Sparse Approximation via Generating Point Sets

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For a set $P$ of $n$ points in the unit ball $b \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d$, consider the problem of finding a small subset $T \subseteq P$ such that its convex-hull $\varepsilon$-approximates the convex-hull of the original set. We present an efficient algorithm to compute such a $\varepsilon'$-approximation of size $k_{\text{alg}}$, where $\varepsilon'$ is function of $\varepsilon$, and $k_{\text{alg}}$ is a function of the minimum size $k_{\text{opt}}$ of such an $\varepsilon$-approximation. Surprisingly, there is no dependency on the dimension $d$ in both bounds. Furthermore, every point of $P$ can be $\varepsilon$-approximated by a convex-combination of points of $T$ that is $O(1/\varepsilon^2)$-sparse.

Our result can be viewed as a method for sparse, convex autoencoding: approximately representing the data in a compact way using sparse combinations of a small subset $T$ of the original data. The new algorithm can be kernelized, and it preserves sparsity in the original input.

1. Introduction

Sparse approximation and coresets. Let $P$ be a set of $n$ points (observations) in the unit ball $b \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d$, and let $C_P$ denote the convex-hull of $P$. Consider the problem of finding a small $\varepsilon$-coreset $T \subseteq P$ for projection width; that is, given any line $\ell$ in $\mathbb{R}^d$, consider the projections of $C_T$ and $C_P$ onto the line $\ell$ – these are two intervals $I_T \subseteq I_P$, and we require that $I_P \subseteq (1 + \varepsilon)I_T$. Such coresets have size $O(1/\varepsilon^{(d-1)/2})$, and lead to numerous efficient approximation algorithms in low-dimensions, see [AHV05]. In particular, such an $\varepsilon$-coreset guarantees that the Hausdorff distance between $C_T$ and $C_P$ is at most $\varepsilon$.

While such coresets can indeed also have size $\Omega(1/\varepsilon^{(d-1)/2})$ in the worst case, data may have structure allowing much smaller coresets to exist, even in high dimensional spaces. For example, the following is a situation where a small such $T$ would exist: Consider a dataset $P$ in which all points are $\varepsilon$-close to one of $k$ different lines. Then taking the extreme dataset points of each line would give us $2k$ points such that every $p \in P$ is $\varepsilon$-close to the convex hull of those points. More generally, the union of any two datasets having good approximations of size $k$ and $k'$, respectively, have one of size at most $k + k'$. Thus, it is natural to ask whether one can approximate the smallest such coreset, in terms of both its size and approximation quality.

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| Technique            | $\varepsilon' \equiv d_H(C_P, C_T)$ | $k_{\text{alg}} \equiv |T|$ | Result                                      |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| $\varepsilon$-nets   | $\leq \varepsilon$               | $O(d k_{\text{opt}} \log k_{\text{opt}})$ | Lemma 3.2                                  |
| Greedy set cover     | $\leq (1 + \delta)\varepsilon$   | $O((k_{\text{opt}}/(\varepsilon \delta)^2) \log n)$ | Lemma 3.3                                  |
| Greedy clustering    | $\leq 8\varepsilon^{1/3} + \varepsilon$ | $O(k_{\text{opt}}/\varepsilon^{2/3})$     | Theorem 4.6                                 |

Figure 1.1: Summary of our results: Given a set $P$ contained in the unit ball of $\mathbb{R}^d$, such that there is a subset $P_{\text{opt}} \subseteq P$ of size $k_{\text{opt}}$, and $d_H(C_P, C_{P_{\text{opt}}}) \leq \varepsilon$, the above results compute an approximate set $T \subseteq P$. Note, that any point in $P$ has an $O(1/\varepsilon^2)$-sparse $(\varepsilon + \varepsilon')$-approximation using $T$, because of the underlying sparsity – see Lemma 2.7.

**The problem in matrix form.** Given a collection $P$ of $n$ points (observations) in the unit ball $b \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d$ viewed as column vectors, find a $d \times k$ matrix $M$ such that each $p \in P$ can be approximately reconstructed as a *sparse, convex combination* of the columns of $M$. That is, for each $p \in P$ there exists a sparse non-negative vector $x$ whose entries sum to 1 such that $p \approx Mx$. This problem is trivial if we allow $k = n$: simply make each data point $p \in P$ into a column of $M$, allowing the $i$th data point to be perfectly reconstructed using $x = e_i$, where $e_i$ is the $i$th vector in the standard basis. Our goal will be to do so using $k \ll n$, so that $M$ and the $x$’s can be viewed as an (approximate) compressed representation of the $p$’s.

**Our results.** Suppose there exists a $d \times k_{\text{opt}}$ matrix $M$ such that (1) each column of $M$ is a convex combination of the observations $p$, and (2) each $p \in P$ can be $\varepsilon$-approximately reconstructed as a convex combination of the columns of $M$: that is, for each $p \in P$ there exists a non-negative vector $x$ whose entries sum to 1 such that $\|p - Mx\| \leq \varepsilon$. Then one can efficiently compute a $d \times k_{\text{alg}}$ matrix $M'$, consisting of $k_{\text{alg}}$ points in $P$, such that each $p \in P$ can be $\varepsilon'$-approximately reconstructed as a sparse convex combination of the columns of $M'$ where $k_{\text{alg}}$ and $\varepsilon'$ are not too large, see Figure 1.1 for details.

Stated in geometric terms, we show the following. Suppose the set $P$ of $n$ points in $b$ has the property that there exists a set of $k_{\text{opt}}$ points $P_{\text{opt}}$ in the convex hull of $P$ such that every point in $P$ is either inside or $\varepsilon$-close to the convex hull of $P_{\text{opt}}$ (the points $P_{\text{opt}}$ are the columns of $M$), where $\varepsilon$-close means that the distance from the convex hull of $P_{\text{opt}}$ is at most $\varepsilon$. Then we can find a set $T$ of $k_{\text{alg}}$ points (these will be points from $P$) such that every point in $P$ is either inside or $\varepsilon'$-close to the convex hull of $T$ and moreover can be approximately reconstructed using a sparse convex combination of $T$.

The reader may notice that sparsity is not mentioned in the assumption about $P_{\text{opt}}$ (or $M$) and yet appears in the conclusion about $T$ ($M'$). This is because convex combinations have the property that sparsity can be achieved almost for free, at the expense of a small amount of reconstruction error (see Lemma 2.7). This is for much the same reason that a large margin separator can be represented using a small number of support vectors.

