

# Decision-Making in Data Streams under Limited Feedback

Marco Heyden

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# The Decision-Making Process

Introduction  
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ABCD  
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PLASTIC  
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$\omega$ -UCB  
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Conclusions  
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Decision maker

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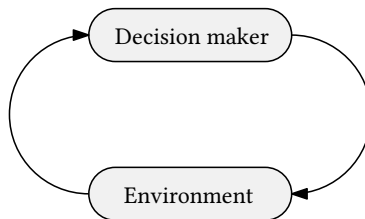
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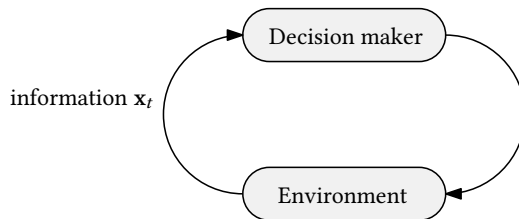
Environment



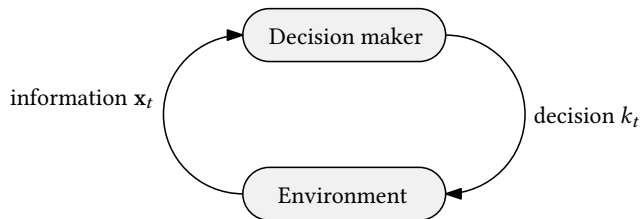
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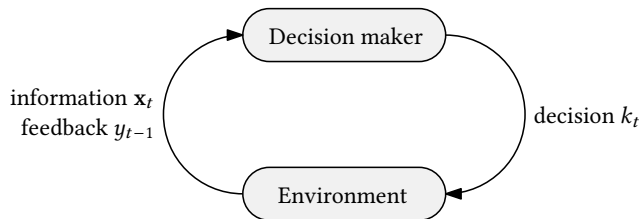
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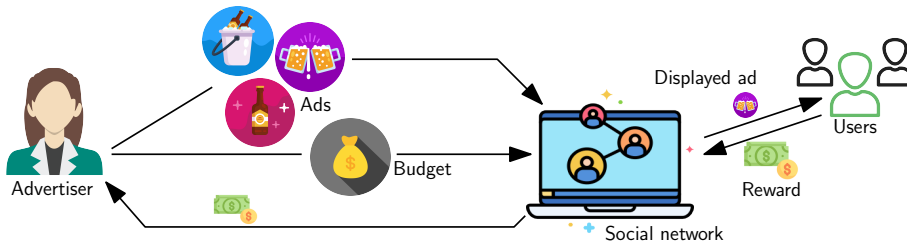
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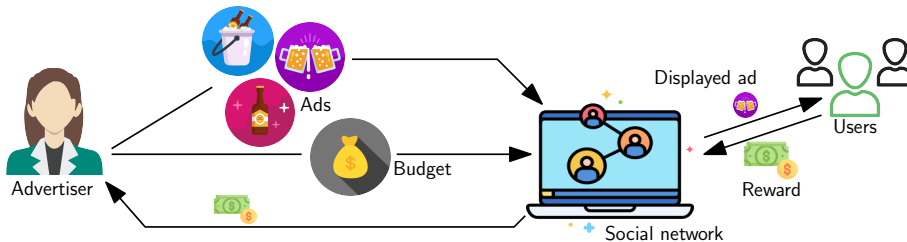
- **Decision maker** is responsible for selecting ads
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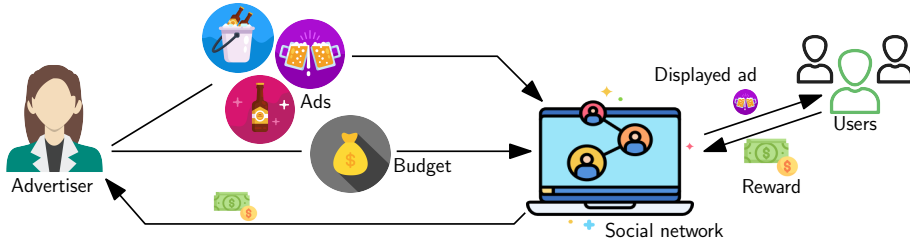
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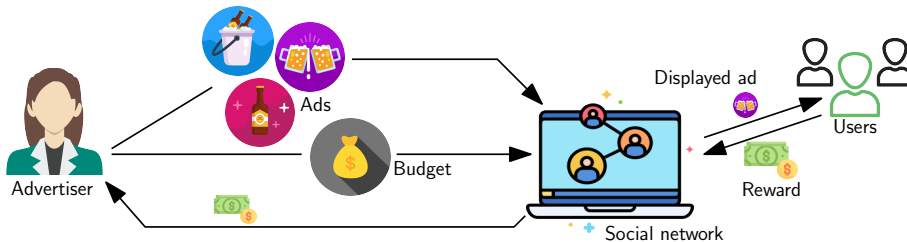
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## Example 2: Biofuel production

- **Decision maker** is responsible for smooth operation of biofuel production plant
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## Decision support systems

- Human decision-making is prone to errors and bias [TK74]

⇒ Use **decision support systems** (DSS) to guide the decision maker

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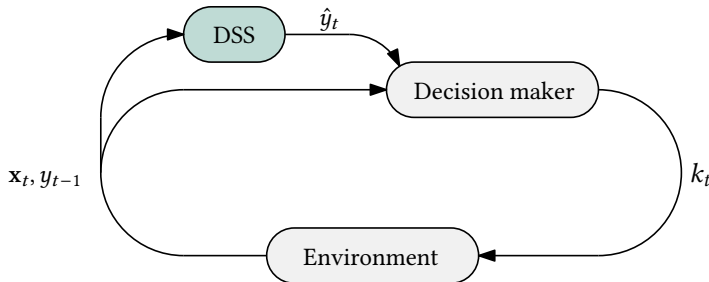
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# Decision Support Systems

## How to design them using machine learning?

### Traditional process:

1. Collect data
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### Challenges:

- **Sequential data:** New data only becomes available over time
- **Dynamic environments** change over time, e.g., due to wear and tear or shifting user preferences

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# Data Streams

## Never-ending sequences of observations

### Data Stream

A *data stream*  $S$  is a possibly never-ending sequence of observations  $\{(\mathbf{x}_1, y_1), (\mathbf{x}_2, y_2), \dots, (\mathbf{x}_t, y_t), \dots\}$  drawn from an ordered set of data generating distributions  $\{\mathcal{S}_{\tau_1, \tau_2}, \mathcal{S}_{\tau_2, \tau_3}, \mathcal{S}_{\tau_3, \tau_4}, \dots\}$ , called *concepts*, such that

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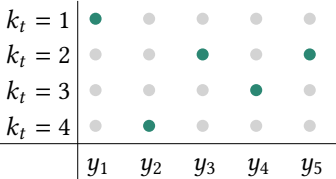
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### Decision-based feedback

- Feedback only available for the chosen decision



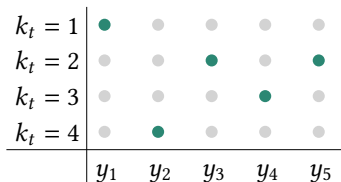
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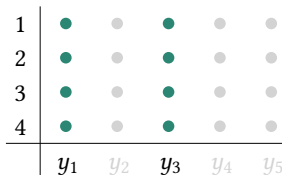
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### Observation-based feedback

- Feedback is only available for some observations
- Extreme case: unavailable feedback



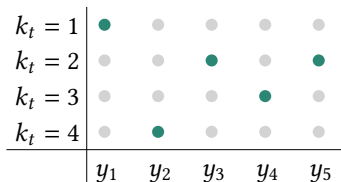
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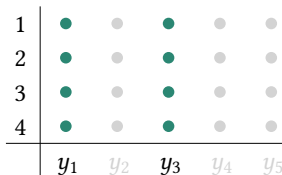
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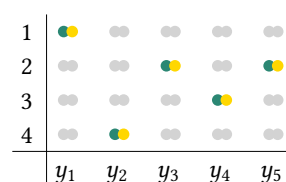
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### Costly feedback

- Obtaining feedback comes at a cost



# This Dissertation

## Addresses limited feedback from three perspectives

Limited Feedback

Introduction  
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ABCD  
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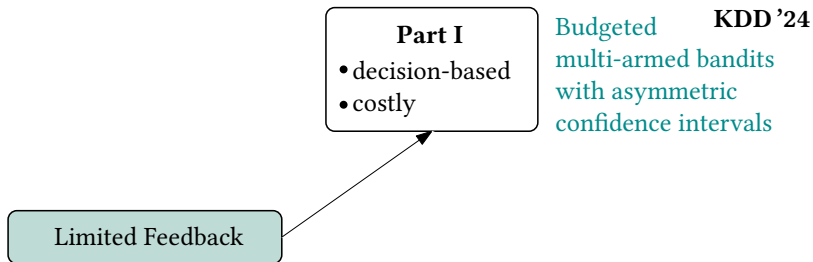
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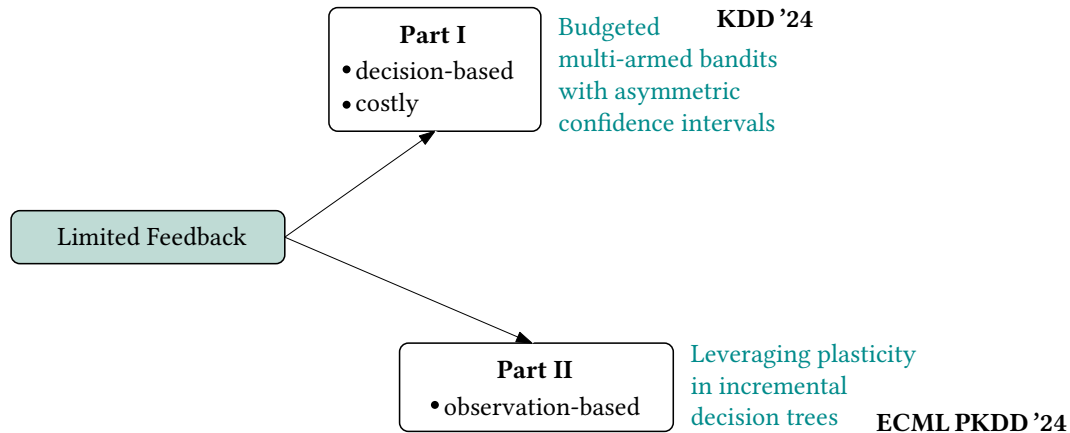
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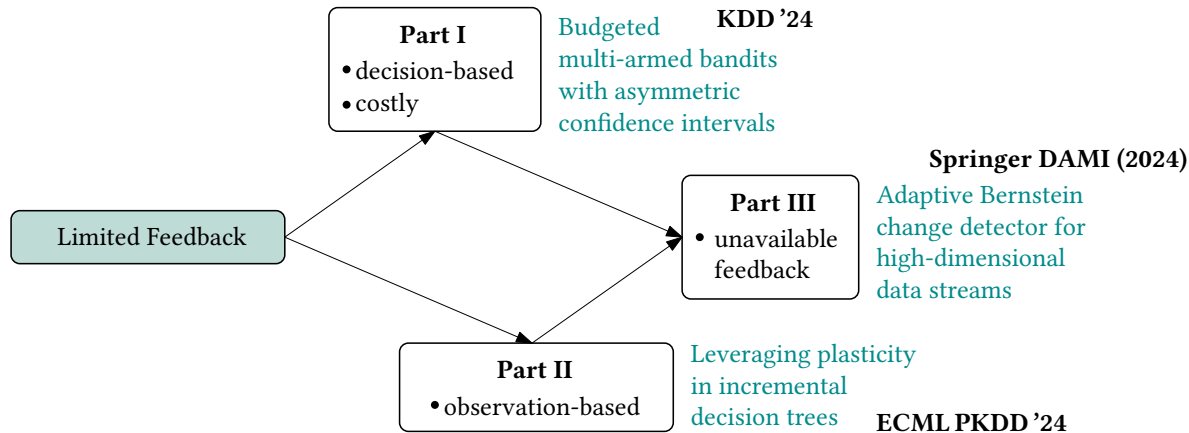
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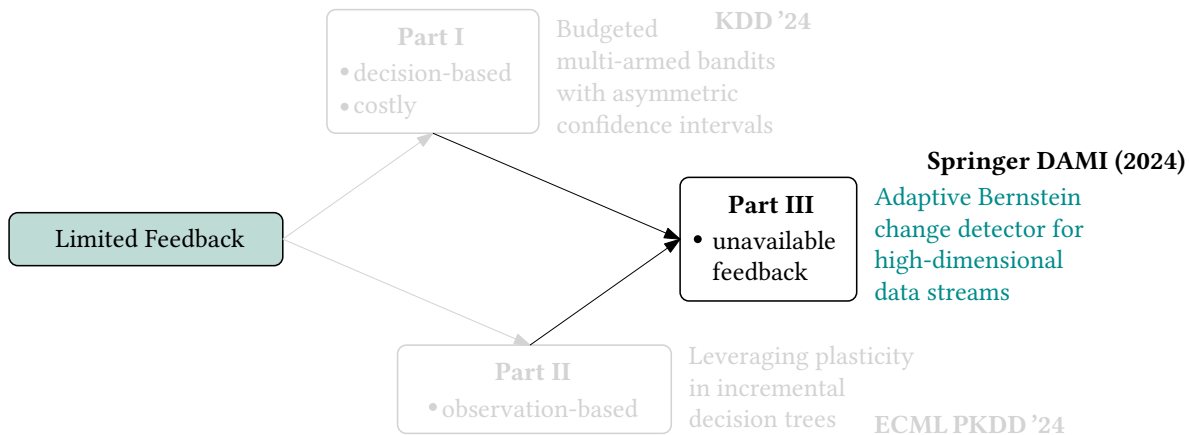
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# Contribution

