Boosting

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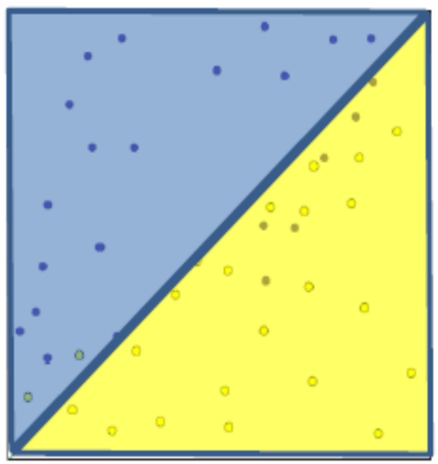
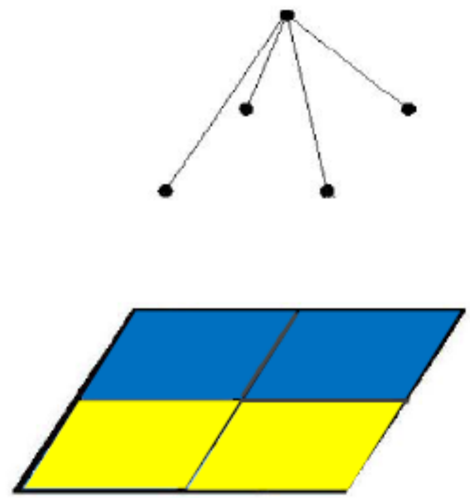
Fall, 2019

Slides Adapted from Book and CMU, Stanford Machine Learning Courses

Fighting the bias-variance tradeoff

- **Simple (a.k.a. weak) learners** e.g., naïve Bayes, logistic regression, decision stumps (or shallow decision trees)





Are good ☺ - Low variance, don't usually overfit

Are bad ☹ - High bias, can't solve hard learning problems

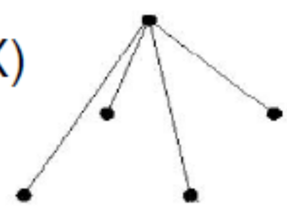
- **Can we make weak learners always good???**
  - **No!!!** **But often yes…**

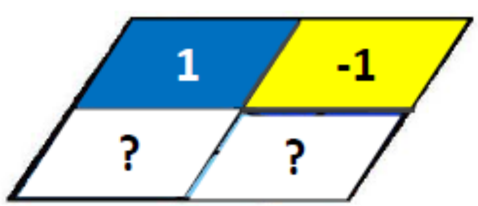
Voting (Ensemble Methods)

- Instead of learning a single (weak) classifier, learn **many weak classifiers** that are **good at different parts of the input space**
- **Output class:** (Weighted) vote of each classifier
  - Classifiers that are most “sure” will vote with more conviction
  - Classifiers will be most “sure” about a particular part of the space
  - On average, do better than single classifier!

$h_1(X)$

$h_2(X)$





$H: X \rightarrow Y \ (-1,1)$

$H(X) = h_1(X)+h_2(X)$

$H(X) = \text{sign}(\sum_t \alpha_t h_t(X))$

weights

Voting (Ensemble Methods)

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- **Output class:** (Weighted) vote of each classifier
  - Classifiers that are most "sure" will vote with more conviction
  - Classifiers will be most "sure" about a particular part of the space
  - On average, do better than single classifier!
- **But how do you ???**
  - force classifiers h_t to learn about different parts of the input space?
  - weigh the votes of different classifiers? α_t

Boosting [Schapire'89]

- **Idea:** given a weak learner, run it multiple times on (reweighted) training data, then let learned classifiers vote

- On each iteration *t*:
  - weight each training example by how incorrectly it was classified
  - Learn a weak hypothesis – h_t
  - A strength for this hypothesis – α_t

- Final classifier: $H(X) = \text{sign}(\sum \alpha_t h_t(X))$

- **Practically useful**
- **Theoretically interesting**

Learning from weighted data

- **Consider a weighted dataset**
  - D(i) – weight of *i* th training example $(\mathbf{x}^i, y^i)$
  - Interpretations:
    - *i* th training example counts as D(i) examples
    - If I were to "resample" data, I would get more samples of "heavier" data points
- **Now, in all calculations, whenever used, *i* th training example counts as D(i) "examples"**
  - e.g., in MLE redefine *Count(Y=y)* to be weighted count

Unweighted data

$$Count(Y=y) = \sum_{i=1}^{m} \mathbf{1}(Y^i=y)$$

Weights D(i)

$$Count(Y=y) = \sum_{i=1}^{m} D(i)\mathbf{1}(Y^i=y)$$

AdaBoost [Freund & Schapire'95]