**Related work.** In comparison with the recent provable algorithms for autoencoding of Arora et al. [AGM14], our result does not require any distributional assumptions on the $x$’s or $p$’s, e.g., that the $p \in P$ were produced by choosing $x$ from a particular distribution and then computing $Mx$ and adding random noise. It also does not require that the columns of $M$ be incoherent (nearly orthogonal). However, we do require that the columns of $M$ be convex combinations of the points $p \in P$ and that they can approximately reconstruct the $p \in P$ via convex combinations, so our results are incomparable.
to those of Arora et al. [AGM14]. Work on related encoding or dictionary learning problems in the full rank case has been done by Spielman et al. [SWW12], and efficient algorithms for finding minimal and sparse Boolean representations under anchor-set assumptions were given by Balcan et al. [BBV15].

1.1. The results in detail

Our results are summarized in Figure 1.1.

(A) **Sparse nearest-neighbor in high dimensions.** For a set of points $P$ in the unit ball $b \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d$ and any point of $p \in C_P$, one can find a point $p' \in C_P$ that is the convex combination of $O(1/\varepsilon^2)$ points of $P$, such that $\|p - p'\| \leq \varepsilon$. This is of course well known by now [Cla10], and we describe (for the sake of completeness) the surprisingly simple iterative algorithm (which is similar to the Perceptron algorithm) to compute such a representation in Section 2.2. (We solve the somewhat more general problem, of finding a sparse nearest-neighbor approximation when $p$ is allowed to be outside the convex-hull.) Namely, points in high dimensions have an inherent sparse approximation property – this is sometimes referred to as an approximate Carathéodory theorem [Bar15], and it follows readily from the analysis of the Perceptron algorithm [Nov62] – see Remark 2.8.

(B) **Geometric hitting set.** Our problem can be interpreted as (a somewhat convoluted) geometric hitting set problem. In particular, one can apply the Clarkson [Cla93] polytope approximation algorithm to this problem, thus yielding an $O(d \log k_{opt})$ approximation. For the sake of completeness, we describe this in detail in Section 3.1. (Since $d$ might be large, this approximation is somewhat less attractive.)

(C) **The greedy approach.** A natural approach is to try and solve the problem using the greedy algorithm. Here, this requires some work, and the resulting algorithm is a combination of the algorithm from (A) with greedy set cover. We initialize an instance of the algorithm from (A) for each point $p \in P$ whose job is to either find a hyperplane through $p$ separating it from $P \setminus \{p\}$ by a large margin or else to approximate $p$ as a combination of a few support-vectors in $P \setminus \{p\}$. At each step, we find the point $p' \in P$ that causes as many of these algorithms to perform an update as possible, and add it into our set $T$. The key issue is to prove that the procedure halts after a limited number of steps. This algorithm is described in Section 3.2.

(D) **Using greedy clustering.** The second algorithm, and our main contribution, is more similar in spirit to the Gonzalez algorithm for $k$-center clustering: Repeatedly find the point $p \in P$ that is farthest from the convex hull of the points of $T$ and then add it into $T$ if this distance is greater than some threshold (a similar idea was used for subspace approximation [HV04, Lemma 5.2]). The key issue here is to prove that some measure of significant progress is made each time a new point is added. Somewhat surprisingly, after $O(k_{opt}/\varepsilon^{2/3})$ iterations, the resulting set is an $O(\varepsilon^{1/3})$-approximation to the original set of points. Note, that unlike the other results mentioned above, there is no dependency on the dimension or the input size.

An additional property of all our algorithms is that the points $T$ found will be actual dataset points and the algorithms only require dot-product access to the data. This means that the algorithms can be kernelized. Additionally, much as with CUR decompositions of matrices, since the points $T$ are data points, they will preserve sparsity if the dataset $P$ was sparse.
2. Preliminaries

For a set $X \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d$, $C_X$ denotes the convex hull of $X$. For two sets $P, P' \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d$, we denote by $d(P, P') = \min_{p \in P} \min_{p' \in P'} ||p - p'||$ the distance between $P$ and $P'$. For a point $q \in \mathbb{R}^d$, its distance to the set $P$ is $d(q, P) = d(\{q\}, P)$, and its projection or nearest neighbor in $P$ is the point $\text{nn}(q, P) = \arg \min_{p \in P} ||q - p||$.

2.1. Sparse convex-approximation: Problem statement and background

For a set $Y$ in $\mathbb{R}^d$, its one sided Hausdorff distance from $X$ is $d(Y \to X) = \max_{y \in Y} d(y, X)$.

Definition 2.1. Consider two sets $P_{in}, P_{out} \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d$. A set $U \subseteq C_{P_{in}}$ is a $\delta$-approximation to $P_{in}$ from $P_{out}$ if $d(C_{P_{in}} \to C_U) \leq \delta$. In words, every point of $C_{P_{in}}$ is in distance at most $\delta$ from a point of $C_U$. In the discrete $\delta$-approximation version, we require that $U \subseteq P_{out}$. We use $\text{opt}(P_{in}, P_{out}, \delta)$ to denote any minimum cardinality $\delta$-approximation to $C_{P_{in}}$ from $P_{out}$, and $k_{\text{opt}}(P_{in}, P_{out}, \delta) = |\text{opt}(P_{in}, P_{out}, \delta)|$ to denote its size. We drop the phrase “from $P_{out}$” when it is clear from the context.

Problem 2.2. Given sets $P_{in}, P_{out} \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d$, compute (or approximate) $\text{opt}(P_{in}, P_{out}, \delta)$.

For the majority of the paper we focus on the natural special case when $P = P_{in} = P_{out}$. The Hausdorff distance between sets $X$ and $Y$ is defined as $d_H(X, Y) = \max \left( d(Y \to X), d(X \to Y) \right)$.

Lemma 2.3. (i) Let $C$ be a convex-set in $\mathbb{R}^d$, then the function $f(p) = d(p, C)$ is convex, where $p \in \mathbb{R}^d$.

(ii) A convex-function $f$, over a convex bounded domain $D \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d$, attains its maximum in a boundary point of $D$.

(iii) For bounded point sets $U, P \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d$, such that $U \subseteq C_P$, we have $d_H(C_U, C_P) = d(P \to C_U)$.

Proof: This is all well known, and we include the proof for the sake of completeness.

(i) Consider any two points $p, y$ in $\mathbb{R}^d$, and let $p' = \text{nn}(p, C)$ and $y' = \text{nn}(y, C)$. For any $t \in [0, 1]$, we have by convexity that $tp' + (1 - t)y' \in C$, and as such, by the triangle inequality, we have

$$f(tp + (1 - t)y) \leq \|tp + (1 - t)y - (tp' + (1 - t)y')\| = \|t(p - p') + (1 - t)(y - y')\|$$

$$\leq \|t(p - p')\| + \|(1 - t)(y - y')\| = t \|p - p'\| + (1 - t) \|y - y'\| = tf(p) + (1 - t)f(y).$$

(ii) If $p$ is the interior of $D$ then there are extremal points $p_1, \ldots, p_d$ of $D$, and constants $\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_d \in [0, 1]$, such that $\sum_i \alpha_i = 1$ and $p = \sum_i \alpha_ip_i$. As such, $f(p) = f(\sum_i \alpha_ip_i) \leq \sum_i \alpha_if(p_i) \leq \max_i f(p_i)$.