## Feedback generation in complex systems

### Research question:

How to guide decision-making when no direct feedback from the environment is available?

**Solution: Let the algorithm generate feedback!**

### Technical contributions:

- ABCD, a change detection and characterization algorithm for high-dimensional data streams
  - “When”, “where”, and “how severely”
- Formalization of change, change subspace, and change severity
- Stream aggregates for adaptive windows

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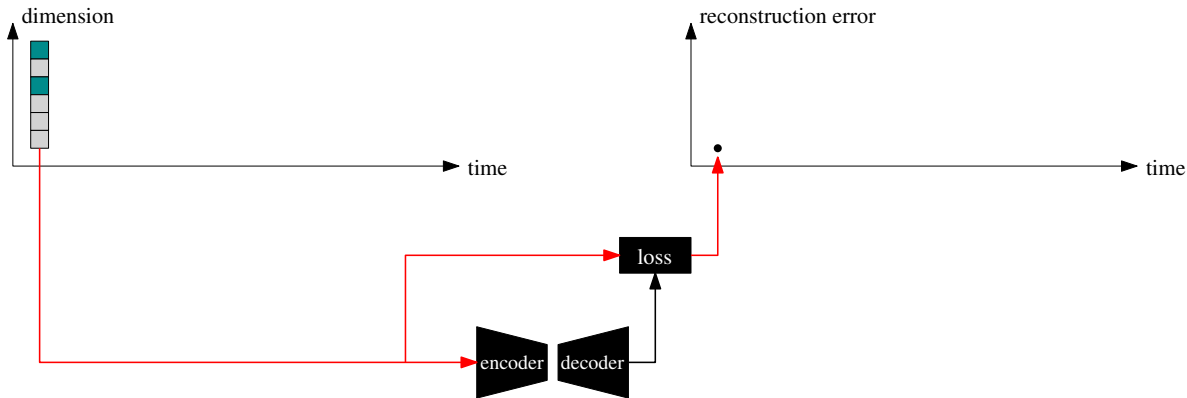
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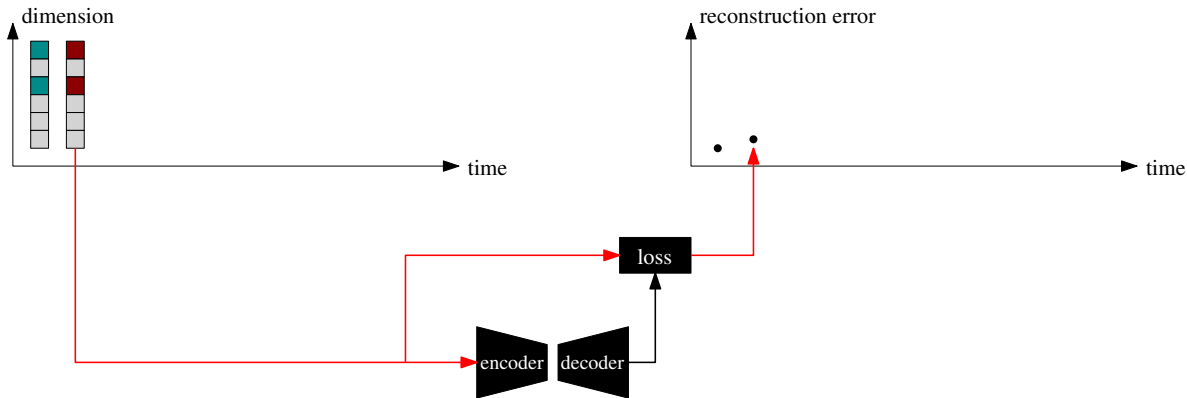
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## Monitor reconstruction loss of encoder-decoder model