Given: $(x_1, y_1), \ldots, (x_m, y_m)$ where $x_i \in X, y_i \in Y = \{-1, +1\}$

Initialize $D_1(i) = 1/m$. **Initially equal weights**

For $t = 1, \ldots, T$:

- Train weak learner using distribution D_t. **Naïve bayes, decision stump**
- Get weak classifier $h_t : X \to \mathbb{R}$.
- Choose $\alpha_t \in \mathbb{R}$. **Magic (+ve)**
- Update:

$$D_{t+1}(i) = \frac{D_t(i)}{Z_t} \begin{cases} e^{-\alpha_t} & \text{if } y_i = h_t(x_i) \\ e^{\alpha_t} & \text{if } y_i \neq h_t(x_i) \end{cases}$$

$$= \frac{D_t(i) \exp(-\alpha_t y_i h_t(x_i))}{Z_t}$$

Increase weight if wrong on pt i $y_i h_t(x_i) = -1 < 0$

where Z_t is a normalization factor

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Increase weight if wrong on pt i $y_i h_t(x_i) = -1 < 0$

where Z_t is a normalization factor

$$Z_t = \sum_{i=1}^{m} D_t(i) \exp(-\alpha_t y_i h_t(x_i))$$

Weights for all pts must sum to 1 $\sum_t D_{t+1}(i) = 1$

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Output the final classifier:

$$H(x) = \text{sign}\left(\sum_{t=1}^{T} \alpha_t h_t(x)\right).$$

What α_t to choose for hypothesis h_t?

Weight Update Rule: $$D_{t+1}(i) = \frac{D_t(i)\exp(-\alpha_t y_i h_t(x_i))}{Z_t}$$

$$\boxed{\alpha_t = \frac{1}{2}\ln\left(\frac{1-\epsilon_t}{\epsilon_t}\right)}$$

[Freund & Schapire'95]

Weighted training error

$$\epsilon_t = P_{i\sim D_t(i)}[h_t(\mathbf{x}^i) \neq y^i] = \sum_{i=1}^{m} D_t(i)\underbrace{\delta(h_t(x_i) \neq y_i)}$$

