Data Mining

Decision Tree

https://data-mining.github.io/winter-2026/

CS 453/553 – Winter 2026
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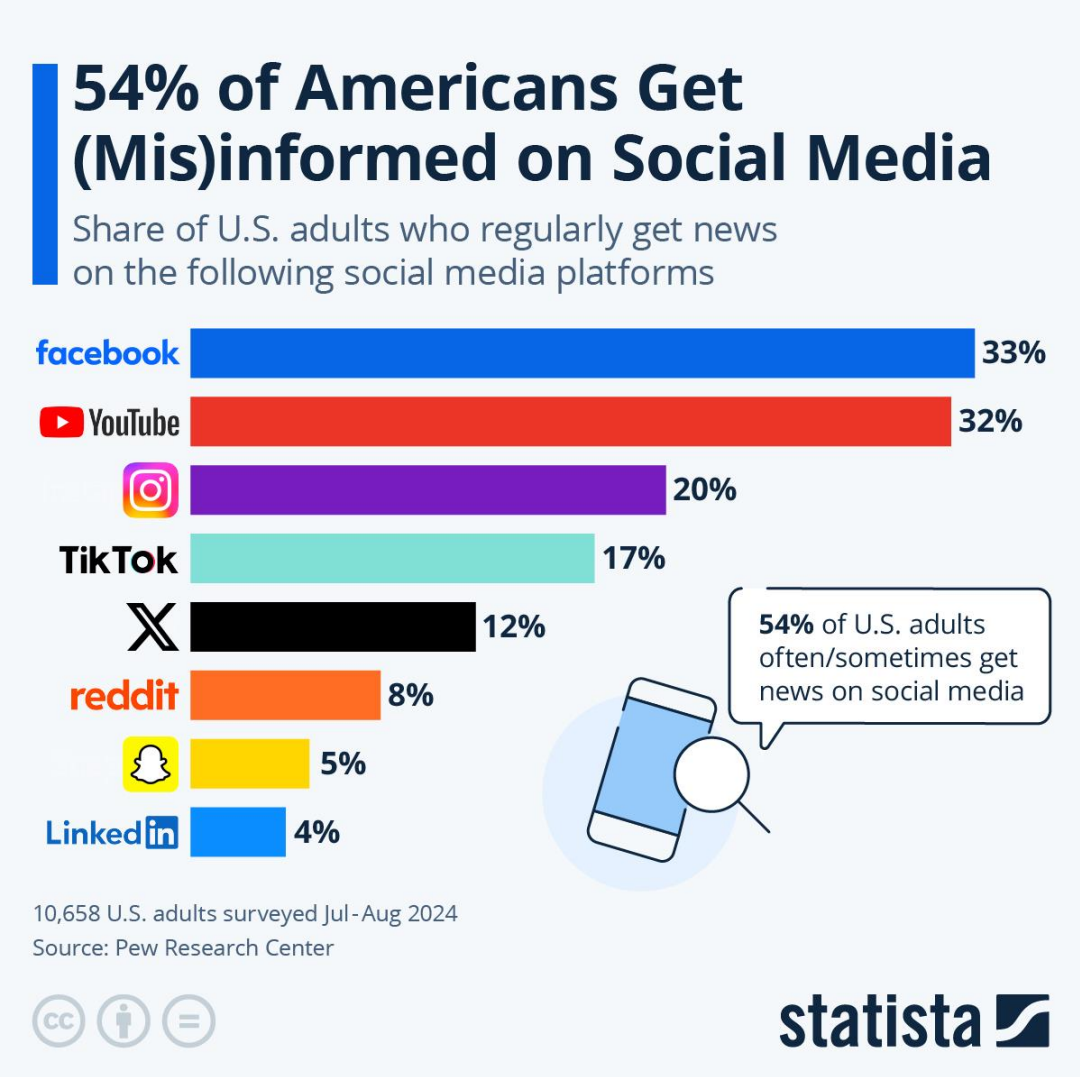
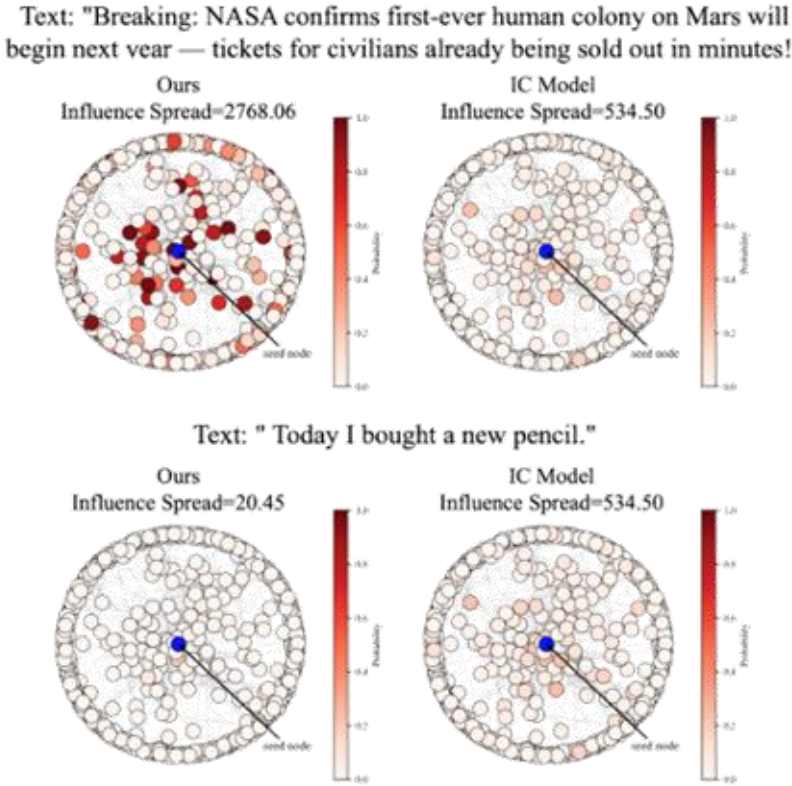
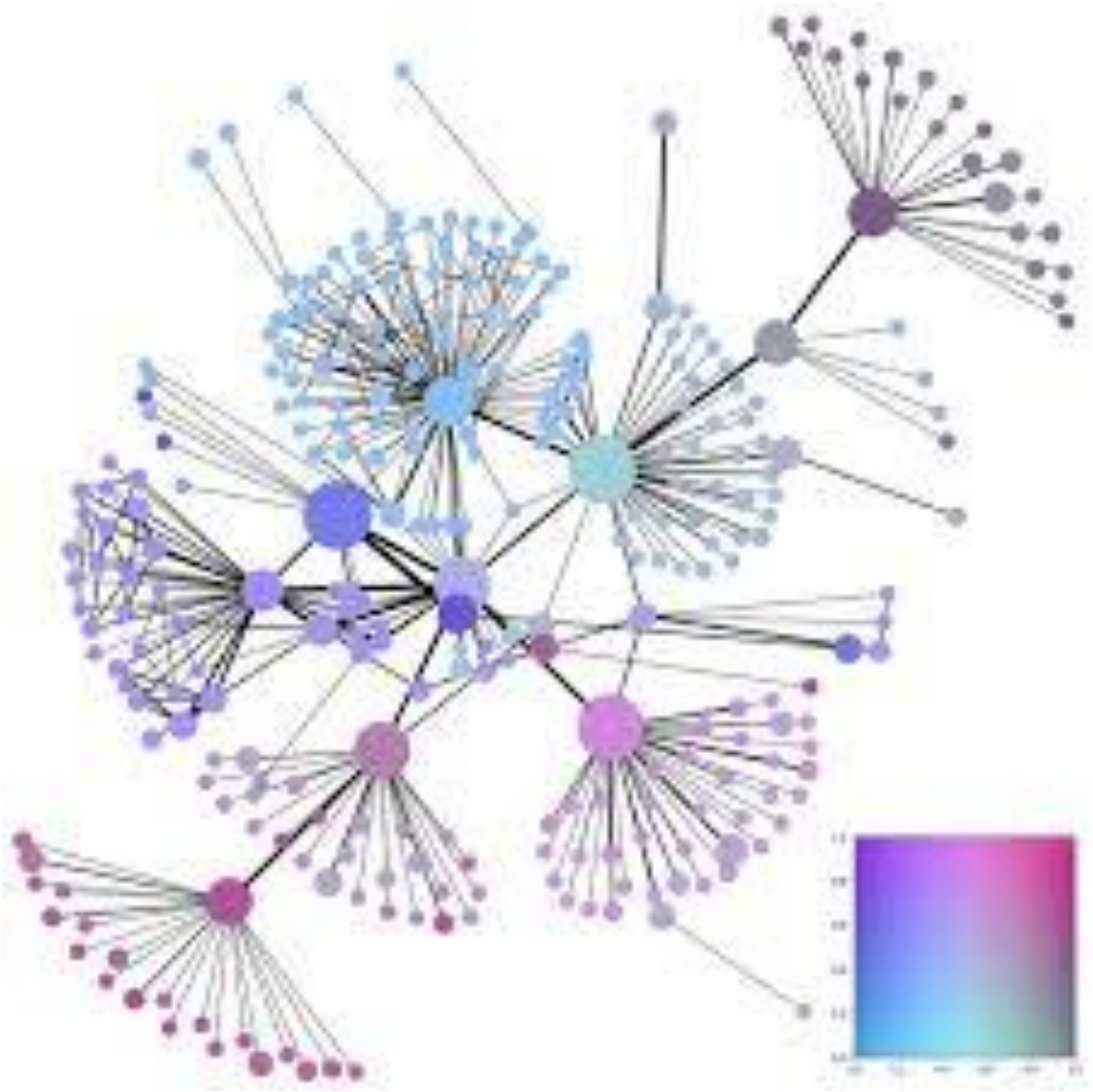
Motivation – What is Classification and Why?