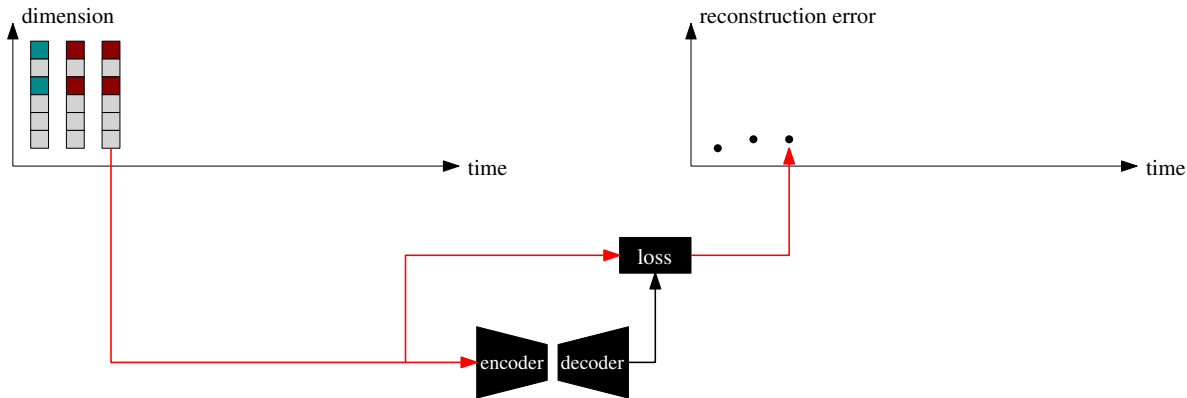
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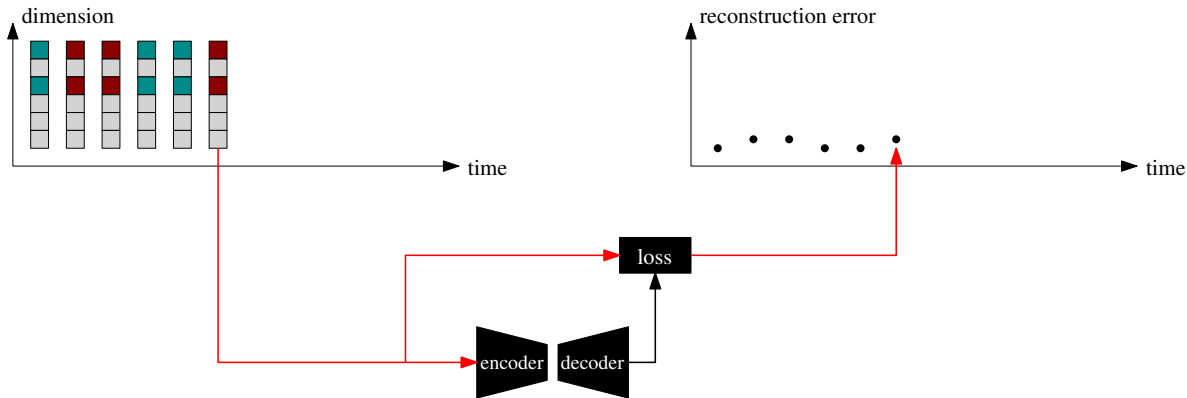
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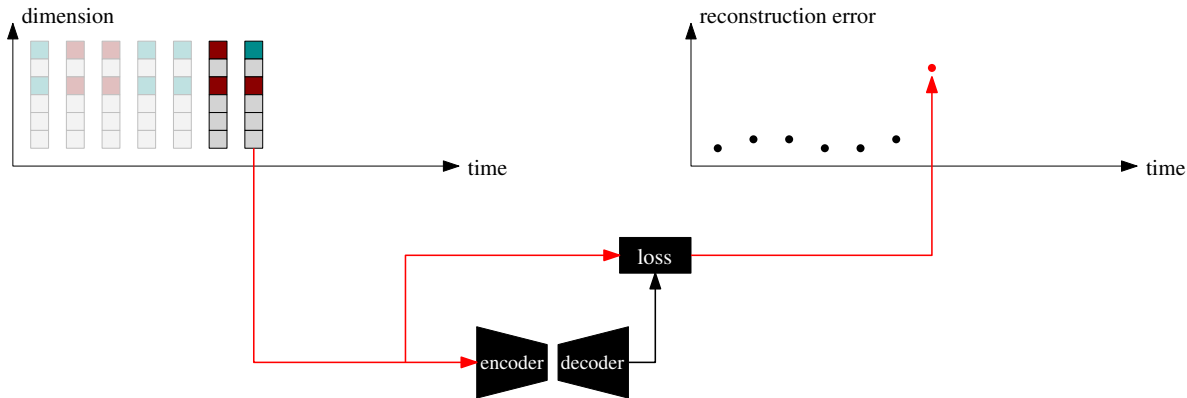
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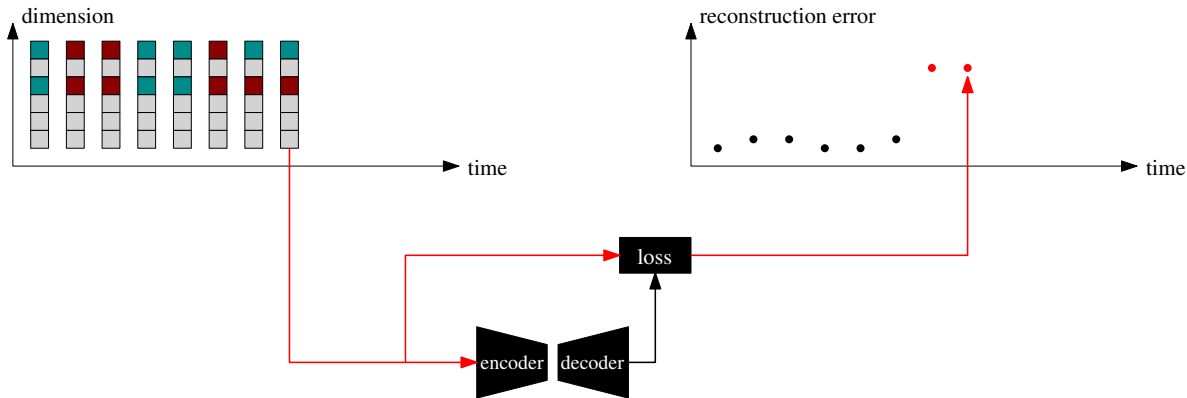
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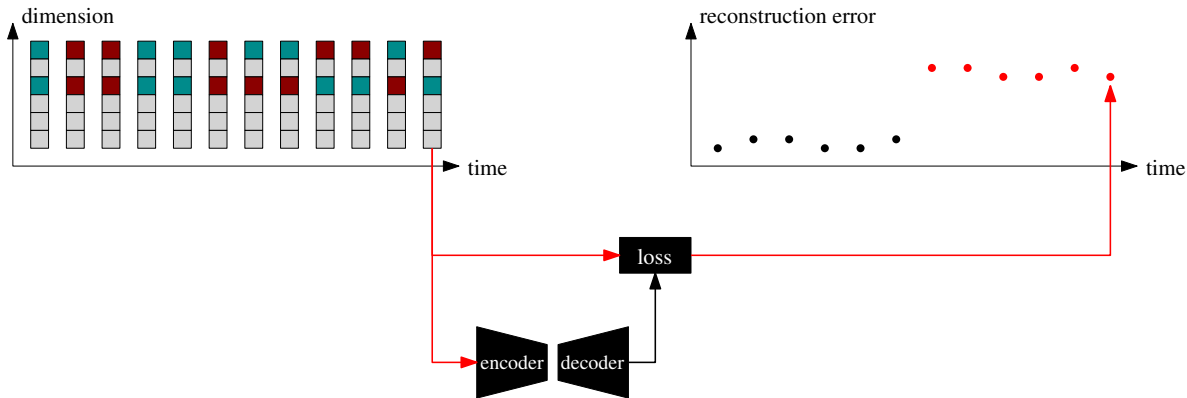
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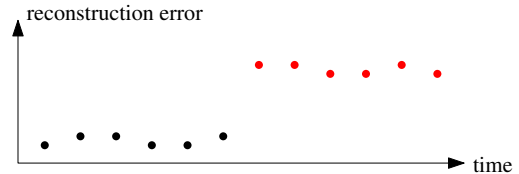
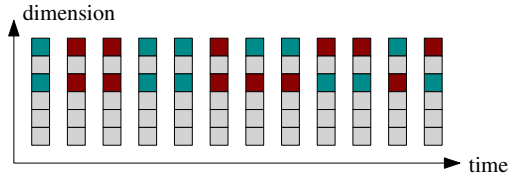
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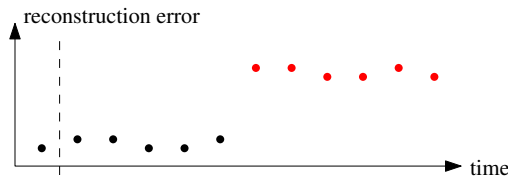
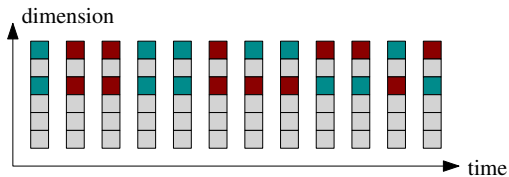
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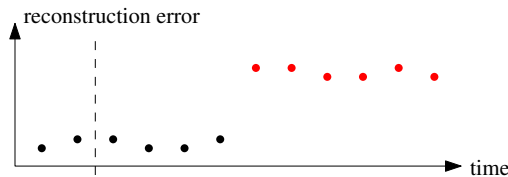
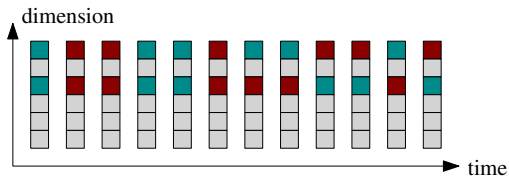
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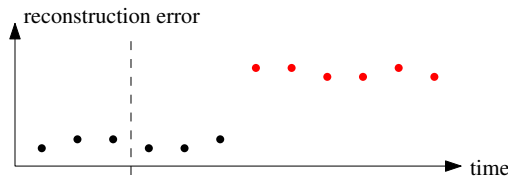
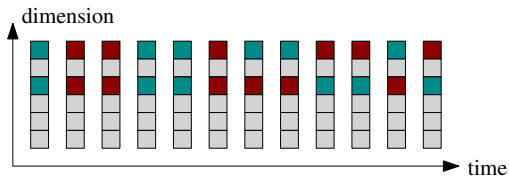
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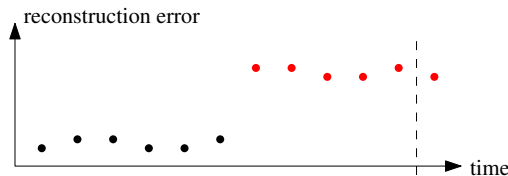
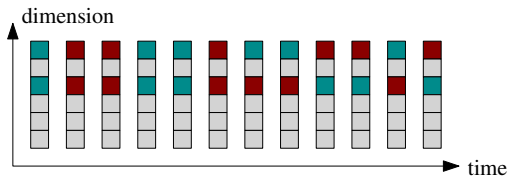
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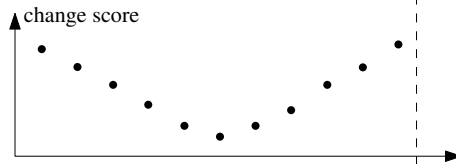
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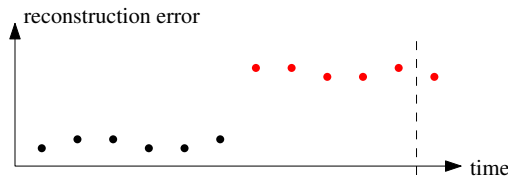
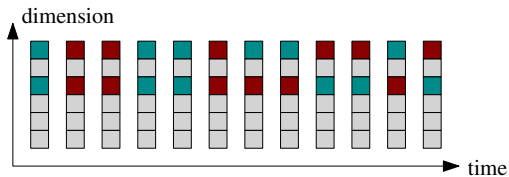
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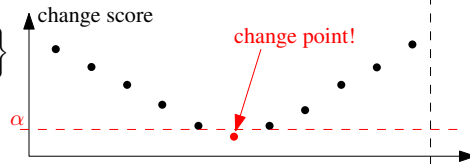
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## Is change significant?



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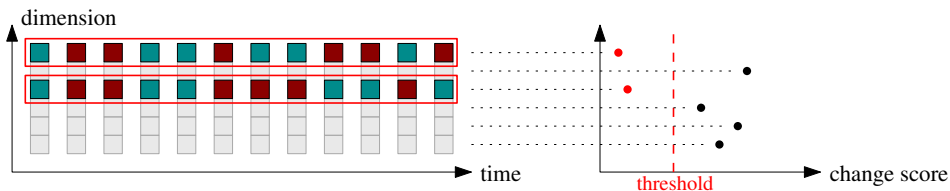


# High-level Algorithm

## Change subspace and severity

### After detecting a change:

1. Identify dimensions that changed the most
  - Apply change score to each dimension
2. Quantify change severity
  - Normalize loss in the change subspace

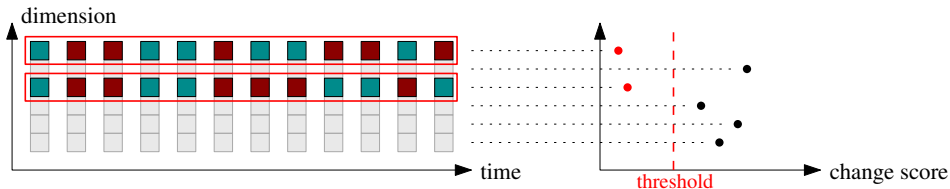


# High-level Algorithm

## Change subspace and severity

### After detecting a change:

1. Identify dimensions that changed the most
  - Apply change score to each dimension
2. Quantify change severity
  - Normalize loss **in the change subspace**

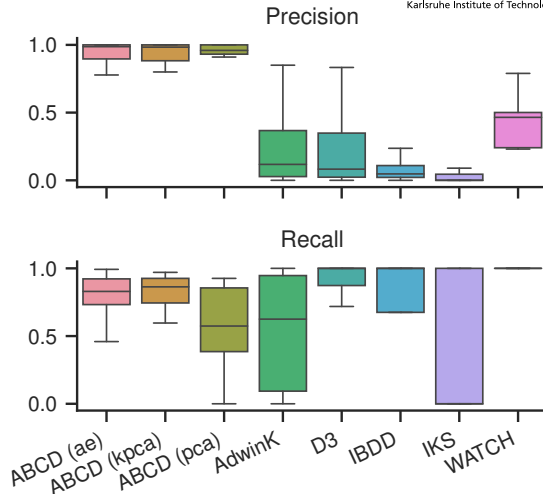


# Experiments

## Change detection results

### Insights:

1. Precision is very high
  2. Lower sensitivity than competitors
- ⇒ Which method to choose depends on the cost of FP and FN

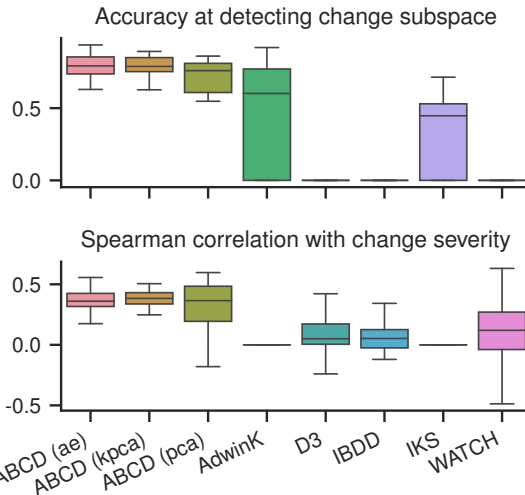


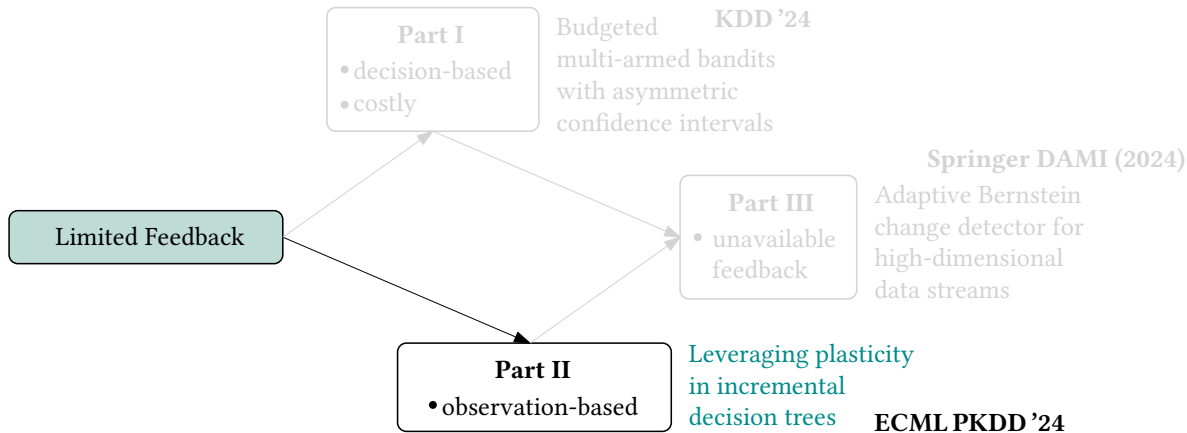
# Experiments

## Change subspace and severity

### Insights:

1. Both metrics are higher than for competitors
  2. However, there is still room for improvement
- ⇒ First strides towards drift characterization





# Contribution

## Feedback-efficient incremental decision tree mining

### Research question:

How to improve feedback efficiency of widely used algorithms for decision support systems?