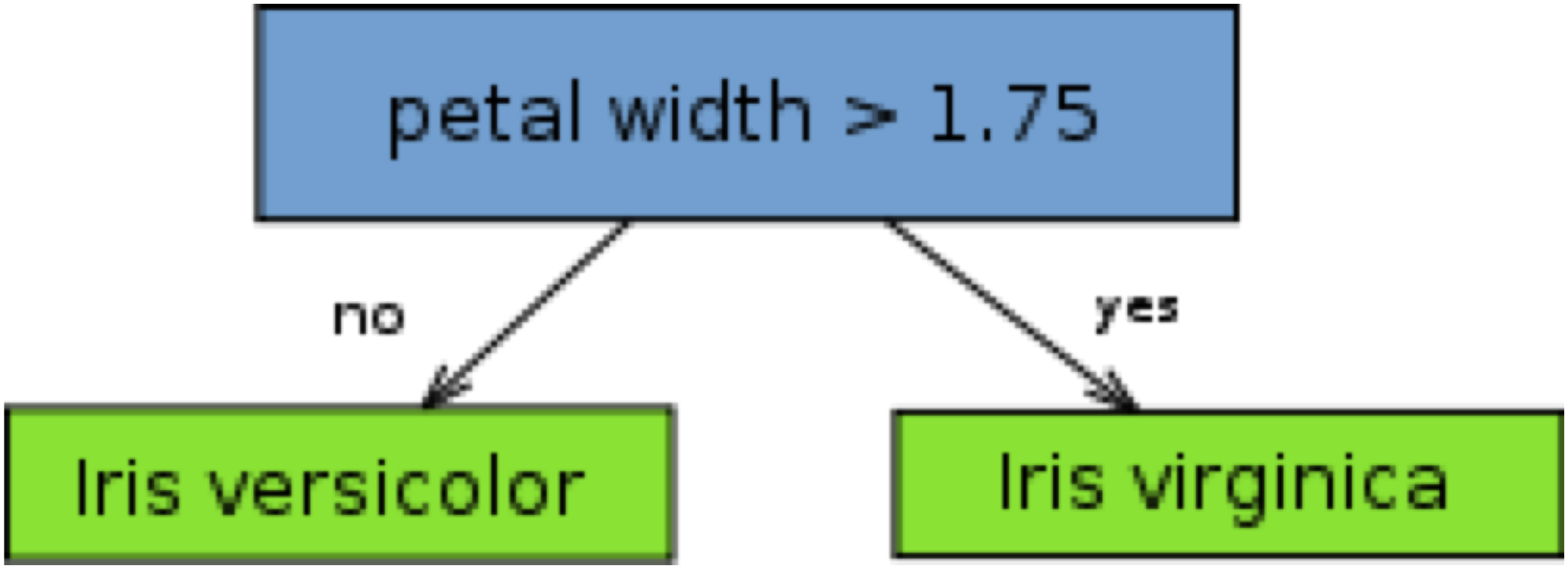
Does h_t get i^{th} point wrong

ε_t = 0 if h_t perfectly classifies all weighted data pts — $\alpha_t = \infty$

ε_t = 1 if h_t perfectly wrong => $-h_t$ perfectly right — $\alpha_t = -\infty$

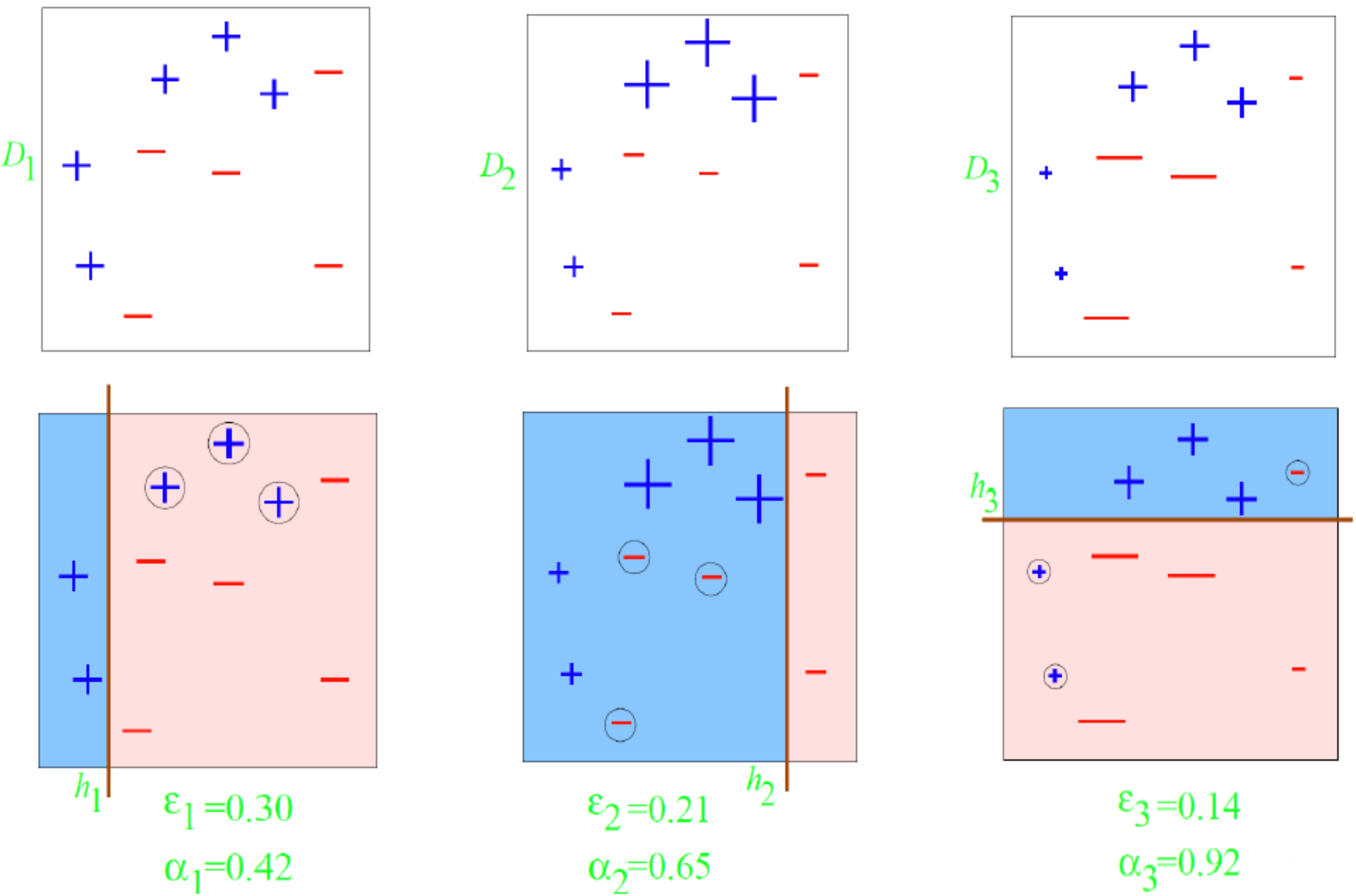
ε_t = 0.5 — $\alpha_t = 0$

Decision Stump



Source: Wikipedia

Boosting Example (Decision Stumps)



