Decision Trees

Machine Learning – CSE546
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Linear separability

- A dataset is **linearly separable** iff there exists a **separating hyperplane**:
  - Exists **w**, such that:
    - $w_0 + \sum_i w_i x_i > 0$; if $\mathbf{x}=\{x_1,\ldots,x_k\}$ is a positive example
    - $w_0 + \sum_i w_i x_i < 0$; if $\mathbf{x}=\{x_1,\ldots,x_k\}$ is a negative example

Not linearly separable data

- Some datasets are **not linearly separable!**

Addressing non-linearly separable data – Option 1, non-linear features

- Choose non-linear features, e.g.,
  - Typical linear features: $w_0 + \sum_i w_i x_i$
  - Example of non-linear features:
    - Degree 2 polynomials, $w_0 + \sum_i w_i x_i + \sum_{ij} w_{ij} x_i x_j$
- Classifier $h_{\mathbf{w}}(\mathbf{x})$ still linear in parameters **w**
  - As easy to learn
  - Data is linearly separable in higher dimensional spaces
  - More discussion later this quarter

Addressing non-linearly separable data – Option 2, non-linear classifier

- Choose a classifier $h_{\mathbf{w}}(\mathbf{x})$ that is non-linear in parameters **w**, e.g.,
  - Decision trees, boosting, nearest neighbor, neural networks…
- More general than linear classifiers
- But, can often be harder to learn (non-convex/concave optimization required)
- But, but, often very useful
- (BTW. Later this quarter, we'll see that these options are not that different)

A small dataset: Miles Per Gallon

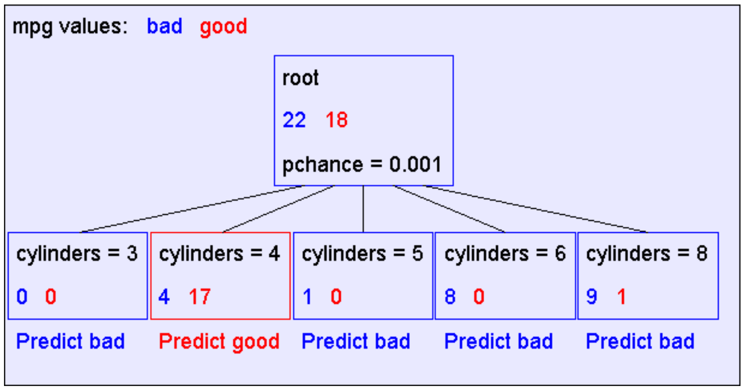
Suppose we want to predict MPG

mpg	cylinders	displacement	horsepower	weight	acceleration	modelyear	maker
good	4	low	low	low	high	75to78	asia
bad	6	medium	medium	medium	medium	70to74	america
bad	4	medium	medium	medium	low	75to78	europe
bad	8	high	high	high	low	70to74	america
bad	6	medium	medium	medium	medium	70to74	america
bad	4	low	medium	low	medium	70to74	asia
bad	4	low	medium	low	low	70to74	asia
bad	8	high	high	high	low	75to78	america
:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
bad	8	high	high	high	low	70to74	america
good	8	high	medium	high	high	79to83	america
bad	8	high	high	high	low	75to78	america
good	4	low	low	low	low	79to83	america
bad	6	medium	medium	medium	high	75to78	america
good	4	medium	low	low	low	79to83	america
good	4	low	low	medium	high	79to83	america
bad	8	high	high	high	low	70to74	america
good	4	low	medium	low	medium	75to78	europe
bad	5	medium	medium	medium	medium	75to78	europe

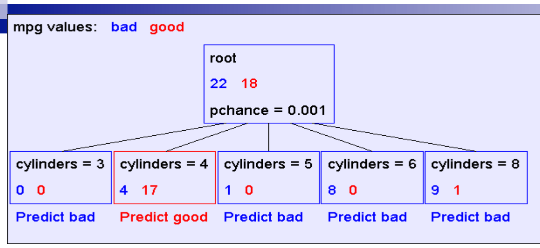
40 training examples

From the UCI repository (thanks to Ross Quinlan)