(iii) By (i), the function $d(p, C_U)$ is convex. By (ii), its maximum over $C_P$ is attained at a point of $P$. We thus have that $d_H(C_U, C_P) = \max(d(C_U \to C_P), d(C_P \to C_U)) = d(C_P \to C_U) = \max_{p \in C_P} d(p, C_P) = d(P \to C_U)$.

Definition 2.4. Consider any set $P \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d$. A set $U \subseteq C_P$ is a $\delta$-approximation to $P$ if $d_H(C_U, C_P) \leq \delta$.

By the above lemma, this is equivalent to every point of $P$ being in distance at most $\delta$ from a point of $C_U$. In the discrete $\delta$-approximation version, we require that $U \subseteq P$. Let $\text{opt}(P, \delta)$ be any minimum cardinality $\delta$-approximation to $C_P$, and let $k_{\text{opt}}(P, \delta) = |\text{opt}(P, \delta)|$ denote its size.

Problem 2.5. Given a set $P \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d$ and value $\delta$, compute (or approximate) $\text{opt}(P, \delta)$.
Example 2.6. Consider a unit radius sphere $S^{(d-1)}$ in $\mathbb{R}^d$ centered at the origin, and let $P$ be a $\delta'$-packing on $S^{(d-1)}$ (i.e., every point in $S^{(d-1)}$ is at distance at most $\delta'$ from a point of $P$, and any two points of $P$ are at distance at least $\delta'$ from each other). It is easy to verify that such a $\delta'$-packing has size $\Theta(1/\delta'^{d-1})$. Furthermore, for any $\delta > 0$, and an appropriate absolute constant $c$ (independent of the dimension or $\delta$), setting $\delta' = c\sqrt{\delta}$, we have the property that for any point $p \in P$, $d(p, C_{P \setminus \{p\}}) > \delta$. That is, any $\delta$-approximation to $P$ requires $\Omega(1/\delta^{d-1})$ points.

On the other hand, let $P_{\text{out}} = \{ \pm de_i \mid i = 1, \ldots, d \}$, where $e_i$ denotes the $i$th orthonormal vector, having zero in all coordinates except for the $i$th coordinate where it is 1. Clearly, $S^{(d-1)} \subseteq C_{P_{\text{out}}}$, and as such $k_{\text{opt}}(P, P_{\text{out}}, \delta) \leq |P_{\text{out}}| = 2d$, with equality for $\delta = 0$.

Throughout this paper we require that $P_{\text{out}}$ be contained in the unit ball, disallowing this latter type of “trivial” solution, and furthermore having the property that a successful approximation also yields a \textit{sparse} solution essentially for free, as shown in Lemma 2.7.

2.2. Computing the approximate distance to the convex hull

The following is well known, and is included for the sake of completeness, see [HKMR15].

Lemma 2.7. Let $P \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d$ be a point set, $\varepsilon > 0$ be a parameter, and let $q \in \mathbb{R}^d$ be a given query point. Then, one can compute, in $O(|P| d/\varepsilon^2)$ time, a point $t \in C_P$, such that $\|q - t\| \leq d(q, C_P) + \varepsilon\Delta$, where $\Delta = \text{diam}(P)$. Furthermore, $t$ is a convex combination of $O(1/\varepsilon^2)$ points of $P$.

\textbf{Proof:} The algorithm is iterative, computing a sequence of points $t_0, \ldots, t_i$ inside $C_P$ that approach $q$. Initially, $p_0 = t_0$ is the closest point of $P$ to $q$. In the $i$th iteration, the algorithm computes the vector $v_i = q - t_{i-1}$, and the point $p_i \in P$ that is extremal in in the direction of $v_i$. Now, the algorithm sets $t_i$ be the closest point to $q$ on $s_i = t_{i-1}p_i$, and the algorithm continues to the next iteration, for $M = O(1/\varepsilon^2)$ iterations. The algorithm returns the point $t_M$ as the desired answer.

By induction, the point $t_i \in C_{\{p_0, \ldots, p_i\}}$. Furthermore, observe that the distance of the points $t_0, t_1, \ldots$ from $q$ is monotonically decreasing. In particular, for all $i > 0$, $t_i$ must fall in the middle of the segment $s_i$, as otherwise, $p_i$ would be closer to $q$ than $p_0$, a contradiction to the definition of $p_0$.

Project the point $p_i$ to the segment $t_{i-1}q$, and let $y_i$ be the projected point. Observe that $\|q - y_i\|$ is a lower bound on $d(q, C_P)$. As such, if $\|y_i - t_{i-1}\| \leq \varepsilon\Delta$ then we are done, as $\|q - t_{i-1}\| \leq \|t_{i-1} - y_i\| + \|y_i - q\| \leq \varepsilon\Delta + d(q, C_P)$. (In particular, one can use this as alternative stopping condition for the algorithm, instead of counting iterations.)

So, let $\alpha$ be the angle $\angle p_i t_{i-1} q$. Observe that as $t_{i-1}p_i \subseteq C_P$, it follows that $\|t_{i-1} - p_i\| \leq \text{diam}(P) = \Delta$. Furthermore, $\cos \alpha = \frac{\|y_i - t_{i-1}\|}{\|t_{i-1} - p_i\|} \leq \frac{\varepsilon\Delta}{\Delta} \geq \varepsilon$, since $\|y_i - t_{i-1}\| > \varepsilon\Delta$. As such, $\sin \alpha = \sqrt{1 - \cos^2 \alpha} \leq \sqrt{1 - \varepsilon^2} \leq 1 - \varepsilon^2/2$. Let $\ell_{i-1} = \|q - t_{i-1}\|$. We have that $\ell_i = \|q - t_i\| = \|q - t_{i-1}\| \sin \alpha \leq (1 - \varepsilon^2/2)\ell_{i-1}$.