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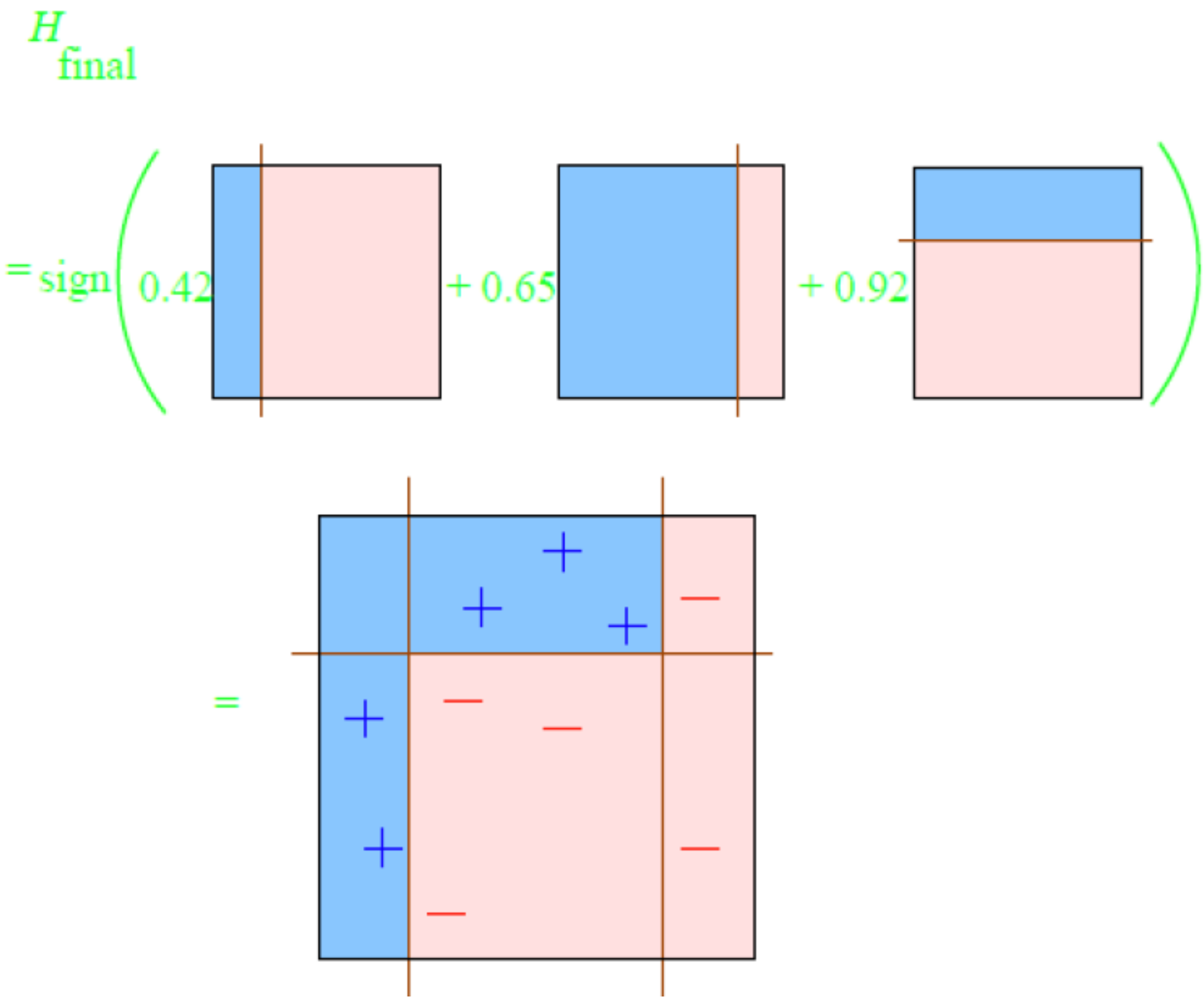


Analyzing training error

Analysis reveals:

- What α_t to choose for hypothesis h_t?

