

Package ‘deconvolveR’

August 23, 2026

Title Empirical Bayes Estimation Strategies

Version 1.2-2

VignetteBuilder knitr

Suggests cowplot, ggplot2, knitr, rmarkdown

Description Empirical Bayes methods for learning prior distributions from data.

An unknown prior distribution (g) has yielded (unobservable) parameters, each of which produces a data point from a parametric exponential family (f). The goal is to estimate the unknown prior (“g-modeling”) by deconvolution and Empirical Bayes methods. Details and examples are in the paper by Narasimhan and Efron (2020, <[doi:10.18637/jss.v094.i11](https://doi.org/10.18637/jss.v094.i11)>).

URL <https://bnaras.github.io/deconvolveR/>

BugReports <https://github.com/bnaras/deconvolveR/issues>

Encoding UTF-8

Depends R (>= 3.0)

License GPL (>= 2)

LazyData true

Imports splines, stats

Config/roxygen2/version 8.0.0

NeedsCompilation no

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Repository CRAN

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deconvolveR-package	<i>R package for Empirical Bayes g-modeling using exponential families.</i>
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Description

deconvolveR is a package for Empirical Bayes Deconvolution and Estimation. A friendly introduction is provided in the JSS paper reference below and this package includes a vignette containing a number of examples.

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References

Bradley Efron. Empirical Bayes Deconvolution Estimates. Biometrika 103(1), 1-20, ISSN 0006-3444. doi:10.1093/biomet/asv068. <http://biomet.oxfordjournals.org/content/103/1/1.full.pdf+html>

Bradley Efron and Trevor Hastie. Computer Age Statistical Inference. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-1-1-7-14989-2. Chapter 21.

Balasubramanian Narasimhan and Bradley Efron. deconvolveR: A G-Modeling Program for Deconvolution and Empirical Bayes Estimation. doi:10.18637/jss.v094.i11

See Also

Useful links:

- <https://bnaras.github.io/deconvolveR/>
- Report bugs at <https://github.com/bnaras/deconvolveR/issues>

bardWordCount	<i>Shakespeare word counts in the entire canon: 14,376 distinct words appeared exactly once, 4343 words appeared twice etc.</i>
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Description

Shakespeare word counts in the entire canon: 14,376 distinct words appeared exactly once, 4343 words appeared twice etc.

Usage

```
data(bardWordCount)
```

References

Bradley Efron and Ronald Thisted. Estimating the number of unseen species: How many words did Shakespeare know? *Biometrika*, Vol 63(3), doi:10.1093/biomet/63.3.435.

deconv	<i>A function to compute Empirical Bayes estimates using deconvolution</i>
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Description

A function to compute Empirical Bayes estimates using deconvolution

Usage

```
deconv(
  tau,
  X,
  y,
  Q,
  P,
  n = 40,
  family = c("Poisson", "Normal", "Binomial"),
  ignoreZero = TRUE,
  deltaAt = NULL,
  c0 = 1,
  scale = TRUE,
  pDegree = 5,
  aStart = 1,
  ...
)
```

Arguments

tau	a vector of (implicitly m) discrete support points for θ . For the Poisson and normal families, θ is the mean parameter and for the binomial, it is the probability of success.
X	the vector of sample values: a vector of counts for Poisson, a vector of z-scores for Normal, a 2-d matrix with rows consisting of pairs, (trial size n_i , number of successes X_i) for Binomial. See details below
y	the multinomial counts. See details below
Q	the Q matrix, implies y and P are supplied as well; see details below
P	the P matrix, implies Q and y are supplied as well; see details below
n	the number of support points for X. Applies only to Poisson and Normal. In the former, implies that support of X is 1 to n or 0 to n-1 depending on the ignoreZero parameter below. In the latter, the range of X is divided into n bins to construct the multinomial sufficient statistic y (y_k = number of X in bin K) described in the references below
family	the exponential family, one of c("Poisson", "Normal", "Binomial") with "Poisson", the default
ignoreZero	if the zero values should be ignored (default = TRUE). Applies to Poisson only and has the effect of adjusting P for the truncation at zero
deltaAt	the theta value where a delta function is desired (default NULL). This applies to the Normal case only and even then only if it is non-null.
c0	the regularization parameter (default 1)
scale	if the Q matrix should be scaled so that the spline basis has mean 0 and columns sum of squares to be one, (default TRUE)
pDegree	the degree of the splines to use (default 5). In notation used in the references below, $p = \text{pDegree} + 1$
aStart	the starting values for the non-linear optimization, default is a vector of 1s
...	further args to function nlm