Analyzing the number of iterations required by the algorithm is somewhat tedious. If $\ell_0 = \|q - t_0\| \geq (4/\varepsilon^2)\Delta$ then the algorithm would be done in one iteration as otherwise $\ell_1 \leq \ell_0 - 2\Delta$, which is impossible. In particular, after $4/\varepsilon^2$ iterations the distance $\ell_i$ shrinks by a factor of two, and as such, after $O((1/\varepsilon^2) \log(1/\varepsilon))$ iterations the algorithm is done.
One can do somewhat better. By the above, we can assume that $d(q, P) = O(\Delta/\varepsilon^2)$. Now, set $\varepsilon_j = 1/2^{2+j}$. By the above, after $n_0 = O((1/\varepsilon_0^n) \log(1/\varepsilon_0)) = O(1)$ iterations, $\ell_{n_0} \leq d(q, C_P) + \text{diam}(P)/4$. For $j \geq 1$, let $n_j = 4/(\varepsilon_j)^2$, and observe that, after $\nu_j = n_j + \sum_{k=0}^{j-1} n_k$ iterations, we have that

$$\ell_{\nu_j} \leq (d(q, C_P) + \varepsilon_{j-1}\Delta)/2 \leq d(q, C_P) + \varepsilon_j \Delta.$$ 

In particular, stopping as soon as $\varepsilon_j \leq \varepsilon$, we have the desired guarantee, and the number of iterations needed is $M = O(1 + \sum_{j=0}^{\lfloor \log 1/\varepsilon \rfloor} 4/\varepsilon_j^2) = O(1/\varepsilon^2)$.

In our use of Lemma 2.7, $P$ and $q$ will always be contained in the unit ball, so we can remove the $\Delta$ term in the bound if we wish since $\Delta \leq 2$.

**Remark 2.8.** Lemma 2.7 is known, and a variant of it follows readily from a result (from 1962) on the convergence of the Perceptron algorithm [Nov62]. Indeed, consider a set $P \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d$ and a query point $q \in \mathbb{R}^d$. Assume that $q \in C_P$, and furthermore that $q$ is the origin (translating space if needed to ensure this). Run the Perceptron algorithm learning a linear classifier that passes through the origin and classifies $P$ as positive examples. Stop the algorithm after $M = 1/\varepsilon^2$ classification mistakes (since $q \in C_P$, there will always be a mistake in $P$). Let $p_1, \ldots, p_M$ be the sequence of points on which mistakes were made and let $w = p_1 + \ldots + p_M$ be the resulting hypothesis vector. By the analysis of [Nov62], we have $\|w\| \leq \text{diam}(P)\sqrt{M}$. This implies that the point $p' = w/M$, which is a convex combination of the points $p_1, \ldots, p_M$, has length—and therefore distance from $q$—at most $\varepsilon \text{diam}(P)$.

Thus, we conclude that for any point $p \in C_P$, and any $\varepsilon \in (0, 1)$, there is a point $p' \in C_U$, which is a convex combination of $O(1/\varepsilon^2)$ points of $P$, such that $\|p - p'\| \leq \varepsilon \text{diam}(P)$. This is sometime referred to as approximate Carathéodory theorem [Bar15].

### 3. Approximations via hitting set algorithms

Here we look at two hitting set type algorithms for Problem 2.2. An $(\alpha, \beta)$-approximation of $\text{opt}(P_{\text{in}}, P_{\text{out}}, \varepsilon)$ is a set $U \subseteq P_{\text{out}}$ such that $d(C_{P_{\text{in}}} \rightarrow C_U) \leq \alpha$ and $|U| \leq \beta k_{\text{opt}}(P_{\text{in}}, P_{\text{out}}, \varepsilon)$, see Definition 2.1. As a warm-up exercise, we first present a $(\varepsilon, O(d \log k_{\text{opt}}))$-approximation using approximation algorithms for hitting sets for set systems with bounded VC dimension. Then, we build on that to get a greedy algorithm which is a $(1+\delta)\varepsilon, O((\varepsilon \delta)^{-2} \log n))$-approximation.

#### 3.1. Approximation via VC dimension

**Definition 3.1.** For a set $P \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d$, a direction vector $v$, and a parameter $\varepsilon$, let $p$ be the point of $P$ extreme in the direction of $v$, and let $h'$ be the tangent to $C_P$ at $p$. Let $h$ be the hyperplane formed by translating $h'$ distance $\varepsilon$, in the direction $-v$. The $\varepsilon$-shadow of $h'$ (or $v$), is the halfspace $h^+(P, \varepsilon, v)$ bounded by $h$ that contains $p$ in its interior.

**Lemma 3.2.** Given sets $P_{\text{in}}, P_{\text{out}}$ in $\mathbb{R}^d$ with a total of $n$ points, and a parameter $\varepsilon$, one can compute a $(\varepsilon, O(d \log k_{\text{opt}}))$-approximation to the optimal discrete set $\text{opt}(P_{\text{in}}, P_{\text{out}}, \varepsilon)$ in polynomial time.

**Proof:** For a direction $v$, consider the hyperplane $h'$ tangent to $C_{P_{\text{in}}}$ at an extremal point $p_v \in P_{\text{in}}$ in the direction of $v$, and its $\varepsilon$-shadow $h^+ = h^+(P_{\text{in}}, \varepsilon, v)$, see Figure 3.1.
Clearly, any discrete \( \varepsilon \)-approximation \( U \subseteq P_{\text{out}} \) to \( P_{\text{in}} \), must contain at least one point of \( P_{\text{out}} \cap h^+ \), as otherwise the approximation fails for the point \( p_v \) (in particular, if such a halfspace has no point in \( P_{\text{out}} \) then there is no approximation). Now, consider the set system

\[
S = \left\{ P_{\text{out}}, \{ P_{\text{out}} \cap h^+(P_{\text{in}}, \varepsilon, v) \mid v \text{ any unit vector} \} \right\}.
\]

This set system has VC dimension at most \( d + 1 \), and in particular, for such a set system one can compute a \( O(d \log k_{\text{opt}}) \) approximation to its minimum size hitting set, which is the desired approximation in this case, see [Har11, Section 6.3]. We describe the algorithm below, but first we verify that this indeed yields the desired approximation.

Consider a hitting set \( U \subseteq P_{\text{out}} \) of \( S \). Let \( p \) be any point in \( C_{P_{\text{in}}} \), and let \( p' \) be the closest point to \( p \) in \( C_U \). If \( \|p - p'\| \leq \varepsilon \), then we are done. Otherwise, consider the vector \( v = p - p' \). Let \( z \) denote the hyperplane whose normal is \( v \) and which passes through the point \( p' \), and let \( z^+ \) denote the halfspace bounded by \( z \) and in the direction of \( v \) (i.e. containing \( p \)). As \( p' \) is the closest point to \( p \) in \( C_U \), \( z^+ \) has empty intersection with \( C_U \). Moreover, \( h^+(P_{\text{in}}, \varepsilon, v) \subseteq z^+ \), as the bounding hyperplanes of both halfspaces have \( v \) as a normal, and the extreme point of \( C_{P_{\text{in}}} \) in the direction of \( v \) must be \( > \varepsilon \) away from \( z \) (as \( p \) is at least this far in the direction of \( v \)). These two facts combined imply \( h^+(P_{\text{in}}, \varepsilon, v) \cap C_U = \emptyset \), a contradiction as \( h^+(P_{\text{in}}, \varepsilon, v) \cap P_{\text{out}} \) is a set in \( S \) that should have been hit.