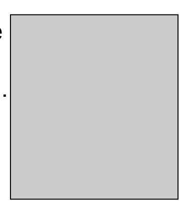
A Decision Stump



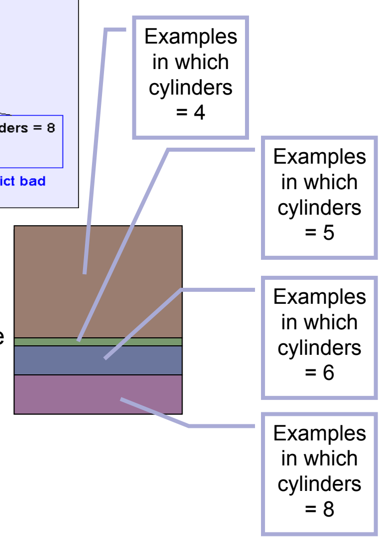
Recursion Step



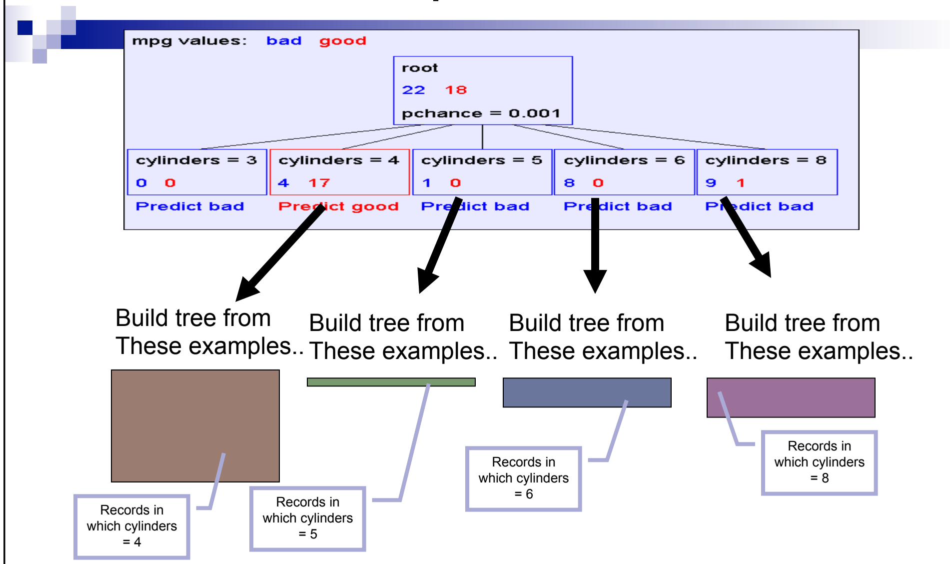
Take the Original Dataset..



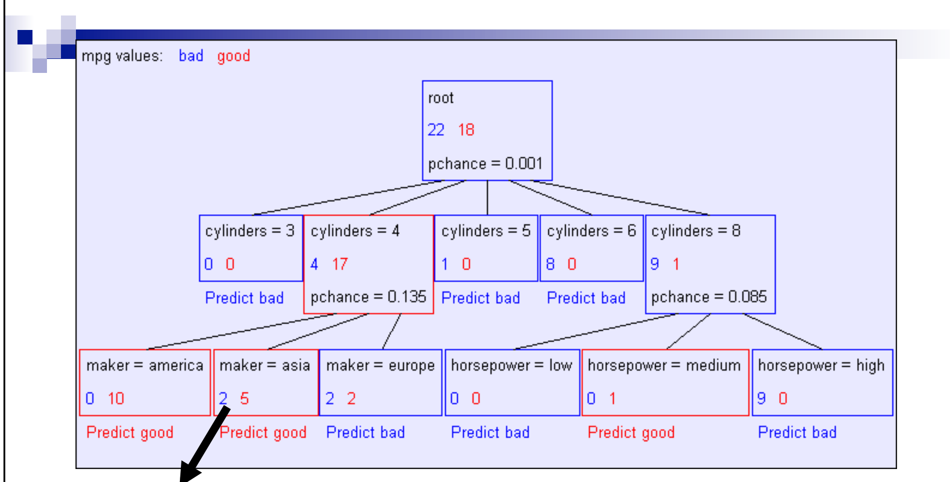
And partition it according to the value of the attribute we split on



Recursion Step



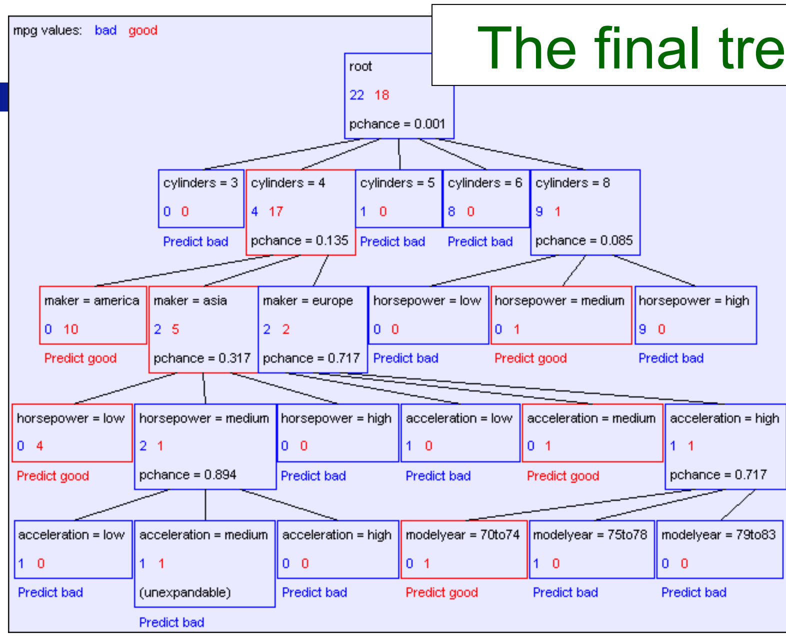
Second level of tree



Recursively build a tree from the seven records in which there are four cylinders and the maker was based in Asia

