Topics:

- Reinforcement Learning Part 3
 - Actor-Critic
 - Proximal Policy Optimization (PPO)
 - RL from Human Feedback for ChatGPT

CS 4644-DL / 7643-A ZSOLT KIRA

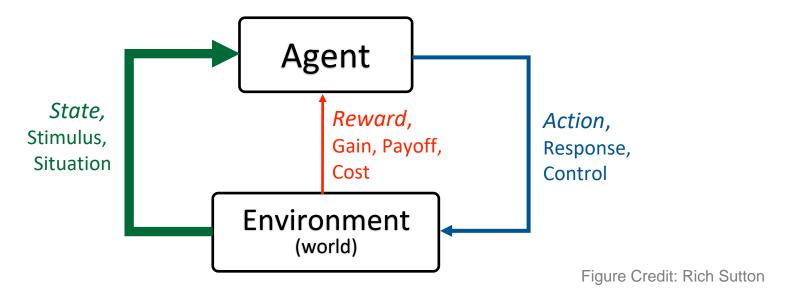
Admin

Projects!

• LAST Meta OH Friday 3pm ET on Diffusion Models

CIOS is coming!

RL: Sequential decision making in an environment with evaluative feedback.



- Environment may be unknown, non-linear, stochastic and complex.
- Agent learns a policy to map states of the environments to actions.
 - Seeking to maximize cumulative reward in the long run.



- MDPs: Theoretical framework underlying RL
- lacktriangle An MDP is defined as a tuple $(\mathcal{S},\mathcal{A},\mathcal{R},\mathbb{T},\gamma)$

 ${\cal S}$: Set of possible states

 ${\cal A}\,$: Set of possible actions

 $\mathcal{R}(s, a, s')$: Distribution of reward

 $\mathbb{T}(s,a,s')$: Transition probability distribution, also written as p(s'|s,a)

 γ : Discount factor

Interaction trajectory: $\ldots s_t, a_t, r_{t+1}, s_{t+1}, a_{t+1}, r_{t+2}, s_{t+2}, \ldots$

Algorithm 1 Deep Q-learning with Experience Replay

```
Initialize replay memory \mathcal{D} to capacity N
```

Initialize action-value function Q with random weights

Experience Replay

for episode = 1, M do

Initialise sequence $s_1 = \{x_1\}$ and preprocessed sequenced $\phi_1 = \phi(s_1)$

for t = 1.T do

With probability ϵ select a random action a_t otherwise select $a_t = \max_a Q^*(\phi(s_t), a; \theta)$

Epsilon-greedy

Execute action a_t in emulator and observe reward r_t and image x_{t+1}

Set $s_{t+1} = s_t, a_t, x_{t+1}$ and preprocess $\phi_{t+1} = \phi(s_{t+1})$

Store transition $(\phi_t, a_t, r_t, \phi_{t+1})$ in \mathcal{D}

Sample random minibatch of transitions $(\phi_j, a_j, r_j, \phi_{j+1})$ from \mathcal{D}

Set
$$y_j = \begin{cases} r_j & \text{for terminal } \phi_{j+1} \\ r_j + \gamma \max_{a'} Q(\phi_{j+1}, a'; \theta) & \text{for non-terminal } \phi_{j+1} \end{cases}$$

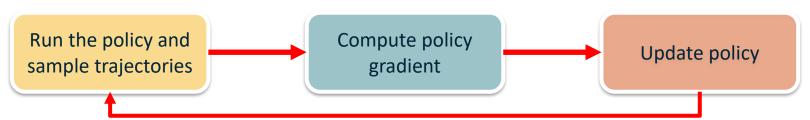
Perform a gradient descent step on $(y_i - Q(\phi_i, a_i; \theta))^2$ according to equation 3

end for end for

- Sample trajectories $\tau_i = \{s_1, a_1, \dots s_T, a_T\}_i$ by acting according to π_{θ}
- Compute policy gradient as