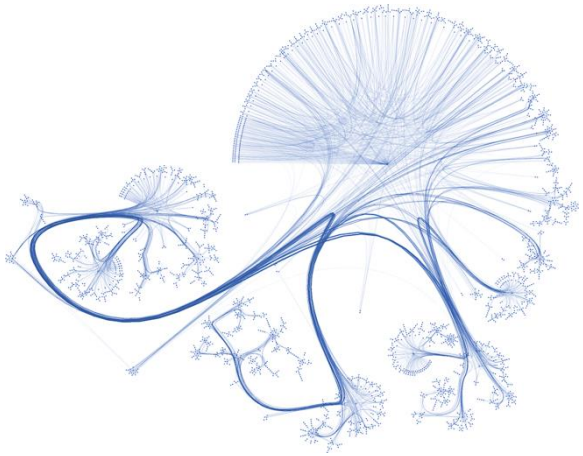
Misinformation Detection



Motivation – What is Classification and Why?



Paper Classification



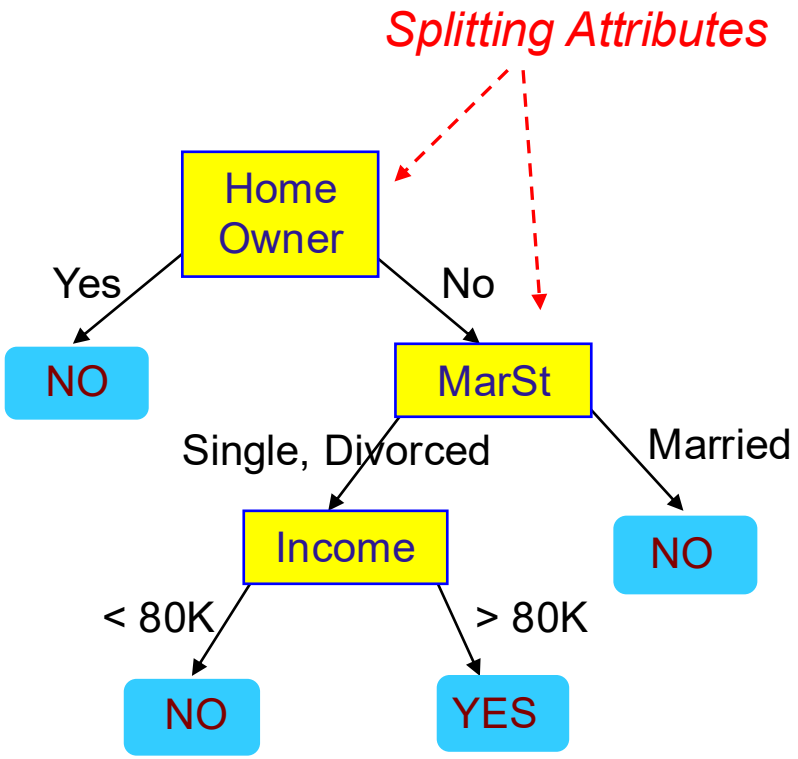
Some Basic Methods

- Naïve Bayes Classifier
- Nearest Neighbor Classifiers
- Decision-Tree
- Advanced Methods:
  - Neural Network
  - Geometric Neural Networks

Decision Tree

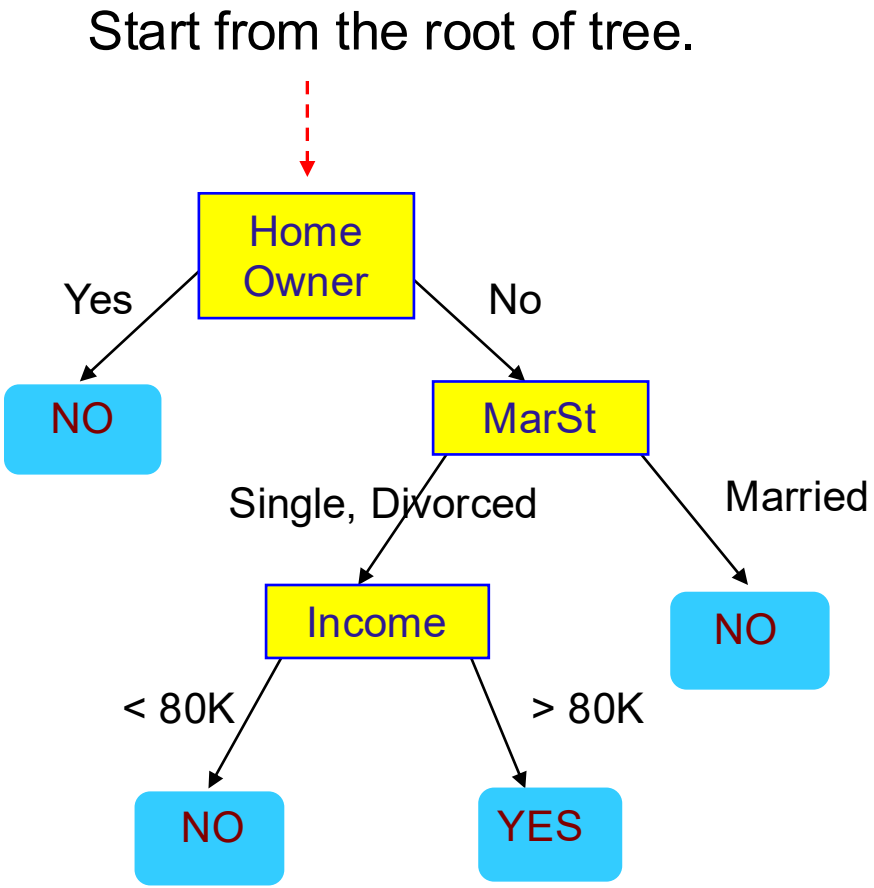
ID	Home Owner	Marital Status	Annual Income	Defaulted Borrower
		categorical	categorical	continuous	class
1	Yes	Single	125K	No
2	No	Married	100K	No
3	No	Single	70K	No
4	Yes	Married	120K	No
5	No	Divorced	95K	Yes
6	No	Married	60K	No
7	Yes	Divorced	220K	No
8	No	Single	85K	Yes
9	No	Married	75K	No
10	No	Single	90K	Yes

Training Data



Model: Decision Tree

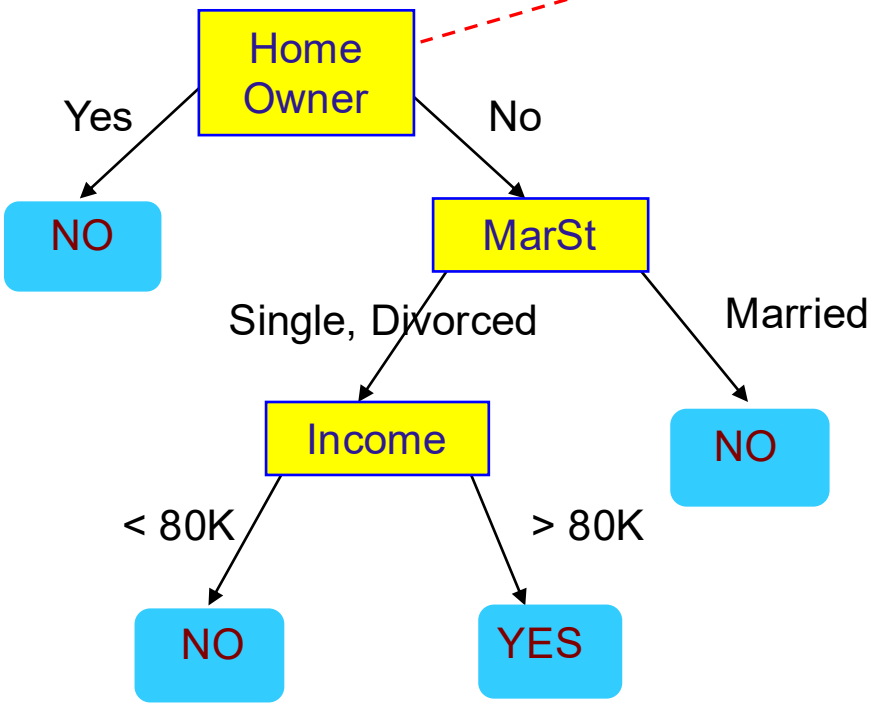
Decision Tree



Test Data

Home Owner	Marital Status	Annual Income	Defaulted Borrower
No	Married	80K	?

