

# Cubist Models For Regression

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## 1 Introduction

Cubist is an R port of the Cubist GPL C code released by RuleQuest at

<http://rulequest.com/cubist-info.html>

See the last section of this document for information on the porting. The other parts describes the functionality of the R package.

## 2 Model Trees

Cubist is a rule-based model that is an extension of Quinlan's M5 model tree. A tree is grown where the terminal leaves contain linear regression models. These models are based on the predictors used in previous splits. Also, there are intermediate linear models at each step of the tree. A prediction is made using the linear regression model at the terminal node of the tree, but is "smoothed" by taking into account the prediction from the linear model in the previous node of the tree (which also occurs recursively up the tree). The tree is reduced to a set of rules, which initially are paths from the top of the tree to the bottom. Rules are eliminated via pruning and/or combined for simplification.

This is explained better in Quinlan (1992). Wang and Witten (1997) attempted to recreate this model using a "rational reconstruction" of Quinlan (1992) that is the basis for the [M5P](#) model in Weka (and the R package RWeka).

An example of a model tree can be illustrated using the Boston Housing data in the `mlbench` package.

```
> library(Cubist)
> library(mlbench)
> data(BostonHousing)
> BostonHousing$chas <- as.numeric(BostonHousing$chas) - 1
> set.seed(1)
> inTrain <- sample(1:nrow(BostonHousing), floor(.8*nrow(BostonHousing)))
> trainingPredictors <- BostonHousing[ inTrain, -14]
> testPredictors      <- BostonHousing[-inTrain, -14]
> trainingOutcome <- BostonHousing$medv[ inTrain]
> testOutcome      <- BostonHousing$medv[-inTrain]
> modelTree <- cubist(x = trainingPredictors, y = trainingOutcome)
> modelTree
```

Call:

```
cubist.default(x = trainingPredictors, y = trainingOutcome)
```

Number of samples: 404

Number of predictors: 13

Number of committees: 1

Number of rules: 4

```
> summary(modelTree)
```

Call:

```
cubist.default(x = trainingPredictors, y = trainingOutcome)
```

Cubist [Release 2.07 GPL Edition] Tue Feb 28 13:53:54 2012

-----

Target attribute `outcome'

Read 404 cases (14 attributes) from undefined.data

Model:

Rule 1: [88 cases, mean 13.81, range 5 to 27.5, est err 2.10]

if

nox > 0.668

then

outcome = 2.07 + 3.14 dis - 0.35 lstat + 18.8 nox + 0.007 b  
          - 0.12 ptratio - 0.008 age - 0.02 crim

Rule 2: [153 cases, mean 19.54, range 8.1 to 31, est err 2.16]

```

if
  nox <= 0.668
  lstat > 9.59
then
  outcome = 34.81 - 1 dis - 0.72 ptratio - 0.056 age - 0.19 lstat + 1.5 rm
            - 0.11 indus + 0.004 b

```

Rule 3: [39 cases, mean 24.10, range 11.9 to 50, est err 2.73]

```

if
  rm <= 6.23
  lstat <= 9.59
then
  outcome = 11.89 + 3.69 crim - 1.25 lstat + 3.9 rm - 0.0045 tax
            - 0.16 ptratio

```

Rule 4: [128 cases, mean 31.31, range 16.5 to 50, est err 2.95]

```

if
  rm > 6.23
  lstat <= 9.59
then
  outcome = -1.13 + 1.6 crim - 0.93 lstat + 8.6 rm - 0.0141 tax
            - 0.83 ptratio - 0.47 dis - 0.019 age - 1.1 nox

```

Evaluation on training data (404 cases):

Average  error	2.27
Relative  error	0.34
Correlation coefficient	0.94

Attribute usage:

Conds	Model	
78%	100%	lstat
59%	53%	nox
41%	78%	rm
	100%	ptratio
	90%	age
	90%	dis
	62%	crim
	59%	b
	41%	tax
	38%	indus

Time: 0.0 secs

There is no formula method for `cubist`; the predictors are specified as matrix or data frame and the outcome is a numeric vector.

There is a predict method for the model:

```
> mtPred <- predict(modelTree, testPredictors)
> ## Test set RMSE
> sqrt(mean((mtPred - testOutcome)^2))
```

```
[1] 3.337924
```

```
> ## Test set R^2
> cor(mtPred, testOutcome)^2
```

```
[1] 0.8573504
```

### 3 Ensembles By Committees

The Cubist model can also use a boosting-like scheme called *committees* where iterative model trees are created in sequence. The first tree follows the procedure described in the last section. Subsequent trees are created using adjusted versions to the training set outcome: if the model over-predicted a value, the response is adjusted downward for the next model (and so on). Unlike traditional boosting, stage weights for each committee are not used to average the predictions from each model tree; the final prediction is a simple average of the predictions from each model tree.

