]} \right].$$

Theorem: For $f \in \mathcal{A}$ and $\beta \in \mathbb{R}$

$$\text{Ent}_f(\beta) \leq E_{\beta f} \left[\sum_{k=1}^n \text{Ent}_{k,f}(\beta) \right].$$

Summary of results

For $f \in \mathcal{A}$ and $\beta \in \mathbb{R}$

$$\Pr \{f - Ef > t\} \leq \inf_{\beta \geq 0} \exp \left(\ln E \left[e^{\beta(f - Ef)} \right] - \beta t \right)$$

$$\ln E \left[e^{\beta(f - Ef)} \right] = \beta \int_0^\beta \frac{\text{Ent}_f(\gamma)}{\gamma^2} d\gamma$$

$$\text{Ent}_f(\beta) \leq E_{\beta f} \left[\sum_{k=1}^n \text{Ent}_{k,f}(\beta) \right]$$

$$\text{Ent}_f(\beta) = \int_0^\beta \int_t^\beta \sigma_{sf}^2[f] ds dt$$

Tomorrow

- Efron-Stein inequality
- Bounded Difference inequality
- Bernstein-Bennett inequalities
- Various applications

Summary of results

For $f \in \mathcal{A}$ and $\beta \in \mathbb{R}$

$$\Pr \{f - Ef > t\} \leq \inf_{\beta \geq 0} \exp \left(\ln E \left[e^{\beta(f - Ef)} \right] - \beta t \right)$$

$$\ln E \left[e^{\beta(f - Ef)} \right] = \beta \int_0^\beta \frac{\text{Ent}_f(\gamma)}{\gamma^2} d\gamma$$

$$\text{Ent}_f(\beta) \leq E_{\beta f} \left[\sum_{k=1}^n \text{Ent}_{k,f}(\beta) \right]$$

$$\text{Ent}_f(\beta) = \int_0^\beta \int_t^\beta \sigma_{sf}^2[f] ds dt$$

where $E_{\beta f}[g] = E[ge^{\beta f}] / E[e^{\beta f}]$ and $\sigma_{\beta f}^2(g) = E_{\beta f} \left[(g - E_{\beta f}[g])^2 \right]$

and $\text{Ent}_{(k)f}(\beta) = \beta E_{(k)\beta f}[f] - \ln E_{(k)}[e^{\beta f}]$

Some operators on \mathcal{A}

For $k \in \{1, \dots, n\}$, $y, y' \in \Omega_k$ and $f \in \mathcal{A}$

partial difference operator $D_{y,y'}^k f = S_y^k f - S_{y'}^k f.$

conditional variance $\sigma_k^2(f) = \frac{1}{2} E_{(y,y') \sim \mu_k^2} \left[\left(D_{y,y'}^k f \right)^2 \right]$

conditional range $r_k(f) = \sup_{y,y' \in \Omega_k} D_{y,y'}^k f$

sum of conditional variances $\Sigma^2(f) = \sum_{k=1}^n \sigma_k^2(f)$

sum of conditional squared ranges $R^2(f) = \sum_{k=1}^n r_k^2(f)$

The Efron-Stein Inequality

Theorem (Efron-Stein inequality): For $f \in \mathcal{A}$

$$\sigma^2(f) \leq E[\Sigma^2(f)]$$

The bounded difference inequality

Lemma: If $a \leq f \leq b$ then

$$\sigma^2(f) \leq \frac{(b-a)^2}{4}$$

Theorem: For $f \in \mathcal{A}$ and $t > 0$

$$\Pr\{f - Ef > t\} \leq \exp\left(\frac{-2t^2}{\sup_{\mathbf{x} \in \Omega} R^2(f)(\mathbf{x})}\right).$$

Recall that $R^2(f) = \sum_{k=1}^n r_k^2(f) = \sum_{k=1}^n \sup_{y, y' \in \Omega_k} (D_{y, y'}^k f)^2$

Corollaries of the bounded difference inequality

Corollary 1 (*Hoeffding's inequality*):

Let X_k be real random variables $a_k \leq X_k \leq b_k$. Then

$$\Pr \left\{ \sum_k (X_k - E[X_k]) > t \right\} \leq \exp \left(\frac{-2t^2}{\sum_{k=1}^n (b_k - a_k)^2} \right).$$

Corollary 2 (*Little bounded difference inequality*): For $f \in \mathcal{A}$ and $t > 0$

$$\Pr \{f - Ef > t\} \leq \exp \left(\frac{-2t^2}{nc^2} \right),$$

where $c = \max_k \sup_{\mathbf{x} \in \Omega, y, y' \in \Omega_k} D_{y, y'}^k f(\mathbf{x})$.

