

# A Survey and Current Research Challenges in Multi-Label Classification Methods

Purvi Prajapati, Amit Thakkar, Amit Ganatra

**Abstract**— Classification is used to predict class of unseen instance as accurate as possible. Multi label classification is a variant of single label classification where set of labels associated with single instance. Multi label classification is used by modern applications, such as text classification, functional genomics, image classification, music categorization etc. This paper introduces the task of multi-label classification, methods for multi-label classification and evolution measure for multi-label classification. Also done comparative analysis of multi label classification methods on the basis of theoretical study and than on the basis of simulation done on various data sets.

**Keywords**—Classification, Single label problem, Multi label problem

## I. INTRODUCTION

A classification task usually involves separating data into training and testing sets. Each instance in the training set contains one class label and several attributes. The goal of classifier is to produce a model which predicts label of the test data given only the test data attributes.

In classification problems, each instance of a dataset is associated with just one class label that is single label classification. (As shown in fig. I)

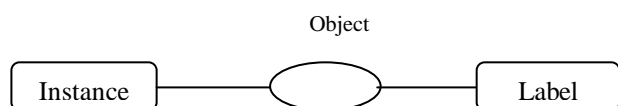


Figure I: Single Label Classification

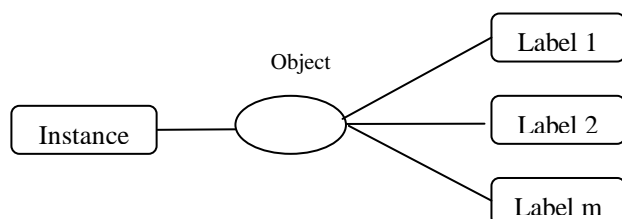


Figure II: Multi Label Classification

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However, there are many classification tasks where each instance can be associated with one or more class labels. This group of problems represents an area known as Multi-Label Classification. (As shown in fig. II)

Multi-label classification methods are increasingly required by modern applications, such as text classification, gene functionality, music categorization and semantic scene classification. The number of class labels is predicted for each instance.

This paper is organized as follows. Start discussion of multi label classification in Section II. In Section III and IV explains the working of multi label classification methods with its comparative study. Evaluation measures for multi label classification are discussed in Section V. Section VI presents experimental analysis of multi label classification methods on different dataset. Finally current research challenges and concluded work in Section VII and Section VIII respectively.

## II. MULTI-LABEL CLASSIFICATION

In single label problems, set of instances is  $D$ , set of labels is  $L$ . For each instance  $d \in D$ , select label set  $l \in L$ . So the Single label representation is  $(d, l)$ . [1, 2]

In multi-label problems, set of instances is  $D$ , set of labels is  $L$ . For each instance  $d \in D$ , select label sub set  $S \subseteq L$ . So the Multi label representation:  $(d, S)$ . [1, 2]

There are mainly two methods for multi-label classification problems: (1) problem transformation method and (2) algorithm adaptation method. Problem transformation method transfers multi-label problems into single label problems. And algorithm adaptation method extends specific learning algorithm to handle multi-label problems.

Below table shows example of multi label problem, with five class labels.  $L = \{\text{rec, sport, swim, auto, run}\}$

Table I: Example of Multi Label Problem

Attributes		Class Labels				
A	B	rec	sport	swim	auto	run
A	1	✓	✓	✓		
A	2	✓	✓			✓
A	2	✓	✓	✓		✓
B	1	✓	✓			
B	2	✓			✓	

## III. PROBLEM TRANSFORMATION METHOD

In this method, the main idea is to transfer multi label problem into a set of single label problems. It is an algorithm

independent method so any traditional classification algorithm can be used to deal with multi label problems. There are several problem transformation methods available for transferring multi label problems into single label problems. [1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8]

For example,  $L = \{11, 12, 13, 14\}$  where  $L$  is number of labels.

**Table II: Multi Label Example**

Example	Label set
1	{11, 14}
2	{13, 14}
3	{11}
4	{12, 13, 14}

**A. Binary Relevance (Br)**

This method is basically binary classification of labels. So it transforms original multi label dataset into  $|L|$  single label dataset. It builds binary classifier for each label. For the classification of new instance, BR gives union of the labels that are positively predicted by  $|L|$  classifier.

As shown in Table III, BR method gives four individual classifier ( $|L|=4$ ) from Table II.