The `committee` option can be used to control number of model trees:

```
> set.seed(1)
> committeeModel <- cubist(x = trainingPredictors, y = trainingOutcome,
+                           committees = 5)
> summary(committeeModel)
```

Call:

```
cubist.default(x = trainingPredictors, y = trainingOutcome, committees = 5)
```

```
Cubist [Release 2.07 GPL Edition] Tue Feb 28 13:53:54 2012
```

```
-----
```

```
Target attribute `outcome'
```

```
Read 404 cases (14 attributes) from undefined.data
```

```
Model 1:
```

Rule 1/1: [88 cases, mean 13.81, range 5 to 27.5, est err 2.10]

```
if
  nox > 0.668
then
  outcome = 2.07 + 3.14 dis - 0.35 lstat + 18.8 nox + 0.007 b
            - 0.12 ptratio - 0.008 age - 0.02 crim
```

Rule 1/2: [153 cases, mean 19.54, range 8.1 to 31, est err 2.16]

```
if
  nox <= 0.668
  lstat > 9.59
then
  outcome = 34.81 - 1 dis - 0.72 ptratio - 0.056 age - 0.19 lstat + 1.5 rm
            - 0.11 indus + 0.004 b
```

Rule 1/3: [39 cases, mean 24.10, range 11.9 to 50, est err 2.73]

```
if
  rm <= 6.23
  lstat <= 9.59
then
  outcome = 11.89 + 3.69 crim - 1.25 lstat + 3.9 rm - 0.0045 tax
            - 0.16 ptratio
```

Rule 1/4: [128 cases, mean 31.31, range 16.5 to 50, est err 2.95]

```
if
  rm > 6.23
  lstat <= 9.59
then
  outcome = -1.13 + 1.6 crim - 0.93 lstat + 8.6 rm - 0.0141 tax
            - 0.83 ptratio - 0.47 dis - 0.019 age - 1.1 nox
```

Model 2:

Rule 2/1: [71 cases, mean 13.41, range 5 to 27.5, est err 2.66]

```
if
  crim > 5.69175
  dis > 1.4254
then
  outcome = 42.13 + 2.45 dis - 0.47 lstat - 0.71 ptratio - 1.8 rm
```

Rule 2/2: [84 cases, mean 18.75, range 8.1 to 27.5, est err 2.25]

```
if
  crim <= 5.69175
  nox > 0.532
  dis > 1.4254
```

```
    tax > 222
    ptratio > 17
then
    outcome = 44.08 + 1.19 crim - 0.43 lstat - 1.05 ptratio - 0.011 age
```

Rule 2/3: [15 cases, mean 23.43, range 5 to 50, est err 5.62]

```
if
    dis <= 1.4254
    ptratio > 17
then
    outcome = 174.86 - 100.95 dis - 1.07 lstat - 0.09 ptratio
```

Rule 2/4: [77 cases, mean 23.90, range 11.8 to 50, est err 2.37]

```
if
    ptratio <= 17
    lstat > 5.12
then
    outcome = -3.3 + 8.3 rm - 0.0238 tax - 1.66 dis - 0.063 age - 0.1 lstat
            - 0.21 ptratio - 3.8 nox + 0.007 zn
```

Rule 2/5: [128 cases, mean 25.56, range 14.4 to 50, est err 3.12]

```
if
    crim <= 5.69175
    nox <= 0.532
    ptratio > 17
then
    outcome = -15.58 + 2.43 crim + 7.1 rm - 0.075 age + 0.24 lstat
            - 0.41 dis - 0.16 ptratio
```

Rule 2/6: [16 cases, mean 27.91, range 15.7 to 39.8, est err 5.25]

```
if
    tax <= 222
    lstat > 5.12
then
    outcome = 274.62 - 12.31 ptratio - 0.212 age - 0.03 lstat
```

Rule 2/7: [18 cases, mean 30.49, range 22.5 to 50, est err 3.69]

```
if
    rm <= 6.861
    lstat <= 5.12
then
    outcome = -58.03 + 10.96 crim + 13.3 rm - 0.03 lstat - 0.08 dis
            - 0.06 ptratio - 1.1 nox
```

Rule 2/8: [19 cases, mean 41.54, range 31.2 to 50, est err 3.63]

```
if
  rm > 6.861
  age <= 71
  lstat <= 5.12
then
  outcome = -56.93 + 14.2 rm - 0.07 lstat - 0.2 dis - 2.6 nox
            - 0.13 ptratio + 0.006 zn
```

