

Package ‘DBHC’

July 24, 2026

Type Package

Title Sequence Clustering with Discrete-Output HMMs

Version 0.0.4

Date 2026-07-24

Description Provides an implementation of a mixture of hidden Markov models (HMMs) for discrete sequence data in the Discrete Bayesian HMM Clustering (DBHC) algorithm. The DBHC algorithm is an HMM Clustering algorithm that finds a mixture of discrete-output HMMs while using heuristics based on Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) to search for the optimal number of HMM states and the optimal number of clusters.

License GPL (>= 3)

Encoding UTF-8

URL <https://github.com/gabybudel/DBHC>

BugReports <https://github.com/gabybudel/DBHC/issues>

Imports seqHMM (>= 2.0.0), TraMineR (>= 2.0-7), reshape2 (>= 1.2.1), ggplot2 (>= 2.2.1), rlang (>= 0.4.0), methods (>= 4.2.2)

NeedsCompilation no

Suggests testthat (>= 3.0.0)

Config/testthat/edition 3

Config/roxygen2/version 8.0.0

Author Gabriel Budel [aut, cre],
Flavius Frasinca [aut]

Maintainer Gabriel Budel <gabysp_budel@hotmail.com>

Repository CRAN

Date/Publication 2026-07-24 18:20:02 UTC

Contents

assign.clusters	2
cluster.bic	3
count.parameters	3
emission.heatmap	4
hmm.clust	4
model.ll	7
partition.bic	8
select.seeds	8
seq2hmm.ll	9
size.search	10
smooth.hmm	10
smooth.proBABILITIES	11
transition.heatmap	12

Index	13
--------------	-----------

assign.clusters	<i>Cluster Assignment</i>
-----------------	---------------------------

Description

Assign sequences to cluster models that give the highest sequence-to-hmm likelihood. Used in [hmm.clust](#).

Usage

```
assign.clusters(partition, memberships, sequences, smoothing = 1e-04)
```

Arguments

partition	A list object with the partition, a mixture of HMMs. Each element in the list is an hmm object (see build_hmm).
memberships	A matrix with cluster memberships for each sequence.
sequences	An stslst object (see seqdef) of sequences with discrete observations.
smoothing	Smoothing parameter for absolute discounting in smooth.proBABILITIES .

Value

The updated matrix with cluster memberships for each sequence.

See Also

Used in main function for the DBHC algorithm [hmm.clust](#).

cluster.bic	<i>HMM BIC</i>
-------------	----------------

Description

Compute the BIC of a single HMM given a threshold epsilon for counting parameters. Auxiliary function used in [size.search](#).

Usage

```
cluster.bic(hmm, eps = 0.001)
```

Arguments

hmm	An hmm object (see build_hmm).
eps	A threshold epsilon for counting parameters.

Value

The BIC of hmm.

See Also

Used in [size.search](#).

count.parameters	<i>Count HMM Parameters</i>
------------------	-----------------------------

Description

Count the number of parameters in an HMM larger than a small number epsilon. Auxiliary function used in [partition.bic](#) and [cluster.bic](#).

Usage

```
count.parameters(hmm, eps = 0.001)
```

Arguments

hmm	An hmm object (see build_hmm).
eps	A threshold epsilon for counting parameters.

Value

The number of parameters larger than eps.

See Also

Used in [partition.bic](#) and [cluster.bic](#).

emission.heatmap	<i>Heatmap Emission Probabilities</i>
------------------	---------------------------------------

Description

Plots a heatmap of an HMM's emission probabilities.

Usage

```
emission.heatmap(emission, base_size = 10)
```

Arguments

emission	A matrix with emission probabilities (see also build_hmm).
base_size	Numerical, a size parameter for the plots made using ggplot2 (see theme), default = 10.

See Also

See [hmm.clust](#) for an example.

hmm.clust	<i>DBHC Algorithm</i>
-----------	-----------------------

Description

Implementation of the DBHC algorithm, an HMM clustering algorithm that finds a mixture of discrete-output HMMs. The algorithm uses heuristics based on BIC to search for the optimal number of hidden states in each HMM and the optimal number of clusters.

Usage

```
hmm.clust(
  sequences,
  id = NULL,
  smoothing = 1e-04,
  eps = 0.001,
  init.size = 2,
  alphabet = NULL,
  K.max = NULL,
  log_space = FALSE,
  print = FALSE,
  seed.size = 3,
  max.iter = 100
)
```

Arguments

sequences	An stslst object (see seqdef) of sequences with discrete observations or a <code>data.frame</code> .
id	A vector with ids that identify the sequences in sequences.
smoothing	Smoothing parameter for absolute discounting in smooth.probabilities .
eps	A threshold epsilon for counting parameters in count.parameters .
init.size	The number of HMM states in an initial HMM.
alphabet	The alphabet of output labels, if not provided alphabet is taken from stslst object (see seqdef).
K.max	Maximum number of clusters, if not provided algorithm searches for the optimal number itself.
log_space	Logical, parameter provided to fit_model for whether to use optimization in log space or not.
print	Logical, whether to print intermediate steps or not.
seed.size	Seed size, the number of sequences to be selected for a seed
max.iter	Maximum number of times sequences are redistributed over the cluster models for a given number of clusters, the redistribution stops with a warning when this number is reached.