**Solution: Improve incremental decision trees!**

### Technical contributions:

- PLASTIC, a feedback-efficient incremental decision tree algorithm
- Decision tree restructuring based on the concept of plasticity
- PLASTIC-A, a change-adaptive version of PLASTIC



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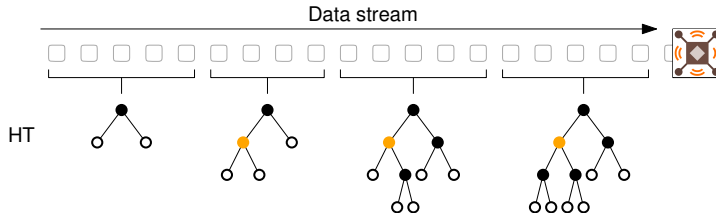
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# Incremental Decision Trees Foundation

## Hoeffding Trees [DH00]

- Feedback-inefficient but accurate

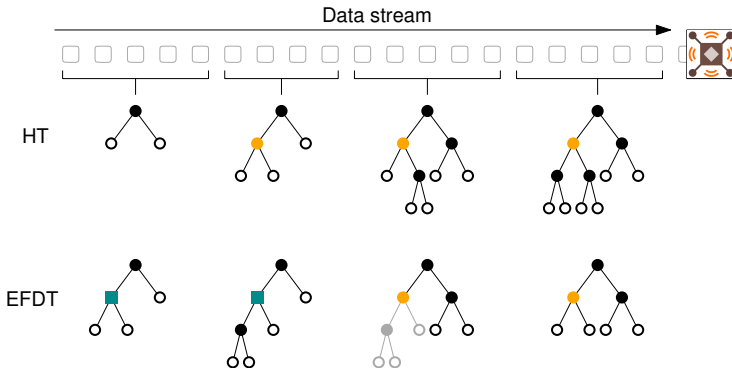


## Hoeffding Trees [DH00]

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## Extremely Fast Decision Trees [MWS18]

- More feedback-efficient
- but unreliable

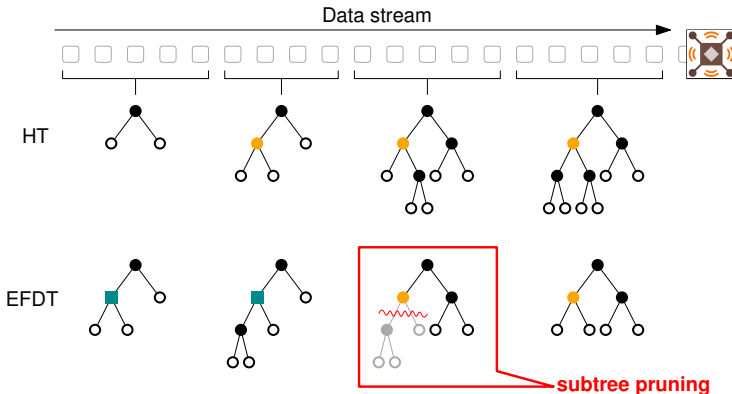


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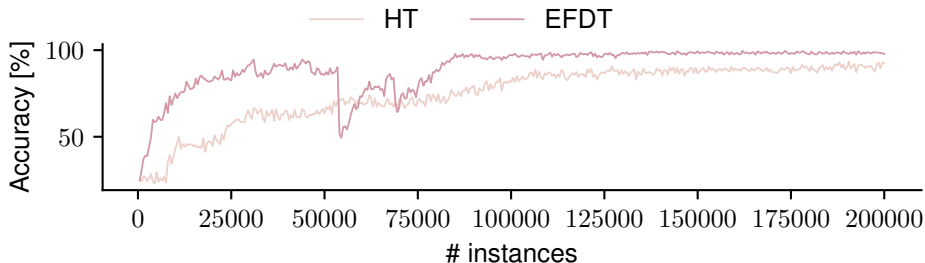
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## HT vs. EFDT

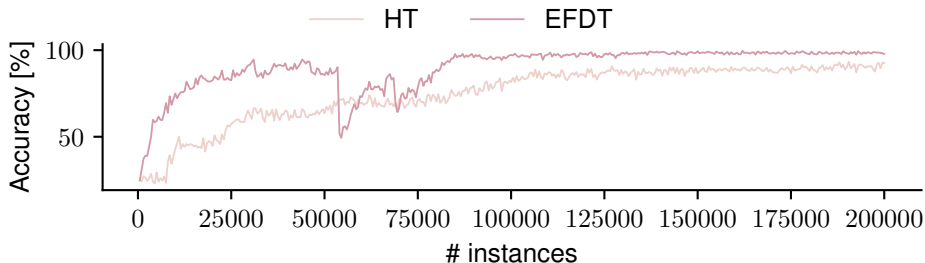
# EFDT learns faster than HT but suffers from accuracy drops

- Illustrative example on synthetic data



Can we maintain EFDT's fast learning but avoid the accuracy drops?

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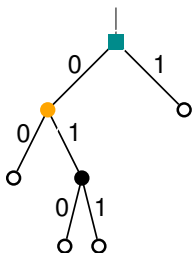


Can we maintain EFDT's fast learning but avoid the accuracy drops?

# Idea behind PLASTIC

## Decision tree plasticity

- In the left-most branch, any instance with attribute values  $\blacksquare = 0$  and  $\bullet = 0$  will arrive at  $\circ$
- Hence, from the viewpoint of the leaf,  $\blacksquare - \bullet - \circ \equiv \bullet - \blacksquare - \circ$

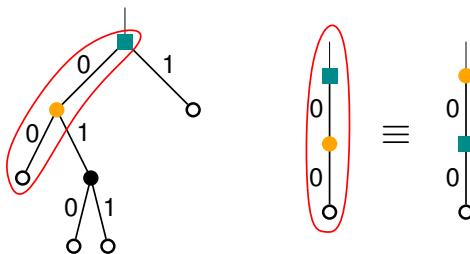


- PLASTIC revises splits by restructuring the affected subtree

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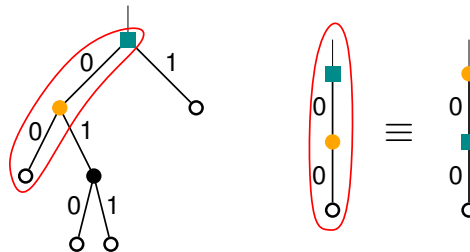
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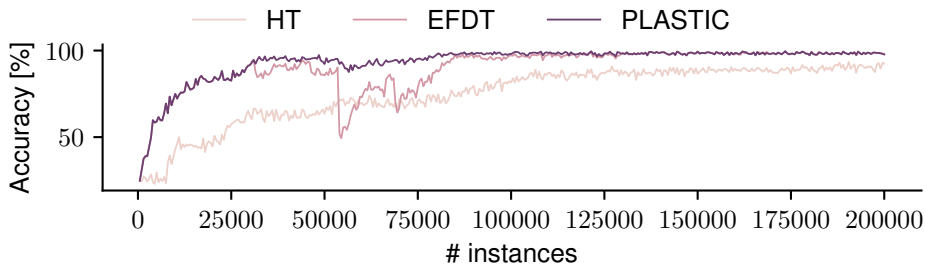
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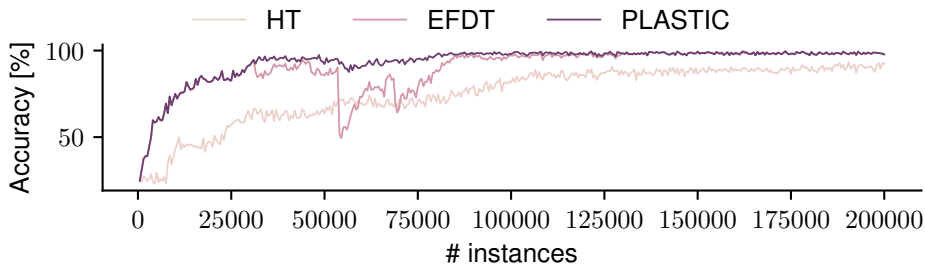


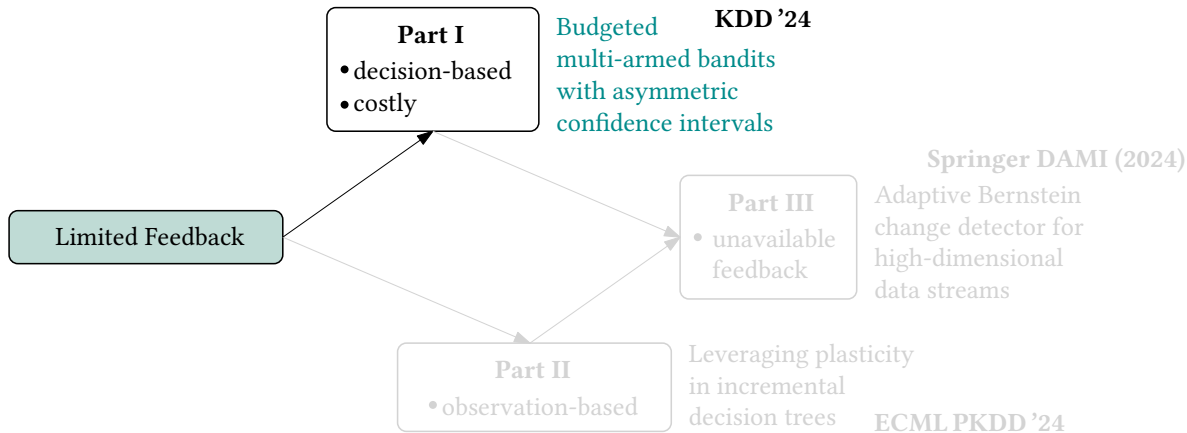
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- Restructuring **avoids accuracy drops** caused by subtree pruning in EFDT
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# Contribution

## Sequential decision-making under budget constraints

### Research question:

How to optimize sequential decisions under budget constraints when feedback is costly and resources are limited?