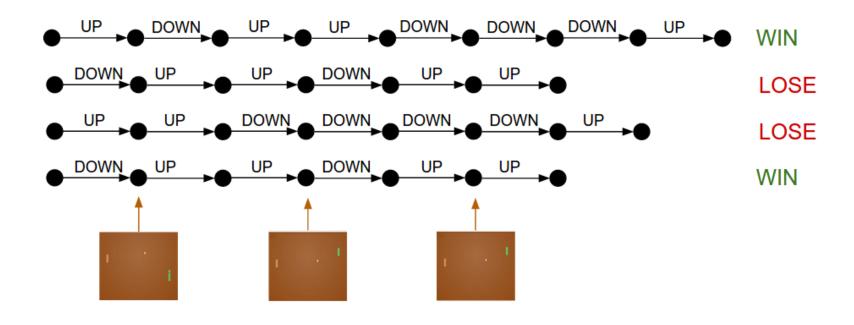
$$\nabla_{\theta} J(\theta) \approx \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i}^{N} \left[\sum_{t=1}^{T} \nabla_{\theta} \log \pi_{\theta} \left(a_{t}^{i} \mid s_{t}^{i} \right) \cdot \sum_{t=1}^{T} \mathcal{R} \left(s_{t}^{i} \mid a_{t}^{i} \right) \right]$$

• Update policy parameters: $heta \leftarrow heta + lpha
abla_{ heta} J(heta)$



Slide credit: Sergey Levine





Slide credit: Dhruv Batra



Issues with Policy Gradients

- Credit assignment is hard!
 - Which specific action led to increase in reward
 - Suffers from high variance → leading to unstable training



Variance reduction

Gradient estimator:
$$\nabla_{\theta} J(\theta) \approx \sum_{t \geq 0} r(\tau) \nabla_{\theta} \log \pi_{\theta}(a_t | s_t)$$

First idea: Push up probabilities of an action seen, only by the cumulative future reward from that state

$$abla_{ heta} J(heta) pprox \sum_{t \geq 0} \left(\sum_{t' \geq t} r_{t'} \right)
abla_{ heta} \log \pi_{ heta}(a_t | s_t)$$

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Second idea: Use discount factor γ to ignore delayed effects

$$abla_{\theta} J(\theta) pprox \sum_{t \geq 0} \left(\sum_{t' \geq t} \gamma^{t' - t} r_{t'} \right)
abla_{\theta} \log \pi_{\theta}(a_t | s_t)$$

- Credit assignment is hard!
 - Which specific action led to increase in reward
 - Suffers from high variance, leading to unstable training
- How to reduce the variance?
 - Subtract an action independent baseline from the reward

$$\nabla_{\theta} J(\theta) = \mathbb{E}_{\tau \sim p_{\theta}(\tau)} \left[\sum_{t=1}^{T} \nabla_{\theta} \log \pi_{\theta} \left(a_{t} \mid s_{t} \right) \cdot \sum_{t=1}^{T} \left(\mathcal{R} \left(s_{t}, a_{t} \right) - b(s_{t}) \right) \right]$$

- Why does it work? Normalization constant (expected value doesn't change)
- What is the best choice of b?



How to choose the baseline?

A better baseline: Want to push up the probability of an action from a state, if this action was better than the **expected value of what we should get from that state**.

Q: What does this remind you of?



How to choose the baseline?

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Q: What does this remind you of?

A: Q-function and value function!



- Learn both policy and Q function
 - Use the "actor" to sample trajectories
 - Use the Q function to "evaluate" or "critic" the policy



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 - Use the "actor" to sample trajectories
 - Use the Q function to "evaluate" or "critic" the policy

- REINFORCE: $\nabla_{\theta} J(\pi_{\theta}) = \mathbb{E}_{a \sim \pi_{\theta}} \left[\nabla_{\theta} \log \pi_{\theta}(a|s) \mathcal{R}(s,a) \right]$
- Actor-critic: $\nabla_{\theta} J(\pi_{\theta}) = \mathbb{E}_{a \sim \pi_{\theta}} \left[\nabla_{\theta} \log \pi_{\theta}(a|s) Q^{\pi_{\theta}}(s,a) \right]$



- Learn both policy and Q function
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- Q function is unknown too! Update using $\mathcal{R}(s,a)$



• Initialize s, θ (policy network) and β (Q network)

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 - Sample reward $\mathcal{R}(s,a)$ and next state $s' \sim p(s'|s,a)$

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$$\theta \leftarrow \theta + \alpha \nabla_{\theta} \log \pi_{\theta}(a \mid s) Q_{\beta}(s, a)$$



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$$\theta \leftarrow \theta + \alpha \nabla_{\theta} \log \pi_{\theta}(a \mid s) Q_{\beta}(s, a)$$

- Update "critic":MSE Loss := $\left(Q_{new}(s,a) (r + \max_{a} Q_{old}(s',a))\right)^2$
 - Recall Q-learning

- Initialize s, θ (policy network) and β (Q network)
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 - Sample reward $\mathcal{R}(s,a)$ and next state $s' \sim p(s'|s,a)$
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- Update "critic":
 - Recall Q-learning $MSE\ Loss := \left(\frac{Q_{new}(s,a)}{a \leftarrow a', s \leftarrow s'} (r + \max_a Q_{old}(s',a)) \right)^2$
 - Update eta Accordingly



How to choose the baseline?