Value

A list with components:

`sequences` An stslst object of sequences with discrete observations.

`id` A vector with ids that identify the sequences in sequences.

`cluster` A vector with found cluster memberships for the sequences.

`partition` A list object with the partition, a mixture of HMMs. Each element in the list is an `hmm` object.

`memberships` A matrix with cluster memberships for each sequence.

`n.clusters` Numerical, the found number of clusters.

`sizes` A vector with the number of HMM states for each cluster model.

`bic` A vector with the BICs for each cluster model.

Examples

```
## Simulated data
library(seqHMM)
output.labels <- c("H", "T")

# HMM 1
states.1 <- c("A", "B", "C")
transitions.1 <- matrix(c(0.8,0.1,0.1,0.1,0.8,0.1,0.1,0.1,0.8), nrow = 3)
rownames(transitions.1) <- states.1
colnames(transitions.1) <- states.1
```

```

emissions.1 <- matrix(c(0.5,0.75,0.25,0.5,0.25,0.75), nrow = 3)
rownames(emissions.1) <- states.1
colnames(emissions.1) <- output.labels
initials.1 <- c(1/3,1/3,1/3)

# HMM 2
states.2 <- c("A", "B")
transitions.2 <- matrix(c(0.75,0.25,0.25,0.75), nrow = 2)
rownames(transitions.2) <- states.2
colnames(transitions.2) <- states.2
emissions.2 <- matrix(c(0.8,0.6,0.2,0.4), nrow = 2)
rownames(emissions.2) <- states.2
colnames(emissions.2) <- output.labels
initials.2 <- c(0.5,0.5)

# Simulate
hmm.sim.1 <- simulate_hmm(n_sequences = 100,
                        initial_probs = initials.1,
                        transition_probs = transitions.1,
                        emission_probs = emissions.1,
                        sequence_length = 25)
hmm.sim.2 <- simulate_hmm(n_sequences = 100,
                        initial_probs = initials.2,
                        transition_probs = transitions.2,
                        emission_probs = emissions.2,
                        sequence_length = 25)
sequences <- rbind(hmm.sim.1$observations, hmm.sim.2$observations)
n <- nrow(sequences)

# Clustering algorithm
id <- paste0("K-", 1:n)
rownames(sequences) <- id
sequences <- sequences[sample(1:n, n),]

res <- hmm.clust(sequences, id = rownames(sequences))

#####

## Swiss Household Data
data("biofam", package = "TraMineR")

# Clustering algorithm
new.alphabet <- c("P", "L", "M", "LM", "C", "LC", "LMC", "D")
sequences <- seqdef(biofam[,10:25], alphabet = 0:7, states = new.alphabet)

res <- hmm.clust(sequences)

# Heatmaps
cluster <- 1 # display heatmaps for cluster 1
transition.heatmap(res$partition[[cluster]]$transition_probs,
                  res$partition[[cluster]]$initial_probs)

```

```
emission.heatmap(res$partition[[cluster]]$emission_probs)

## A smaller example, which takes less time to run
subset <- sequences[sample(1:nrow(sequences), 20, replace = FALSE),]

# Clustering algorithm, limiting number of clusters to 2
res <- hmm.clust(subset, K.max = 2)

# Number of clusters
print(res$n.clusters)

# Table of cluster memberships
table(res$memberships[, "cluster"])

# BIC for each number of clusters
print(res$bic)

# Heatmaps
cluster <- 1 # display heatmaps for cluster 1
transition.heatmap(res$partition[[cluster]]$transition_probs,
  res$partition[[cluster]]$initial_probs)
emission.heatmap(res$partition[[cluster]]$emission_probs)
```

model.ll*Get HMM Log Likelihood*

Description

Get the log likelihood of an HMM object and check if it is feasible (i.e., contains no illegal emissions). Auxiliary function used in [partition.bic](#).

Usage

```
model.ll(hmm)
```

Arguments

hmm An hmm object (see [build_hmm](#)).

Value

The log likelihood of the hmm object, print warning if model is infeasible (i.e., if the log likelihood is evaluated for a sequence that contains emissions that are assigned probability 0 in the hmm object).

See Also

Used in [partition.bic](#).

partition.bic	<i>Partition BIC</i>
---------------	----------------------

Description

Compute the BIC of a partition given a threshold epsilon for counting parameters. Auxiliary function used in [hmm.clust](#).

Usage

```
partition.bic(partition, eps = 0.001)
```

Arguments

partition	A list object with the partition of HMMs, a mixture of HMMs.
eps	A threshold epsilon for counting parameters in count.parameters .

Value

The BIC of the partition.

See Also

Used in main function for the DBHC algorithm [hmm.clust](#).

select.seeds	<i>Seed Selection Procedure</i>
--------------	---------------------------------

Description

Seed selection procedure of the DBHC algorithm, also invokes size search algorithm for seed in [size.search](#). Used in [hmm.clust](#).