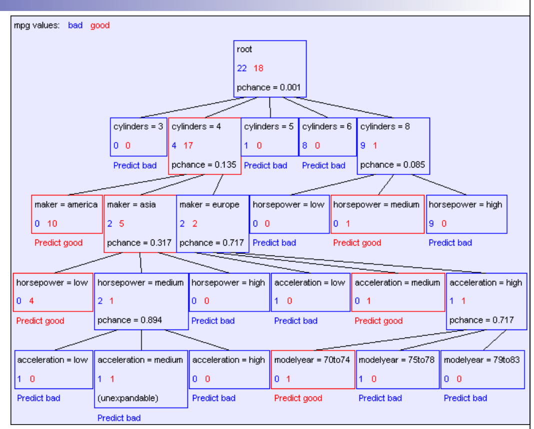
(Similar recursion in the other cases)

The final tree



Classification of a new example

- Classifying a test example – traverse tree and report leaf label



Are all decision trees equal?

- Many trees can represent the same concept
- But, not all trees will have the same size!
  - e.g., $\phi = A \wedge B \vee \neg A \wedge C$ ((A and B) or (not A and C))

Learning decision trees is hard!!!

- Learning the simplest (smallest) decision tree is an NP-complete problem [Hyafil & Rivest '76]
- Resort to a greedy heuristic:
  - Start from empty decision tree
  - Split on **next best attribute (feature)**
  - Recurse

Choosing a good attribute

X_1	X_2	Y
T	T	T
T	F	T
T	T	T
T	F	T
F	T	T
F	F	F
F	T	F
F	F	F

Measuring uncertainty

- Good split if we are more certain about classification after split
  - Deterministic good (all true or all false)
  - Uniform distribution bad

P(Y=A) = 1/2	P(Y=B) = 1/4	P(Y=C) = 1/8	P(Y=D) = 1/8

P(Y=A) = 1/4	P(Y=B) = 1/4	P(Y=C) = 1/4	P(Y=D) = 1/4

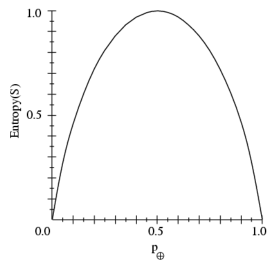
Entropy

Entropy $H(X)$ of a random variable Y

$$H(Y) = -\sum_{i=1}^{k} P(Y = y_i) \log_2 P(Y = y_i)$$

More uncertainty, more entropy!

Information Theory interpretation: $H(Y)$ is the expected number of bits needed to encode a randomly drawn value of Y (under most efficient code)



Andrew Moore's Entropy in a nutshell

Low Entropy High Entropy

Andrew Moore's Entropy in a nutshell

Low Entropy

..the values (locations of soup) sampled entirely from within the soup bowl

High Entropy

..the values (locations of soup) unpredictable... almost uniformly sampled throughout our dining room

Information gain

X_1	X_2	Y
T	T	T
T	F	T
T	T	T
T	F	T
F	T	T
F	F	F

- Advantage of attribute – decrease in uncertainty
  - Entropy of Y before you split
  - Entropy after split
    - Weight by probability of following each branch, i.e., normalized number of records

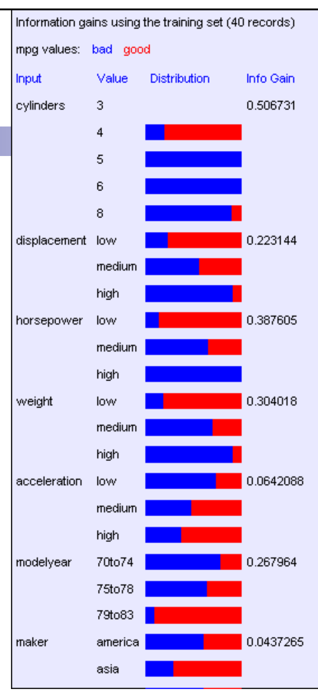
$$H(Y \mid X) = -\sum_{j=1}^{v} P(X = x_j) \sum_{i=1}^{k} P(Y = y_i \mid X = x_j) \log_2 P(Y = y_i \mid X = x_j)$$