A better baseline: Want to push up the probability of an action from a state, if this action was better than the **expected value of what we should get from that state**.

Q: What does this remind you of?

A: Q-function and value function!

Intuitively, we are happy with an action a_t in a state s_t if $Q^{\pi}(s_t, a_t) - V^{\pi}(s_t)$ is large. On the contrary, we are unhappy with an action if it's small.

Using this, we get the estimator:
$$\nabla_{\theta}J(\theta) pprox \sum_{t \geq 0} (Q^{\pi_{\theta}}(s_t, a_t) - V^{\pi_{\theta}}(s_t)) \nabla_{\theta} \log \pi_{\theta}(a_t|s_t)$$



 In general, replacing the policy evaluation or the "critic" leads to different flavors of the actor-critic

- REINFORCE:
$$\nabla_{\theta} J(\pi_{\theta}) = \mathbb{E}_{a \sim \pi_{\theta}} \left[\nabla_{\theta} \log \pi_{\theta}(a|s) \mathcal{R}(s,a) \right]$$

$$-\mathsf{Q}-\mathsf{Actor}\,\mathsf{Critic}\ \
abla_{ heta}J(\pi_{ heta})=\mathbb{E}_{a\sim\pi_{ heta}}\left[
abla_{ heta}\log\pi_{ heta}(a|s)Q^{\pi_{ heta}}(s,a)
ight]$$

- Advantage Actor Critic: $\nabla_{\theta} J(\pi_{\theta}) = \mathbb{E}_{a \sim \pi_{\theta}} \left[\nabla_{\theta} \log \pi_{\theta}(a|s) A^{\pi_{\theta}}(s,a) \right] = Q^{\pi_{\theta}}(s,a) - V^{\pi_{\theta}}(s)$

Advanced policy gradient methods

- Trust Region Policy Gradient (TRPO, Schulman 2017)
- Issue with vanilla actor critic: policy may receive huge update!
 - Big parameter update -> drastic change in behavior -> may stuck in low-reward region!
- Idea: Anchor policy updates to past!

$$J(heta) = \mathbb{E}_{s \sim
ho^{\pi_{ heta_{
m old}}}, a \sim \pi_{ heta_{
m old}}}ig[rac{\pi_{ heta}(a|s)}{\pi_{ heta_{
m old}}(a|s)}\hat{A}_{ heta_{
m old}}(s,a)ig]$$

- Idea: constrain the update to a trust region using offpolicy policy gradient
- Subject to:

$$\mathbb{E}_{s \sim
ho^{\pi_{ heta_{ ext{old}}}}}[D_{ ext{KL}}(\pi_{ heta_{ ext{old}}}(.\,|s)\|\pi_{ heta}(.\,|s)] \leq \delta$$

importance sampling $E_{x \sim p(x)}[f(x)] = \int p(x)f(x)dx$ $= \int \frac{q(x)}{q(x)}p(x)f(x)dx$ $= \int q(x)\frac{p(x)}{q(x)}f(x)dx$ $= E_{x \sim q(x)}\left[\frac{p(x)}{q(x)}f(x)\right]$

Optimizing this objective requires calculating Hessian (second-order optimization)!



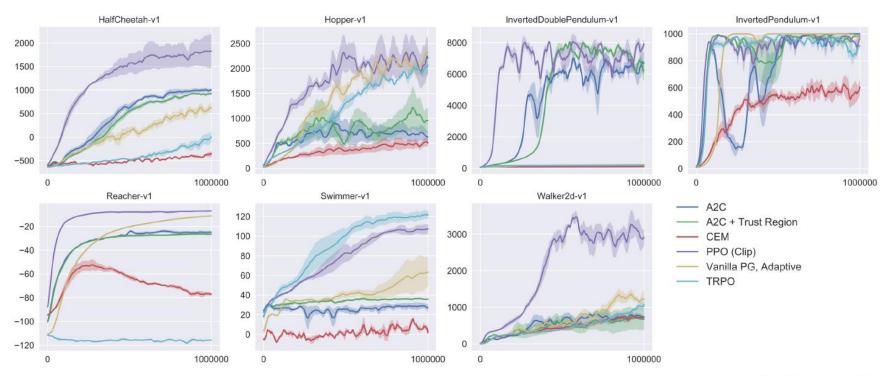
Advanced policy gradient methods

- Proximal Policy Optimization (PPO, Schulman 2017)
- Issue with TRPO: objective too complicated! Requires second-order optimization (calculating Hessian).