$$\alpha_t = \frac{1}{2} \ln \left(\frac{1 - \epsilon_t}{\epsilon_t} \right)$$

ε_t - weighted training error

- If each weak learner h_t is slightly better than random guessing ($\varepsilon_t < 0.5$), then training error of AdaBoost decays exponentially fast in number of rounds T.

$$\frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^{m} \delta(H(x_i) \neq y_i) \leq \exp\left(-2 \sum_{t=1}^{T} (1/2 - \epsilon_t)^2 \right)$$

Training Error

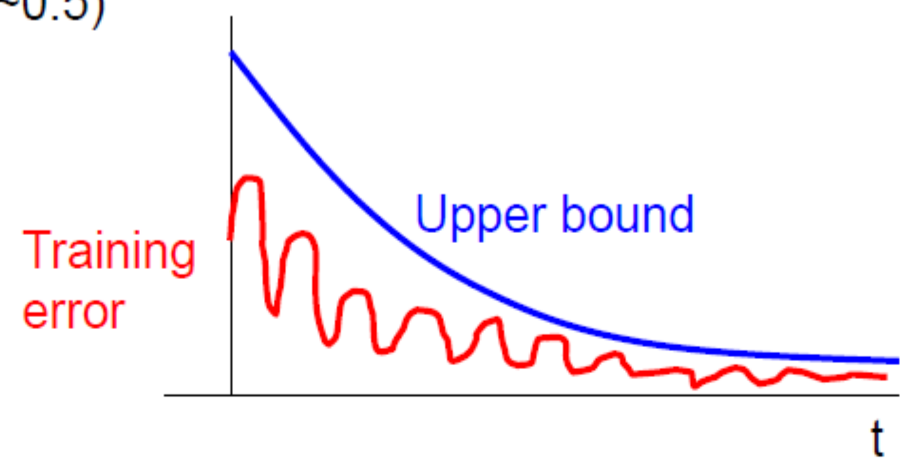
Analyzing training error

Training error of final classifier is bounded by:

$$\frac{1}{m}\sum_{i=1}^{m}\delta(H(x_i)\neq y_i) \leq \frac{1}{m}\sum_{i=1}^{m}\exp(-y_i f(x_i)) = \prod_t Z_t$$

Where $f(x) = \sum_t \alpha_t h_t(x); H(x) = sign(f(x))$

If $Z_t < 1$, training error decreases exponentially (even though weak learners may not be good ε_t~0.5)



What α_t to choose for hypothesis h_t?

Training error of final classifier is bounded by:

$$\frac{1}{m}\sum_{i=1}^{m}\delta(H(x_i)\neq y_i)\leq\frac{1}{m}\sum_{i=1}^{m}\exp(-y_i f(x_i))=\prod_t Z_t$$

Where $f(x)=\sum_t \alpha_t h_t(x); H(x)=sign(f(x))$

If we minimize $\prod_t Z_t$, we minimize our training error

We can tighten this bound greedily, by choosing α_t and h_t on each iteration to minimize Z_t.

$$Z_t=\sum_{i=1}^{m}D_t(i)\exp(-\alpha_t y_i h_t(x_i))$$

What α_t to choose for hypothesis h_t?

We can minimize this bound by choosing α_t on each iteration to minimize Z_t.

$$Z_t = \sum_{i=1}^{m} D_t(i) \exp(-\alpha_t y_i h_t(x_i))$$

For boolean target function, this is accomplished by [Freund & Schapire '97]:

$$\boxed{\alpha_t = \frac{1}{2} \ln \left(\frac{1-\epsilon_t}{\epsilon_t} \right)}$$

Proof:

$$\begin{aligned} Z_t &= \sum_{i:y_i \neq h_t(x_i)} D_t(i) e^{\alpha_t} + \sum_{i:y_i = h_t(x_i)} D_t(i) e^{-\alpha_t} \\ &= \epsilon_t e^{\alpha_t} + (1-\epsilon_t) e^{-\alpha_t} \end{aligned}$$

$$\frac{\partial Z_t}{\alpha_t} = \epsilon_t e^{\alpha_t} - (1-\epsilon_t) e^{-\alpha_t} = 0 \qquad \Rightarrow e^{2\alpha_t} = \frac{1-\epsilon_t}{\epsilon_t}$$

What α_t to choose for hypothesis h_t?

We can minimize this bound by choosing α_t on each iteration to minimize Z_t.

