EECS 349:Machine Learning

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Topic 2: Decision Trees

(Includes content provided by: Russel & Norvig, D. Downie, P. Domingos)

General Learning Task

There is a set of possible examples $X = \{\vec{x}_1, \ldots \vec{x}_n\}$

Each example is an n-tuple of attribute values

$$\vec{x}_1 = < a_1, \ldots, a_k >$$

There is a target function that maps *X* onto some finite set *Y*

$$f : X \to Y$$

The DATA is a set of duples <example, target function values>

$$D = \{< \vec{x}_1, f(\vec{x}_1) >, \ldots < \vec{x}_m, f(\vec{x}_m) >\}$$

Find a hypothesis ***h*** such that...

$$\forall \vec{x}, h(\vec{x}) \approx f(\vec{x})$$

Attribute-based representations

Examples described by attribute values (Boolean, discrete, continuous, etc.)
E.g., situations where I will/won't wait for a table:

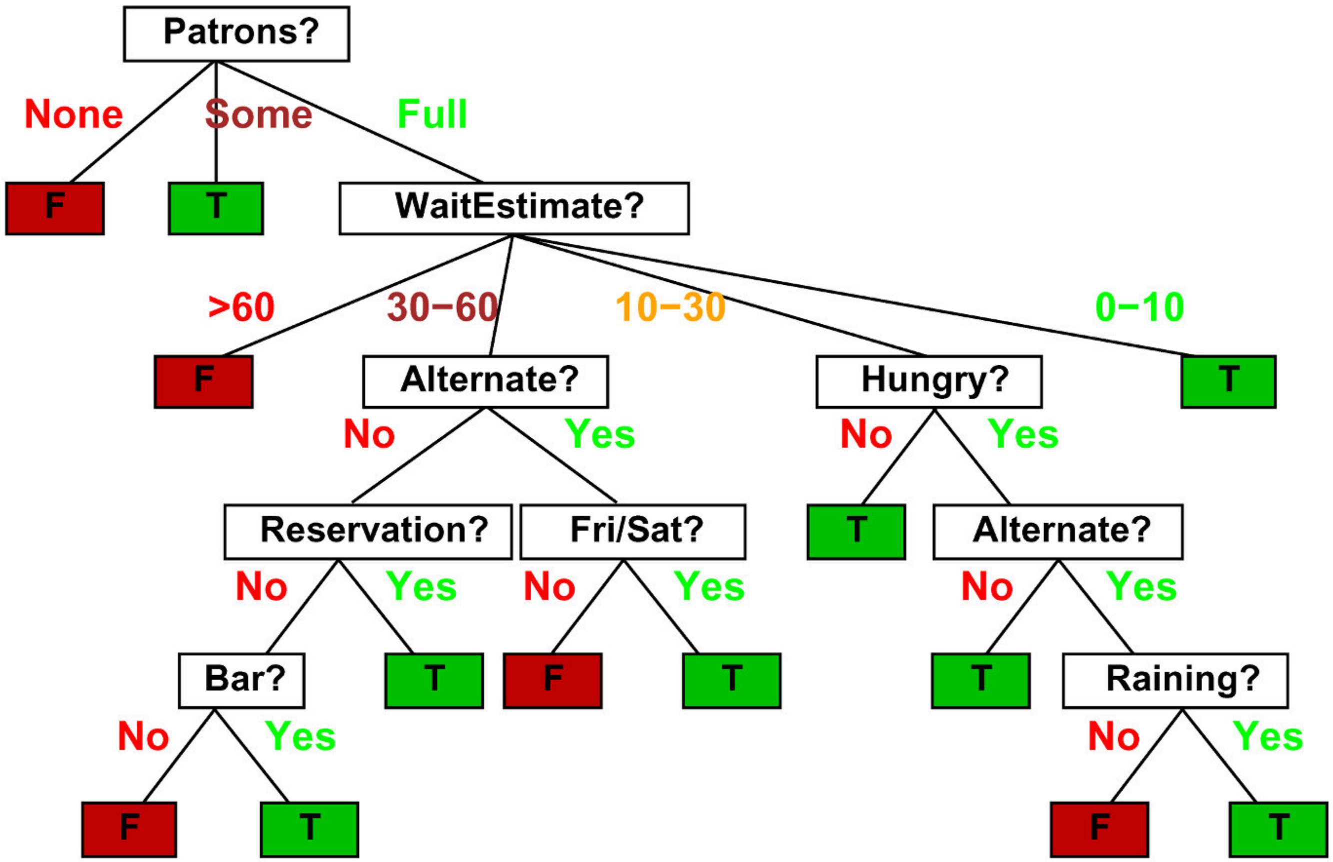
Example	Attributes										Target
	Alt	*Bar*	*Fri*	*Hun*	*Pat*	*Price*	*Rain*	*Res*	*Type*	*Est*	*WillWait*
X_1	*T*	*F*	*F*	*T*	*Some*	*\$\$\$*	*F*	*T*	*French*	*0–10*	*T*
X_2	*T*	*F*	*F*	*T*	*Full*	*\$*	*F*	*F*	*Thai*	*30–60*	*F*
X_3	*F*	*T*	*F*	*F*	*Some*	*\$*	*F*	*F*	*Burger*	*0–10*	*T*
X_4	*T*	*F*	*T*	*T*	*Full*	*\$*	*F*	*F*	*Thai*	*10–30*	*T*
X_5	*T*	*F*	*T*	*F*	*Full*	*\$\$\$*	*F*	*T*	*French*	*>60*	*F*
X_6	*F*	*T*	*F*	*T*	*Some*	*\$\$*	*T*	*T*	*Italian*	*0–10*	*T*
X_7	*F*	*T*	*F*	*F*	*None*	*\$*	*T*	*F*	*Burger*	*0–10*	*F*
X_8	*F*	*F*	*F*	*T*	*Some*	*\$\$*	*T*	*T*	*Thai*	*0–10*	*T*
X_9	*F*	*T*	*T*	*F*	*Full*	*\$*	*T*	*F*	*Burger*	*>60*	*F*
X_{10}	*T*	*T*	*T*	*T*	*Full*	*\$\$\$*	*F*	*T*	*Italian*	*10–30*	*F*
X_{11}	*F*	*F*	*F*	*F*	*None*	*\$*	*F*	*F*	*Thai*	*0–10*	*F*
X_{12}	*T*	*T*	*T*	*T*	*Full*	*\$*	*F*	*F*	*Burger*	*30–60*	*T*