- Information gain is difference $IG(X) = H(Y) - H(Y \mid X)$

Learning decision trees

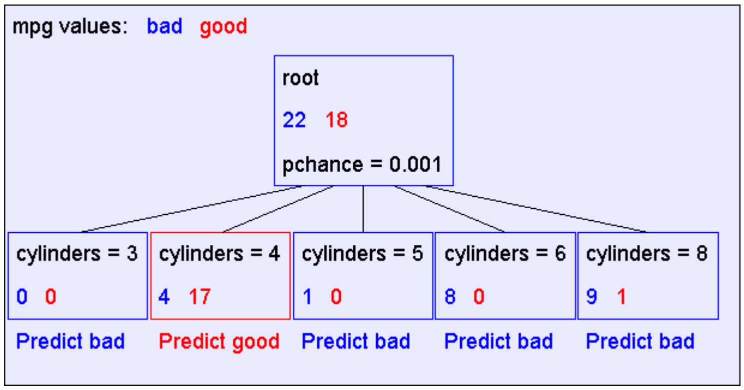
- Start from empty decision tree
- Split on **next best attribute (feature)**
  - Use, for example, information gain to select attribute
  - Split on $\arg\max_i IG(X_i) = \arg\max_i H(Y) - H(Y \mid X_i)$
- Recurse