Application: vector valued concentration

Theorem: X_i independent r.v. with values in a normed space \mathcal{B}
 $E[X_i] = 0$ and $\|X_i\| \leq c_i$.

Then for $\delta > 0$ with probability at least $1 - \delta$

$$\left\| \sum_i X_i \right\| \leq E \left\| \sum_i X_i \right\| + \sqrt{2 \sum_i c_i^2 \ln(1/\delta)}.$$

If \mathcal{B} is a Hilbert-space and the X_i are iid then

$$\left\| \frac{1}{n} \sum_i X_i \right\| \leq \sqrt{\frac{E[\|X_1\|^2]}{n}} + c_1 \sqrt{\frac{2 \ln(1/\delta)}{n}}$$

Application: Rademacher complexities

Theorem: \mathcal{F} a class of functions $f : \mathcal{X} \rightarrow [0, 1]$

$\mathbf{X} = (X_1, \dots, X_n)$ be a vector of iid r.v. with values in \mathcal{X} .

Define for Rademacher variables $\epsilon_1, \dots, \epsilon_n$

$$\text{Rad}(\mathcal{F}, \mathbf{x}) = \frac{2}{n} E_{\epsilon} \sup_{f \in \mathcal{F}} \left| \sum_i \epsilon_i f(x_i) \right|.$$

Then with probability at least $1 - \delta$ in \mathbf{X}

$$\sup_{f \in \mathcal{F}} \left| \frac{1}{n} \sum_i f(X_i) - E[f(X_i)] \right| \leq \text{Rad}(\mathcal{F}, \mathbf{X}) + 2\sqrt{\frac{2 \ln(2/\delta)}{n}}.$$

Bennett and Bernstein inequalities

Lemma: If $f - Ef \leq 1$. Then for $\beta > 0$ we have $\sigma_{\beta f}^2(f) \leq e^\beta \sigma^2(f)$.

Lemma: Assume that $f - E_k f \leq 1$ for all $k \in \{1, \dots, n\}$. Then for $\beta > 0$

$$\text{Ent}_f(\beta) \leq (\beta e^\beta - e^\beta + 1) E_{\beta f} [\Sigma^2(f)].$$

Lemma: For $x \geq 0$ we get $(1+x) \ln(1+x) - x \geq 3x^2 / (6+2x)$.

Theorem (Bennett/Bernstein inequalities): Assume $f - E_k f \leq 1, \forall k$. Let $t > 0$ and denote $V = \sup_{\mathbf{x} \in \Omega} \Sigma^2(f)(\mathbf{x})$. Then

$$\begin{aligned} \Pr \{f - E[f] > t\} &\leq \exp \left(-V \left((1 + tV^{-1}) \ln(1 + tV^{-1}) - tV^{-1} \right) \right) \\ &\leq \exp \left(\frac{-t^2}{2V + 2t/3} \right). \end{aligned}$$

Application: vector valued concentration revisited

Theorem: X_i iid r.v. with values in a Hilbert space \mathcal{H}
 $E[X_i] = 0$ and $\|X_i\| \leq c$.

Then for $\delta > 0$ with probability at least $1 - \delta$

$$\left\| \frac{1}{n} \sum_i X_i \right\| \leq \sqrt{\frac{E[\|X_1\|^2]}{n}} \left(1 + \sqrt{2 \ln(1/\delta)} \right) + \frac{4c \ln(1/\delta)}{2n}.$$

Tomorrow

- Gaussian concentration
- Exponential Efron-Stein inequalities
- Application to convex Lipschitz functions
- Application to random matrices

Gaussian concentration

Theorem (*Ibragimov, Tsirelson, Sudakov*):

$f : \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is L -Lipschitz (possibly unbounded)

$\mathbf{X} = (X_1, \dots, X_n)$ an iid vector $X_i \sim N(0, 1)$.

Then for $t > 0$

$$\Pr \{f(\mathbf{X}) > \mathbb{E}[f(\mathbf{X})] + t\} \leq e^{-t^2/(2L^2)}.$$

A monotonicity bound on the thermal variance

Lemma (Chebychev's association inequality):

$g, h : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$, X a real random variable.