Idea: Approximate trust-region constraint with a penalty term

$$\underset{\theta}{\mathsf{maximize}} \qquad \hat{\mathbb{E}}_t \left[\frac{\pi_{\theta}(\mathsf{a}_t \mid \mathsf{s}_t)}{\pi_{\theta_{\mathrm{old}}}(\mathsf{a}_t \mid \mathsf{s}_t)} \hat{A}_t \right] - \beta \hat{\mathbb{E}}_t [\mathsf{KL}[\pi_{\theta_{\mathrm{old}}}(\cdot \mid \mathsf{s}_t), \pi_{\theta}(\cdot \mid \mathsf{s}_t)]]$$

Advanced policy gradient methods



Schulman 2017



Applications to Language Modeling

- One of the key benefits of RL is ability to tune to evaluative feedback
- Used to turn unaligned language models to ones that do what we want: Answer our questions
- Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback (RLHF)



From Language Models to Assistants

- 1. Zero-Shot (ZS) and Few-Shot (FS) In-Context Learning
- 2. Instruction finetuning
- 3. Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback (RLHF)

4. What's next?



RL to Improve Language modeling ≠ assisting users

PROMPT Explain the moon landing to a 6 year old in a few sentences.

COMPLETION

GPT-3

Explain the theory of gravity to a 6 year old.

Explain the theory of relativity to a 6 year old in a few sentences.

Explain the big bang theory to a 6 year old.

Explain evolution to a 6 year old.

Language models are not *aligned* with user intent [Ouyang et al., 2022].



Language modeling ≠ assisting users

PROMPT Explain the moon landing to a 6 year old in a few sentences.

COMPLETION Human

A giant rocket ship blasted off from Earth carrying astronauts to the moon. The astronauts landed their spaceship on the moon and walked around exploring the lunar surface. Then they returned safely back to Earth, bringing home moon rocks to show everyone.

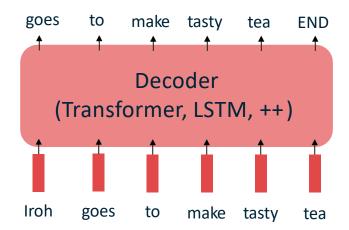
Language models are not *aligned* with user intent [Ouyang et al., 2022]. Finetuning to the rescue!



Pretraining can improve NLP applications by serving as parameter initialization.

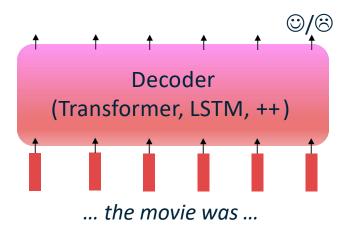
Step 1: Pretrain (on language modeling)

Lots of text; learn general things!



Step 2: Finetune (on your task)

Not many labels; adapt to the task!

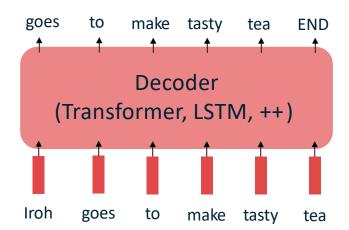


Scaling up finetuning

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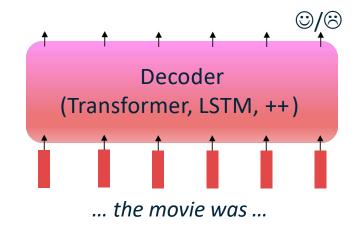
Step 1: Pretrain (on language modeling)

Lots of text; learn general things!