Decision Tree



Test Data

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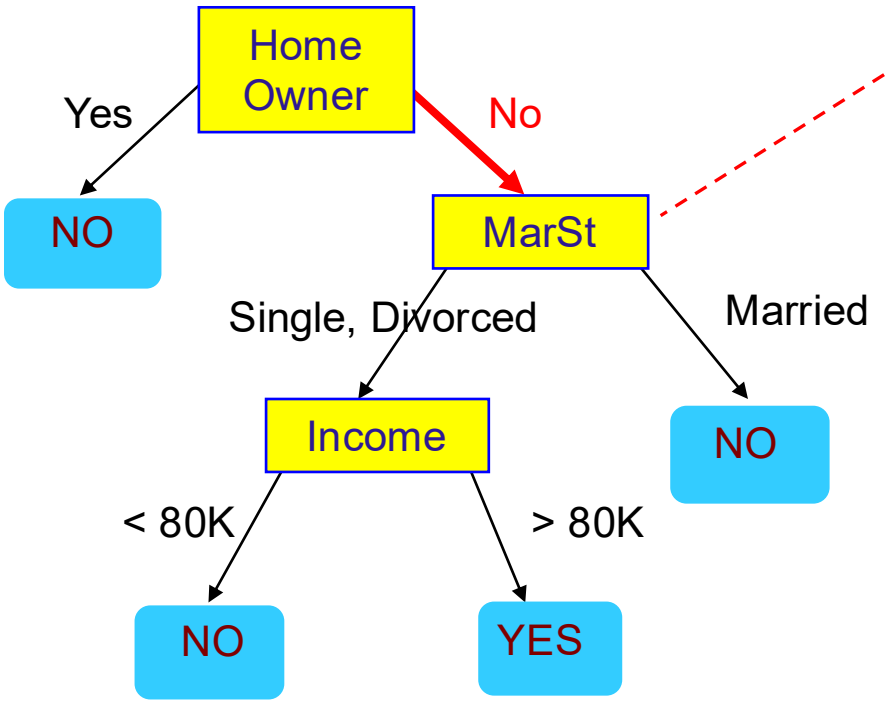
Decision Tree



Test Data

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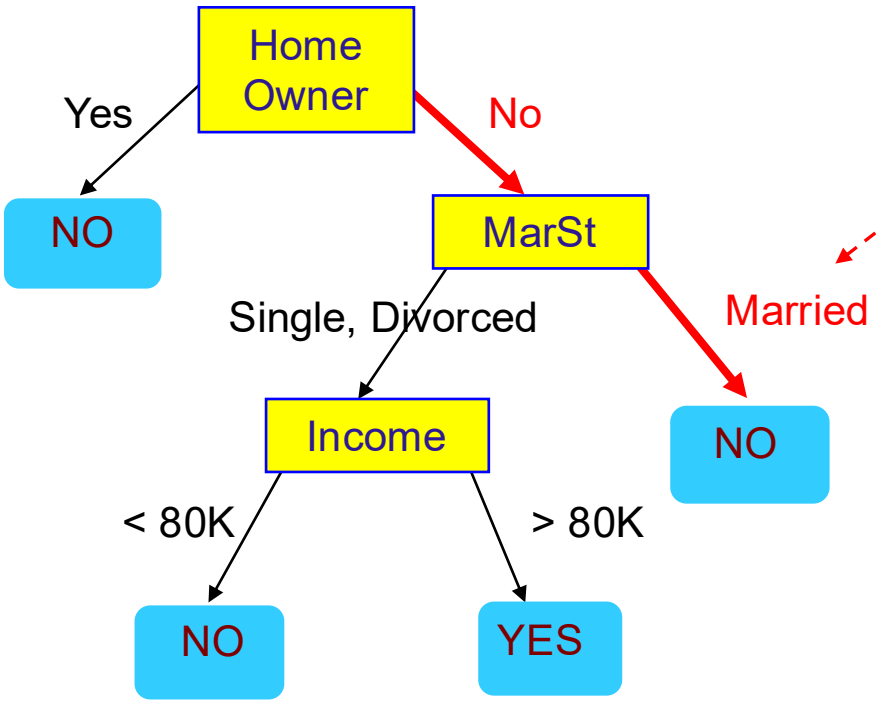
No	Married	80K	?

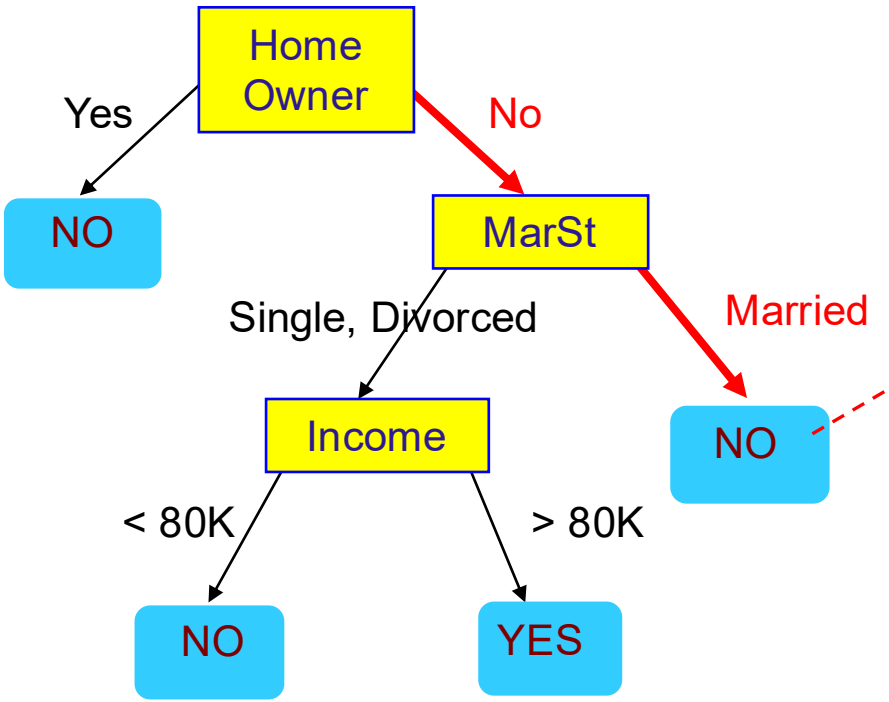
Decision Tree



Test Data

Home Owner	Marital Status	Annual Income	Defaulted Borrower
No	Married	80K	?

Decision Tree



Test Data

Home Owner	Marital Status	Annual Income	Defaulted Borrower
No	Married	80K	?

Assign Defaulted to "No"

Decision Tree

ID	Home Owner	Marital Status	Annual Income	Defaulted Borrower
		categorical	categorical	continuous	class
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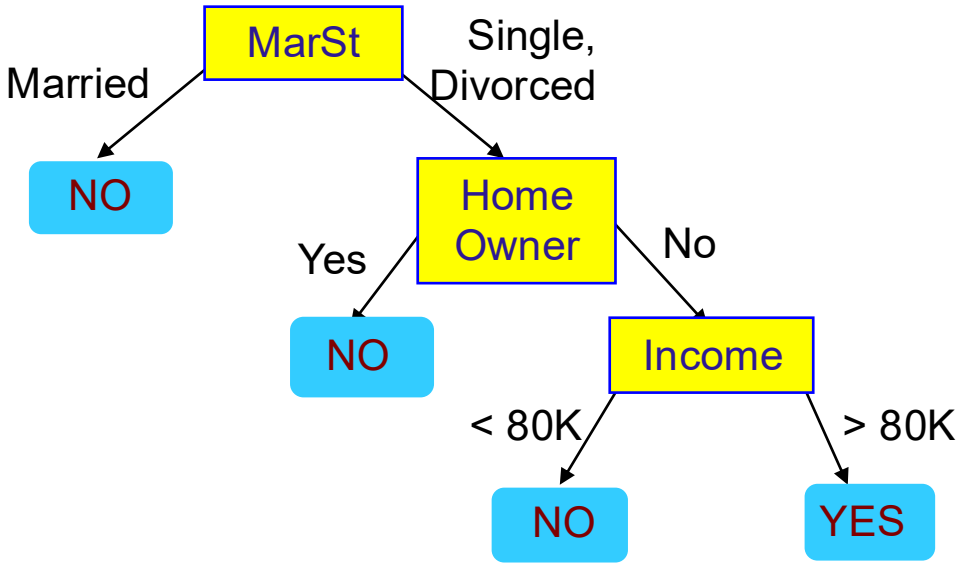


There could be more than one tree that fits the same data!

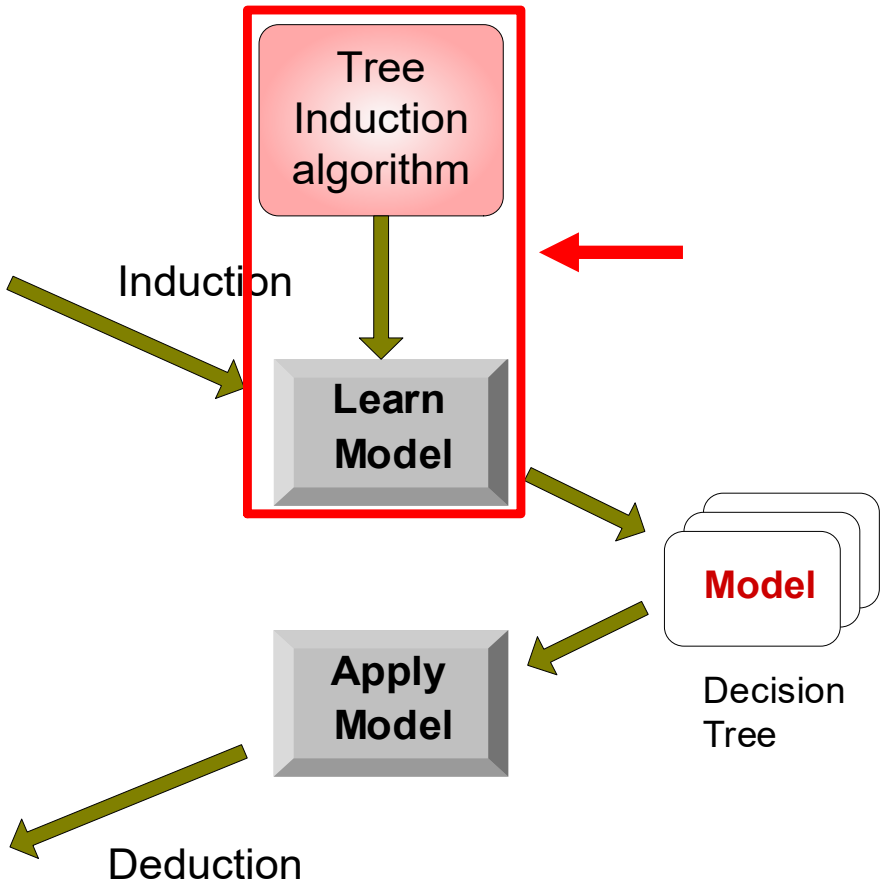
Decision Tree

Tid	Attrib1	Attrib2	Attrib3	Class
1	Yes	Large	125K	No
2	No	Medium	100K	No
3	No	Small	70K	No
4	Yes	Medium	120K	No
5	No	Large	95K	Yes
6	No	Medium	60K	No
7	Yes	Large	220K	No
8	No	Small	85K	Yes
9	No	Medium	75K	No
10	No	Small	90K	Yes