Usage

```
select.seeds(
  sequences,
  log_space = FALSE,
  K,
  seed.size = 3,
  init.size = 2,
  print = FALSE,
  smoothing = 1e-04
)
```

Arguments

sequences	An stslist object (see seqdef) of sequences with discrete observations.
log_space	Logical, parameter provided to fit_model for whether to use optimization in log space or not.
K	The number of seeds to select, equal to the number of clusters in a partition.
seed.size	Seed size, the number of sequences to be selected for a seed.
init.size	The number of HMM states in an initial HMM.
print	Logical, whether to print intermediate steps or not.
smoothing	Smoothing parameter for absolute discounting in smooth.proBABILITIES .

Value

A partition as a list object with HMMs for the selected seeds.

See Also

Used in main function for the DBHC algorithm [hmm.clust](#).

seq2hmm.ll	<i>Sequence-to-HMM Likelihood</i>
------------	-----------------------------------

Description

Compute the sequence-to-HMM likelihood of an HMM evaluated for a single sequence and check if the sequence contains emissions that are not possible according to the HMM. Auxiliary function used in [select.seeds](#) and [assign.clusters](#).

Usage

```
seq2hmm.ll(hmm)
```

Arguments

hmm	An hmm object (see build_hmm) containing a single sequence.
-----	--

Value

The log likelihood of the sequence contained in `hmm`, value will be set to minus infinity if the sequence contains illegal emissions.

See Also

Used in [select.seeds](#) and [assign.clusters](#).

size.search	<i>Size Search Algorithm</i>
-------------	------------------------------

Description

The size search algorithm finds the optimal number of HMM states for a set of sequences and returns both the optimal hmm object and the corresponding number of hidden states. Used in [select.seeds](#).

Usage

```
size.search(sequences, log_space = FALSE, print = FALSE, max.states = 20)
```

Arguments

sequences	An stslist object (see seqdef) of sequences with discrete observations.
log_space	Logical, parameter provided to fit_model for whether to use optimization in log space or not.
print	Logical, whether to print intermediate steps or not.
max.states	Maximum number of HMM states to search, the search stops with a warning when this number is reached.

Value

A list with the optimal number of HMM states and the optimal hmm object.

See Also

Used in the DBHC seed selection procedure in [select.seeds](#).

smooth.hmm	<i>Smooth HMM Parameters</i>
------------	------------------------------

Description

Smooth the parameters of an HMM using absolute discounting given a threshold epsilon. Auxiliary function used in [select.seeds](#), [assign.clusters](#), and [hmm.clust](#).

Usage

```
smooth.hmm(hmm, smoothing = 1e-04)
```

Arguments

hmm	A raw hmm object (see build_hmm).
smoothing	Smoothing parameter for absolute discounting in smooth.proBABILITIES .

Value

An hmm object with smoothed probabilities.

See Also

Used in [select.seeds](#), [assign.clusters](#), and main function for the DBHC algorithm [hmm.clust](#).

smooth.probabilities *Smooth Probabilities*

Description

Smooth a vector of probabilities using absolute discounting. Auxiliary function used in [smooth.hmm](#).

Usage

```
smooth.probabilities(probs, smoothing = 1e-04)
```

Arguments

probs	A vector of raw probabilities.
smoothing	Smoothing parameter for absolute discounting. Absolute discounting assumes the parameter is smaller than the smallest non-zero probability. When it is not, the amount discounted from this vector is lowered to half the smallest non-zero probability, so that the result stays a probability vector.

Value

A vector of smoothed probabilities.

See Also

Used in [smooth.hmm](#).

transition.heatmap	<i>Heatmap Transition Probabilities</i>
--------------------	---

Description

Plots a heatmap of an HMM's initial and transition probabilities.

Usage

```
transition.heatmap(transition, initial = NULL, base_size = 10)
```

Arguments

transition	A matrix with transition probabilities (see also build_hmm).
initial	An (optional) vector of initial probabilities.
base_size	Numerical, a size parameter for the plots made using ggplot2 (see theme), default = 10.

See Also

See [hmm.clust](#) for an example.

Index

`assign.clusters`, [2](#), [9–11](#)
`build_hmm`, [2–4](#), [7](#), [9](#), [10](#), [12](#)
`cluster.bic`, [3](#), [3](#), [4](#)
`count.parameters`, [3](#), [5](#), [8](#)
`emission.heatmap`, [4](#)
`fit_model`, [5](#), [9](#), [10](#)
`hmm.clust`, [2](#), [4](#), [4](#), [8–12](#)
`model.ll`, [7](#)
`partition.bic`, [3](#), [4](#), [7](#), [8](#)
`select.seeds`, [8](#), [9–11](#)
`seq2hmm.ll`, [9](#)
`seqdef`, [2](#), [5](#), [9](#), [10](#)
`size.search`, [3](#), [8](#), [10](#)
`smooth.hmm`, [10](#), [11](#)
`smooth.probabilities`, [2](#), [5](#), [9](#), [10](#), [11](#)
`theme`, [4](#), [12](#)
`transition.heatmap`, [12](#)