Step 2: Finetune (on many tasks)

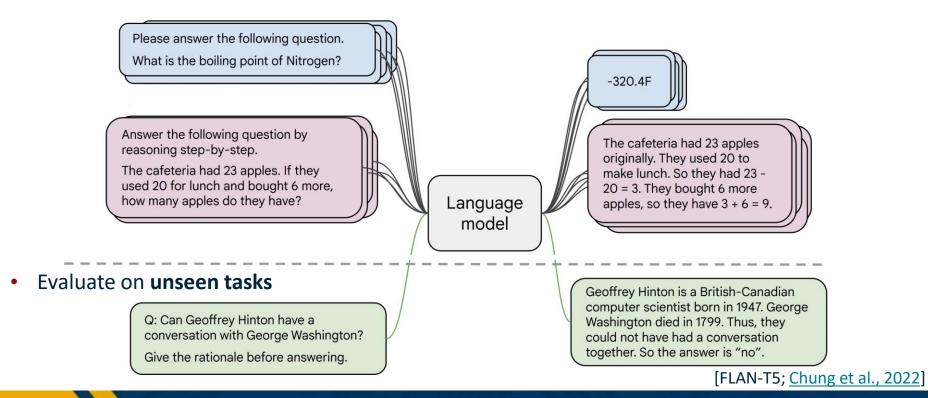
Not many labels; adapt to the tasks!





Instruction finetuning

Collect examples of (instruction, output) pairs across many tasks and finetune an LM





Instruction finetuning

Model input (Disambiguation QA)

Q: In the following sentences, explain the antecedent of the pronoun (which thing the pronoun refers to), or state that it is ambiguous.

Sentence: The reporter and the chef will discuss their favorite dishes.

Options:

- (A) They will discuss the reporter's favorite dishes
- (B) They will discuss the chef's favorite dishes
- (C) Ambiguous

A: Let's think step by step.

Before instruction finetuning

The reporter and the chef will discuss their favorite dishes.

The reporter and the chef will discuss the reporter's favorite dishes.

The reporter and the chef will discuss the chef's favorite dishes.

The reporter and the chef will discuss the reporter's and the chef's favorite dishes.



(doesn't answer question)



Instruction finetuning

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After instruction finetuning

The reporter and the chef will discuss their favorite dishes does not indicate whose favorite dishes they will discuss. So, the answer is (C).

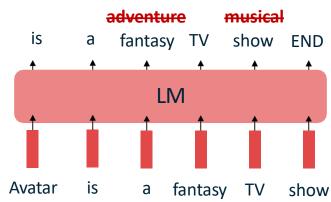
3

Limitations of instruction finetuning?

- One limitation of instruction finetuning is obvious: it's expensive to collect groundtruth data for tasks.
- But there are other, subtler limitations too. Can you think of any?
- Problem 1: tasks like open-ended creative generation have no right answer.
 - Write me a story about a dog and her pet grasshopper.
- Problem 2: language modeling penalizes all token-level mistakes equally, but some

errors are worse than others.

- Can we explicitly attempt to satisfy human preferences?



From Language Models to Assistants

- 1. Zero-Shot (ZS) and Few-Shot (FS) In-Context Learning
 - + No finetuning needed, prompt engineering (e.g. CoT) can improve performance
 - Limits to what you can fit in context
 - Complex tasks will probably need gradient steps
- 2. Instruction finetuning
 - + Simple and straightforward, generalize to unseen tasks
 - Collecting demonstrations for so many tasks is expensive
 - Mismatch between LM objective and human preferences
- 3. Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback (RLHF)

4. What's next?



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Optimizing for human preferences

- Let's say we were training a language model on some task (e.g. summarization).
- For each LM sample s, imagine we had a way to obtain a *human reward* of that summary: $R(s) \in \mathbb{R}$, higher is better.

SAN FRANCISCO,
California (CNN) -A magnitude 4.2
earthquake shook the
San Francisco
...
overturn unstable
objects.

An earthquake hit San Francisco. There was minor property damage, but no injuries.

$$R(s_1) = 8.0$$

The Bay Area has good weather but is prone to earthquakes and wildfires.

$$R(s_2) = 1.2$$

Now we want to maximize the expected reward of samples from our LM:

. Note

Note: for mathematical simplicity we're assuming only one "prompt"





How do we model human preferences?

- Awesome: now for any arbitrary, non-differentiable reward function R(s), we can train our language model to maximize expected reward.
- Not so fast! (Why not?)
- Problem 1: human-in-the-loop is expensive!
- **Solution:** instead of directly asking humans for preferences, **model their preferences** as a separate (NLP) problem! [Knox and Stone, 2009]

An earthquake hit San Francisco. There was minor property damage, but no injuries.

$$R(s_1) = 8.0$$



The Bay Area has good weather but is prone to earthquakes and wildfires.

$$R(s_2) = 1.2$$



Train an LM $RM_{\phi}(s)$ to predict human preferences from an annotated dataset, then optimize for RM_{ϕ} instead.