**Table III: Binary Relevance Method**

Ex #	11	Ex #	12	Ex #	13	Ex #	14
1	✓	1		1		1	✓
2		2		2	✓	2	✓
3	✓	3		3		3	
4		4	✓	4	✓	4	✓

**B. Ranking Via Single Label**

This method transforms the multi label dataset into single label dataset. There are different ways for transformation like ignore multi label instance, find maximum count of labels, find minimum count of labels, random selection of label and assign weight to each labels. A single label classifier outputs a vote (probability) for each class label which produce ranking. (As shown if Table IV)

**Table IV: Ranking via Single label**

Ex #	Label set
3	{11}

(a) Ignore

Ex #	Label	Ex #	Label	Ex #	Label
1	14	1	14	1	14
2	14	2	14	2	14
3	11	3	11	3	11
4	14	4	14	4	14

(b) Maximun

(c) Minimun

(d) Random

Ex #	Label	Weight
1	11	0.50
1	14	0.50
2	13	0.50
2	14	0.50
3	11	1.00
4	12	0.33
4	13	0.33
4	14	0.33

(e) Copy weight

**C. Ranking Via Pair-Wise Comparison (Rpc)**

This method performs pair wise comparison of labels. It learns  $m=k(k-1)/2$  binary models, one model for each pair of labels. (Where  $k$  is number of labels,  $k=|L|$ ) Model is trained based on examples that are annotated by at least one of the labels, but not both. So for new instance, all  $m$  models are invoked and ranking is obtained by counting the votes received by each label.[9] (see Table V and Table VI)

**Table V: one classifier for each pair of labels**

Ex #	11_12	Ex #	11_13	Ex #	11_14
1	11	1	11	2	14
3	11	2	13	3	11
4	12	3	11	4	14
		4	13		

Ex #	12_13	Ex #	12_14	Ex #	13_14
2	13	1	14	1	14
		2	14		

**Table VI: Ranking of labels for new instance**

New instance  $x'$ :

11_12	11_13	11_14	12_13	12_14	13_14
11	13	11	13	12	13

Votes for each label:

L1	12	13	14
2	1	3	0

Ranking based on votes:  $r(13) > r(11) > r(12) > r(14)$

**D. Calibrated Label Ranking (Clr)**

This method is extension of RPC method. It introduces one additional virtual label  $V$ , with the purpose of separating positive and negative labels. Final ranking is obtained by considering votes of all labels including virtual label  $V$ . (As shown in Table VII)

**Table VII: Calibrated Ranking of labels**

Ex #	11_V	Ex #	12_V
1	11	1	V
2	V	2	V
3	11	3	V
4	V	4	12

Ex #	13_V	Ex #	14_V
1	V	1	14
2	13	2	14
3	V	3	V
4	13	4	14

**Table VIII: Ranking of labels for new instance**

New instance  $x'$ :

11_12	11_13	11_14	12_13	12_14	13_14
11	11	11	12	12	14

11_V	12_V	13_V	14_V
11	V	V	V

Votes for each label:

11	12	13	14	V
4	2	0	1	3

Ranking based on votes:

$r(11) > r(1V) > r(12) > r(14) > r(13)$

### E. Label Power Set (Lp)

This method replaces each unique subset (Distinct Label Set) of labels that exists in multi label dataset with single label. So LP introduces new set of class labels. For new instance, base classifier of LP predicts one label which is originally a set of labels in multi label dataset. Below Table IX shows LP method performs on Table II. For first instance label 11, 12 are present and label 13,14 are absent so LP gives 1001.

**Table IX: Label power set**

Ex #	Label(11121314)
1	1001
2	0011
3	1000
4	0111

### F. Pruned Set (Ps)

This method transforms multi label dataset into single label dataset using LP method. Pruning parameter p (user defined threshold) identifies pruned examples in given multi label dataset. Pruned examples are those whose label set occur less time than pruning parameter p. The PS method identifies less important examples from multi label dataset. As shown in below Table X last row is discarded considering pruning parameter 3.

**Table X: Pruned set method for p=3**

Label-set	Count
11	16
12	14
12, 13	12
11,14	8
13,14	7
11,12,13	2

### G. Random K-Label Set (Rakel)

This method randomly breaks a large set of labels into a number n of subsets of small size k, called k-label sets. For training of multi label classifier LP method is used, an average decision is calculated for each label in L. And final decision is positive for a given label if the average decision is larger than threshold t. It considers label correlation ship and avoids LP problems.