Value

a list of 9 items consisting of	
mle	the maximum likelihood estimate $\hat{\alpha}$
Q	the m by p matrix Q
P	the n by m matrix P
S	the ratio of artificial to genuine information per the reference below, where it was referred to as $R(\alpha)$
cov	the covariance matrix for the mle
cov.g	the covariance matrix for the g
stats	an m by 6 or 7 matrix containing columns for θ , g , $\tilde{g}$ which is g with thinning correction applied and named tg, std. error of g , G (the cdf of g), std. error of G , and the bias of g
loglik	the negative log-likelihood function for the data taking a p -vector argument
statsFunction	a function to compute the statistics returned above

Details

The data X is always required with two exceptions. In the Poisson case, y alone may be specified and X omitted, in which case the sample space of the observations X is assumed to be 1, 2, ..., $\text{length}(y)$. The second exception is for experimentation with other exponential families besides the three implemented here: y , P and Q can be specified together.

Note also that in the Poisson case where there is zero truncation, the stats matrix has an additional column "tg" which accounts for the thinning correction induced by the truncation. See vignette for details.

References

Bradley Efron. Empirical Bayes Deconvolution Estimates. *Biometrika* 103(1), 1-20, ISSN 0006-3444. doi:10.1093/biomet/asv068. <http://biomet.oxfordjournals.org/content/103/1/1.full.pdf+html>

Bradley Efron and Trevor Hastie. *Computer Age Statistical Inference*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-1-1-7-14989-2. Chapter 21.

Examples

```
set.seed(238923) ## for reproducibility
N <- 1000
theta <- rchisq(N, df = 10)
X <- rpois(n = N, lambda = theta)
tau <- seq(1, 32)
result <- deconv(tau = tau, X = X, ignoreZero = FALSE)
print(result$stats)
##
## Twin Towers Example
## See Brad Efron: Bayes, Oracle Bayes and Empirical Bayes
## disjointTheta is provided by deconvolveR package
theta <- disjointTheta; N <- length(disjointTheta)
z <- rnorm(n = N, mean = disjointTheta)
tau <- seq(from = -4, to = 5, by = 0.2)
result <- deconv(tau = tau, X = z, family = "Normal", pDegree = 6)
g <- result$stats[, "g"]
if (require("ggplot2")) {
  ggplot() +
    geom_histogram(mapping = aes(x = disjointTheta, y = ..count.. / sum(..count..) ),
      color = "blue", fill = "red", bins = 40, alpha = 0.5) +
    geom_histogram(mapping = aes(x = z, y = ..count.. / sum(..count..) ),
      color = "brown", bins = 40, alpha = 0.5) +
    geom_line(mapping = aes(x = tau, y = g), color = "black") +
    labs(x = paste(expression(theta), "and x"), y = paste(expression(g(theta)), "and f(x)"))
}
```

disjointTheta	<i>A set of Θ values that have a bimodal distribution for testing</i>
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Description

A set of Θ values that have a bimodal distribution for testing

Usage

```
data(disjointTheta)
```

surg	<i>Intestinal surgery data involving 844 cancer patients. The data consists of pairs (n_i, s_i) where n_i is the number of satellites removed and s_i is the number of satellites found to be malignant.</i>
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Description

Intestinal surgery data involving 844 cancer patients. The data consists of pairs (n_i, s_i) where n_i is the number of satellites removed and s_i is the number of satellites found to be malignant.

Usage

```
data(surg)
```

References

Gholami, et. al. Number of Lymph Nodes Removed and Survival after Gastric Cancer Resection: An Analysis from the US Gastric Cancer Collaborative. J Am Coll Surg. 2015 Aug;221(2):291-9. doi: 10.1016/j.jamcollsurg.2015.04.024.

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