As for the algorithm, Clarkson [Cla93] described how to compute this set via reweighting, but the following technique due to Long [Lon01] is easier to describe (we sketch it here for the sake of completeness). Consider the LP relaxation of the hitting set for this set system. Clearly, one can assign weights to points (between 0 and 1), such that the total weight of the points is at most \( k_{\text{opt}} \), such that every range in \( S \) the total weight of the points its covers is at least 1. Dividing this fractional solution by \( k_{\text{opt}} \), we get a weighted set system, where every set has weight at least \( \eta = 1/k_{\text{opt}} \), and total weight of the points is 1. That is, we can interpret this weights over the points as a measure, where all the sets of interests are \( \eta \)-heavy. A random sample of size \( O((d/\eta) \log(1/\eta)) = O(k_{\text{opt}}d \log k_{\text{opt}}) \) of \( P \) (according to the weights) is an \( \eta \)-net with constant probability [HW87], and stabs all the sets of \( S \), as desired.

### 3.2. Approximation via a greedy algorithm

Lemma 3.3. Let \( P_{\text{in}} \) and \( P_{\text{out}} \) be sets of points in \( \mathbb{R}^d \) contained in the unit ball, with a total of \( n \) points. For parameters \( \varepsilon, \delta \in (0, 1) \), one can compute, in polynomial time, a \( ((1 + \delta)\varepsilon, O(\varepsilon^{-2}\delta^{-2}\log n)) \)-approximation to the optimal discrete set \( \text{opt}(P_{\text{in}}, P_{\text{out}}, \varepsilon) \).

**Proof:** The algorithm is greedy – the basic idea is to restrict the set system of Lemma 3.2 to the relevant active sets. Formally, let \( U_0 = \{ p_0 \} \), where \( p_0 \) is some arbitrary point of \( P_{\text{out}} \). For \( i > 0 \), in the \( i \)th iteration, consider the current convex set \( C_{i-1} = C_{U_{i-1}} \). For a point \( q \in P_{\text{in}} \setminus C_{i-1} \), let \( \text{nn}(q, C_{i-1}) \) be its nearest point in \( C_{i-1} \), and let \( v_i(q) \) be the direction of the vector \( q - \text{nn}(p, C_{i-1}) \). In particular, consider the \( \varepsilon \)-shadow halfspace \( h^+ = h^+(P_{\text{in}}, \varepsilon, v_i(q)) \), see Definition 3.1, which must be hit by the desired hitting set.

Let \( Z_i \subseteq P_{\text{in}} \) be the set of points of \( P_{\text{in}} \) that are active; that is, they are in distance \( \geq (1 + \delta)\varepsilon \) from \( C_{U_{i-1}} \). We restrict our attention to the set system of active halfspaces; that is,

\[
S_i = \left\{ P_{\text{out}}, \{ P_{\text{out}} \cap h^+(P_{\text{in}}, \varepsilon, v_i(q)) \mid q \in Z_i \} \right\}.
\]
By the termination condition of the algorithm, at termination every point in $P_{\text{out}}$ is hit, and the algorithm is done. Now, as in the classical algorithm for hitting set (or set cover), pick the point $p_i$ in $P_{\text{out}}$ that hits the largest number of ranges in $\mathcal{S}$, and add it to $U_{i-1}$ to form $U_i$.

A point $q \in Z_i$, is hit in the $i$th iteration if $p_i \in h^{+}(P, \varepsilon, v_i(q))$. The argument of Lemma 2.7 implies that after a point $q \in P_{\text{in}}$ is hit $c/(\varepsilon^2\delta^2)$ times, its distance to the convex-hull of the current points is smaller than $(1 + \delta)\varepsilon$, and from this point on it is no longer active, where $c$ is some sufficiently large constant. Indeed, using the notation of the proof Lemma 2.7, if a point $q \in Z_i$ is hit in the $i$th iteration by a point $p_i$, and $d(q, C_{U_{i-1}}) \leq (1 + \delta)\varepsilon$ then we are done. Otherwise, let $t_{i-1} = \text{nn}(q, C_{U_{i-1}})$, and let $y_i$ be the projection of $p_i$ to the segment $q t_{i-1}$, see Figure 2.1. We have that $\|y_i - t_{i-1}\| \geq \|q - t_{i-1}\| - \|q - y_i\| \geq (1 + \varepsilon)\delta - \varepsilon \geq \varepsilon\delta$, since $\|q - y_i\| \leq \varepsilon$ (as $p_i$ and $y_i$ are both in the $\varepsilon$-shadow of $q$). Now, the analysis of Lemma 2.7 applies (with $\delta\varepsilon$ instead of $\varepsilon$), implying that after $O(1/\varepsilon^2)$ iterations, the distance of $q$ from the current convex-hull would be smaller than $(1 + \delta)\varepsilon$.

So, let $n_i$ be the number of active points in the beginning of the $i$th iteration, and observe that at least $n_i/k_{\text{opt}}$ points are being hit in the $i$th iteration. In particular, let $\kappa = 2 \lceil c k_{\text{opt}}/(\varepsilon^2\delta^2) \rceil$, and observe that in the iterations between $i - \kappa$ and $i$, we have that the number of points being hit is at least $\sum_{j=i-\kappa}^{i} n_j/k_{\text{opt}} \geq 2n_i/c/(\varepsilon^2\delta^2)$. This implies that $n_{i-\kappa} \geq 2n_i$, as otherwise, $n_{i-\kappa} < 2n_i$, implying that in this range of iterations $N = n_{i-\kappa}c/(\varepsilon^2\delta^2)$ hits happened, which is impossible, as $n_{i-\kappa}$ points can be hit at most $N$ times before they are all inactive.

As such, after $\kappa$ iterations of the greedy algorithm, the number of active points drops by a factor of two, and we conclude that after $O(k_{\text{opt}}(\varepsilon\delta)^{-2} \log n)$ total iterations, the algorithm is done.

4. Approximating the convex hull in high dimensions

Here we provide an efficient bi-criteria approximation algorithm for Problem 2.5. That is, the algorithm computes a subset $U \subseteq C_P$, such that (i) $d_H(C_U, C_P) \leq O(\varepsilon^{1/3})\text{diam}(P)$, and (ii) $|U| \leq O(k_{\text{opt}}(P, \varepsilon)/\varepsilon^{2/3})$. To simplify the presentation, in the remainder of this section we assume $\Delta = \text{diam}(P) = O(1)$, and hence drop most appearances of $\Delta$.