**Table XI: Comparative Study of Problem Transformation Methods**

Method	Merits	Demerits
BR	Simple binary classification and relatively fast.	Does not consider label correlation ship.
Ranking via single label	Conceptually Simple	Not dealing well with overlapping of labels.
RPC	Flexible method	Consume more prediction time and more memory space.
CLR	It deals with pair wise comparison of each label with virtual	It is conceptually expensive method. Unlabeled data is not

	label and it also provide ranking.	considered during classification.
LP	It considers label correlation ship.	Conceptually complex method and leads to over fitting of training data.
PS	Run faster and considers label correlation ship.	Dependence on predictions of base classifier.
RAkEL	Simpler, considers label correlation ship and more predictive capability.	Consumes more time and Unlabeled data is not considered during classification.

## IV. ALGORITHM ADAPTATION METHOD

In this method, single label classifier is extended to develop multi label classifier to handle multi label problems. So this method is an algorithm dependent method. Various algorithm adaptation methods are developed based on different algorithms. [1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8]

### A. Multi-Label Decision Tree (C4.5)

This algorithm is the extension of basic decision tree algorithm for handling multi label data. In basic decision tree algorithm, entropy formula is modified to handle multiple labels.

Entropy (D) =

$$-\sum_{j=1}^q p(\lambda_j) \log p(\lambda_j) + q(\lambda_j) \log q(\lambda_j) \quad (1)$$

Where,

$p(\lambda_j)$  = Relative frequency of class  $\lambda_j$

$q(\lambda_j) = 1 - q(\lambda_j)$

### B. Multi-Layer Neural Network (Mlnn)

The multi-label neural network uses the multi layer feed forward neural network as its base algorithm. Adapting neural network algorithm to classify multi-label instances requires three key steps: (1) Creating a new error function that captures the characteristics of multi-label learning. (2) Modify the network to minimize this new error function. (3) Using threshold function to determine an output is in the relevant set of labels.

### C. Back Propagation Multi-Label Learning (Bpml)

BPMLL extends basic back-propagation algorithm by introducing a new global error function that captures the characteristics of multi label learning.

### D. Multi-Label K Nearest Neighbors (Mlknn)

This algorithm is the extension of kNN algorithm. It uses the kNN algorithm independently for each label. It finds the k nearest examples to the test instance and considers those that are labeled with positive and negative. (MLkNN has also the capability of producing a ranking of the labels as an output.)



**E. Multi-Label Boosting (Adaboost.Mh, Adaboost.Mr)**

(2)

These two algorithms are extensions of basic AdaBoost algorithm for handling multi-label data. Hamming loss is reduced using AdaBoost.MH and accuracy is increased using AdaBoost.MR.

**Table XII: Comparative study of Algorithm Adaptation Methods**

Method	Merits	Demerits
C4.5	Easy to learn and more informative attributes are used for splitting decision tree.	Does not consider label correlation ship.
BPMLL	Provides better generalization capability to learning system.	Because of neural network complexity becomes high in training phase.
MLkNN	Work well on image and text data. Better performance compared to other algorithms.	Unlabeled data is not considered for classification.
AdaBoost.MH AdaBoost.MR	Improved accuracy and minimized hamming loss.	Unlabeled data is not considered for classification.

**Table XIII: Comparative study of MLC methods**

Problem Transformation	Algorithm Adaptation
Algorithm Independent	Algorithm Dependent
Multiple model or single model is used	Single model is used
Data Preprocessing is required	Limited preprocessing is required.

**V. EVALUATION MEASURE**

The evaluation of multi label problems is different than single label problems. Multi label problems are associated with more than one labels therefore classification of an instance may be partially correct or partially incorrect. Mainly there are two types of evaluation measures for multi label classification problems: (1) example based measure and (2) label based measure. [4, 7, 8]

**A. Example Based Measures**

Let (x, Y) be a multi-label example,  $Y \subseteq L$ . Let h be a multi-label classifier. Let  $z=h(x)$  be a set of labels predicted by h for (x, Y).