Classification of examples is positive (T) or negative (F)

Decision Tree

One possible representation for hypotheses

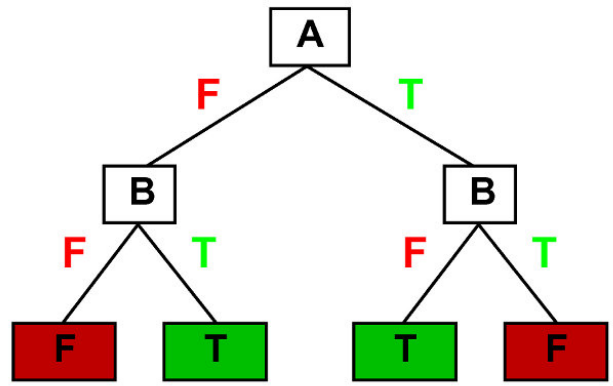
E.g., here is the "true" tree for deciding whether to wait:



Expressiveness of D-Trees

Decision trees can express any function of the input attributes.
E.g., for Boolean functions, truth table row $\longrightarrow$ path to leaf:

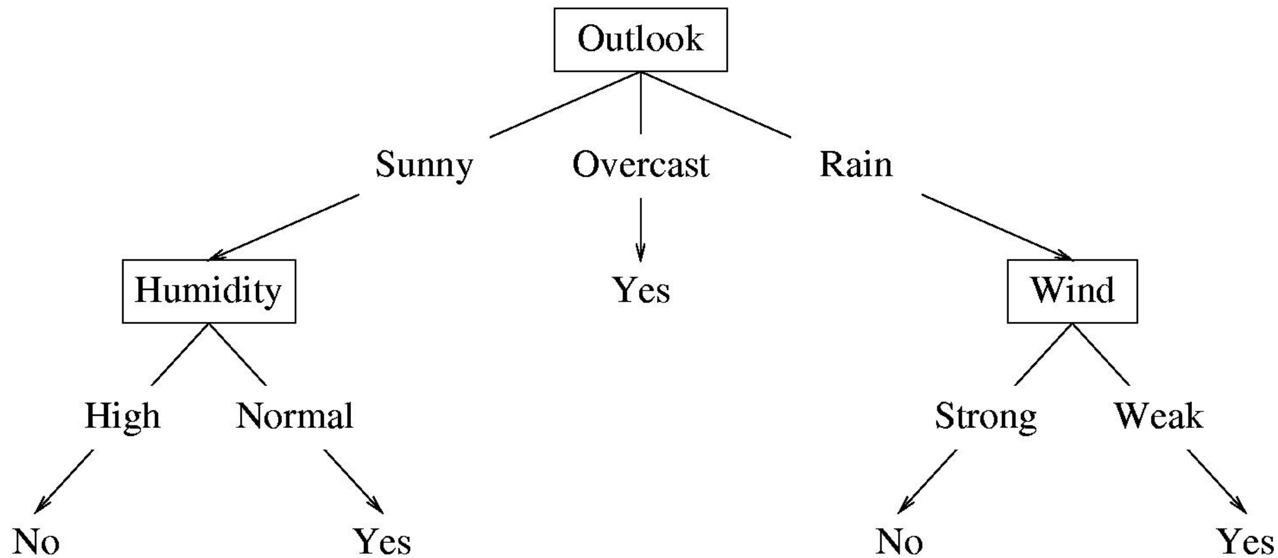
A	B	A xor B
F	F	F
F	T	T
T	F	T
T	T	F