4.1. The algorithm

Let $\delta = 8\varepsilon^{1/3}$. The algorithm is greedy, similar in spirit to the Gonzalez algorithm for $k$-center clustering [Gon85] and subspace approximation algorithms [HV04, Lemma 5.2]. The algorithm starts with an arbitrary point $t_0 \in P$. For $i > 0$, in the $i$th iteration, the algorithm computes the point $t_i$ in $P$ which is furthest away from $C_{U_{i-1}}$, where $U_{i-1} = \{t_0, \ldots, t_{i-1}\}$. For now assume these distance queries are done exactly, and later we will relax them to approximate queries using Lemma 2.7. Let $r_i = d(t_i, C_{U_{i-1}})$. The algorithm stops as soon as $r_i \leq \delta$, and outputs $U_{i-1}$.

**Observation 4.1.** In the above algorithm, for all $i > 0$, $t_i$ is a vertex of $C_P$ (so long as exact distance queries are used). In particular, if the output has to be a subset of the convex hull vertices, one can choose $t_0$ to be the extreme vertex in any direction.

4.2. Analysis

By the termination condition of the algorithm, at termination every point in $P$ is in distance at most $8\varepsilon^{1/3}$ away from $C_{U_{i-1}}$, as desired. As for the number of rounds until termination, we argue that in each

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3 Or similarly, the analysis of the Perceptron algorithm, using $q$ as the origin and all points in $P_{\text{out}}$ as negative.
round there exists some point \( o \in P_{\text{opt}} \) such that \( d(o, U_i) \leq (1 - \Omega(\varepsilon^{2/3}))d(o, U_{i-1}) \).

So consider some round \( i \), the current set \( U_{i-1} \), and the point \( t_i \in P \) furthest away from \( C_{U_{i-1}} \). Let \( t'_i \) be the closest point to \( t_i \) in \( C_{U_i} \), and let \( r_i = \|t_i - t'_i\| \). Let \( h_i \) be the hyperplane orthogonal to the segment \( t_it'_i \) and lying \( \varepsilon \) distance below \( t_i \) in the direction of \( t'_i \). Let \( h^+_i \) denote the closed halfspace having \( h_i \) as its boundary, and that contains \( t_i \). If no points of \( P_{\text{opt}} \) are in \( h^+_i \) then \( d(t_i, C_{P_{\text{opt}}}) > \varepsilon \), which is impossible. As such, there must be a point \( o_i \in P_{\text{opt}} \cap h^+_i \). Let \( o'_i \) be the closest point to \( o_i \) in \( C_U \).

**Claim 4.2.** \( r_i - \varepsilon \leq \|o_i - o'_i\| \leq r_i \).

*Proof:* Let \( h'_i \) be the translation of \( h_i \) so it passes through \( t'_i \). We have that \( r_i - \varepsilon \leq \|o_i - o'_i\| \), as \( o_i \) lies in \( h^+_i \) and all of \( C_{U_{i-1}} \) lies below \( h'_i \).

For the second part, for any \( p \in \mathbb{R}^d \), let \( f_{i-1}(p) \) be the distance of \( p \) from \( C_{U_{i-1}} \). By Lemma 2.3 (iii), and since \( o_i \in P_{\text{opt}} \subseteq C_p \), it follows that \( \|o_i - o'_i\| \leq \max_{p \in C_p} f_{i-1}(p) = \|t_i - t'_i\| = r_i \).

**Lemma 4.3.** If \( r_i \geq 8\varepsilon^{1/3} \) then \( d(o_i, C_{U_i}) \leq (1 - \varepsilon^{2/3})d(o_i, C_{U_{i-1}}) \).

*Proof:* In the following, all entities are defined in the context of the \( i \)th iteration, and we omit the subscript \( i \) denoting this to simplify the exposition. Assume, for the time being, that the angle \( \angle tt'o' \) is a right angle and the segment \( t'o' \) has length \( \ell = 1 \), see **Figure 4.1**. This is the worst case configuration in terms of the new convex-hull \( C_{U_i} \) getting closer to \( o \), as can be easily seen.

Let \( z \) be the intersection of \( h \) with the ray emanating from \( o' \) in the direction \( t - t' \). Let \( z' \) be the closest point on \( o't \), and let \( \tau = \|z - z'\| \), see **Figure 4.1**. Let \( \rho \) be the radius of the ball formed by \( \text{ball}(o, r) \cap h \), and observe that \( o \in h^+ \cap \text{ball}(o', r) \subseteq \text{ball}(z, \rho) \). As such, \( \|o - z\| \leq \rho \). Now, we have \( \rho = \sqrt{r^2 - \|z - o'\|^2} = \sqrt{r^2 - (r - \varepsilon)^2} = \sqrt{2r\varepsilon - \varepsilon^2} \leq \sqrt{2}\varepsilon \).

Let \( \alpha = \angle zo't \) and \( \beta = \pi/2 - \alpha = \angle to'\ell' \), and observe that \( \sin \alpha = \cos \beta = \ell/\sqrt{\ell^2 + r^2} \). Now, we have

\[
\frac{\tau}{r - \varepsilon} = \sin \alpha = \frac{\ell}{\sqrt{\ell^2 + r^2}} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 + \frac{r^2}{\ell^2}}} \leq \sqrt{1 - \frac{r^2}{2}} \leq 1 - \frac{r^2}{4}
\]

since \( \ell = 1 \) and \( r \leq 1 \).
Sanity condition: Consider the line which is the intersection of the hyperplane \( h \) and the two dimensional plane spanned by \( t, t' \) and \( o' \) (this line is denoted by \( h \) in the figures). Let \( u \) be the point in distance \( \rho \) on this line from \( z \), on the side further away from \( t \). Let \( t'' \) be the intersection of \( h \) with \( t o' \). Next, let \( u' \) be the nearest point to \( u \) on the segment \( t o' \). We are guaranteed that \( u' \) is in the interior of this segment if \( ||u' - t''|| < ||t'' - o'|| \iff \end{equation} \|

\( u' - t'' \| = (\rho + \ell') \cos \beta = (\rho + \ell') ||u - o'|| < \|

\( t'' - o' \| \iff (\rho + \ell') \ell' < ||t'' - o'||^2 = (\ell')^2 + (r - \varepsilon)^2 \). Thus, we have to prove that \( \rho \ell' < (r - \varepsilon)^2 \). As \( \ell' < \ell = 1 \), we have that this is implied if \( \rho \leq \sqrt{2r\varepsilon} < (r - \varepsilon)^2 \), this inequality holds if \( r \geq 8\varepsilon^{1/3} \).

Back to the proof: We next bound the distance of \( o \) from \( C_{U_1} \). Observe that by rotating \( o \) around the line \( o't \) we can assume that \( o \) lies on the plane spanned by \( t, t', o' \) and its distance to the segment \( t o' \) has not changed. Now, the set of points in distance \( r' \) from the the segment \( o't \) is a hipodrome, and this hipodrome covers a connected portion of \( \operatorname{ball}(o', r) \). For \( r' = ||u - u'|| \), by the above sanity condition, this hipodrome covers all the points of \( \operatorname{ball}(o', r) \) that are above \( h \). This implies that \( o \) maximizes its distance to \( C_{U_1} \) if \( o = u \).