Suppose we want to predict MPG

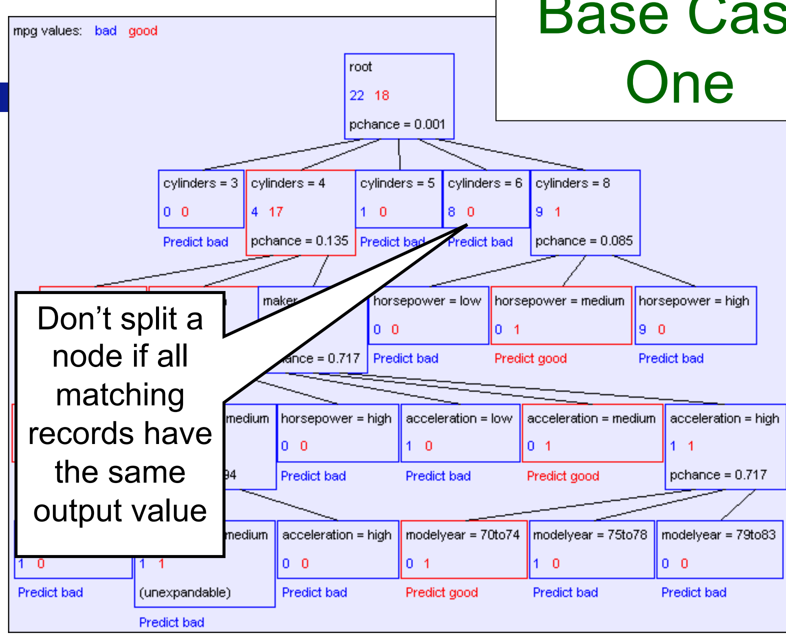


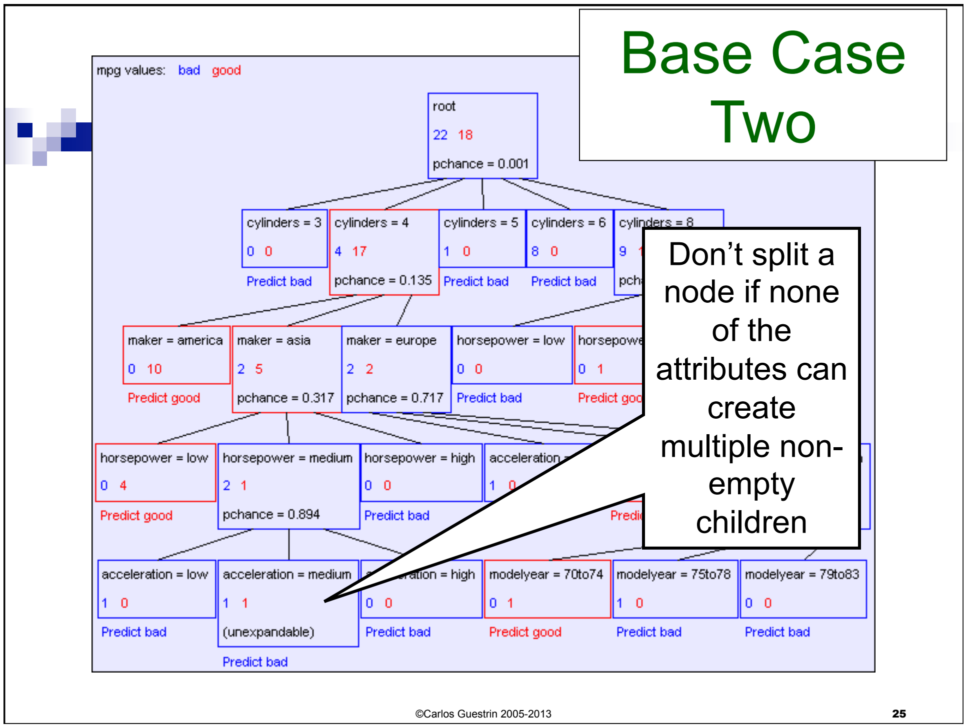
Look at all the information gains…

A Decision Stump



Base Case One




Base Case Two
Don't split a node if none of the attributes can create multiple non-empty children
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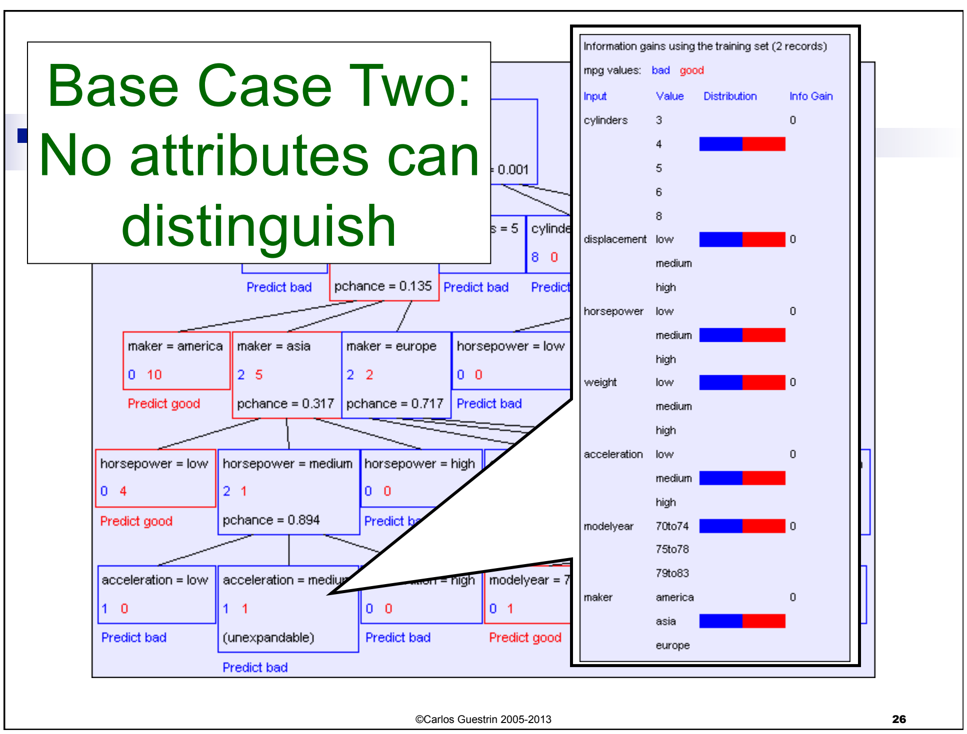
Base Case Two: No attributes can distinguish
Information gains using the training set (2 records)
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Base Cases

- Base Case One: If all records in current data subset have the same output then don't recurse
- Base Case Two: If all records have exactly the same set of input attributes then don't recurse

Base Cases: An idea

- Base Case One: If all records in current data subset have the same output then don't recurse
- Base Case Two: If all records have exactly the same set of input attributes then don't recurse

Proposed Base Case 3:

If all attributes have zero information gain then don't recurse

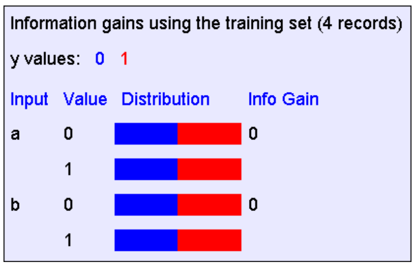
•*Is this a good idea?*

The problem with Base Case 3

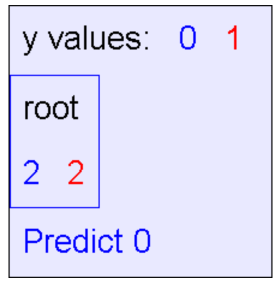
a	b	y
0	0	0
0	1	1
1	0	1
1	1	0

Y = A XOR B

The information gains:



The resulting bad decision tree:

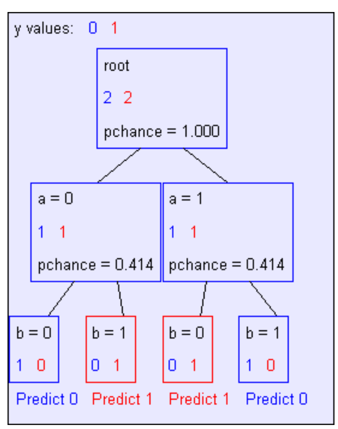


If we omit Base Case 3:

a	b	y
0	0	0
0	1	1
1	0	1
1	1	0

y = a XOR b

The resulting decision tree:



Basic Decision Tree Building Summarized

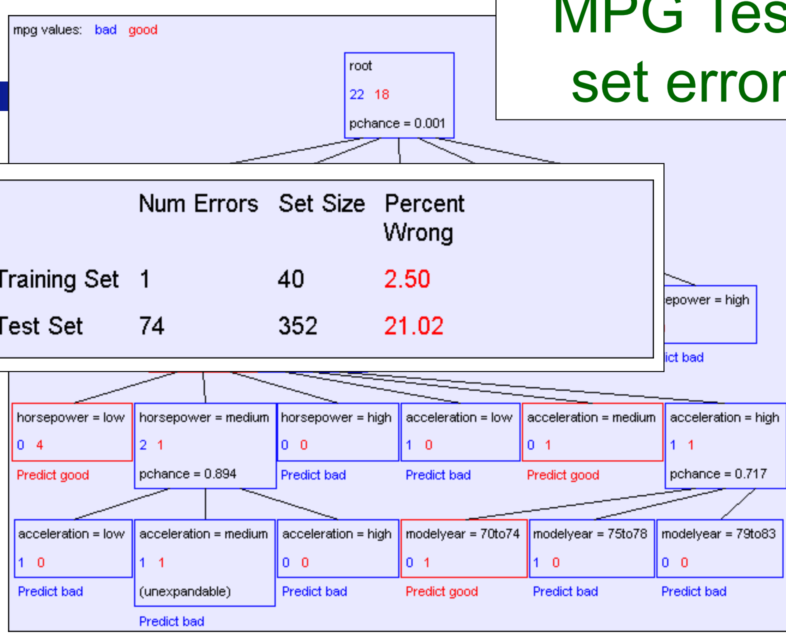
BuildTree(*DataSet*,*Output*)

- If all output values are the same in *DataSet*, return a leaf node that says "predict this unique output"
- If all input values are the same, return a leaf node that says "predict the majority output"
- Else find attribute *X* with highest Info Gain
- Suppose *X* has n_X distinct values (i.e. X has arity n_X).
  - Create and return a non-leaf node with n_X children.
  - The *i*'th child should be built by calling

    BuildTree(DS_i,*Output*)

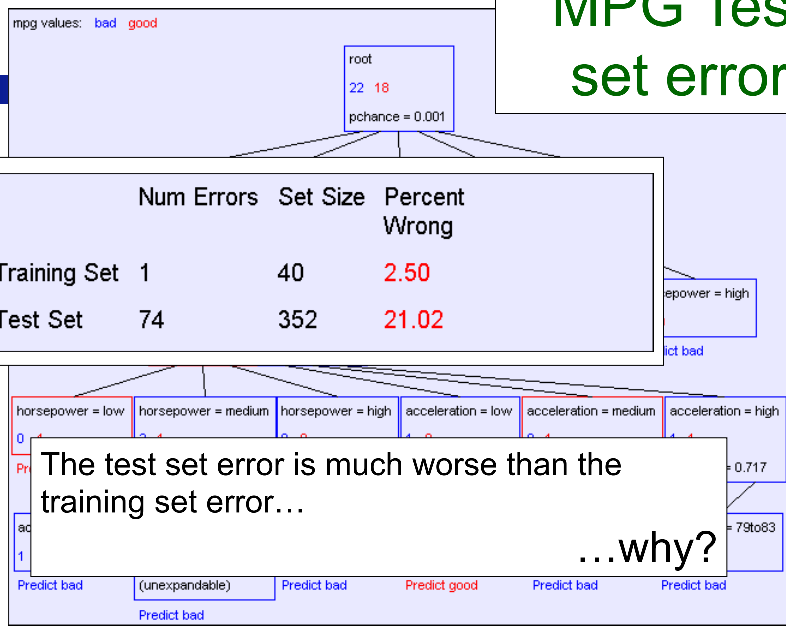
    Where DS_i built consists of all those records in DataSet for which X = *i*th distinct value of X.

MPG Test set error



	Num Errors	Set Size	Percent Wrong
Training Set	1	40	2.50
Test Set	74	352	21.02

MPG Test set error



	Num Errors	Set Size	Percent Wrong
Training Set	1	40	2.50
Test Set	74	352	21.02

The test set error is much worse than the training set error…

…why?