If g and h are either both nondecreasing or both nonincreasing then

$$E[g(X)h(X)] \geq E[g(X)]E[h(X)].$$

If either one of g or h is nondecreasing and the other nonincreasing then

$$E[g(X)h(X)] \leq E[g(X)]E[h(X)].$$

Lemma (monotonicity bound): If $0 \leq s \leq \beta$. Then

$$\sigma_{sf}^2(f) \leq E_{x \sim \mu_{\beta f}} \left[E_{x' \sim \mu} \left[\left(f(x) - f(x') \right)_+^2 \right] \right].$$

More operators on \mathcal{A}

Define two operators $D^2 : \mathcal{A} \rightarrow \mathcal{A}$ and $V_+^2 : \mathcal{A} \rightarrow \mathcal{A}$ by

$$D^2 f = \sum_k \left(f - \inf_{y \in \Omega_k} S_y^k f \right)^2$$

and $V_+^2 f = \sum_k E_{y \sim \mu_k} \left[\left((f - S_y^k f)_+ \right)^2 \right].$

Exponential Efron-Stein inequality, upper tail

Lemma : For $\beta > 0$ and $f \in \mathcal{A}$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Ent}_f(\beta) &\leq \frac{\beta^2}{2} E_{\beta f} [V_+^2(f)] \\ \text{and } \ln E [e^{\beta(f-E[f])}] &\leq \frac{\beta}{2} \int_0^\beta E_{\gamma f} [V_+^2 f] d\gamma. \end{aligned}$$

Theorem: With $t > 0$

$$\Pr \{f - E[f] > t\} \leq \exp \left(\frac{-t^2}{2 \sup_{\mathbf{x} \in \Omega} V_+^2 f(\mathbf{x})} \right) \leq \exp \left(\frac{-t^2}{2 \sup_{\mathbf{x} \in \Omega} D^2 f(\mathbf{x})} \right).$$

Exponential Efron-Stein inequality, lower tail

Lemma : If $f \in \mathcal{A}$ and $f - \inf_k f \leq 1, \forall k$ then for $\beta > 0$

$$\text{Ent}_{-f}(\beta) \leq \psi(\beta) E_{-\beta f} [D^2 f],$$

$$\text{where } \psi(\beta) = e^\beta - \beta - 1$$

$$\text{and } \ln E [e^{\beta(E[f]-f)}] \leq \frac{\psi(\beta)}{\beta} \int_0^\beta E_{-\gamma f} [D^2 f] d\gamma$$

Theorem : If $f - \inf_k f \leq 1$ for all k and with $\Delta := \sup_{\mathbf{x} \in \Omega} D^2 f(\mathbf{x})$, then for $t > 0$

$$\begin{aligned} \Pr \{E[f] - f > t\} &\leq \exp \left(-\Delta \left(\left(1 + \frac{t}{\Delta}\right) \ln \left(1 + \frac{t}{\Delta}\right) - \frac{t}{\Delta} \right) \right) \\ &\leq \exp \left(\frac{-t^2}{2 \sup_{\mathbf{x} \in \Omega} D^2 f(\mathbf{x}) + 2t/3} \right). \end{aligned}$$

Application: convex Lipschitz functions

Theorem: $f : [0, 1]^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$

f is L -Lipschitz

f is separately convex (i.e. $y \in [0, 1] \mapsto S_y^k f(\mathbf{x})$ is convex for all k and all \mathbf{x})

X_1, \dots, X_n are independent with values in $[0, 1]$

Then

$$\Pr \{f(\mathbf{X}) > Ef(\mathbf{X}) + s\} \leq e^{-s^2/2L^2}.$$

We wait with the lower tail...

Application: operator norm of a random matrix

Recall: If M is an $m \times n$ matrix its operator norm is

$$\|M\|_{\infty} = \sup_{v \in \mathbb{R}^n, w \in \mathbb{R}^m, \|w\|, \|v\|=1} \langle Mv, w \rangle$$

Theorem:

$\mathbf{X} = (X_{ij}) \in [-1, 1]^{mn}$ a random $m \times n$ matrix with independent X_{ij} .

Then

$$\Pr \{ \|\mathbf{X}\|_{\infty} - E [\|\mathbf{X}\|_{\infty}] \geq t \} \leq \exp \left(\frac{-t^2}{8} \right)$$

and

$$\Pr \{ E [\|\mathbf{X}\|_{\infty}] - \|\mathbf{X}\|_{\infty} \geq t \} \leq \exp \left(\frac{-t^2}{8 + 4t/3} \right).$$

Tomorrow

- Concentration of self bounding functions
- Application to convex Lipschitz functions
- Decoupling
- Concentration of the supremum of an empirical process

Beyond uniform bounds

Previous strategy:

1. Bound $\text{Ent}_f(\gamma) \leq \xi(\gamma) E_{\gamma f}[G(f)]$

with $G : \mathcal{A} \rightarrow \mathcal{A}$, $\xi : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_+$

(e.g. $\xi(\gamma) = \gamma^2/8$ and $G = R^2$ for bded difference,
 $\xi(\gamma) = \gamma e^\gamma - e^\gamma + 1$ and $G = \Sigma^2$ for Bennet, etc)

2. Bound mgf as

$$\ln E e^{\beta(f - Ef)} \leq \beta \int_0^\beta \frac{\xi(\gamma)}{\gamma^2} E_{\gamma f}[G(f)] d\gamma \leq \beta \sup_{\mathbf{x}} G(f)(\mathbf{x}) \int_0^\beta \frac{\xi(\gamma)}{\gamma^2} d\gamma.$$

Now we want to avoid the uniform estimate on $G(f)$ of the last step!