So, let \( \tau' = ||u - u'|| \), and observe that \( \ell' = \ell(r - \varepsilon)/r \), implying that \[
\tau' = \frac{\ell' + \rho}{\ell'} \tau = \tau + \rho \frac{\tau}{\ell'} = \tau + \rho \sin \beta = \tau + \rho \frac{r - \varepsilon}{\sqrt{\ell^2 + r^2}} = \tau + \rho \frac{r}{1 + r^2} \leq \tau + \rho r \cdot \frac{r}{1 + r^2} \leq \tau + \rho r .
\]

As such, we have that

\[
\frac{d(o, C_{U_1})}{d(o, C_{U_{i-1}})} \leq \frac{||u - u'||}{||z - o'||} = \frac{\tau'}{r - \varepsilon} \leq \frac{\tau}{r - \varepsilon} + \frac{\rho r}{r - \varepsilon} \leq \frac{\tau}{r - \varepsilon} + 2\rho \leq 1 - \frac{r^2}{4} + 2\sqrt{r\varepsilon} \leq 1 - \varepsilon^2/3 ,
\]

if \( r \geq 8\varepsilon^{1/3} \).

Lemma 4.4. Let \( P \) be a set of \( n \) points in \( \mathbb{R}^d \) with diameter \( \Delta = \operatorname{diam}(P) \), and let \( \varepsilon > 0 \) be a parameter, then one can compute a set \( U \subseteq C_P \), such that (i) \( d_H(C_U, C_P) \leq (8\varepsilon^{1/3} + \varepsilon)\Delta \), (ii) \( m = |U| \leq O(k_{opt}/\varepsilon^{2/3}) \), where \( k_{opt} = k_{opt}(P, \varepsilon) \), and (iii) the running time is \( O(nm^2d/\varepsilon^2) \).

Proof: Recall that in any round before the algorithm terminates \( r_i > \delta \Delta = 8\varepsilon^{1/3} \Delta \). Let \( P_{opt} = \operatorname{opt}(P, \varepsilon) \) be any optimal approximating set of size \( k_{opt} \). In the \( i \)th iteration of the algorithm, for some point \( o_i \in P_{opt} \), its distance to the convex hull of \( C_{U_i} \) shrinks by a factor of \( 1 - \varepsilon^{2/3} \), by Lemma 4.3. Conceptually, we charge round \( i \) to \( o_i \). Now, note that by Claim 4.2, \( d(o_i, C_{U_{i-1}}) \geq r_i - \varepsilon \Delta > (\delta - \varepsilon) \Delta \geq \Delta \delta/2 \). Therefore, once the distance of an optimal point \( o \) to \( C_{U_i} \) falls below \( \Delta \delta/2 = 8\varepsilon^{1/3} \Delta/2 \), it cannot be charged again in any future iteration. The initial distance of \( o \) to \( C_{U_0} \) is at most \( \Delta \). As such, by Lemma 4.3, an optimal point \( o \) can get charged at most \( k \) times, where \( k \) is the smallest positive integer such that \( (1 - \varepsilon^{2/3})^k \Delta \leq 4\varepsilon^{1/3} \Delta \), which holds if \( \exp(-k\varepsilon^{2/3}) \leq 4\varepsilon^{1/3} \). Namely, \( k = O(\varepsilon^{-2/3} \log 1/\varepsilon) \).

Using the same idea of decreasing values of \( \varepsilon \), as done in Lemma 2.7, one can improve this bound to \( O(1/\varepsilon^{2/3}) \). We omit the easy but tedious details. We conclude that the number of iterations performed by the algorithm is at most \( m = O(k_{opt}/\varepsilon^{2/3}) \).
So the distance of all the points of $P_{opt}$ from $C_{U_m}$ is at most $\delta \Delta$. Now, consider any point $p \in C_P$. Let $t = \text{nn}(p, P_{opt})$, and observe that $\|p - t\| \leq \varepsilon \Delta$. Since $t \in C_{P_{opt}}$, we have that $t$ can be written down as a convex combination $t = \sum_{i=1}^{\nu} \alpha_i o_i$, where $\alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_\nu \geq 0$, $\sum \alpha_i = 1$, and $o_1, \ldots, o_\nu \in P_{opt}$. For $i = 1, \ldots, \nu$, let $o'_i = \text{nn}(o_i, C_{U_m})$, and note that $t' = \sum_i \alpha_i o'_i \in C_{U_m}$. Now observe that for all $i$, $\|o_i - o'_i\| \leq \delta \Delta$. In particular, $(o_i - o'_i) \in \text{ball}(0, \delta \Delta)$, and hence $\sum_i \alpha_i (o_i - o'_i) \in \text{ball}(0, \delta \Delta)$. Therefore $d(p, C_{U_m}) \leq \|p - t\| \leq \|p - t'\| + \|t - t'\| \leq \varepsilon \Delta + \|\sum_i \alpha_i (o_i - o'_i)\| \leq (\varepsilon + \delta) \Delta$. We conclude that $d_H(C_{U_m}, C_P) \leq (\varepsilon + \delta) \Delta$.

As for the running time, at each iteration, the algorithm computes the point in $P$ furthest away from $C_{U_i}$. The analysis above assumes these queries are done exactly, which is expensive. However, by Lemma 2.7 one can use faster $\varepsilon \Delta$-approximate queries. It is easy to verify this does not change the correctness of the algorithm. Specifically, the point $t_i$ chosen in the $i$th round, may now be $\varepsilon \Delta$ closer to the current convex hull than the furthest point, and so in the analysis of Lemma 4.3, $o_i$ may lie as much as $\varepsilon \Delta$ above $t_i$. In particular, the length of $\tau$ does not change, however now $\rho$ is only bounded by $2\sqrt{r \varepsilon}$ instead of $\sqrt{2r \varepsilon}$, and this constant factor difference only slightly degrades the constant in front of $\varepsilon^{2/3}$ in the lemma statement. The other effect is that when the algorithm stops the distance to the convex hull is bounded by $(8\varepsilon^{1/3} + \varepsilon) \Delta$, and this is accounted for in the above theorem statement.

Now using Lemma 2.7 directly, it takes $O(nmd/\varepsilon^2)$ time per round to find the $\varepsilon \Delta$ approximate furthest point, and therefore the total running time is $O(nm^2d/\varepsilon^2)$.