**Solution: Use budgeted multi-armed bandit algorithms!**

### Technical contributions:

- $\omega$ -UCB, a budget-aware multi-armed bandit algorithm based on asymmetric confidence intervals
- Derivation of asymmetric confidence intervals
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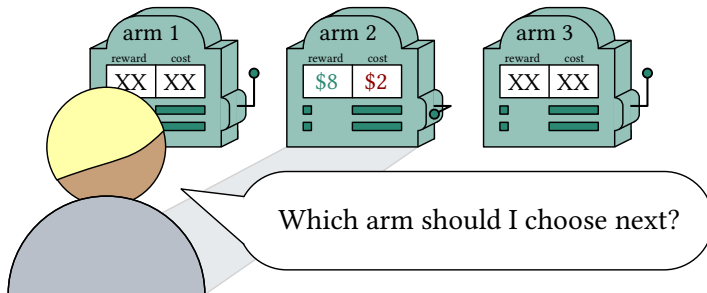
# Budgeted Multi-Armed Bandits

## Generic algorithm

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While budget  $B$  not empty:

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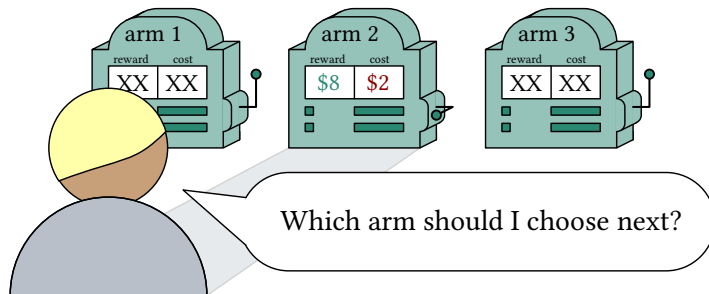
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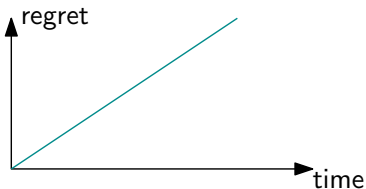
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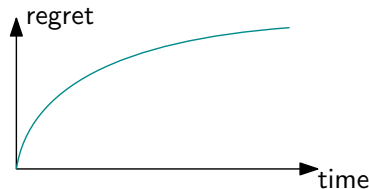




- **Regret:** Difference in reward compared to the optimal strategy



linear regret  
→ algorithm does not learn

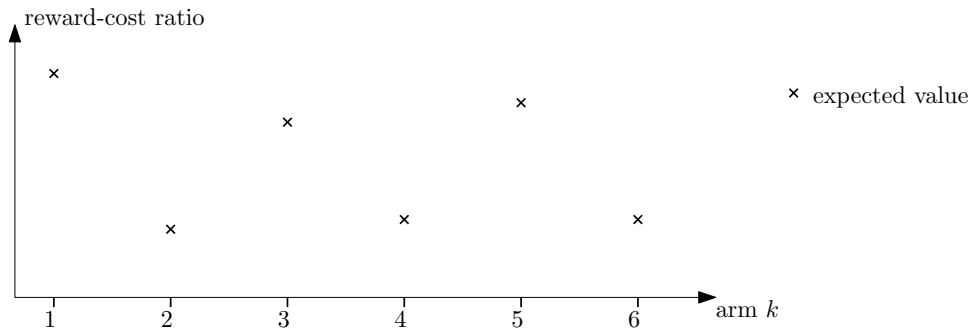


sublinear regret  
→ algorithm learns

# Foundation

## Upper confidence bound (UCB) sampling

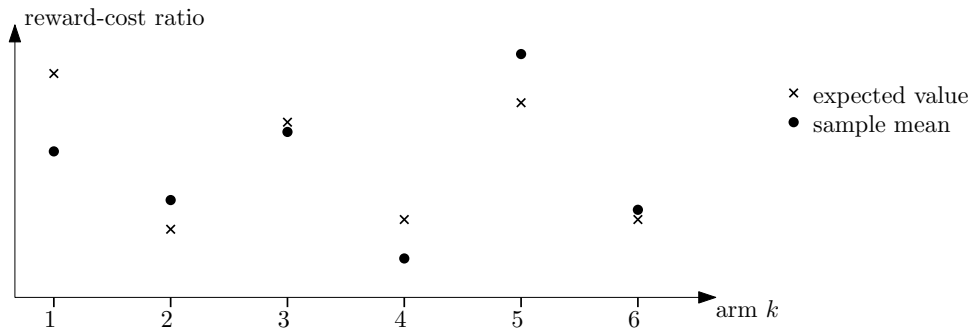
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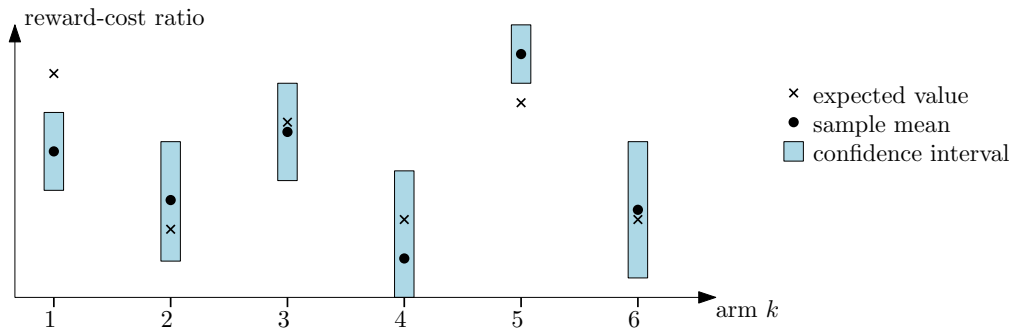
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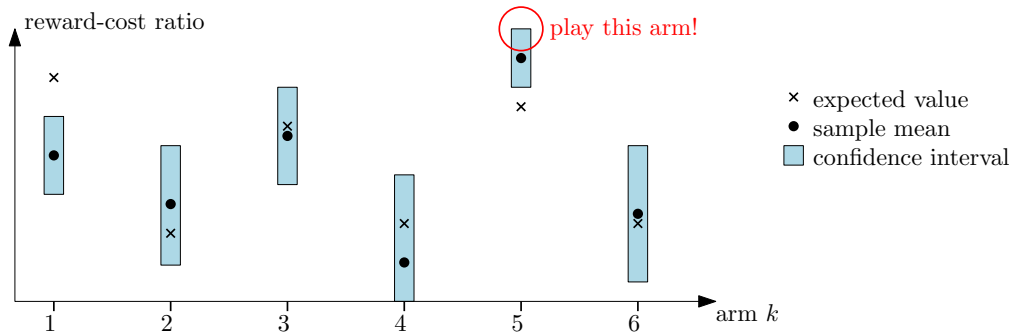
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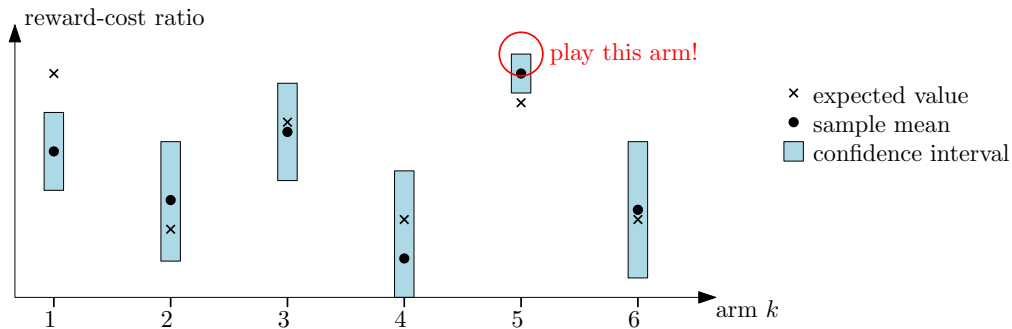
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## Problem

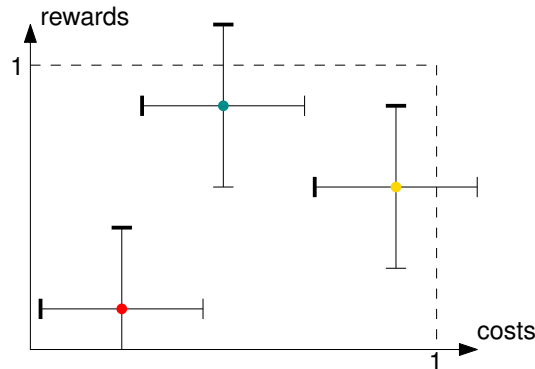
# Symmetric CIs lead to increased UCB for reward-cost ratio

The UCB for the reward-cost ratio should be

- as **accurate** as possible (UCB > expected value)
- as **tight** as possible

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$$UCB = \frac{\text{average reward} + \text{uncertainty}}{\text{average cost} - \text{uncertainty}}$$



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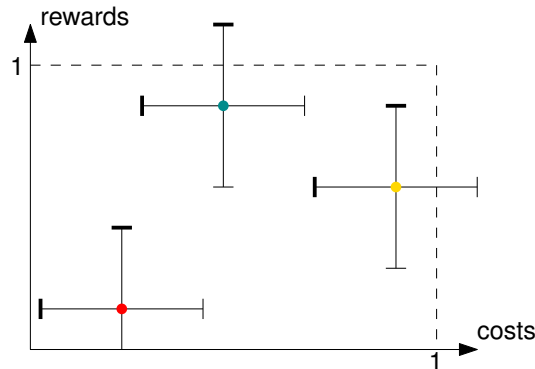
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# Use asymmetric confidence intervals instead

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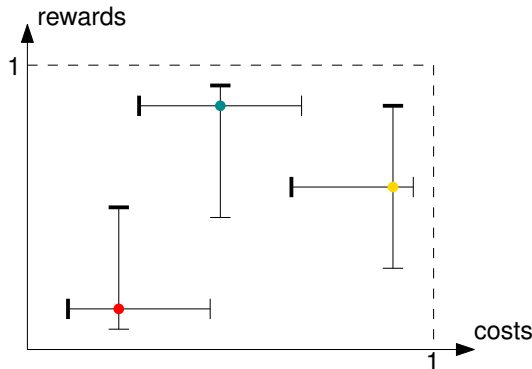
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- Use **asymmetric confidence intervals**
- Tighten confidence intervals when variance is low (our  $\eta$ -parameter,  $\eta = 1 \rightarrow$  Bernoulli)



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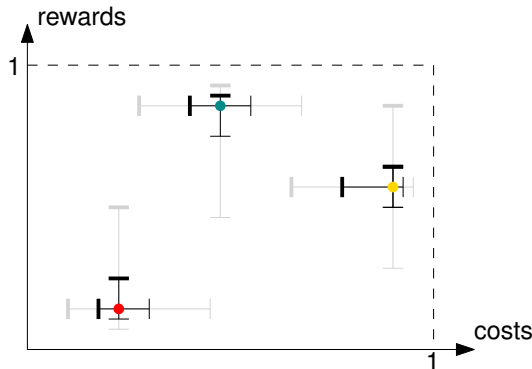
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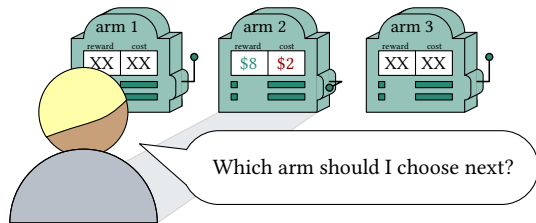
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## $\omega$ -UCB algorithm