Training Set

Tid	Attrib1	Attrib2	Attrib3	Class
11	No	Small	55K	?
12	Yes	Medium	80K	?
13	Yes	Large	110K	?
14	No	Small	95K	?
15	No	Large	67K	?

Test Set



Decision Tree

- Many Algorithms:
  - Hunt's Algorithm (one of the earliest)
  - CART
  - ID3, C4.5
  - SLIQ,SPRINT

Decision Tree

- Let D_t be the set of training records that reach a node t

- General Procedure:
  - If D_t contains records that belong the same class y_t, then t is a leaf node labeled as y_t
  - If D_t contains records that belong to more than one class, use an attribute test to split the data into smaller subsets. Recursively apply the procedure to each subset.

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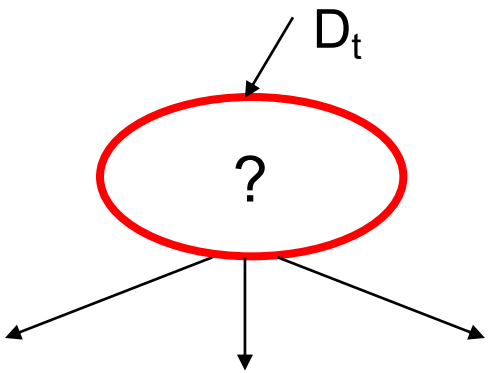
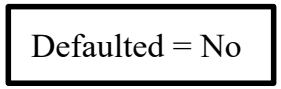
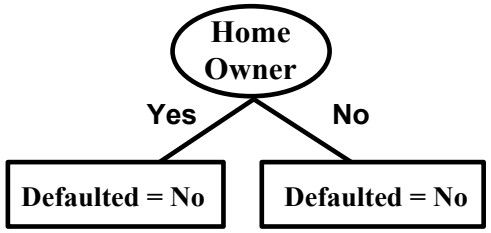


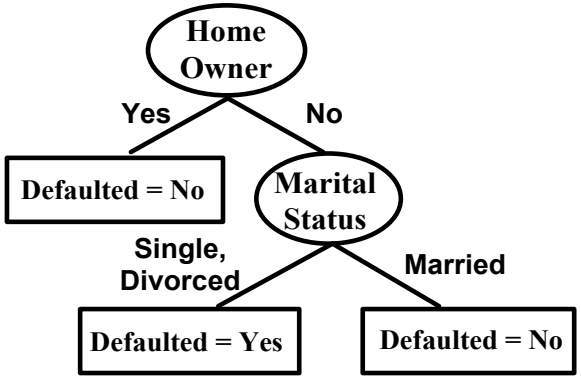
Decision Tree



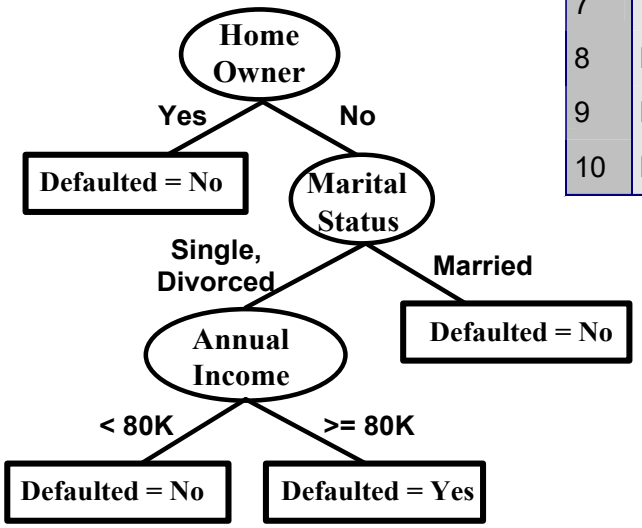
(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

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6	No	Married	60K	No
7	Yes	Divorced	220K	No
8	No	Single	85K	Yes
9	No	Married	75K	No
10	No	Single	90K	Yes

Decision Tree

- How should training records be split?
  - Method for expressing test condition
    - depending on attribute types
  - Measure for evaluating the goodness of a test condition

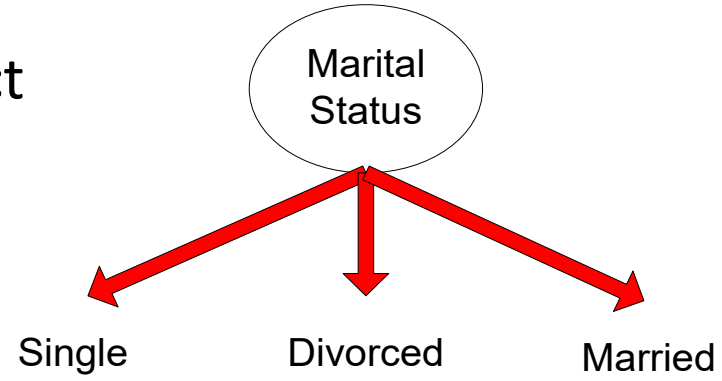
- How should the splitting procedure stop?
  - Stop splitting if all the records belong to the same class or have identical attribute values
  - Early termination

Decision Tree

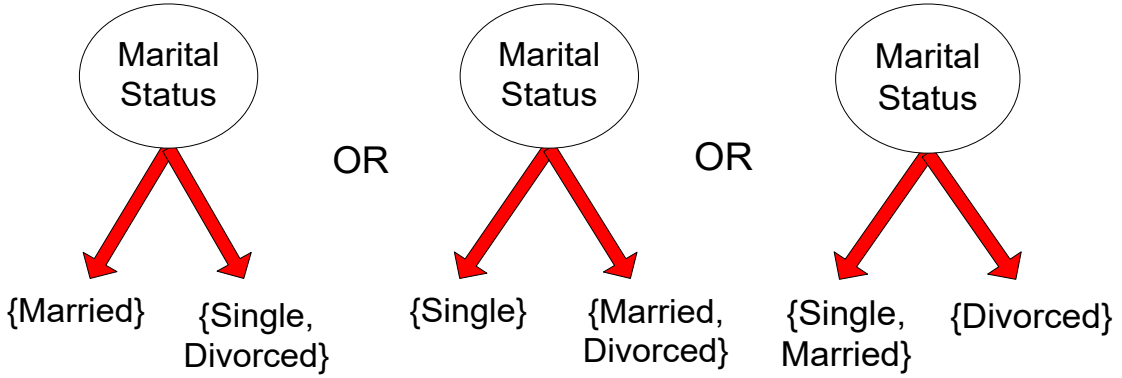
- Depends on attribute types
  - Binary
  - Nominal
  - Ordinal
  - Continuous

Decision Tree - Nominal

- Multi-way split:
  - Use as many partitions as distinct values.