Decision trees & Learning Bias

mpg	cylinders	displacement	horsepower	weight	acceleration	modelyear	maker
good	4	low	low	low	high	75to78	asia
bad	6	medium	medium	medium	medium	70to74	america
bad	4	medium	medium	medium	low	75to78	europe
bad	8	high	high	high	low	70to74	america
bad	6	medium	medium	medium	medium	70to74	america
bad	4	low	medium	low	medium	70to74	asia
bad	4	low	medium	low	low	70to74	asia
bad	8	high	high	high	low	75to78	america
:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
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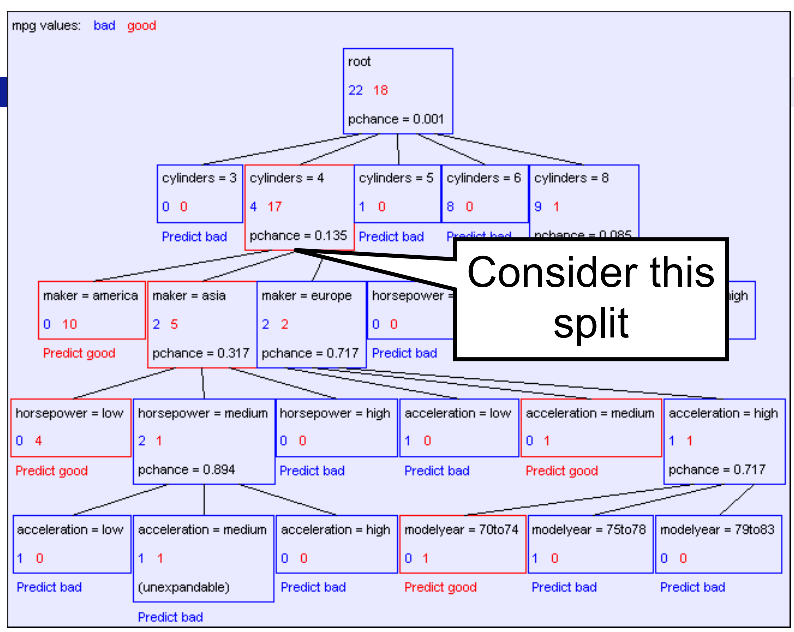
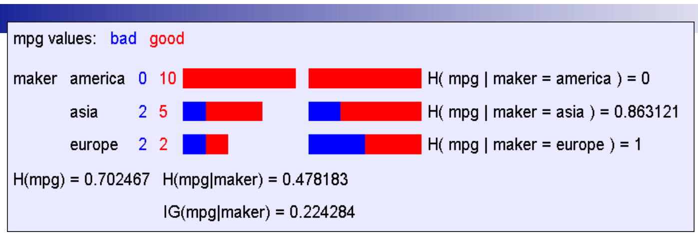
bad	8	high	high	high	low	70to74	america
good	4	low	medium	low	medium	75to78	europe
bad	5	medium	medium	medium	medium	75to78	europe

Decision trees will overfit

- Standard decision trees are have no learning bias
  - Training set error is always zero!
    - (If there is no label noise)
  - Lots of variance
  - Will definitely overfit!!!
  - Must bias towards simpler trees
- Many strategies for picking simpler trees:
  - Fixed depth
  - Fixed number of leaves
  - Or something smarter…

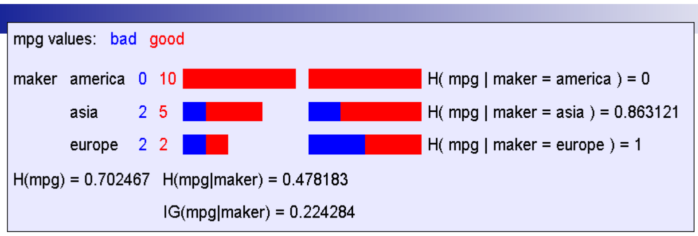


A chi-square test



- Suppose that MPG was completely uncorrelated with maker.
- What is the chance we'd have seen data of at least this apparent level of association anyway?

A chi-square test



- Suppose that mpg was completely uncorrelated with maker.
- What is the chance we'd have seen data of at least this apparent level of association anyway?

By using a particular kind of chi-square test, the answer is 7.2%

(Such simple hypothesis tests are very easy to compute, unfortunately, not enough time to cover in the lecture, but see readings…)

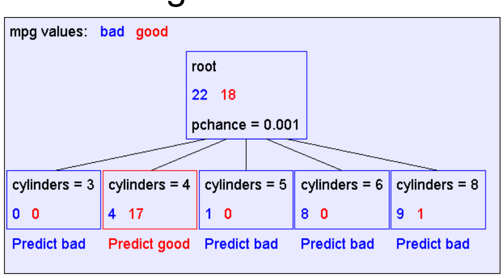
Using Chi-squared to avoid overfitting

- Build the full decision tree as before
- But when you can grow it no more, start to prune:
  - Beginning at the bottom of the tree, delete splits in which p_{chance} > *MaxPchance*
  - Continue working you way up until there are no more prunable nodes

MaxPchance is a magic parameter you must specify to the decision tree, indicating your willingness to risk fitting noise

Pruning example

- With MaxPchance = 0.1, you will see the following MPG decision tree:

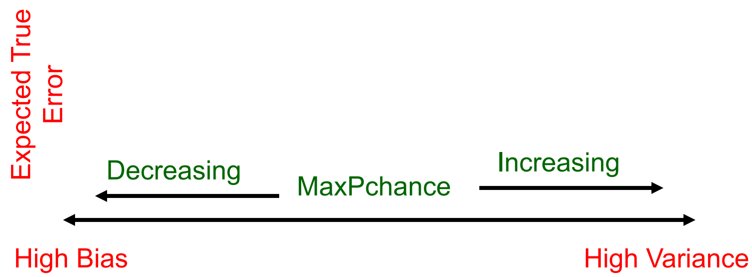


Note the improved test set accuracy compared with the unpruned tree

	Num Errors	Set Size	Percent Wrong
Training Set	5	40	12.50
Test Set	56	352	15.91

MaxPchance

- Technical note MaxPchance is a regularization parameter that helps us bias towards simpler models



Real-Valued inputs

- What should we do if some of the inputs are real-valued?