Trivially, there is a consistent decision tree for any training set w/ one path to leaf for each example (unless f nondeterministic in x) but it probably won't generalize to new examples

Prefer to find more **compact** decision trees

Decision Trees represent *disjunctions* of *conjunctions*



$f(x) = yes$ iff...

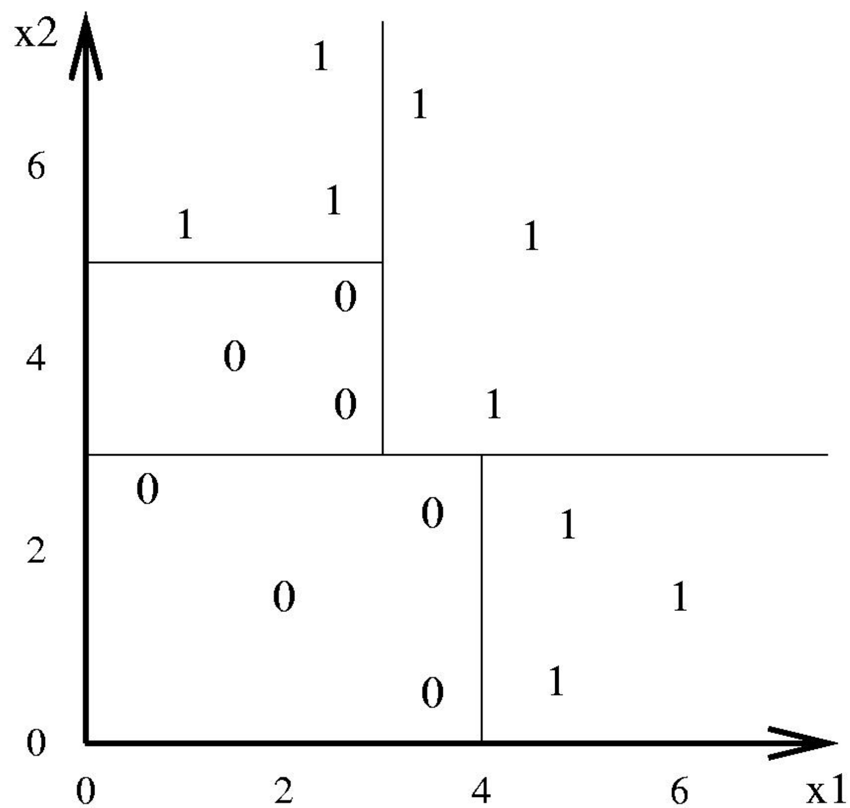
$(\text{Outlook} = \text{Sunny} \wedge \text{Humidity} = \text{Normal}) \vee$

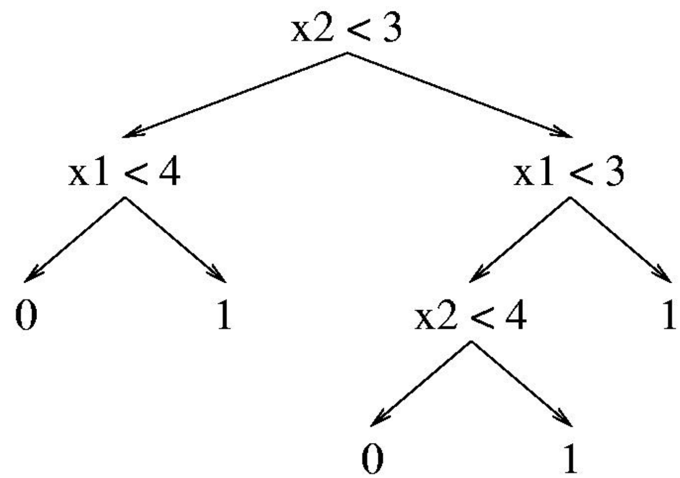
$(\text{Outlook} = \text{overcast}) \vee$