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Dumb classifiers made Smart

Training error of final classifier is bounded by:

$$\frac{1}{m}\sum_{i=1}^{m}\delta(H(x_i)\neq y_i) \leq \prod_t Z_t = \prod_t \sqrt{1-(1-2\epsilon_t)^2}$$

$$\leq \exp\left(-2\sum_{t=1}^{T}\underbrace{(1/2-\epsilon_t)^2}\right)$$

grows as ε_t moves away from 1/2

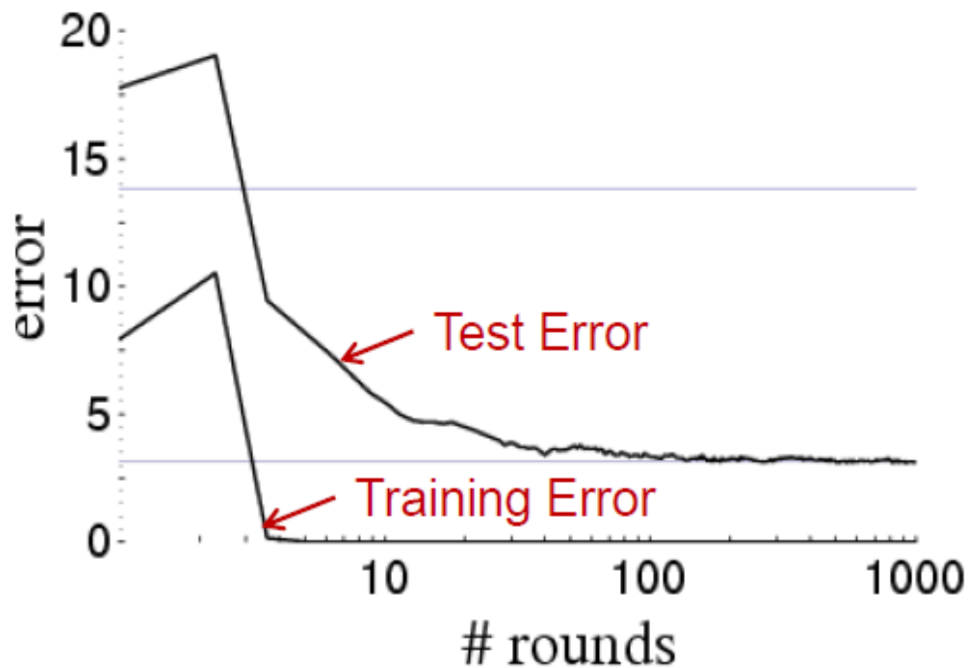
If each classifier is (at least slightly) better than random $\varepsilon_t < 0.5$

AdaBoost will achieve zero *training error* exponentially fast (in number of rounds T) !!

What about test error?

Boosting results – Digit recognition

[Schapire, 1989]



- Boosting often, **but not always**
  - Robust to overfitting
  - Test set error decreases even after training error is zero

Generalization Error Bounds

[Freund & Schapire'95]

$$error_{true}(H) \leq error_{train}(H) + \tilde{O}\left(\sqrt{\frac{Td}{m}}\right)$$

	bias	variance	
↕ tradeoff	large	small	T small
	small	large	T large

- T – number of boosting rounds
- d – VC dimension of weak learner, measures complexity of classifier
- m – number of training examples

Generalization Error Bounds

[Freund & Schapire'95]

$$error_{true}(H) \leq error_{train}(H) + \tilde{\mathcal{O}}\left(\sqrt{\frac{Td}{m}}\right)$$