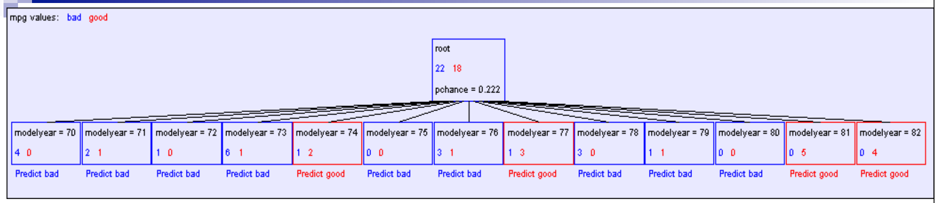
mpg	cylinders	displacemen	horsepower	weight	acceleration	modelyear	maker
good	4	97	75	2265	18.2	77	asia
bad	6	199	90	2648	15	70	america
bad	4	121	110	2600	12.8	77	europe
bad	8	350	175	4100	13	73	america
bad	6	198	95	3102	16.5	74	america
bad	4	108	94	2379	16.5	73	asia
bad	4	113	95	2228	14	71	asia
bad	8	302	139	3570	12.8	78	america
:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
good	4	120	79	2625	18.6	82	america
bad	8	455	225	4425	10	70	america
good	4	107	86	2464	15.5	76	europe
bad	5	131	103	2830	15.9	78	europe

Infinite number of possible split values!!!

Finite dataset, only finite number of relevant splits!

Idea One: Branch on each possible real value

"One branch for each numeric value" idea:



Hopeless: with such high branching factor will shatter the dataset and overfit

Threshold splits

- Binary tree, split on attribute X
  - One branch: X < t
  - Other branch: X ≥ t

Choosing threshold split

- Binary tree, split on attribute X
  - One branch: $X < t$
  - Other branch: $X \geq t$
- Search through possible values of *t*
  - Seems hard!!!
- But only finite number of *t*'s are important
  - Sort data according to X into $\{x_1,\ldots,x_m\}$
  - Consider split points of the form $x_i + (x_{i+1} - x_i)/2$

A better idea: thresholded splits

- Suppose X is real valued
- Define $IG(Y|X{:}t)$ as $H(Y) - H(Y|X{:}t)$
- Define $H(Y|X{:}t) =$

$$H(Y|X < t)\,P(X < t) + H(Y|X >= t)\,P(X >= t)$$

  - $IG(Y|X{:}t)$ is the information gain for predicting Y if all you know is whether X is greater than or less than *t*
- Then define $IG^*(Y|X) = max_t\, IG(Y|X{:}t)$
- For each real-valued attribute, use $IG^*(Y|X)$ for assessing its suitability as a split
- Note, may split on an attribute multiple times, with different thresholds

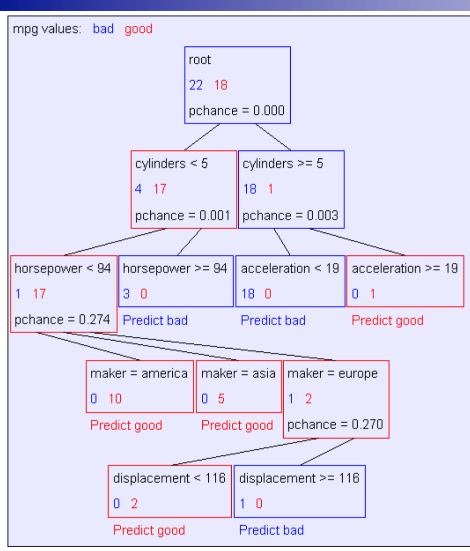
Example with MPG

Information gains using the training set (40 records)

mpg values: bad good

Input	Value	Distribution	Info Gain
cylinders	< 5		0.48268
	>= 5		
displacement	< 198		0.428205
	>= 198		
horsepower	< 94		0.48268
	>= 94		
weight	< 2789		0.379471
	>= 2789		
acceleration	< 18.2		0.159982
	>= 18.2		
modelyear	< 81		0.319193
	>= 81		
maker	america		0.0437265
	asia		
	europe		

Example tree using reals



What you need to know about decision trees

- Decision trees are one of the most popular data mining tools
  - Easy to understand
  - Easy to implement
  - Easy to use
  - Computationally cheap (to solve heuristically)
- Information gain to select attributes (ID3, C4.5,…)
- Presented for classification, can be used for regression and density estimation too
- Decision trees will overfit!!!
  - Zero bias classifier ! Lots of variance
  - Must use tricks to find “simple trees”, e.g.,
    - Fixed depth/Early stopping
    - Pruning
    - Hypothesis testing

Acknowledgements

- Some of the material in the decision trees presentation is courtesy of Andrew Moore, from his excellent collection of ML tutorials:
  - http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~awm/tutorials