Accuracy:

Accuracy for each instance is defined as the proportion of the predicted correct labels to the total number (predicted and actual) of labels for that instance. Overall accuracy is the averages across all instances.

$$Accuracy(H, D) = \frac{1}{|D|} \sum_{i=1}^{|D|} \frac{|Y_i \cap Z_i|}{|Y_i \cup Z_i|}$$

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Precision:

Precision is the percentage of predicted labels that were correct.

$$Precision(H, D) = \frac{1}{|D|} \sum_{i=1}^{|D|} \frac{|Y_i \cap Z_i|}{|Z_i|} \tag{3}$$

Recall:

Recall is the percentage of correct labels that were predicted.

$$Recall(H, D) = \frac{1}{|D|} \sum_{i=1}^{|D|} \frac{|Y_i \cap Z_i|}{|Y_i|} \tag{4}$$

Hamming loss:

Hamming Loss reports how many times on average, the relevance of an example to a class label is incorrectly predicted. Therefore, hamming loss takes into account the prediction error (an incorrect label is predicted) and the missing error (a relevant label not predicted), normalized over total number of classes and total number of examples.

$$Hamming Loss(H, D) = \frac{1}{|D|} \sum_{i=1}^{|D|} \frac{|Y_i \Delta Z_i|}{|L|} \tag{5}$$

Where,  $\Delta$  stands for the symmetric difference of two sets.

**B. Label Based Measures**

Calculate a binary evaluation measure separately for each label. Two averaging operations are used across all labels: micro and macro average. Binary evaluation measure is calculated using parameters of confusion matrix. (true positive, true negative, false positive and false negative)

$$M_{macro} = \frac{1}{|L|} \sum_{\lambda=1}^{|L|} M(tp_{\lambda}, fp_{\lambda}, tn_{\lambda}, fn_{\lambda}) \tag{6}$$

$$M_{micro} = M\left(\sum_{\lambda=1}^{|L|} tp_{\lambda}, \sum_{\lambda=1}^{|L|} fp_{\lambda}, \sum_{\lambda=1}^{|L|} tn_{\lambda}, \sum_{\lambda=1}^{|L|} fn_{\lambda}\right)$$

(7)

**VI. EXPERIMENT**

Four different multi label dataset are used in experiments: Gene base, Yeast, Medical and Scene. The results obtained in below table show that the algorithm adaptation methods has been best option for multi label methods compared to problem transformation methods.

**Table XIV: Multi label data set statistics**

Dataset	#Instances	#Attributes	#Labels
Genebase	662	1186	27
Yeast	2417	103	14
Medical	978	1449	45
Scene	2407	294	6





Table XV: Experimental results [6]

Dataset	Method	Problem Transformation			Algorithm Adaptation	
		BR	LP	CLR	ML-kNN	J48ML
Genebase	H.Loss (%)	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.2
	Precision (%)	98.9	98.8	99.0	99.2	98.9
	Recall(%)	98.3	97.2	98.7	90.1	97.7
Yeast	H.Loss(%)	24.5	27.9	22.0	19.4	28.1
	Precision(%)	59.9	54.1	65.2	72.9	53.3
	Recall(%)	57.4	53.7	58.4	57.0	57.2
Medical	H.Loss(%)	1.0	1.3	1.0	1.5	1.3
	Precision(%)	83.4	77.1	83.6	81.2	77.2
	Recall(%)	78.7	74.0	77.7	57.2	74.1
Scene	H.Loss(%)	13.7	14.4	13.8	8.5	14.4
	Precision(%)	61.7	59.8	60.6	82.0	59.7
	Recall(%)	62.2	59.7	65.2	67.2	60.8

## VI. RESEARCH CHALLENGES

Following are the research challenges in the field of multi-label classification problem.

- To apply data preprocessing techniques like pruning, feature selection, handle missing value to improve the performance of MLC problem.
- To handle continuous attribute in MLC problem.
- Design a hierarchical structure for multiple labels to manage label correlation ship.
- To extract relevant label set from multiple label set.
- A novel approach is build to use both problem transformation method and algorithm adaptation method for improving performance of multi label classification problem.

## VII. CONCLUSION

This paper presented study of different problem transformation methods and algorithm adaptation methods for multi label classification. From comparative study and experimental analysis on four dataset Genebase, Yeast, Medical and Scene concluded that algorithm adaptation method is best option for multi label classification compared to problem transformation method.

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