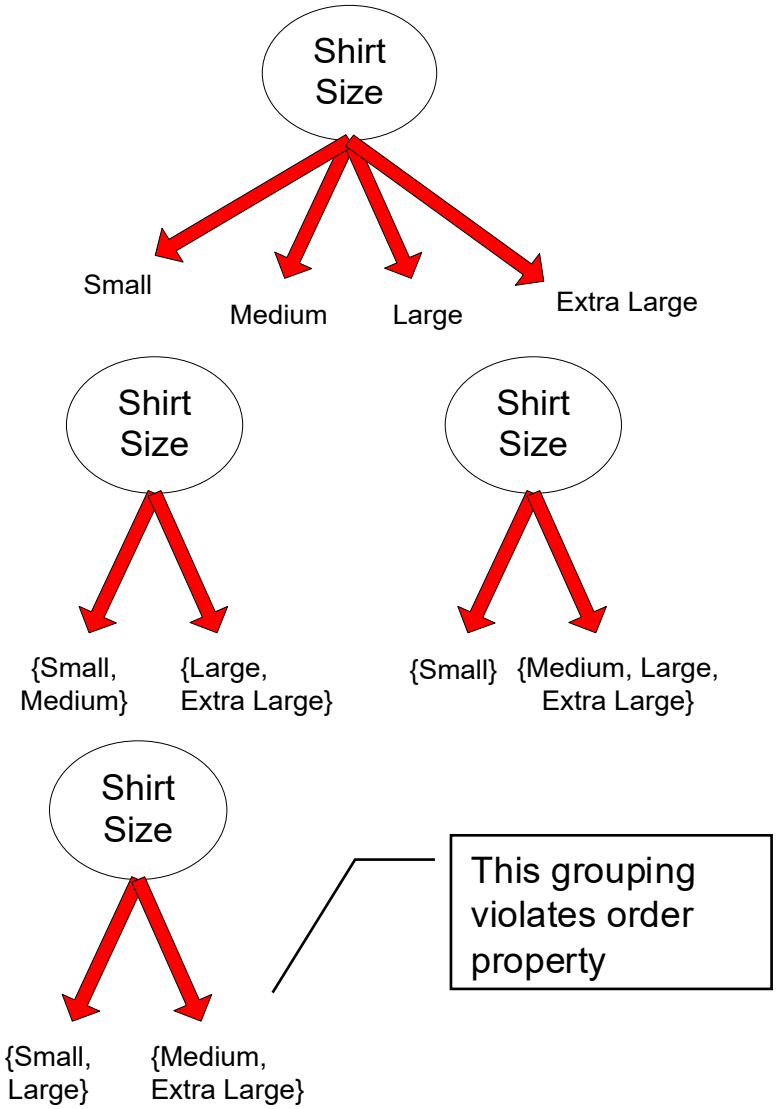


- Binary split:
  - Divides values into two subsets

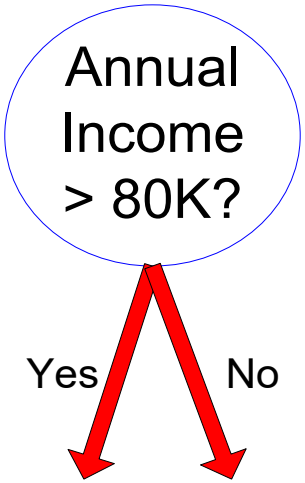


Decision Tree – Ordinal Attributes

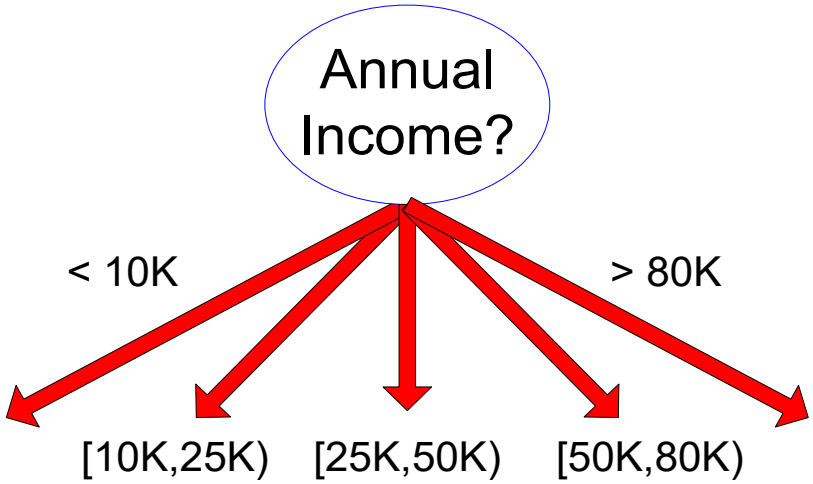
- Multi-way split:
  - Use as many partitions as distinct values
- Binary split:
  - Divides values into two subsets
  - Preserve order property among attribute values



Decision Tree – Continuous Attributes



(i) Binary split



(ii) Multi-way split

Decision Tree – Continuous Attributes

- Different ways of handling
  - Discretization to form an ordinal categorical attribute

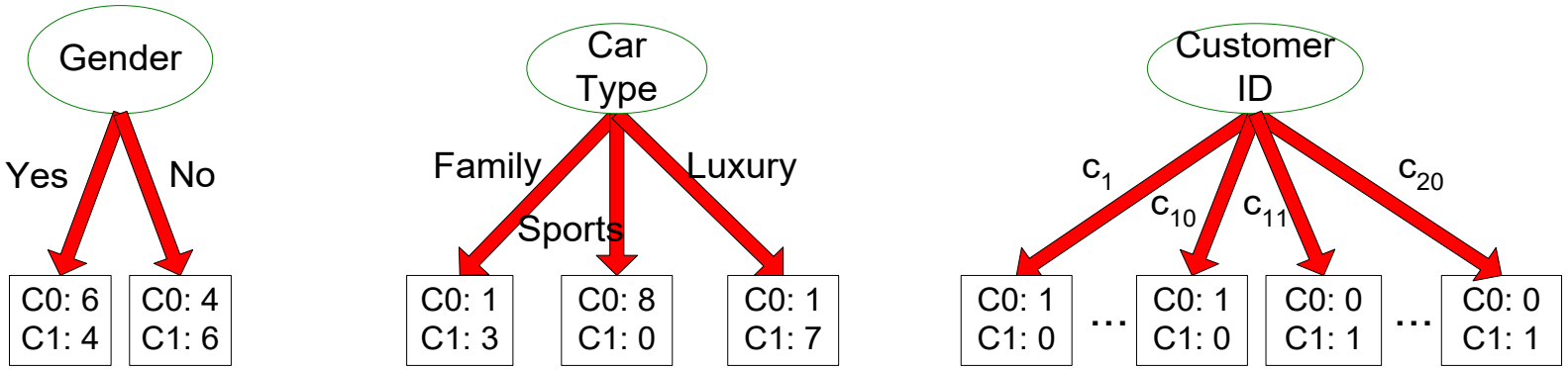
    Ranges can be found by equal interval bucketing, equal frequency bucketing (percentiles), or clustering.
    - Static – discretize once at the beginning
    - Dynamic – repeat at each node

  - Binary Decision: $(A < v)$ or $(A \geq v)$
    - consider all possible splits and finds the best cut
    - can be more compute intensive

Decision Tree – How to determine the Best Split

Before Splitting: 10 records of class 0,
10 records of class 1

Customer Id	Gender	Car Type	Shirt Size	Class
1	M	Family	Small	C0
2	M	Sports	Medium	C0
3	M	Sports	Medium	C0
4	M	Sports	Large	C0
5	M	Sports	Extra Large	C0
6	M	Sports	Extra Large	C0
7	F	Sports	Small	C0
8	F	Sports	Small	C0
9	F	Sports	Medium	C0
10	F	Luxury	Large	C0
11	M	Family	Large	C1
12	M	Family	Extra Large	C1
13	M	Family	Medium	C1
14	M	Luxury	Extra Large	C1
15	F	Luxury	Small	C1
16	F	Luxury	Small	C1
17	F	Luxury	Medium	C1
18	F	Luxury	Medium	C1
19	F	Luxury	Medium	C1
20	F	Luxury	Large	C1



Which test condition is the best?

Decision Tree – How to determine the Best Split

- Greedy approach:
  - Nodes with purer class distribution are preferred
- Need a measure of node impurity:

C0: 5 C1: 5	C0: 9 C1: 1
High degree of impurity	Low degree of impurity

Decision Tree – How to determine the Best Split

- Gini Index

$$Gini\ Index = 1 - \sum_{i=0}^{c-1} p_i(t)^2$$

Where $\boldsymbol{p_i(t)}$ is the frequency of class $\boldsymbol{i}$ at node t, and $\boldsymbol{c}$ is the total number of classes

- Entropy

$$Entropy = -\sum_{i=0}^{c-1} p_i(t) log_2 p_i(t)$$

- Misclassification error

$$Classification\ error = 1 - \max[p_i(t)]$$

Decision Tree – How to determine the Best Split

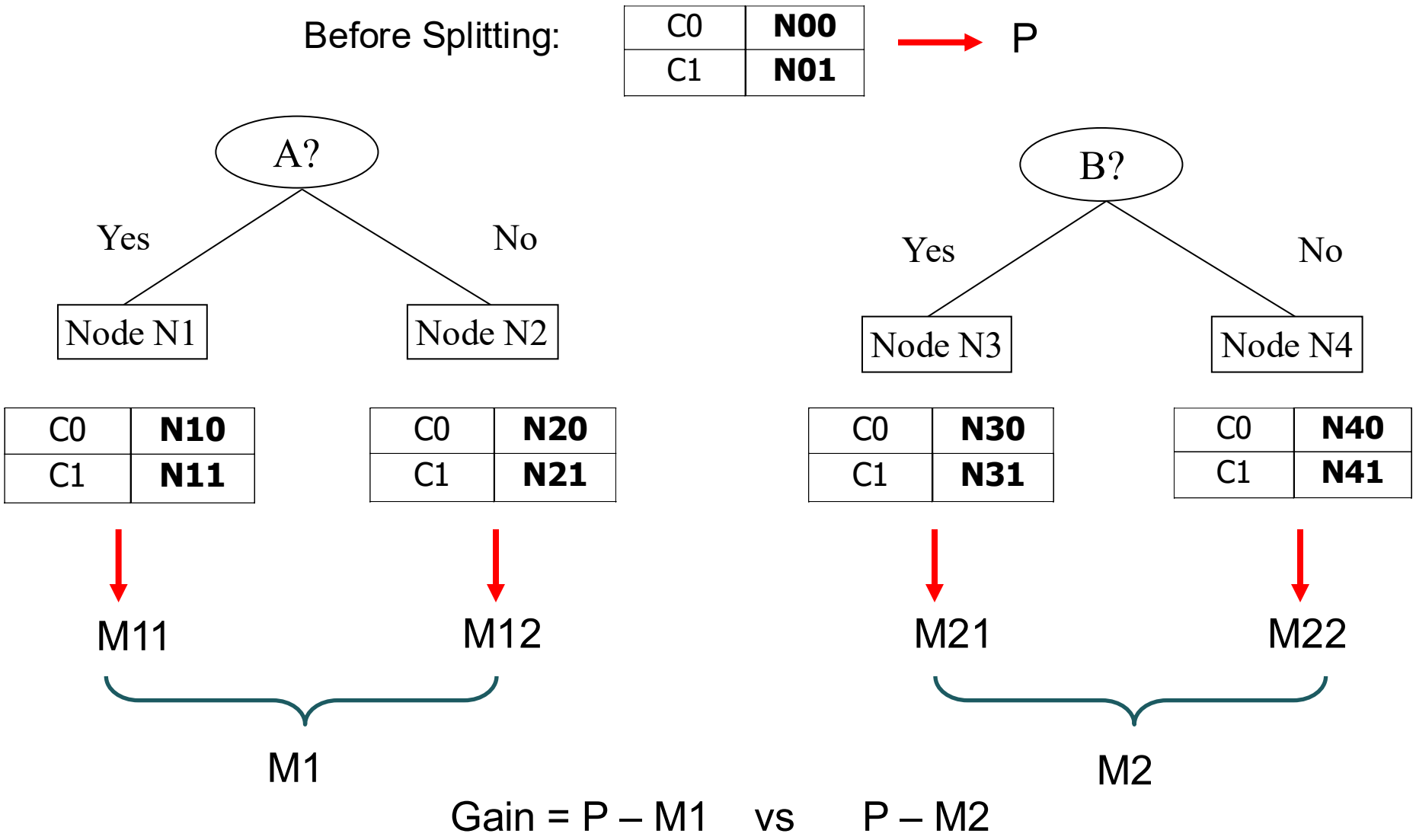
1. Compute impurity measure (P) before splitting
2. Compute impurity measure (M) after splitting
    - Compute impurity measure of each child node
    - M is the weighted impurity of child nodes