### 4.2.1. Improving the running time further

The running time of the algorithm of Lemma 4.4 can be improved further, but it requires some care. Let $L_{i-1} = \text{span}(U_{i-1})$ denote the linear subspace spanned by the point set $U_{i-1}$, with the orthonormal basis $v_1, \ldots, v_{i-1}$. For any point $p \in P$, let $p'_{i-1}$ denote its orthogonal projection onto the subspace; that is, $p'_{i-1} = \text{nn}(p, L_{i-1}) = \sum_j \langle p, v_j \rangle v_j$, and let $\ell_{i-1}(p) = \|p - p'_{i-1}\| = d(p, L_i)$. Observe, that for any point $t \in L_{i-1}$ and any point $p \in \mathbb{R}^d$, we have that $\|p - t\| = \sqrt{\|p - p'_{i-1}\|^2 + \|p'_{i-1} - t\|^2}$ by the Pythagorean theorem, where $p'_{i-1}$ is the projection of $p$ to $L_{i-1}$.

As such, for any point $p \in P$, in the beginning of the $i$th iteration, the algorithm has the projection and distance of $p$ to $L_{i-1}$; that is, $p'_{i-1} = (\langle p, v_1 \rangle, \ldots, \langle p, v_{i-1} \rangle)$, and $\ell_{i-1}(p)$. The algorithm also initially computes for each point $p \in P$ its norm $\|p\|^2$. As such, given any point $t \in L_{i-1}$, its distance to a point $p \in P$ can be computed in $O(i)$ time (instead of $O(d)$). The algorithm also maintains, for every point $p \in P$, an approximate nearest neighbor $\text{nn}_{i-1}(p) \in C_{U_{i-1}}$; that is,

$$d(p, C_{U_{i-1}}) \leq \|p - \text{nn}_{i-1}(p)\| \leq d(p, C_{U_{i-1}}) + \varepsilon \Delta,$$

where $\Delta = \text{diam}(P)$. Naturally, the algorithm also maintains the distance $d_{i-1}(p) = \|p - \text{nn}_{i-1}(p)\|$.

Now, the algorithm does the following in the $i$th iteration:

(A) Computes, in $O(n)$ time, the point $p \in P$ that maximizes $d_{i-1}(p)$.

(B) Let $p'_{i-1}$ be the projection of $p$ to $L_{i-1}$. Computes, in $O(d)$ time, the new vector for the basis of $L_i$; that is $v_i = (p - p'_{i-1}) / \|p - p'_{i-1}\|$. Now $v_1, \ldots, v_i$ is an orthonormal basis of the linear space $L_i$.

(C) For every point $p \in P$, update its projection $p'_{i-1}$ into $L_{i-1}$ into the projection of $p$ into $L_i$, by computing $\langle p, v_i \rangle$. Also, update $\ell_i(p) = \sqrt{\ell_{i-1}(p)^2 - \langle p, v_i \rangle^2}$.

(D) Let $P'$ denote the projected points of $P$ into $L_i$. For every $p \in P$, we need to update $\text{nn}_{i-1}(p)$ to $\text{nn}_i(p)$ (and the associated distance). To this end, the algorithm of Lemma 2.7 is called on $p'_i$ and $U_i$ (all lying in the subspace $L_i$ which is of dimension $i$). Importantly, the algorithm
Lemma 4.5. The running time of the above algorithm is \(O(nm(d + m/\varepsilon^2 + m^2))\), for \(m = O(k_{\text{opt}}/\varepsilon^{2/3})\).

**Proof:** The algorithm performs \(m = O(k_{\text{opt}}/\varepsilon^{2/3})\) iterations, and this bound the dimension of the output subspace. Every iteration of the algorithm takes \(O(nd)\) time, except for the last portion of updating the approximate nearest point for all the points of \(P\) (i.e., (D)). The key observation is that \(\sum_i(#_i(p) - 1) = O(1/\varepsilon^2)\), since if the algorithm of Lemma 2.7 runs \(\alpha = #_i(p) > 1\) iterations, then the distance of \(p\) to the convex-hull shrinks by a factor of \((1 - \varepsilon^2/2)^\alpha\). Arguing as in the proof of Lemma 2.7, this can happen \(O(1/\varepsilon^2)\) times before \(p\) is in distance at most \(\varepsilon\Delta\) from the convex-hull, and can no longer be updated. As such, for a single point \(p \in P\), the operations in (D) takes overall \(O(t^2(#_i(p) - 1)) = O(m^2(m + 1/\varepsilon^2))\) time. As such, the overall running time of the algorithm is \(O(n(dm + m^2/\varepsilon^2 + m^3))\).

4.2.2. The result

**Theorem 4.6.** Let \(P\) be a set of \(n\) points in \(\mathbb{R}^d\) with diameter \(\Delta = \text{diam}(P)\), and let \(\varepsilon > 0\) be a parameter, then one can compute a set \(U \subseteq C_P\), such that

1. \(d_H(C_U, C_P) \leq (8\varepsilon^{1/3} + \varepsilon)\Delta\), and
2. \(|U| \leq O(k_{\text{opt}}/\varepsilon^{2/3})\), where \(k_{\text{opt}} = k_{\text{opt}}(P, \varepsilon)\).

The running time of the algorithm is \(O(nm(d + m/\varepsilon^2 + m^2))\), for \(m = O(k_{\text{opt}}/\varepsilon^{2/3})\). (Here, the constants hidden in the \(O\) are independent of the dimension.)

**Remark 4.7.** (A) The constants hidden in the \(O\) notation used of Theorem 4.6 are independent of the dimension. In comparison to the other algorithms in this paper, the approximation quality is slightly worse. However, the advantage is a drastic improvement in the size of the approximation.

(B) The running time of the algorithm of Theorem 4.6 can be further improved, by keeping track for each point \(p \in P\), and each point \(t \in U_i\), the distance of \(t\) from the hyperplane (in \(L_i\)) that determines whether or not the approximate nearest neighbor to \(p\) needs to be recomputed. By careful implementation, this can be done in the \(i\)th iteration in \(O(in)\) time (updating \(O(in)\) such numbers in this iteration). This improves the running time to \(O(nm(d + m/\varepsilon^2))\). Motivated by our laziness we omit the messy details.

**Remark 4.8.** Note that the algorithm is a simple iterative process, which is oblivious to the value of the diameter \(\Delta = \text{diam}(P)\) and does not use it directly anywhere. Nevertheless, after \(O(k_{\text{opt}}/\varepsilon^{2/3})\) iterations the solution is an \((8\varepsilon^{1/3} + \varepsilon)\Delta\)-approximation to the convex hull. In practice, one may not know the value of \(k_{\text{opt}}\), and so this value cannot be used in a stopping condition. However, it is easy to get a 2-approximation \(\Delta'\), such that \(\Delta \leq \Delta' \leq 2\Delta\), by a linear scan of the points. Then, one can use the check \(d(t_i, C_{U_i}) = d_H(C_P, C_{U_i}) \leq (8\varepsilon^{1/3} + \varepsilon)\Delta'/2\) as a stopping condition, where \(U_i\) is the current approximation.
References