$(\text{Outlook} = \text{rain} \wedge \text{Wind} = \text{weak})$

Decision Tree Boundaries

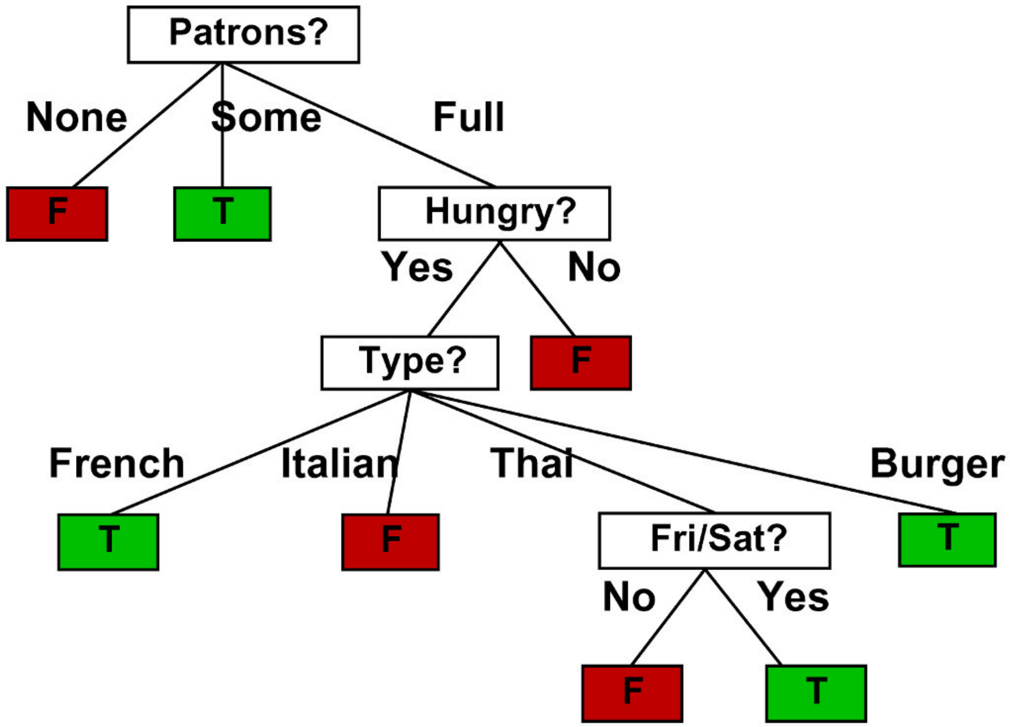
Decision trees divide the feature space into axis-parallel rectangles, and label each rectangle with one of the K classes.





A learned decision tree

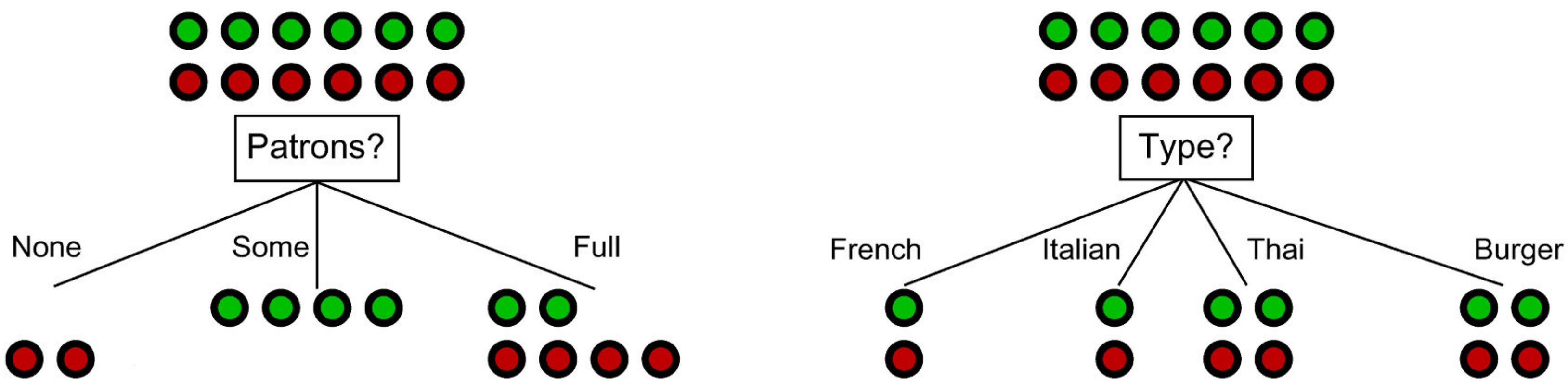
Decision tree learned from the 12 examples:



Substantially simpler than "true" tree—a more complex hypothesis isn't justified by small amount of data

Choosing an attribute

Idea: a good attribute splits the examples into subsets that are (ideally) "all positive" or "all negative"



Patrons? is a better choice—gives **information** about the classification

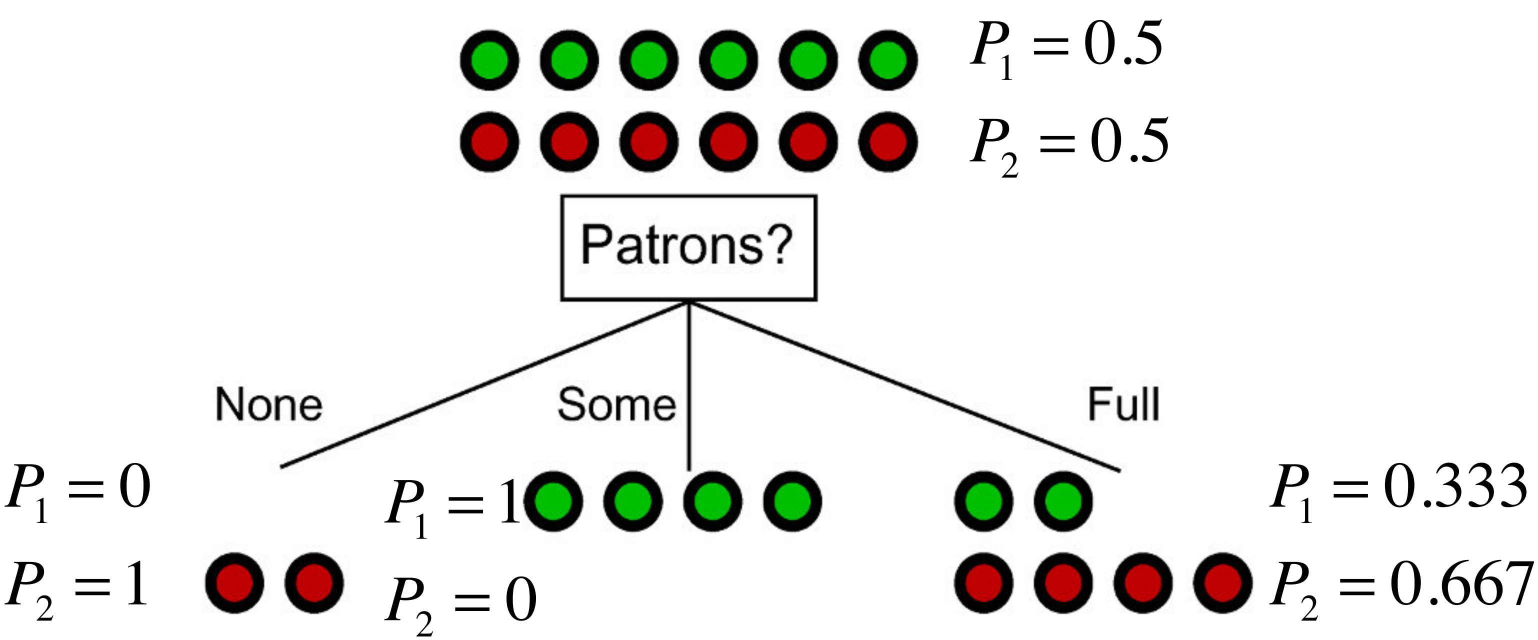
The more skewed the examples in a bin, the better.

We're going to use ENTROPY to as a measure of how skewed each bin is.