How do we model human preferences?

- Problem 2: human judgments are noisy and miscalibrated!
- **Solution:** instead of asking for direct ratings, ask for **pairwise comparisons**, which can be more reliable [Phelps et al., 2015; Clark et al., 2018]

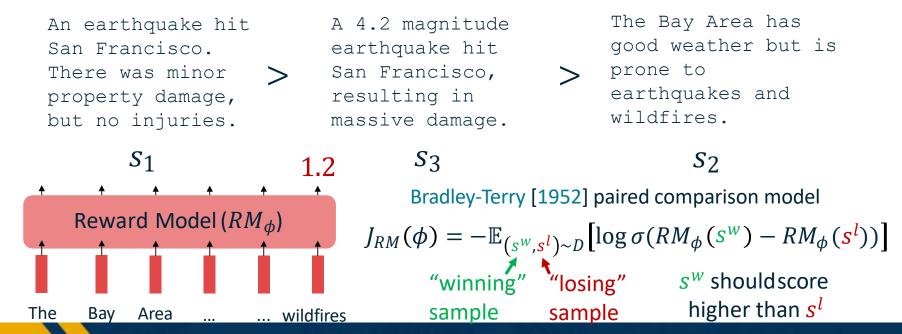
A 4.2 magnitude earthquake hit San Francisco, resulting in massive damage.

$$R(s_3) = 4.1?$$
 6.6? 3.2?



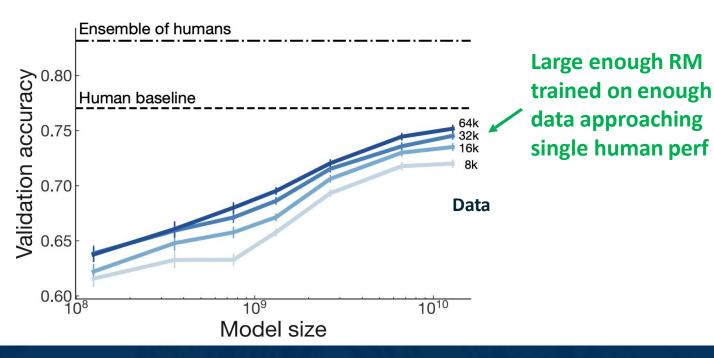
How do we model human preferences?

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Make sure your reward model works first!

Evaluate RM on predicting outcome of held-out human judgments

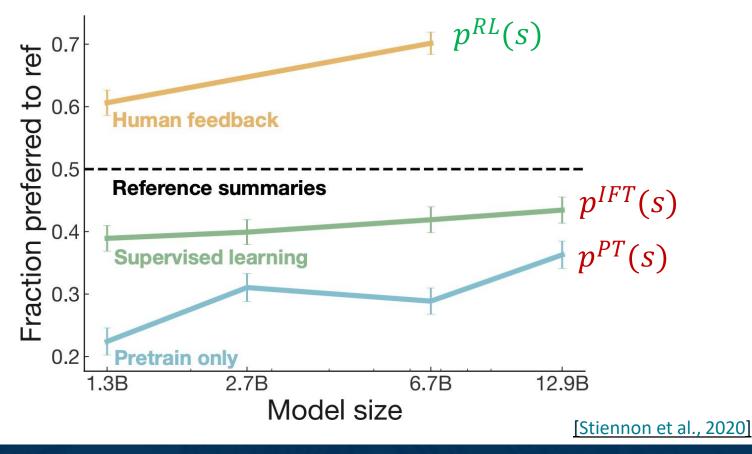


RLHF: Putting it all together [Christiano et al., 2017; Stiennon et al., 2020]

- Finally, we have everything we need:
 - A pretrained (possibly instruction-finetuned) LM $p^{PT}(s)$
 - A reward model $RM_{\phi}(s)$ that produces scalar rewards for LM outputs, trained on a dataset of human comparisons
 - A method for optimizing LM parameters towards an arbitrary reward function.
- Now to do RLHF:
 - Initialize a copy of the model $p_{ heta}^{RL}(s)$, with parameters heta we would like to optimize
 - Optimize the reward with RL



RLHF provides gains over pretraining + finetuning

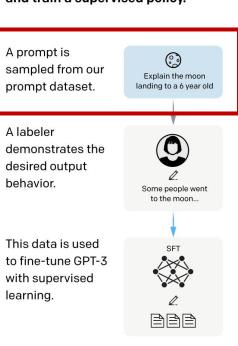


InstructGPT: scaling up RLHF to tens of thousands of tasks

Step 1

Collect demonstration data. and train a supervised policy.