With high probability

Boosting can overfit if T is large

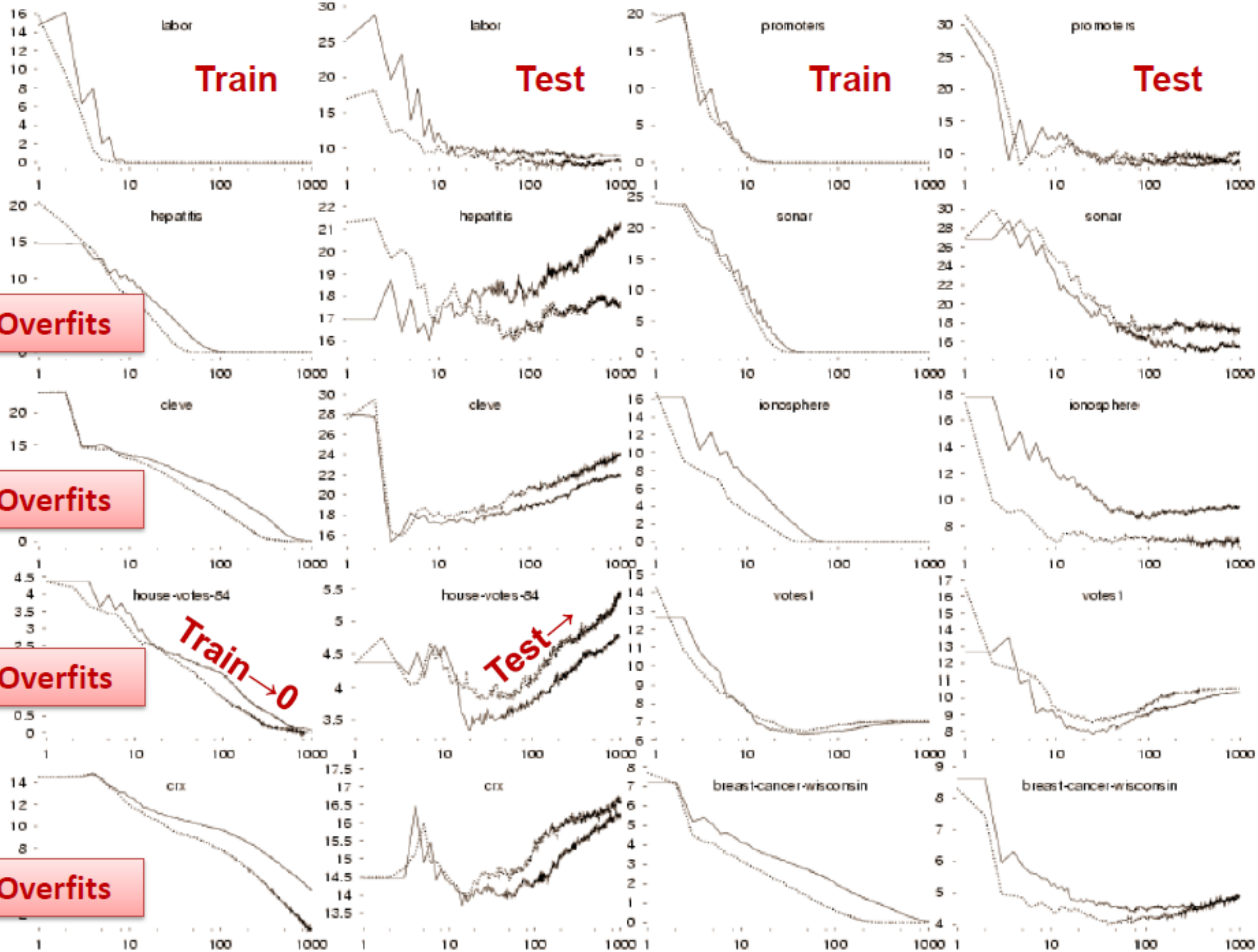
Boosting often,

Contradicts experimental results

- Robust to overfitting
- Test set error decreases even after training error is zero

Need better analysis tools – margin based bounds

AdaBoost and AdaBoost.MH on Train (left) and Test (right) data from Irvine repository. [Schapire and Singer, ML 1999]



Boosting and Logistic Regression

Logistic regression assumes:

$$P(Y=1|X) = \frac{1}{1+\exp(-f(x))} \qquad f(x) = w_0 + \sum_j w_j x_j$$

And tries to maximize data likelihood:

$$P(\mathcal{D}|f) \overset{\text{iid}}{=} \prod_{i=1}^{m} \frac{1}{1+\exp(-y_i f(x_i))}$$

Y_i = 1 or -1

Equivalent to minimizing log loss

$$-\log P(\mathcal{D}|f) = \sum_{i=1}^{m} \ln(1+\exp(-y_i f(x_i)))$$

Boosting and Logistic Regression

Logistic regression equivalent to minimizing log loss

$$\sum_{i=1}^{m} \ln(1+\exp(-y_i f(x_i)))$$

$$f(x) = w_0 + \sum_j w_j x_j$$

Boosting minimizes similar loss function!!

$$\frac{1}{m}\sum_{i=1}^{m} \exp(-y_i f(x_i)) = \prod_t Z_t$$

$$f(x) = \sum_t \alpha_t h_t(x)$$

Weighted average of weak learners

Both smooth approximations of 0/1 loss!