Counts as probabilities

$P_1 =$ probability I will wait for a table

$P_2 =$ probability I will NOT wait for a table



Information

Information answers questions

The more clueless I am about the answer initially, the more information contained in the answer

Scale: 1 bit $=$ answer to Boolean question with prior $\langle 0.5, 0.5 \rangle$

Information in an answer when prior is $\langle P_1, \ldots, P_n \rangle$ is

$$H(\langle P_1, \ldots, P_n \rangle) = \Sigma_{i=1}^{n} - P_i \log_2 P_i$$

(also called entropy of the prior)

About ID3

- A recursive, greedy algorithm to build a decision tree
- At each step it picks the best variable to split the data on, and then moves on
- It is “greedy” because it makes the optimal choice at the current step, without considering anything beyond the current step.
- This can lead to trouble, if one needs to consider things beyond a single variable (e.g. multiple variables) when making a choice. (Try it on XOR)

Decision Tree Learning (ID3)

Aim: find a small tree consistent with the training examples

Idea: (recursively) choose "most significant" attribute as root of (sub)tree

function DTL(*examples, attributes, default*) **returns** a decision tree

  if *examples* is empty **then return** *default*
  else if all *examples* have the same classification **then return** the classification
  else if *attributes* is empty **then return** MODE(*examples*)
  else
    best ← CHOOSE-ATTRIBUTE(*attributes*, *examples*)
    tree ← a new decision tree with root test *best*
    for each value v_i of *best* **do**
      $examples_i$ ← {elements of *examples* with $best = v_i$}
      subtree ← DTL($examples_i$, *attributes* − *best*, MODE(*examples*))
      add a branch to *tree* with label v_i and subtree *subtree*
    return *tree*

Choosing an attribute in ID3

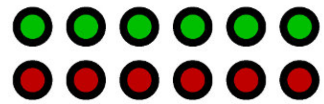
- For each attribute, find the entropy *H* of the example set AFTER splitting on that example

  *note, this means taking the entropy of each subset created by splitting on the attribute, and then combining these entropies…weighted by the size of each subset.

- Pick the attribute that creates the lowest overall entropy.

Entropy prior to splitting

Instances where I waited
Instances where I didn't



P_1 = probability I will wait for a table

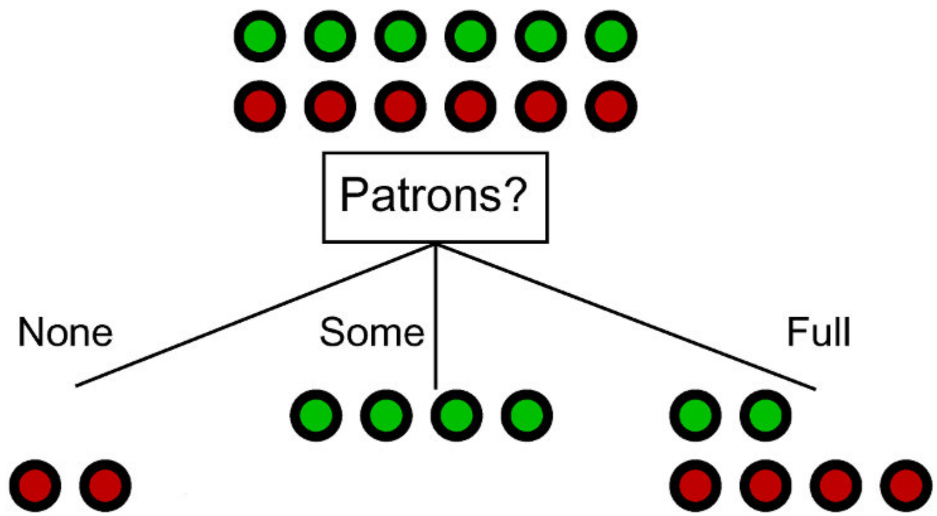
P_2 = probability I will NOT wait for a table

