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

Contents
1 Introduction 2
2 Data 2
3 Workflow 2
4 Network structure 3
  4.1 Learning .......................................................... 3
  4.2 Analyzing ......................................................... 4
5 Network parameters 6
  5.1 Learning .......................................................... 6
  5.2 Analyzing ......................................................... 6
  5.3 Interface to bnlearn, gRain, and graph .................... 7
6 Selecting features 8
  6.1 External feature selection ................................. 9
7 Evaluating 9
  7.1 Network scores .................................................. 9
  7.2 Predictive accuracy ........................................... 9
  7.3 More ............................................................... 10
8 Predicting 10
9 Miscellaneous 11
10 Complementing bnclassify with mlr 11
  10.1 Wrapper feature selection ................................. 11
  10.2 Comparing to random forest .............................. 12
References 12
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)
```

```r
#> [1] 1728 7
```

```r
head(car)
```

```r
#> 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 nb, ode_cl_aic, and fssj are objects of class 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 `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 `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 `?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"
```

`narcs` 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:

```r
is_ode(ode_cl_aic)
#> [1] TRUE
is_semi_naive(ode_cl_aic)
#> [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

`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`.

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

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

```r
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`.

```r
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:

a <- lp(nb('class', car), car, smooth = 1)
g <- as_grain(a)
gRain::querygrain.grain(g)$buying
#> buying
#> low med high vhigh
#> 0.2488415 0.2495832 0.2507330 0.2508423
6 Selecting features

Some structure and parameter learning methods perform feature selection:

- \texttt{fssj} and \texttt{bsej}: embedded wrapper
- MANB: Bayesian model averaging
- AWNB: weighting

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

```r
length(features(fssj))
#> [1] 5
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 \texttt{class} to \texttt{doors} and 100\% probability for arcs to the other features.

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

This means that it has effectively omitted \texttt{doors} from the model, rendering it independent from the class.

```r
params(manb)$doors
da
#> 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 \texttt{doors}, \texttt{lug_boot}, and \texttt{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

The 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.

```r
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.

```r
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.

```r
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:

```r
set.seed(0)
cv(ode_cl_aic, car, k = 10, dag = FALSE)
#> [1] 0.9386636
```
To get the accuracy for each of the folds, instead of the mean accuracy, set `mean = FALSE`.

```r
set.seed(0)
cv(ode_cl_aic, car, k = 10, dag = FALSE, mean = FALSE)
#> 
#>  [,1]  
#> 1 0.9252874  
#> 2 0.9248555  
#> 3 0.9534884  
#> 4 0.9651163  
#> 5 0.9479769  
#> 6 0.9479769  
#> 7 0.9302326  
#> 8 0.9127907  
#> 9 0.9306358  
#>10 0.9482759
```

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

```r
set.seed(0)
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.

```r
pp <- predict(nb, car, prob = TRUE)  
head(pp)
#> unacc acc good vgood  
#> [1,] 1.0000000 2.171346e-10 8.267214e-16 3.536615e-19
```
## 9 Miscellaneous

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

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

Mutual information of `maint` and `buying` conditioned to `class`:

```r
> 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 `bnc_bn` object with `mlr`, call the `as_mlr` function.

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

The obtained `ode_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.

```r
# 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:

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:

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)
set.seed(0)
benchmark(classifiers, t, rdesc, show.info = FALSE, measures = mlr::acc)

References

Bischl, Bernd, Michel Lang, Jakob Richter, Jakob Bossek, Leonard Judt, Tobias Kuehn, Erich
package=mlr.

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

Højsgaard, Søren. 2012. “Graphical Independence Networks with the gRain Package for R.” Journal


Scutari, Marco. 2010. “Learning Bayesian Networks with the bnlearn R Package.” Journal of