3. Choose the attribute test condition that produces the highest gain

Gain = P - M

or equivalently, lowest impurity measure after splitting (M)

Decision Tree – GINI to determine the Best Split



Decision Tree – GINI to determine the Best Split

- Gini Index for a given node t :

$$Gini\ Index = 1 - \sum_{i=0}^{c-1} p_i(t)^2$$

- For 2-class problem (p, 1 – p):
  - GINI = $1 - p^2 - (1 - p)^2 = 2p\ (1\text{-}p)$

C1	**0**
C2	**6**
Gini=0.000	

C1	**1**
C2	**5**
Gini=0.278	

C1	**2**
C2	**4**
Gini=0.444	

C1	**3**
C2	**3**
Gini=0.500	

- When a node p is split into k partitions (children)

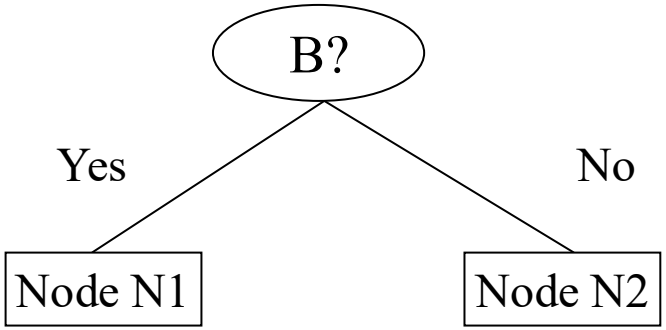
$$GINI_{split} = \sum_{i=1}^{k} \frac{n_i}{n} GINI(i)$$

where, n_i = number of records at child i,

n = number of records at parent node p.

Decision Tree

- Splits into two partitions (child nodes)
- Effect of Weighing partitions:
  - Larger and purer partitions are sought



	Parent
C1	**7**
C2	**5**
Gini = 0.486	

Gini(N1)
= 1 – $(5/6)^2$ – $(1/6)^2$
= 0.278

Gini(N2)
= 1 – $(2/6)^2$ – $(4/6)^2$
= 0.444

	N1	N2
C1	**5**	**2**
C2	**1**	**4**
Gini=0.361		

Weighted Gini of N1 N2
= 6/12 * 0.278 +
6/12 * 0.444
= 0.361

Gain = 0.486 – 0.361 = 0.125

Decision Tree

- For each distinct value, gather counts for each class in the dataset
- Use the count matrix to make decisions

Multi-way split

	CarType		
	Family	Sports	Luxury
C1	1	8	1
C2	3	0	7

Two-way split
(find best partition of values)

	CarType	
	{Sports, Luxury}	{Family}
C1	9	1
C2	7	3

	CarType	
	{Sports}	{Family, Luxury}
C1	8	2
C2	0	10

Which of these is the best?

Your Practice

Decision Tree

- For each distinct value, gather counts for each class in the dataset
- Use the count matrix to make decisions

Multi-way split

	CarType		
	Family	Sports	Luxury
C1	1	8	1
C2	3	0	7
Gini	0.163		

Two-way split
(find best partition of values)

	CarType	
	{Sports, Luxury}	{Family}
C1	9	1
C2	7	3
Gini	0.468	

	CarType	
	{Sports}	{Family, Luxury}
C1	8	2
C2	0	10
Gini	0.167	

Which of these is the best?

Decision Tree – Continuous Attributes

- Use Binary Decisions based on one value
- Several Choices for the splitting value
  - Number of possible splitting values = Number of distinct values
- Each splitting value has a count matrix associated with it
  - Class counts in each of the partitions, A ≤ v and A > v
- Simple method to choose best v
  - For each v, scan the database to gather count matrix and compute its Gini index
  - Computationally Inefficient! Repetition of work.

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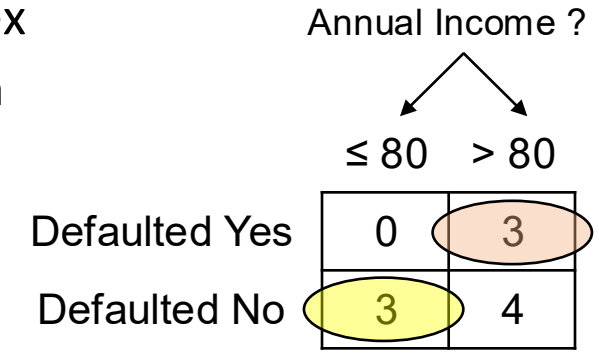

Decision Tree – Continuous Attributes

- For efficient computation: for each attribute,
  - Sort the attribute on values
  - Linearly scan these values, each time updating the count matrix and computing gini index
  - Choose the split position that has the least gini index

Cheat	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Annual Income										
Sorted Values →	60	70	75	85	90	95	100	120	125	220

Decision Tree – Continuous Attributes

- For efficient computation: for each attribute,
  - Sort the attribute on values
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  - Choose the split position that has the least gini index

Cheat	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Annual Income										
Sorted Values →	60	70	75	85	90	95	100	120	125	220
Split Positions →	55	65	72	80	87	92	97	110	122	172	230
	<= >	<= >	<= >	<= >	<= >	<= >	<= >	<= >	<= >	<= >	<= >

Decision Tree – Continuous Attributes

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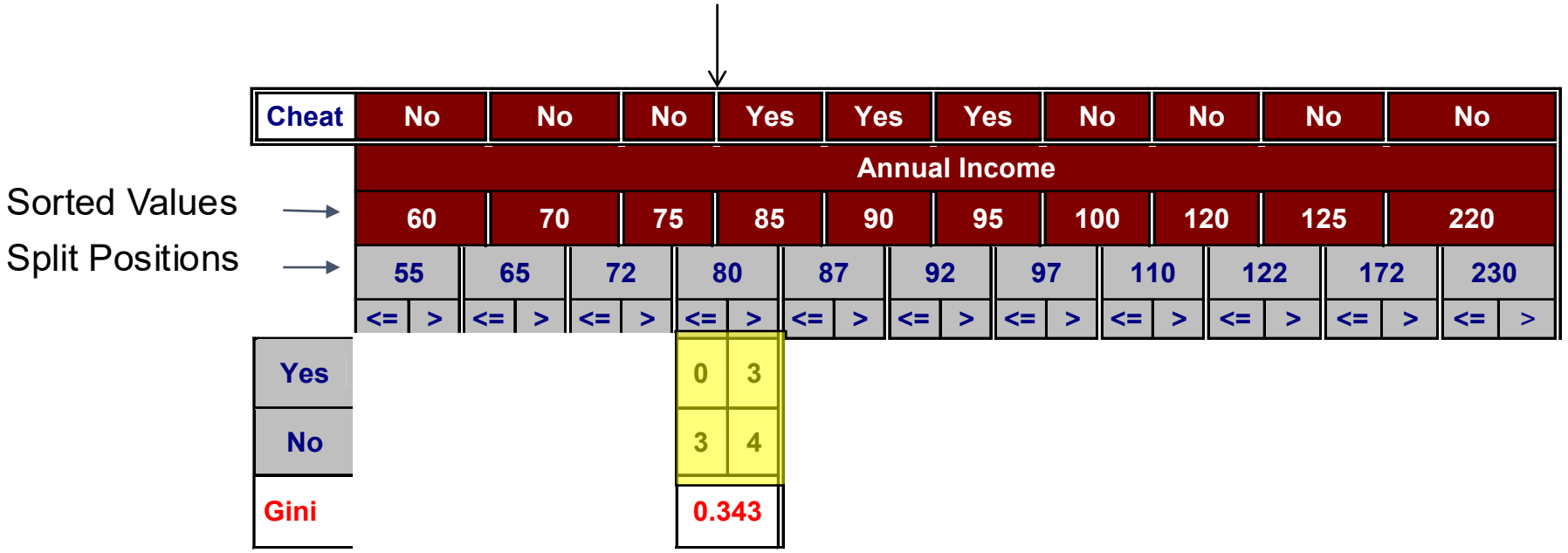