$$H_0\langle P_1, P_2\rangle = \sum_j -P_j \log_2 P_j$$

$$= -P_1 \log_2 P_1 - P_2 \log_2 P_2$$

$$= 1$$

If we split on Patrons

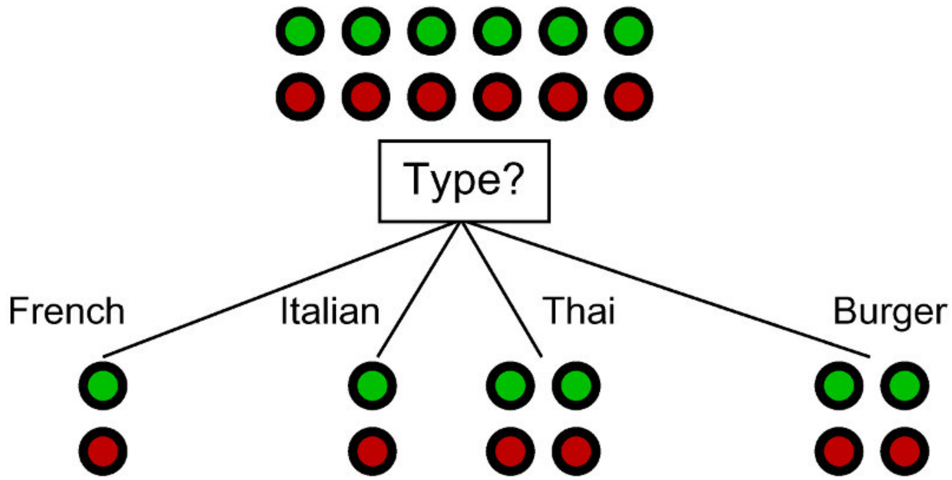


$$H_{none} \qquad H_{some} \qquad H_{full}$$

$$H_{Patrons} = W_{none}H_{none} + W_{some}H_{some} + W_{full}H_{full}$$

$$= \frac{2}{12}0 + \frac{4}{12}0 + \frac{6}{12}\left(-\frac{2}{6}\log_2\frac{2}{6} - \frac{4}{6}\log_2\frac{4}{6}\right) = .459$$

If we split on Type



$$H_{Type} = W_{french} H_{french} + W_{italian} H_{italian} + W_{thai} H_{thai} + W_{burger} H_{burger}$$

$$= \frac{2}{12}1 + \frac{2}{12}1 + \frac{4}{12}1 + \frac{4}{12}1 = 1$$

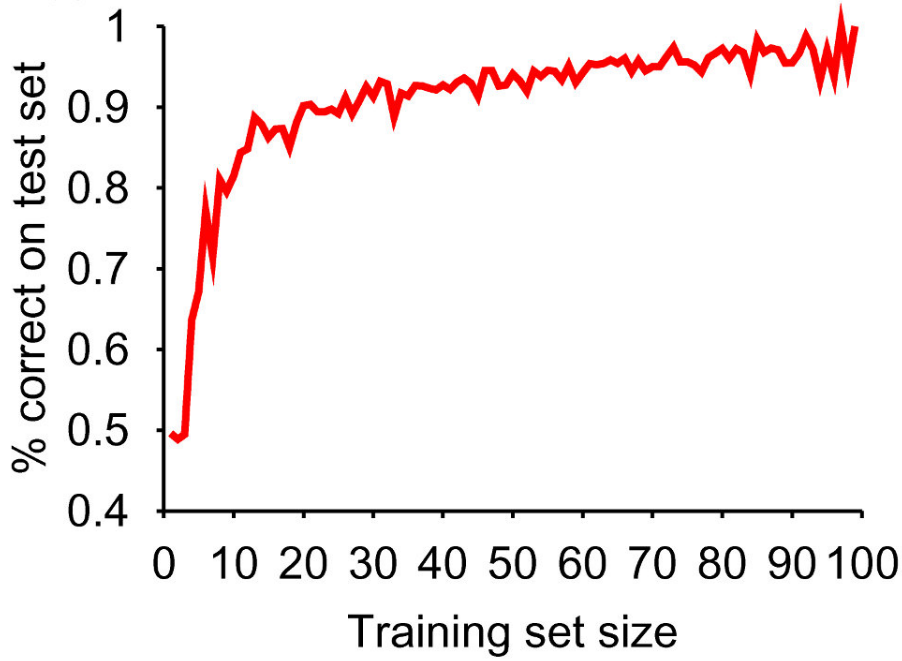
Measuring Performance

How do we know that $h \approx f$? (Hume's **Problem of Induction**)

1) Use theorems of computational/statistical learning theory

2) Try h on a new test set of examples
(use **same distribution over example space** as training set)

