Evaluating Learned State Representations for Atari

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State Representation Learning

**Goal:** Learn to extract the important features ("state variables") from raw observations (e.g. images).

**Why?** Poor sample efficiency limits the applicability of deep reinforcement learning to real world problems (e.g. robotics).

To address this inefficiency, there has been a renewed focus on separated state representation and policy learning.
Our Research

Autoencoders are a popular method for state representation learning, but the evaluations of the learned representations tend to be primitive.

Our research:

1. presented a new method for evaluating learned state representations by probing their contents.
2. investigated the quality of state representations learned by undercomplete, variational, and disentangled variational autoencoders for a range of representation sizes.
Evaluating Representation Quality via Probing

The state representations were evaluated by training non-linear regression and classification “probes” to predict important state variables from them.

This extended a probing method that was proposed alongside the Atari Annotate RAM Interface\(^1\), which provided the target values.

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Evaluating Representation Quality via Probing

-The Atari Annotated RAM Interface identifies the RAM values of important state variables for each game.

The previous probing method did not take into account the nature of each state variable (i.e. numeric or categorical).
Probing vs. Reconstructions: Regression

$|z| = 100$  

$|z| = 10$
Probing vs. Reconstructions: Regression

| $\mathbf{z}$ | $= 100$ | $\mathbf{z}$ | $= 10$ |

Ball Localisation Performance in Pong for each Autoencoder

- **AE**
- **VAE**
- **$\beta$-VAE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Representation Size (Number of Dimensions)</th>
<th>Performance (Avg. $R^2$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>0.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph showing the performance of different autoencoders with varying representation sizes.
Probing vs. Reconstructions: Classification

$|z| = 100$  

$|z| = 10$
Probing vs. Reconstructions: Classification

Score Classification Performance in Pong for each Autoencoder

| \|z\| = 100 | \|z\| = 10 |
Key Findings and Future Work

Our results:

▶ demonstrate the differences in representations learned by different types of autoencoders, and assess their robustness to representation size.
▶ highlight the discrepancies between evaluations using reconstruction quality vs. probing.

Avenues for future work:

▶ Investigate why the differences in performance between the types of autoencoders exist.
▶ Create a broader benchmark that contains both a wider set of games and extends to other domains to more comprehensively evaluated state representation learners.
Extra: A Comparison Between Probing Techniques for Assessing the Encoding Quality of Player Y in Pong

![Comparison Between Probing Techniques for Assessing the Encoding Quality of Player Y in Pong](image)
Extra: Reconstructions for all Games

Original  | $|Z| = 100$  | $|Z| = 10$  | Original  | $|Z| = 100$  | $|Z| = 10$
Extra: Autoencoder Architecture

- Fully convolutional encoder/decoder with five layers.
- Only difference between autoencoders was the bottleneck layer(s).
- Learnt compact representations of full size (160 × 210 px), greyscale images.