Boosting and Logistic Regression

Logistic regression:

- Minimize log loss

$$\sum_{i=1}^{m} \ln(1 + \exp(-y_i f(x_i)))$$

- Define

$$f(x) = \sum_j w_j x_j$$

where x_j predefined features

(linear classifier)

- Jointly optimize over all weights $w_0, w_1, w_2 \ldots$

Boosting:

- Minimize exp loss

$$\sum_{i=1}^{m} \exp(-y_i f(x_i))$$

- Define

$$f(x) = \sum_t \alpha_t h_t(x)$$

where $h_t(x)$ defined dynamically to fit data

(not a linear classifier)

- Weights α_t learned per iteration t incrementally

Hard & Soft Decision

Weighted average of weak learners $$f(x) = \sum_t \alpha_t h_t(x)$$

Hard Decision/Predicted label: $$H(x) = sign(f(x))$$

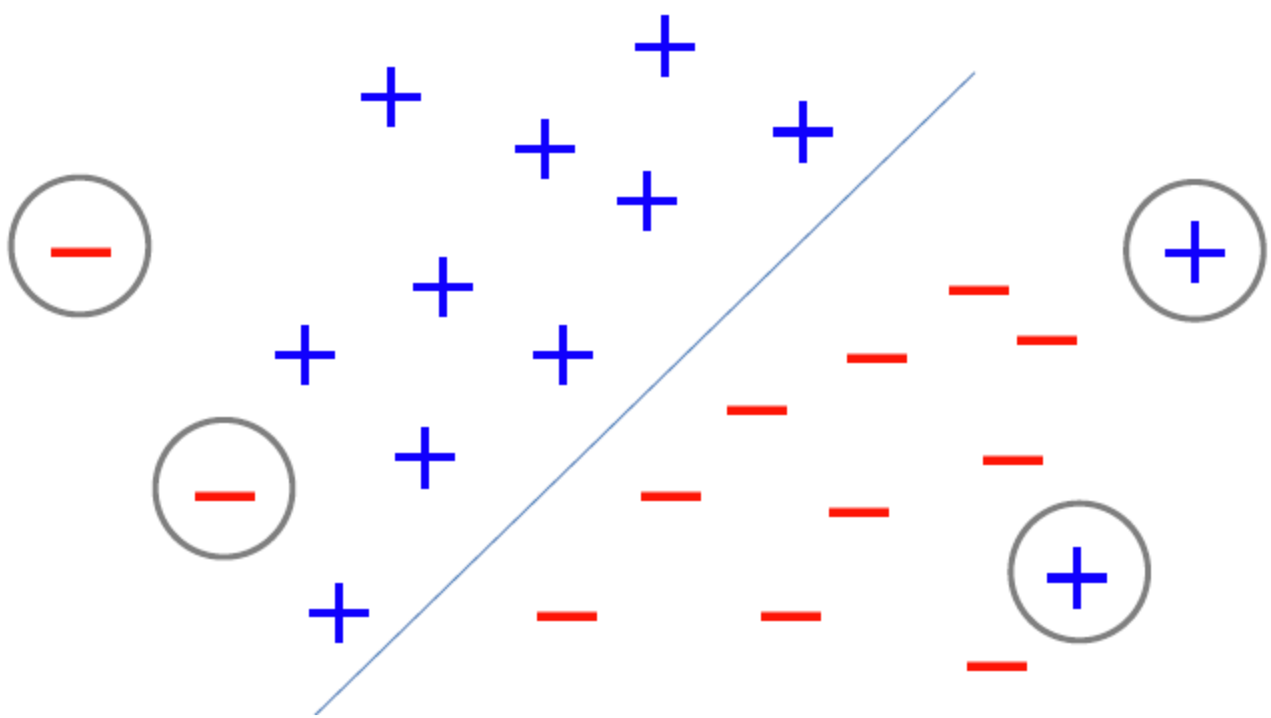
Soft Decision:
(based on analogy with
logistic regression)

$$P(Y = 1|X) = \frac{1}{1 + \exp(-f(x))}$$

Effect of Outliers

Good ☺ : Can identify outliers since focuses on examples that are hard to categorize

Bad ☹ : Too many outliers can degrade classification performance dramatically increase time to convergence



Bagging

[Breiman, 1996]

Related approach to combining classifiers:

1. Run independent weak learners on bootstrap replicates (sample with replacement) of the training set
2. Average/vote over weak hypotheses

Bagging	**vs.**	**Boosting**
Resamples data points		Reweights data points (modifies their distribution)
Weight of each classifier is the same		Weight is dependent on classifier's accuracy
Only variance reduction		Both bias and variance reduced – learning rule becomes more complex with iterations

Boosting Summary

- Combine weak classifiers to obtain very strong classifier
  - Weak classifier – slightly better than random on training data
  - Resulting very strong classifier – can eventually provide zero training error
- AdaBoost algorithm
- Boosting v. Logistic Regression
  - Similar loss functions
  - Single optimization (LR) v. Incrementally improving classification (B)
- Most popular application of Boosting:
  - Boosted decision stumps!
  - Very simple to implement, very effective classifier