30k tasks!



Step 2

Collect comparison data, and train a reward model.

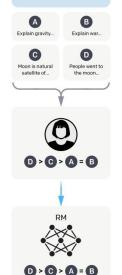
A prompt and several model outputs are sampled.

A labeler ranks

the outputs from best to worst.

This data is used

to train our reward model.



Explain the moon

landing to a 6 year old

Step 3

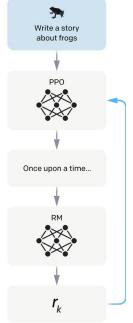
Optimize a policy against the reward model using reinforcement learning.

A new prompt is sampled from the dataset.

The policy generates an output.

The reward model calculates a reward for the output.

The reward is used to update the policy using PPO.



InstructGPT: scaling up RLHF to tens of thousands of tasks

Tasks collected from labelers:

- **Plain:** We simply ask the labelers to come up with an arbitrary task, while ensuring the tasks had sufficient diversity.
- **Few-shot:** We ask the labelers to come up with an instruction, and multiple query/response pairs for that instruction.
- User-based: We had a number of use-cases stated in waitlist applications to the OpenAI API. We asked labelers to come up with prompts corresponding to these use cases.

| Use-case | Prompt |
|---------------|---|
| Brainstorming | List five ideas for how to regain enthusiasm for my career |
| Generation | Write a short story where a bear goes to the beach, makes friends with a seal, and then returns home. |



4

InstructGPT

PROMPT Explain the moon landing to a 6 year old in a few sentences.

COMPLETION

GPT-3

Explain the theory of gravity to a 6 year old.

Explain the theory of relativity to a 6 year old in a few sentences.

Explain the big bang theory to a 6 year old.

Explain evolution to a 6 year old.

InstructGPT

People went to the moon, and they took pictures of what they saw, and sent them back to the earth so we could all see them.

InstructGPT

PROMPT Write a short poem about a wise frog.

COMPLETION GPT-3

Write a short story in which a character has two different names.

Write a short story in which you try to get something back that you have lost.

Write a short story in which a character has a bad dream.

InstructGPT

The frog is a symbol of wisdom
He knows all the secrets of the world
He is a master of disguise
And a great teacher of life
He is a symbol of transformation
And the bringer of change
He is the frog who has seen it all
And knows the meaning of it all

ChatGPT: Instruction Finetuning + RLHF for dialog agents

ChatGPT: Optimizing Language Models for Dialogue

Note: OpenAI (and similar companies) are keeping more details secret about ChatGPT training (including data, training parameters, model size)—perhaps to keep a competitive edge...

Methods

We trained this model using Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback (RLHF), using the same methods as InstructGPT, but with slight differences in the data collection setup. We trained an initial model using supervised fine-tuning: human AI trainers provided conversations in which they played both sides—the user and an AI assistant. We gave the trainers access to model-written suggestions to help them compose their responses. We mixed this new dialogue dataset with the InstructGPT dataset, which we transformed into a dialogue format.

(Instruction finetuning!)

ChatGPT: Instruction Finetuning + RLHF for dialog agents

ChatGPT: Optimizing Language Models for Dialogue

Note: OpenAI (and similar companies) are keeping more details secret about ChatGPT training (including data, training parameters, model size)—perhaps to keep a competitive edge...

Methods

To create a reward model for reinforcement learning, we needed to collect comparison data, which consisted of two or more model responses ranked by quality. To collect this data, we took conversations that AI trainers had with the chatbot. We randomly selected a model-written message, sampled several alternative completions, and had AI trainers rank them. Using these reward models, we can fine-tune the model using <u>Proximal Policy Optimization</u>. We performed several iterations of this process.

(RLHF!)

Summary

- Reinforcement Learning has wide range of uses!
 - Can optimize any non-differentiable "objective"
 - Can be combined with supervised/unsupervised learning
 - Can be combined with other algorithms such as tree search