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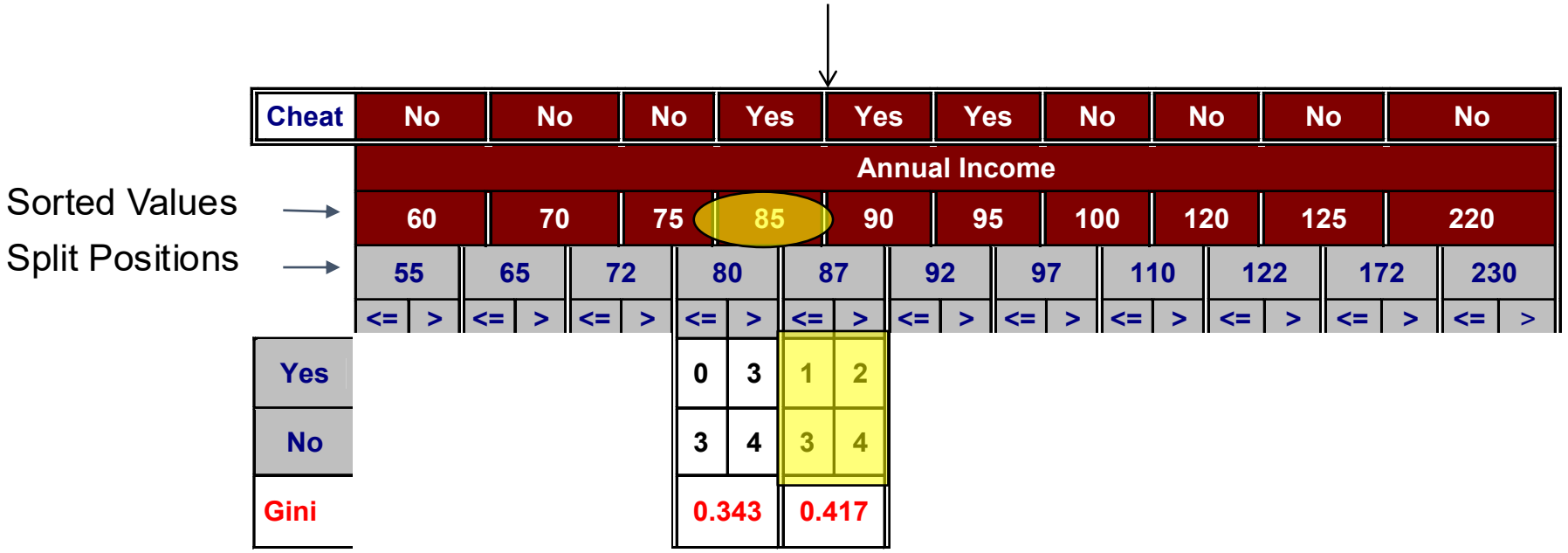

Decision Tree – Continuous Attributes

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Cheat	No		No		No		Yes		Yes		Yes		No		No		No		No	
Annual Income																				
Sorted Values →	60		70		75		85		90		95		100		120		125		220	
Split Positions →	55		65		72		80		87		92		97		110		122		172		230	
	<=	>	<=	>	<=	>	<=	>	<=	>	<=	>	<=	>	<=	>	<=	>	<=	>	<=	>
Yes	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	1	2	2	1	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	0
No	0	7	1	6	2	5	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	4	3	5	2	6	1	7	0
Gini	0.420		0.400		0.375		0.343		0.417		0.400		***0.300***		0.343		0.375		0.400		0.420	

Decision Tree – Entropy

- Entropy at a given node $\boldsymbol{t}$

$$Entropy = -\sum_{i=0}^{c-1} p_i(t) log_2 p_i(t)$$

Where $\boldsymbol{p_i(t)}$ is the frequency of class $\boldsymbol{i}$ at node $\boldsymbol{t}$, and $\boldsymbol{c}$ is the total number of classes

- Maximum of $\log_2 c$ when records are equally distributed among all classes, implying the least beneficial situation for classification
- Minimum of 0 when all records belong to one class, implying most beneficial situation for classification

– Entropy based computations are quite similar to the GINI index computations

Decision Tree – Entropy

$$Entropy = -\sum_{i=0}^{c-1} p_i(t) log_2 p_i(t)$$

C1	**0**
C2	**6**

P(C1) = 0/6 = 0 P(C2) = 6/6 = 1

Entropy = – 0 log 0 – 1 log 1 = – 0 – 0 = 0

C1	**1**
C2	**5**

P(C1) = 1/6 P(C2) = 5/6

Entropy = – (1/6) $\log_2$ (1/6) – (5/6) $\log_2$ (1/6) = 0.65

C1	**2**
C2	**4**

P(C1) = 2/6 P(C2) = 4/6

Entropy = – (2/6) $\log_2$ (2/6) – (4/6) $\log_2$ (4/6) = 0.92

Decision Tree – Entropy

- Information Gain:

$$Gain_{split} = Entropy(p) - \sum_{i=1}^{k} \frac{n_i}{n} Entropy(i)$$

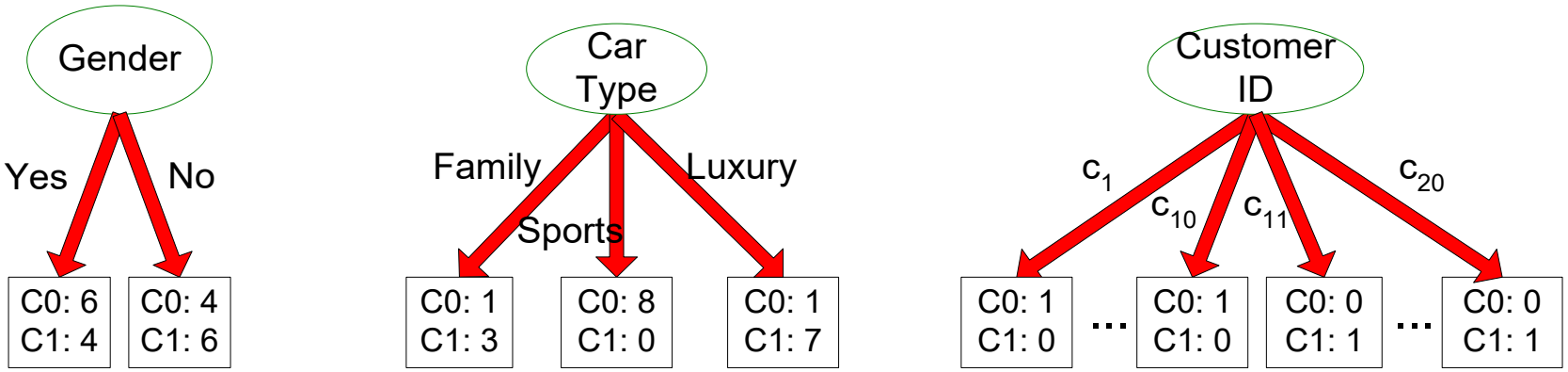
Parent Node, p is split into k partitions (children)

n_i is number of records in child node i

  - Choose the split that achieves most reduction (maximizes GAIN)
  - Used in the ID3 and C4.5 decision tree algorithms
  - Information gain is the mutual information between the class variable and the splitting variable

Decision Tree – Some Notes

- Node impurity measures tend to prefer splits that result in large number of partitions, each being small but pure



  - Customer ID has highest information gain because entropy for all the children is zero

Model Complexity

Decision Tree – Some Notes

- Gain Ratio:

$$Gain\ Ratio = \frac{Gain_{split}}{Split\ Info} \qquad Split\ Info = -\sum_{i=1}^{k} \frac{n_i}{n} log_2 \frac{n_i}{n}$$

Parent Node, p is split into k partitions (children)

n_i is number of records in child node i

- Adjusts Information Gain by the entropy of the partitioning ($Split\ Info$).
  - Higher entropy partitioning (large number of small partitions) is penalized!
- Used in C4.5 algorithm
- Designed to overcome the disadvantage of Information Gain

Decision Tree – Some Notes

- Gain Ratio:

$$Gain\ Ratio = \frac{Gain_{split}}{Split\ Info} \qquad Split\ Info = \sum_{i=1}^{k} \frac{n_i}{n} log_2 \frac{n_i}{n}$$

Parent Node, p is split into k partitions (children)

n_i is number of records in child node i

	CarType		
	Family	Sports	Luxury
C1	1	8	1
C2	3	0	7
Gini	0.163		

SplitINFO = 1.52

	CarType	
	{Sports, Luxury}	{Family}
C1	9	1
C2	7	3
Gini	0.468	

SplitINFO = 0.72

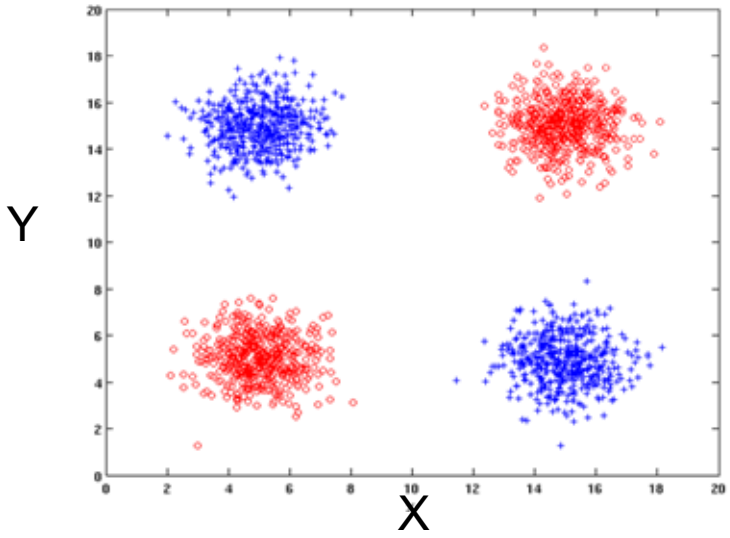
	CarType	
	{Sports}	{Family, Luxury}
C1	8	2
C2	0	10
Gini	0.167	