**Goal: Maximize the total reward until the available budget runs out**

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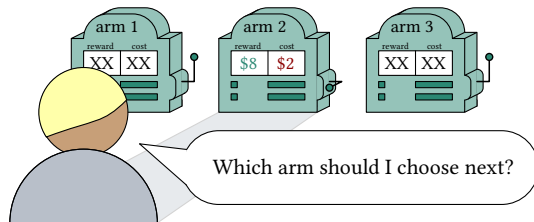
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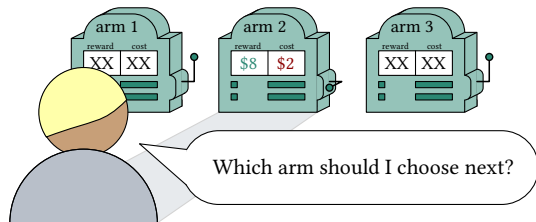
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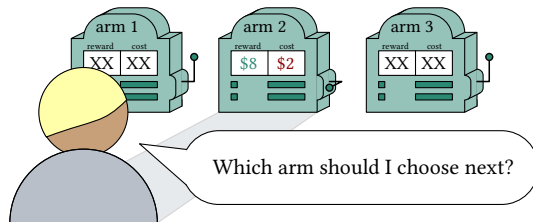
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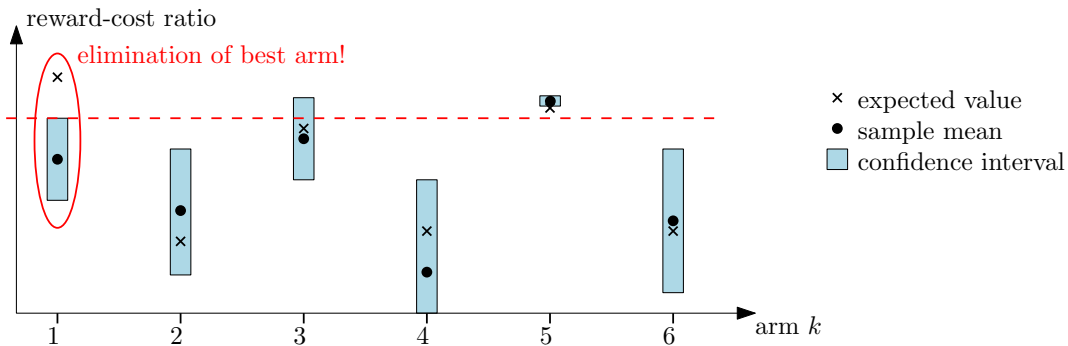
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- Time-adaptive confidence intervals prevent elimination of best arm



# Proof of sub-linear regret

## Proof structure

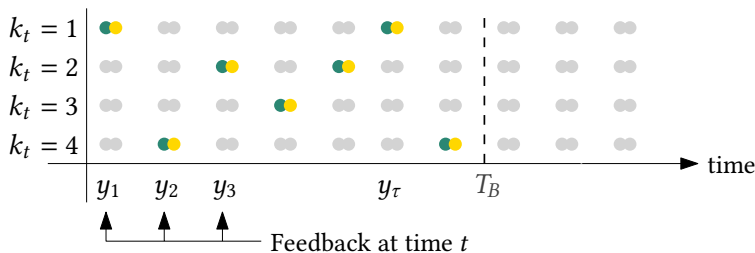
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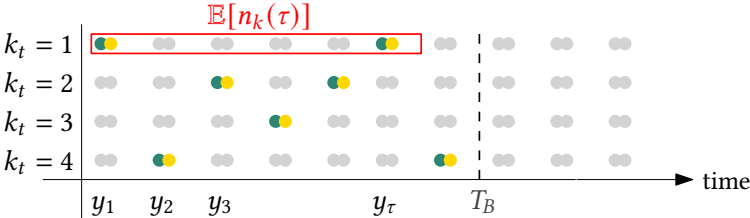
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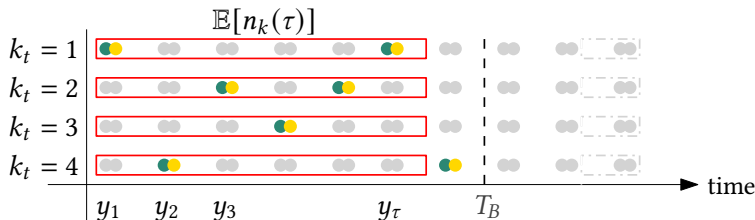
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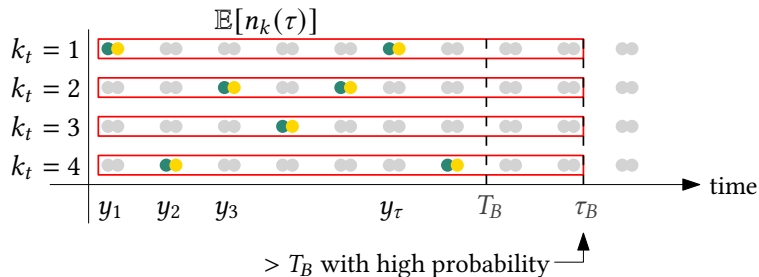
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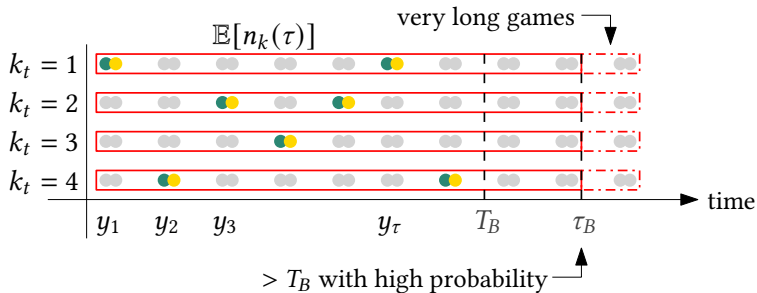
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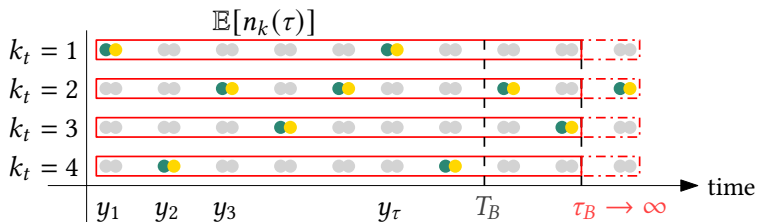
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# Proof of sub-linear regret Results (I)

## Theorem (Number of suboptimal plays)

With  $\omega$ -UCB, the expected number of plays of a suboptimal arm  $k > 1$  before time step  $\tau$ ,  $\mathbb{E}[n_k(\tau)]$ , is upper-bounded by:

$$\mathbb{E}[n_k(\tau)] \leq 1 + n_k^*(\tau) + \xi(\tau, \rho),$$

where

$$\xi(\tau, \rho) = (\tau - K) \left( 2 - \sqrt{1 - \tau^{-\rho}} \right) - \sum_{t=K+1}^{\tau} \sqrt{1 - t^{-\rho}},$$
$$n_k^*(\tau) = \frac{8\rho \log \tau}{\delta_k^2} \max \left\{ \frac{\eta_k^r \mu_k^r}{1 - \mu_k^r}, \frac{\eta_k^c (1 - \mu_k^c)}{\mu_k^c} \right\}, \quad \delta_k = \frac{\Delta_k}{\Delta_k + \frac{1}{\mu_k^c}},$$

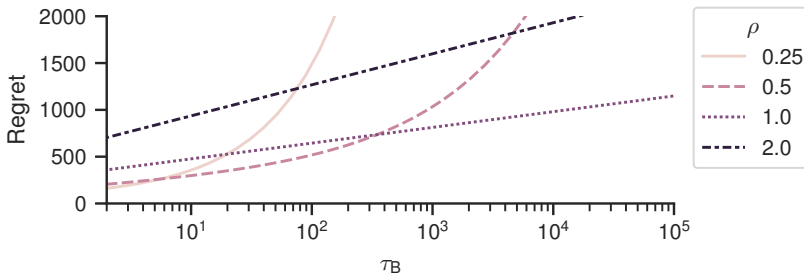
and  $K$  and  $\Delta_k$  are defined as before.

# Proof of sub-linear regret

## Regret illustration for 2-armed bandit

Hyperparameter  $\rho$  controls amount of exploration

- $\rho > 1$  leads to logarithmic growth
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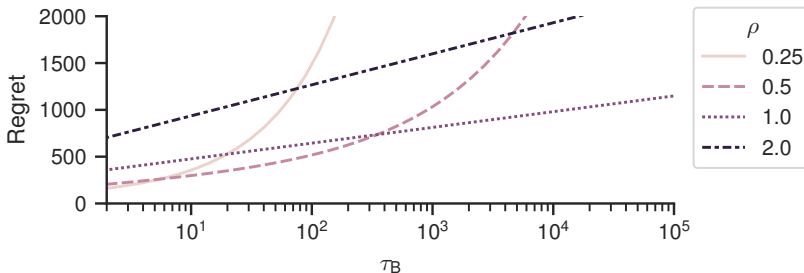


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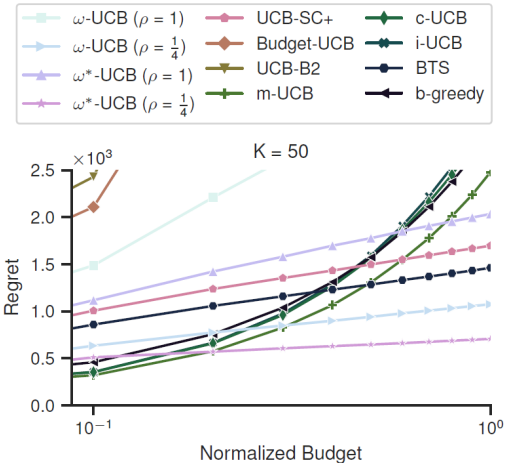
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On the right:

- Regret over time

Insights:

- $\rho = 1$  is too conservative in practice
  - Estimating  $\eta$  as in  $\omega^*$ -UCB reduces regret
- ⇒ **“Use  $\omega^*$ -UCB with  $\rho = 1/4!$ ”**