First trick: self-boundedness

Idea: Suppose $G(f) \leq f$. Then

$$\beta \int_0^\beta \frac{\xi(\gamma)}{\gamma^2} E_{\gamma f} [G(f)] d\gamma \leq \beta \int_0^\beta \frac{\xi(\gamma)}{\gamma^2} E_{\gamma f} [f] d\gamma = \beta \int_0^\beta \frac{\xi(\gamma)}{\gamma^2} \left(\frac{d}{d\gamma} \ln Z_{\gamma f} \right) d\gamma$$

Theorem: If $V_+^2 f \leq af + b$ then

$$\ln E \left[e^{\beta(f - E[f])} \right] \leq \frac{\beta^2 (aE[f] + b)}{2 - a\beta} \quad \text{and} \quad \ln E \left[e^{\beta f} \right] \leq \frac{2\beta E[f] + \beta^2 b}{2 - a\beta}$$

If $D^2 f \leq af + b$ and $f - \inf_k f \leq 1$ then

$$\ln E \left[e^{\beta(E[f] - f)} \right] \leq \frac{\beta^2 (aE[f] + b)}{2}.$$

Self-boundedness - tail bounds

Lemma: If $C, b, t > 0$, then

$$\inf_{\beta \in [0, 1/b)} \left(-\beta t + \frac{C\beta^2}{1 - b\beta} \right) \leq \frac{-t^2}{2(2C + bt)}.$$

Theorem: If $V_+^2 f \leq af + b$ then

$$\Pr \{f - E[f] > t\} \leq \exp \left(\frac{-t^2}{2(aE[f] + b + at/2)} \right).$$

If $D^2 f \leq af + b$ and $f - \inf_k f \leq 1$ then

$$\Pr \{E[f] - f > t\} \leq \exp \left(\frac{-t^2}{2(aE[f] + b)} \right).$$

Convex Lipschitz functions revisited

Theorem: $f : [0, 1]^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$

f is L -Lipschitz

f is separately convex (i.e. $y \in [0, 1] \mapsto S_y^k f(\mathbf{x})$ is convex for all k and all \mathbf{x})

f^2 takes values in an interval of length ≤ 1

X_1, \dots, X_n are independent with values in $[0, 1]$

Then for $t \in [0, E[f(\mathbf{X})]]$

$$\Pr \{E[f(\mathbf{X})] > f(\mathbf{X}) + s\} \leq e^{-s^2/8L^2}.$$

Second trick: decoupling

Recall Fenchel-Young inequality: \forall p.-density ρ , $\forall g$

$$E_{\beta f} [g] \leq \text{Ent}_f (\beta) + E [\ln e^g] .$$

With $g = \theta G (f)$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Ent}_f (\beta) &\leq \xi (\beta) E_{\beta f} [G (f)] = \xi (\beta) \theta^{-1} E_{\beta f} [\theta G (f)] \\ &\leq \xi (\beta) \theta^{-1} \left(\text{Ent}_f (\beta) + \ln E [\exp (\theta G (f))] \right) . \end{aligned}$$

Rearranging we get for $\theta > \xi (\beta)$

$$\text{Ent}_f (\beta) \leq \frac{\xi (\beta)}{\theta - \xi (\beta)} \ln E [\exp (\theta G (f))] .$$

The supremum of an empirical process

Theorem: X_1, \dots, X_n independent with values in \mathcal{X}

\mathcal{F} be a ctble class of functions $f : \mathcal{X} \rightarrow [-1, 1]$

$E[f(X_i)] = 0, \forall i \in \{1, \dots, n\}$

Define $F : \mathcal{X}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ and $W : \mathcal{X}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ by

$$F(\mathbf{x}) = \sup_{f \in \mathcal{F}} \sum_i f(x_i) \text{ and}$$

$$W(\mathbf{x}) = \sup_{f \in \mathcal{F}} \sum_i \left(f^2(x_i) + E[f^2(X_i)] \right).$$

Then for $t > 0$

$$\Pr\{F - E[F] > t\} \leq \exp\left(\frac{-t^2}{2E[W] + t}\right).$$