SplitINFO = 0.97

Decision Tree – Some Notes

- Advantages:
  - Relatively inexpensive to construct
  - Extremely fast at classifying unknown records
  - Easy to interpret for small-sized trees
  - Robust to noise (especially when methods to avoid overfitting are employed)
  - Can easily handle redundant attributes
  - Can easily handle irrelevant attributes (unless the attributes are interacting)
- Disadvantages: .
  - Irrelevant attribute.
  - Each decision boundary involves only a single attribute

Decision Tree – Handing Irrelevant Attributes

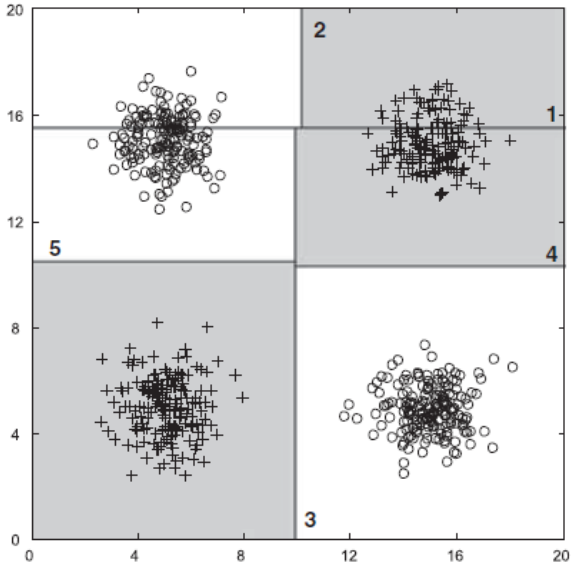


+ : 1000 instances

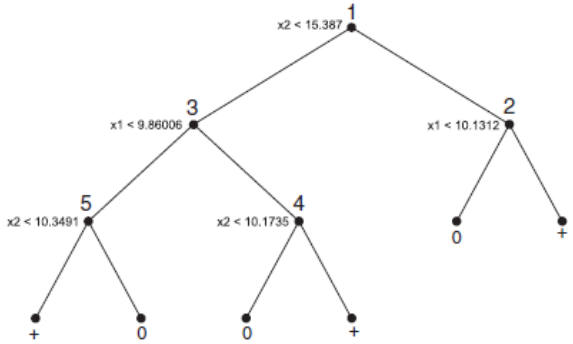
o : 1000 instances

Entropy (X) : 0.99
Entropy (Y) : 0.99

Decision Tree – Handing Irrelevant Attributes



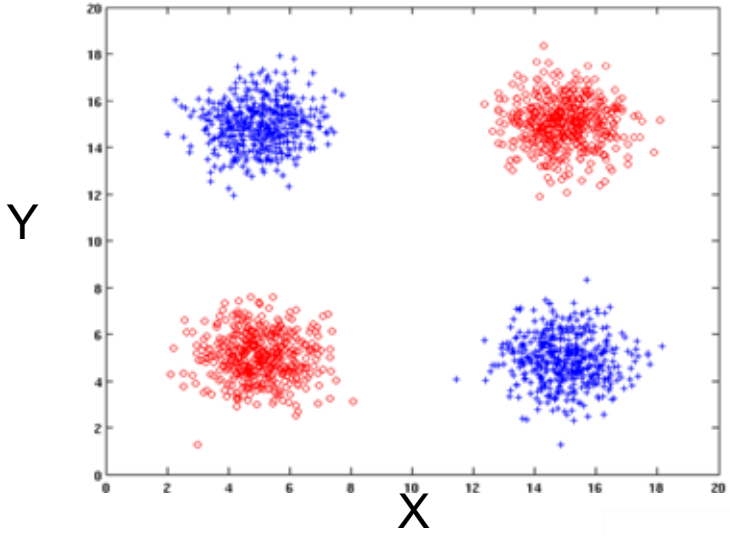
(a) Decision boundary for tree with 6 leaf nodes.



(b) Decision tree with 6 leaf nodes.

Figure 3.28. Decision tree with 6 leaf nodes using X and Y as attributes. Splits have been numbered from 1 to 5 in order of other occurrence in the tree.

Decision Tree – Handing Irrelevant Attributes



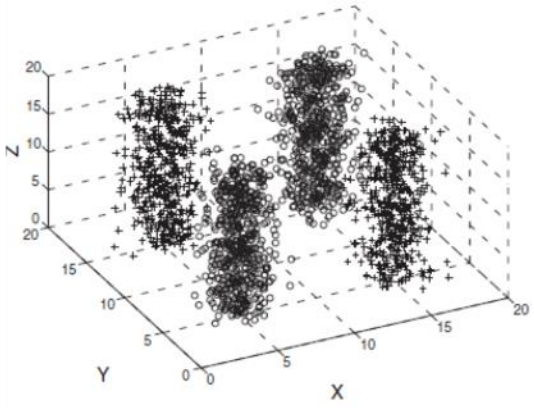
+ : 1000 instances

o : 1000 instances

Adding Z as a noisy attribute generated from a uniform distribution

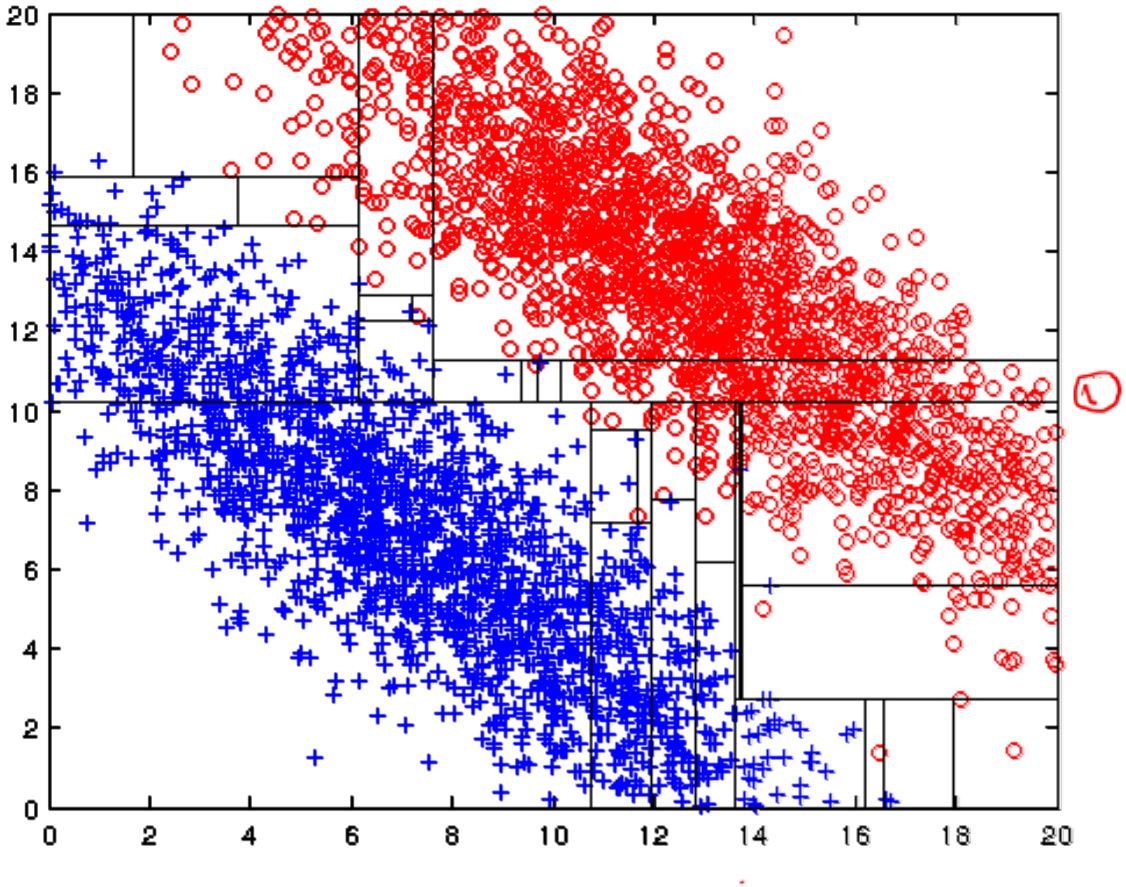
Entropy (X) : 0.99
Entropy (Y) : 0.99
Entropy (Z) : 0.98

Attribute Z will be chosen for splitting!



(a) Three-dimensional data with attributes X, Y, and Z.

Decision Tree – Single Attribute-based Decision Boundaries



Both positive (+) and negative (o) classes generated from skewed Gaussians with centers at (8,8) and (12,12) respectively.