

Chapter 3 Discrete Random Variables And Probability

Probability distribution

to distinguish between discrete and continuous random variables. In the discrete case, it is sufficient to specify a probability mass function p

In probability theory and statistics, a probability distribution is a function that gives the probabilities of occurrence of possible events for an experiment. It is a mathematical description of a random phenomenon in terms of its sample space and the probabilities of events (subsets of the sample space).

For instance, if X is used to denote the outcome of a coin toss ("the experiment"), then the probability distribution of X would take the value 0.5 (1 in 2 or $1/2$) for $X = \text{heads}$, and 0.5 for $X = \text{tails}$ (assuming that the coin is fair). More commonly, probability distributions are used to compare the relative occurrence of many different random values.

Probability distributions can be defined in different ways and for discrete or for continuous variables. Distributions with special properties...

Probability theory

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Probability theory or probability calculus is the branch of mathematics concerned with probability. Although there are several different

probability interpretations, probability theory treats the concept in a rigorous mathematical manner by expressing it through a set of axioms. Typically these axioms formalise probability in terms of a probability space, which assigns a measure taking values between 0 and 1, termed the probability measure, to a set of outcomes called the sample space. Any specified subset of the sample space is called an event.

Central subjects in probability theory include discrete and continuous random variables, probability distributions, and stochastic processes (which provide mathematical abstractions of non-deterministic or uncertain processes or measured quantities...

Probability density function

In probability theory, a probability density function (PDF), density function, or density of an absolutely continuous random variable, is a function whose

In probability theory, a probability density function (PDF), density function, or density of an absolutely continuous random variable, is a function whose value at any given sample (or point) in the sample space (the set of possible values taken by the random variable) can be interpreted as providing a relative likelihood that the value of the random variable would be equal to that sample. Probability density is the probability per unit length, in other words. While the absolute likelihood for a continuous random variable to take on any particular value is zero, given there is an infinite set of possible values to begin with. Therefore, the value of the PDF at two different samples can be used to infer, in any particular draw of the random variable, how much more likely it is that the random...

Random walk

independent random variables $Z_1, Z_2, \dots$ $\{\displaystyle Z_{\{1\}}, Z_{\{2\}}, \dots\}$, where each variable is either 1 or -1 , with a 50% probability for either

In mathematics, a random walk, sometimes known as a drunkard's walk, is a stochastic process that describes a path that consists of a succession of random steps on some mathematical space.

An elementary example of a random walk is the random walk on the integer number line

$\mathbb{Z}$

$\{\mathbb{Z}\}$

which starts at 0, and at each step moves +1 or −1 with equal probability. Other examples include the path traced by a molecule as it travels in a liquid or a gas (see Brownian motion), the search path of a foraging animal, or the price of a fluctuating stock and the financial status of a gambler. Random walks have applications to engineering and many scientific fields including ecology, psychology, computer science, physics, chemistry...

Discrete choice

as in problems with continuous choice variables, discrete choice analysis examines "which one". However, discrete choice analysis can also be used to examine

In economics, discrete choice models, or qualitative choice models, describe, explain, and predict choices between two or more discrete alternatives, such as entering or not entering the labor market, or choosing between modes of transport. Such choices contrast with standard consumption models in which the quantity of each good consumed is assumed to be a continuous variable. In the continuous case, calculus methods (e.g. first-order conditions) can be used to determine the optimum amount chosen, and demand can be modeled empirically using regression analysis. On the other hand, discrete choice analysis examines situations in which the potential outcomes are discrete, such that the optimum is not characterized by standard first-order conditions. Thus, instead of examining "how much" as in...

Non-uniform random variate generation

Neumann in the early 1950s. For a discrete probability distribution with a finite number n of indices at which the probability mass function f takes non-zero

Non-uniform random variate generation or pseudo-random number sampling is the numerical practice of generating pseudo-random numbers (PRN) that follow a given probability distribution.

Methods are typically based on the availability of a uniformly distributed PRN generator. Computational algorithms are then used to manipulate a single random variate, X , or often several such variates, into a new random variate Y such that these values have the required distribution.

The first methods were developed for Monte-Carlo simulations in the Manhattan Project, published by John von Neumann in the early 1950s.

Posterior probability

probability distribution of one random variable given the value of another can be calculated with Bayes's theorem by multiplying the prior probability

The posterior probability is a type of conditional probability that results from updating the prior probability with information summarized by the likelihood via an application of Bayes' rule. From an epistemological perspective, the posterior probability contains everything there is to know about an uncertain proposition (such as a scientific hypothesis, or parameter values), given prior knowledge and a mathematical model describing the observations available at a particular time. After the arrival of new information, the current posterior probability may serve as the prior in another round of Bayesian updating.

In the context of Bayesian statistics, the posterior probability

distribution usually describes the epistemic uncertainty about statistical parameters conditional on a collection of...

Rademacher distribution

In probability theory and statistics, the Rademacher distribution (which is named after Hans Rademacher) is a discrete probability distribution where

In probability theory and statistics, the Rademacher distribution (which is named after Hans Rademacher) is a discrete probability distribution where a random variate X has a 50% chance of being $+1$ and a 50% chance of being -1 .

A series (that is, a sum) of Rademacher distributed variables can be regarded as a simple symmetrical random walk where the step size is 1.

Infinite divisibility (probability)

rigorously, the probability distribution F is infinitely divisible if, for every positive integer n , there exist i.i.d. random variables $X_{n1}, \dots, X_{nn}$ whose

In probability theory, a probability distribution is infinitely divisible if it can be expressed as the probability distribution of the sum of an arbitrary number of independent and identically distributed (i.i.d.) random variables. The characteristic function of any infinitely divisible distribution is then called an infinitely divisible characteristic function.

More rigorously, the probability distribution F is infinitely divisible if, for every positive integer n , there exist i.i.d. random variables $X_{n1}, \dots, X_{nn}$ whose sum $S_n = X_{n1} + \dots + X_{nn}$ has the same distribution F .

The concept of infinite divisibility of probability distributions was introduced in 1929 by Bruno de Finetti. This type of decomposition of a distribution is used in probability and statistics to find families of probability...

Binomial distribution

In probability theory and statistics, the binomial distribution with parameters n and p is the discrete probability distribution of the number of successes

In probability theory and statistics, the binomial distribution with parameters n and p is the discrete probability distribution of the number of successes in a sequence of n independent experiments, each asking a yes-no question, and each with its own Boolean-valued outcome: success (with probability p) or failure (with probability $q = 1 - p$). A single success/failure experiment is also called a Bernoulli trial or Bernoulli experiment, and a sequence of outcomes is called a Bernoulli process; for a single trial, i.e., $n = 1$, the binomial distribution is a Bernoulli distribution. The binomial distribution is the basis for the binomial test of statistical significance.

The binomial distribution is frequently used to model the number of

successes in a sample of size n drawn with replacement from...

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