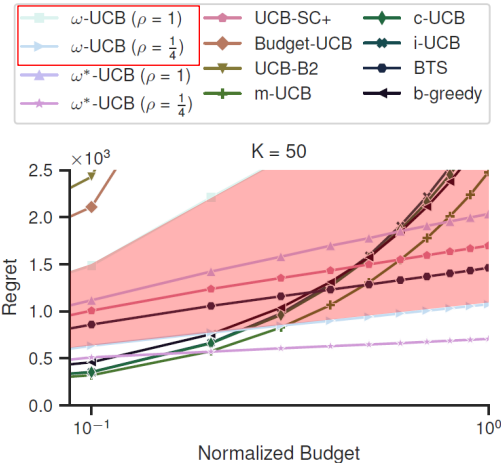
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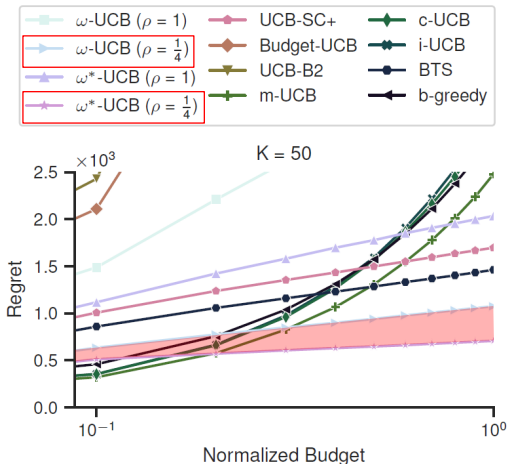
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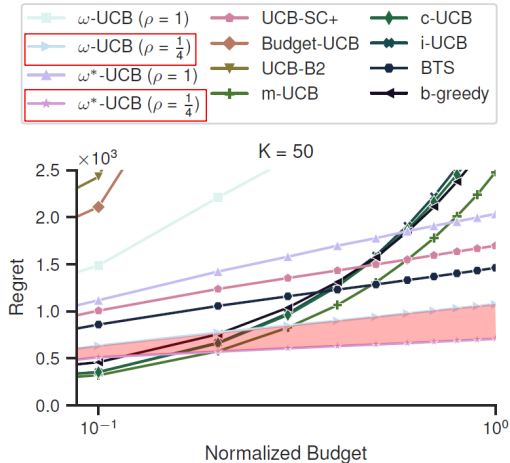
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- Unavailable feedback  $\Rightarrow$  ABCD (characterizing change in high-dimensional data streams) [Hey+24a]

## Additional materials

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- Released PLASTIC and ABCD as [part of open-source projects](https://capymoa.org/) (<https://capymoa.org/>)
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- [Advertisement video](#) and [blog post](#) (by Vadim Arzamasov and me) showcasing  $\omega$ -UCB

# Conclusions

Most existing algorithms for decision making in data streams assume **plenty and cheap feedback**. My dissertation addresses limited feedback from **three perspectives**:

- Costly decision-based feedback  $\Rightarrow$   $\omega$ -UCB (Sequential decision-making under budget constraints ) [Hey+24b]
- Observation-based feedback  $\Rightarrow$  PLASTIC (feedback-efficient incremental decision tree mining) [Hey+24c]
- Unavailable feedback  $\Rightarrow$  ABCD (characterizing change in high-dimensional data streams) [Hey+24a]

## Additional materials

- Complete **source code** available on GitHub (<https://github.com/heymarco>)
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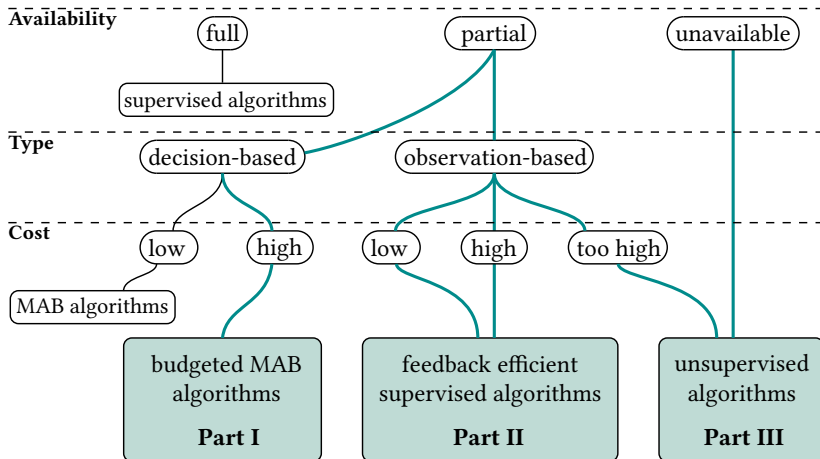
Existing decision trees focus on:

- feedback efficiency (EFDT) [MWS18; MSW22]
- adaptivity to concept drift [HSD01; BG09; GFR06; WLH12; MSW22]
- statistical foundation [Rut+13; Rut+14a; Rut+14b; Rut+15]
- semi-supervised learning [WLH12]
- fuzzy data [HY09; DMP21]
- stability [PHK07]

- **R1:** change detection
- **R2:** change subspace detection
- **R3:** Quantifying change severity
- **UV:** univariate data
- **MV:** multivariate data
- **HD:** high-dimensional data

Approach	Reference	Type	R1	R2	R3
ADWIN	[BG07]	UV	✓	–	–
SeqDrift2	[PSK14]	UV	✓	–	–
kdq-Tree	[Das+06]	MV	✓	–	✓
PCA-CD	[Qah+15]	MV	✓	–	✓
IKS	[Rei+16]	MV	✓	✓	–
LDD-DSDA	[Liu+17]	MV	✓	–	–
AdwinK	[FDK19]	MV	✓	✓	–
D3	[Göz+19]	MV	✓	–	✓
ECHAD	[Cec+20]	MV	✓	–	✓
IBDD	[SCM20]	HD	✓	–	✓
WATCH	[Fab+21]	HD	✓	–	✓
<b>ABCD</b>	ours	HD	✓	✓	✓





## Change

- Data stream = sequence of observations  $S = x_1, x_2, \dots, x_t$
- Each  $x_i$  comes from a distribution  $F_i$  and is  $d$ -dimensional
- **A change has occurred after  $t^*$  if  $F_{t^*} \neq F_{t^*+1}$**

## Change Subspace

- Set of all dimensions  $D = \{1, 2, \dots, d\}$
- **Union of all  $D' \subseteq D$  in which the joint distribution  $F^{D'}$  changed**
- **and which do not contain a subspace  $D''$  for which  $F_{t^*}^{D''} \neq F_{t^*+1}^{D''}$**

## Change Severity

- Positive function  $\Delta$  that quantifies the discrepancy between  $F_{t^*}$  and  $F_{t^*+1}$

## ABCD – Idea (1)

# Track information loss of dimensionality reduction

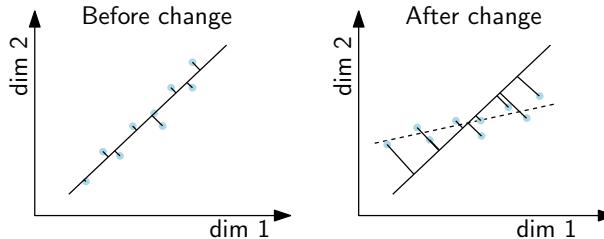
- Finding changes in high-dimensional data is hard!
  - Exponential number of subspaces, correlation changes, etc.
- Dimensionality reduction = encode data in fewer dimensions while minimizing information loss
- Concept changes  $\Rightarrow$  information loss increases



## ABCD – Idea (1)

### Track information loss of dimensionality reduction

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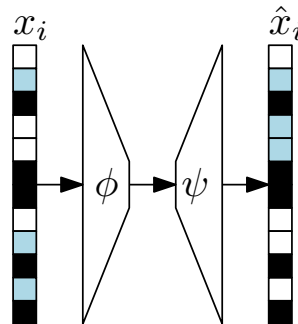


## ABCD – Idea (2)

### Learn a model of the data and detect if it becomes obsolete

#### Identification of changes

- Learn lower-dimensional model of the data
- Model encodes data in  $d' < d$  dimensions
  - Encoder:  $\phi : \mathbb{R}^d \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^{d'}$
  - Decoder:  $\psi : \mathbb{R}^{d'} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^d$
  - Reconstruction:  $\bar{x}_i = \psi(\phi(x_i))$
- Loss  $L_i$  comes from some distribution  $L$ 
  - $L_i = MSE(x_i, \bar{x}_i)$
- Detect changes in  $(L_1, L_2, \dots, L_t)$



# ABCD – Idea (3)

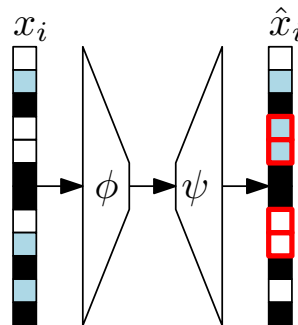
## Change subspace and severity

### Subspace

- Reconstruction is inaccurate in subspace  $D^*$
- Identify change subspace by examining which dimensions are poorly reconstructed

### Severity

- *After* approximation of change subspace
- How severe was the change in the affected subspace?
- Does the reconstruction error correlate with the severity of the change?



# Detecting changes in reconstruction error

## Adaptive windows

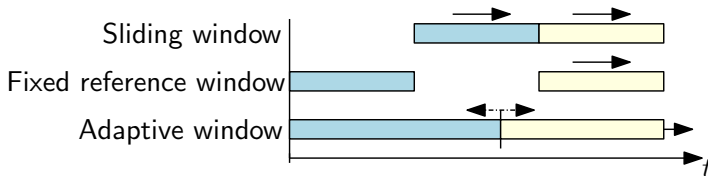
### Advantages

- No need to specify window size
- Detection of changes at various time scales
- Larger amount of 'consistent' data available

### Challenges

- Runtime and memory

How can we maintain and evaluate an adaptive window efficiently?

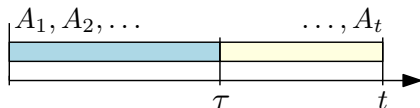




# Detecting changes in reconstruction error

## Stream aggregates

- We keep stream aggregates  $A_i$ 
  - Derived from Welford's and Chan's algorithm [Wel62; CGL82] for online variance updating
- Update and derive mean loss and variance for any time interval in constant time
- Drop old aggregates without information loss



$$A_\tau = (\hat{\mu}_\tau, \text{ssd}_\tau)$$

$$A_t = (\hat{\mu}_t, \text{ssd}_t)$$

$$A_{\tau+1,t} = ?$$

$$\bar{\mu}_{\tau+1,t} = \frac{1}{t-\tau} (t\bar{\mu}_{1,t} - \tau\bar{\mu}_{1,\tau}) \quad \text{ssd}_{\tau+1,t} = \text{ssd}_{1,t} - \text{ssd}_{1,\tau} - \frac{\tau(t-\tau)}{t} (\bar{\mu}_{1,\tau} - \bar{\mu}_{\tau+1,t})^2$$

# Change Subspace and Severity

## Change Subspace

1. Given change point  $t^*$
3. Apply change score in  $j$ -th dimension
4. Thresholding of resulting value  $p_j$  to find  $D^*$

**Change Severity**  $\Delta$  is the normalized average loss  $\bar{\mu}_{>t^*}^{D^*}$  observed in  $D^*$  after the change:

$$\Delta = \frac{|\bar{\mu}_{>t^*}^{D^*} - \bar{\mu}_{\leq t^*}^{D^*}|}{\sigma_{\leq t^*}^{D^*}}$$

# ABCD Experiment Setup

## Data streams

- 7 data streams (simulated using real world and synthetic data)
- 3 additional synthetic data streams to evaluate change subspace detection and severity estimation
- $d \in [24, 1024]$

## Baselines

- We use Autoencoders, PCA, and Kernel-PCA as encoder-decoder models
- We compare against IBDD [Sou+21], ADWIN-K [FDK19], D3 [Göz+19], WATCH [Fab+21], and IKS [Rei+16]
- For each approach we evaluate a grid of hyperparameters

## Precision and recall are based on:

- **TP:** Change detected before the next one.
- **FN:** Change not detected before the next one.
- **FP:** Change detected although no change occurred.