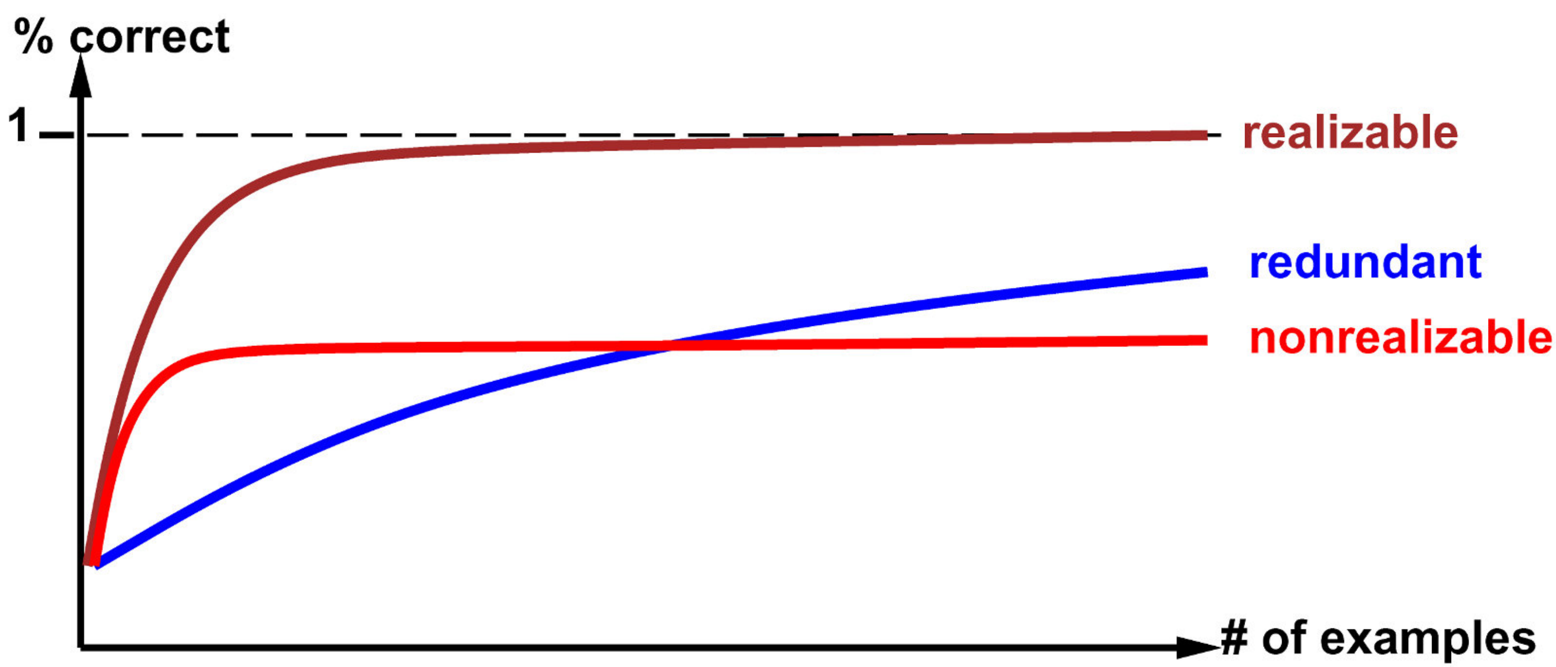
Learning curve = % correct on test set as a function of training set size



What the learning curve tells us

Learning curve depends on

- realizable (can express target function) vs. non-realizable
  non-realizability can be due to missing attributes
  or restricted hypothesis class (e.g., thresholded linear function)
- redundant expressiveness (e.g., loads of irrelevant attributes)



Rule #2 of Machine Learning

The *best* (i.e. the one that generalizes well) hypothesis almost never achieves 100% accuracy on the training data.

(Rule #1 was: you can't learn anything without inductive bias)

Avoiding Overfitting

- Approaches
  - Stop splitting when information gain is low or when split is not statistically significant.
  - Grow full tree and then **prune** it when done

- How to pick the "best" tree?
  - Performance on training data?
  - Performance on validation data?
  - Complexity penalty?

Reduced Error Pruning

- Split data into a training and a validation set
- Repeat until pruning hurts performance measure
    1. Try removing each leaf node (one by one) and measure the resulting performance on the validation set
    2. Remove the leaf that most improves performance

C4.5 Algorithm

- Builds a decision tree from labeled training data
- Also by Ross Quinlan
- Generalizes ID3 by
  - Allowing continuous value attributes
  - Allows missing attributes in examples
  - Prunes tree after building to improve generality

Rule post pruning

- Used in C4.5
- Steps
  1. Build the decision tree
  2. Convert it to a set of logical rules
  3. Prune each rule independently
  4. Sort rules into desired sequence for use

Take away about decision trees

- Used as classifiers
- Supervised learning algorithms (ID3, C4.5)
- (mostly) Batch processing
- Good for situations where
  - The classification categories are finite
  - The data can be represented as vectors of attributes
  - You want to be able to UNDERSTAND how the classifier makes its choices