## Metrics for subspace and severity:

- Subspace accuracy: treat membership of change subspace as binary classification
- Spearman  $\rho$ : correlation coefficient between severity in subspace and ground truth

# Incremental Decision Trees

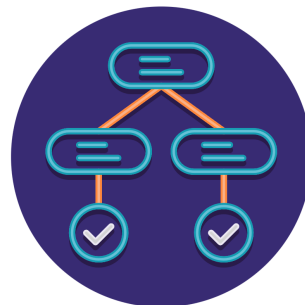
## Motivation

### Decision Trees come with many benefits:

- They can handle mixed data
  - They are interpretable
  - They are popular choices in ensembles (e.g., Random Forest)
  - They are robust to outliers
- ⇒ Well suited for decision support systems

But how to build and maintain them in data streams?

⇒ Incremental decision trees



# Incremental Decision Trees

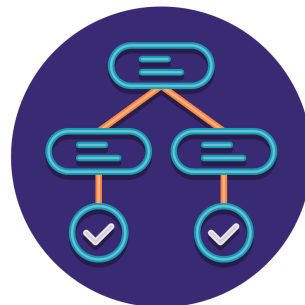
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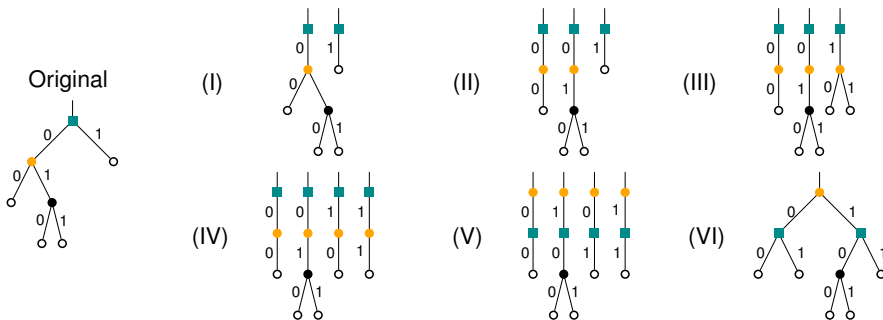


# PLASTIC Algorithm – Decision tree restructuring

I-IV. Decouple the branches of the tree

V. Reorder each branch

VI. Re-build tree



Backup

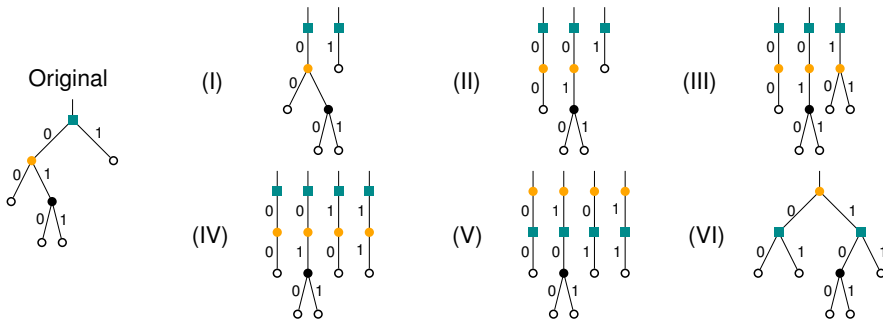
References  
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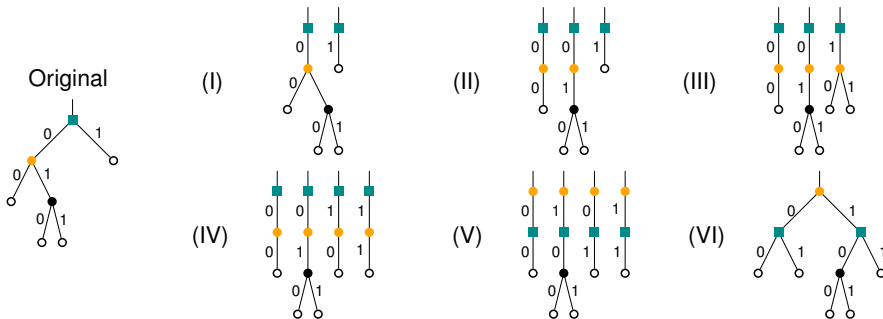
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# PLASTIC

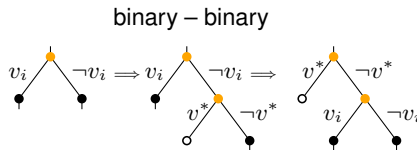
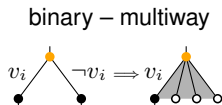
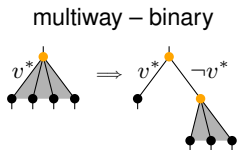
## Numerical and binary categorical splits

### Numerical splits

- For numerical splits, split threshold  $\nu^*$  typically changes
- ⇒ Adjust split threshold prior to restructuring
- ⇒ Remove unreachable subtree

### Binary categorical splits (e.g., “color=green ⇒ go left”)

- We propose a set of transformations illustrated below



Backup

References  
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### Experiments

#### 1. Comparison with EFDT

- Evaluates the effect of **decision tree restructuring**
- Comparison of PLASTIC and EFDT
- We use our own implementation of EFDT (based on the same code as PLASTIC)

#### 2. Comparison with HT, EFDT and EFHAT

- Evaluation against **state of the art** decision trees
- We add a simple adaptive version of PLASTIC called PLASTIC-A
  - Trains a background tree when accuracy drops
  - Replaces current tree once it is more accurate

### Data streams

- 9 synthetic, 15 real-world data streams
- 200,000 instances on synthetic data
- Up to 15 million instances on real world data

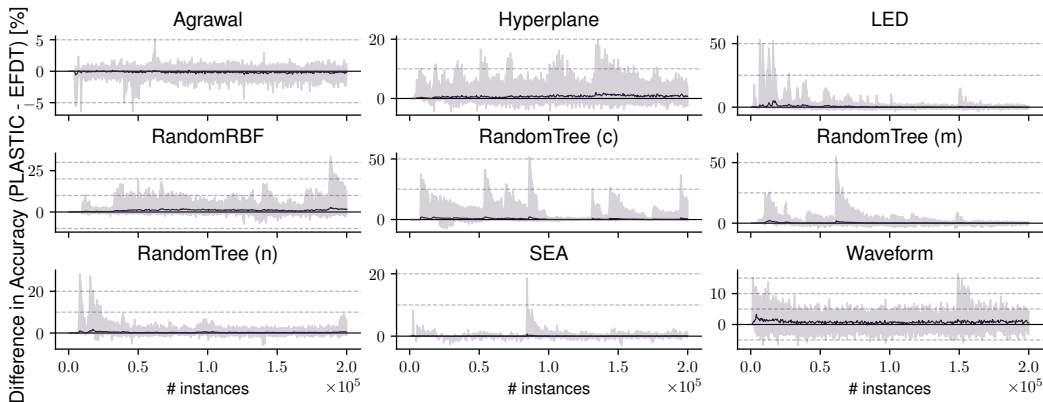
### Evaluation methodology

- Test-then-train evaluation
- Accuracy in sliding window of size 500 (synthetic data) and 1000 (real world data)

# Experiments

## Comparison to EFDT (synthetic data)

- Graphs show difference in accuracy between PLASTIC and EFDT
- Shaded area shows maximum difference across experiment repetitions



Backup

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# Experiments

## Results on real-world data streams



Approach	HT	EFDT	EFHAT	PLASTIC	PLASTIC-A	NoChange
RIALTO	24.2	37.8	42.3	<b>49.2</b>	47.4	0.0
SENSORS	15.8	38.2	42.7	<b>48.1</b>	47.1	0.1
COVTYPE	68.3	77.4	79.6	<b>82.1</b>	81.3	95.1
HARTH	79.5	86.5	89.2	88.3	<b>90.9</b>	99.9
PAMAP2	58.4	94.5	98.3	96.6	<b>98.6</b>	99.9
WISDM	65.6	80.6	89.0	82.6	<b>93.1</b>	99.9
...						
Accuracy	64.8	74.2	76.4	76.7	<b>77.8</b>	61.4
Rank	4.21	3.71	2.50	<b>2.29</b>	<b>2.29</b>	–
Runtime	<b>61.8</b>	110.6	198.6	141.6	175.0	27.1

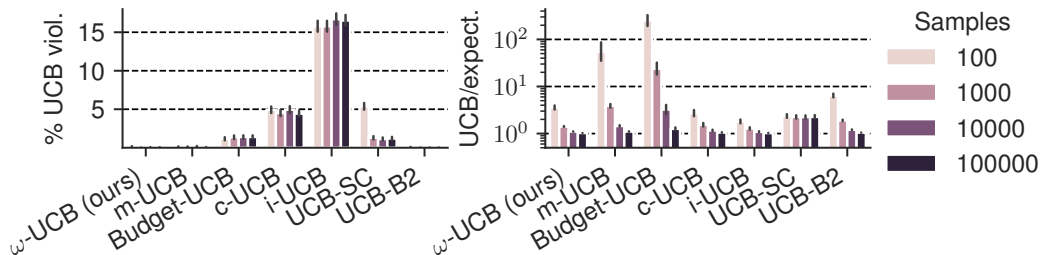
# Related work

## Existing UCB approaches have issues

The UCB for the reward-cost ratio should be

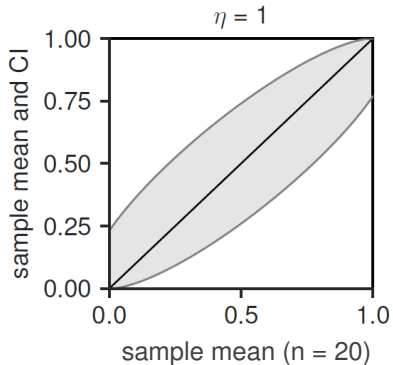
- as **accurate** as possible (UCB > expected value)
- as **tight** as possible

→ but this is not the case.



# Our Approach

## Asymmetric confidence interval (illustration)



$$\omega_{\pm}(\alpha) = \frac{B}{2A} \pm \sqrt{\frac{B^2}{4A^2} - \frac{C}{A}},$$

$$A = n + z^2\eta, \quad B = 2n\bar{\mu} + z^2\eta(M + m), \quad C = n\bar{\mu}^2 + z^2\eta Mm,$$







## Theorem (Instance-dependent regret bound (based on [Xia+17]))

Define  $\tau_B = \lfloor 2B / \min_{k \in [K]} \mu_k^c \rfloor$  and  $\Delta_k$ ,  $n_k^*(\tau_B)$ , and  $\xi(\tau_B, \rho)$  as before. For any  $\rho > 0$ , the regret of  $\omega$ -UCB is upper-bounded by

$$\text{Regret} \leq \sum_{k=2}^K \Delta_k (1 + n_k^*(\tau_B) + \xi(\tau_B, \rho)) + \mathcal{X}(B) \sum_{k=2}^K \Delta_k + \frac{2\mu_1^r}{\mu_1^c},$$

where  $\mathcal{X}(B)$  is in  $\mathcal{O}\left(\frac{B}{\mu_{\min}^c} e^{-0.5B\mu_{\min}^c}\right)$ .

## Theorem (Asymptotic regret)

The regret of  $\omega$ -UCB is

$$\text{Regret} \in \mathcal{O}(B^{1-\rho}), \text{ for } 0 < \rho < 1; \quad \text{Regret} \in \mathcal{O}(\log B), \text{ for } \rho \geq 1$$