Rule 2/9: [14 cases, mean 43.48, range 22.8 to 50, est err 5.55]

```
if
  age > 71
  lstat <= 5.12
then
  outcome = -24.48 + 1.99 crim + 0.467 age + 3.5 rm
```

Model 3:

Rule 3/1: [88 cases, mean 13.81, range 5 to 27.5, est err 2.32]

```
if
  nox > 0.668
then
  outcome = -9 + 5.5 dis + 19.4 nox + 0.014 b - 0.12 lstat - 0.16 ptratio
            - 0.04 crim
```

Rule 3/2: [10 cases, mean 17.64, range 11.7 to 27.5, est err 11.68]

```
if
  nox <= 0.668
  b <= 179.36
then
  outcome = -2.07 + 0.149 b + 0.77 lstat
```

Rule 3/3: [156 cases, mean 19.68, range 8.1 to 33.8, est err 2.23]

```
if
  nox <= 0.668
  lstat > 9.53
then
  outcome = 28.56 - 1.09 dis - 0.27 lstat - 0.068 age + 2.6 rm
            - 0.6 ptratio
```

Rule 3/4: [164 cases, mean 29.68, range 11.9 to 50, est err 3.44]

```
if
  lstat <= 9.53
then
  outcome = 6.57 + 4.08 crim - 0.75 lstat + 7.6 rm - 0.0301 tax
            - 0.79 ptratio - 0.15 dis - 2.2 nox + 0.001 b
```

Model 4:

Rule 4/1: [335 cases, mean 19.44, range 5 to 50, est err 2.69]

```
if
  rm <= 7.079
  lstat > 5.12
then
  outcome = 45.08 - 0.4 lstat + 0.27 rad - 0.0124 tax - 0.2 crim
            - 0.6 ptratio - 8.5 nox - 0.36 dis - 0.04 indus
```

Rule 4/2: [19 cases, mean 20.96, range 5 to 50, est err 6.81]

```
if
  rm <= 7.079
  dis <= 1.4261
then
  outcome = 163.2 - 85.4 dis - 1.21 lstat - 0.15 crim
```

Rule 4/3: [111 cases, mean 23.01, range 14.4 to 32, est err 1.92]

```
if
  nox <= 0.51
  rm <= 7.079
  tax > 193
  lstat > 5.12
then
  outcome = 9.18 + 12.12 crim + 2.8 rm - 0.031 age - 0.05 lstat + 0.04 rad
            - 0.002 tax - 0.1 ptratio - 0.1 dis - 1.6 nox
```

Rule 4/4: [9 cases, mean 24.33, range 15.7 to 36.2, est err 7.38]

```
if
  rm <= 7.079
  tax <= 193
  lstat > 5.12
then
  outcome = 22.72
```

Rule 4/5: [18 cases, mean 30.49, range 22.5 to 50, est err 4.91]

```
if
  rm <= 6.861
  lstat <= 5.12
then
  outcome = 20.95 + 8.16 crim - 0.54 lstat + 0.23 rad + 1.3 rm
```

Rule 4/6: [35 cases, mean 36.15, range 22.5 to 50, est err 3.61]

```
if
  age <= 71
```



```
    lstat <= 5.12
then
    outcome = -67.4 + 15.9 rm - 1.05 rad - 0.005 b - 0.05 lstat
```

Rule 4/7: [43 cases, mean 39.37, range 15 to 50, est err 6.37]

```
if
    rm > 7.079
then
    outcome = -123.73 + 0.308 b + 8.8 rm - 0.45 rad - 1.38 ptratio
              - 0.04 lstat - 0.0016 tax - 0.1 dis - 1.2 nox - 0.02 indus
              - 0.01 crim
```

Rule 4/8: [14 cases, mean 43.48, range 22.8 to 50, est err 5.14]

```
if
    age > 71
    lstat <= 5.12
then
    outcome = -34.28 + 0.598 age - 0.75 lstat + 6.1 rm - 0.047 b + 0.16 rad
```

Model 5:

Rule 5/1: [88 cases, mean 13.81, range 5 to 27.5, est err 2.73]

```
if
    nox > 0.668
then
    outcome = -35.12 + 8.59 dis + 38.7 nox + 0.017 b - 0.04 lstat
              - 0.07 ptratio + 0.01 rad + 0.1 rm
```

Rule 5/2: [156 cases, mean 19.68, range 8.1 to 33.8, est err 2.53]

```
if
    nox <= 0.668
    lstat > 9.53
then
    outcome = 44.88 - 1.48 dis - 0.076 age - 0.28 lstat - 0.8 ptratio
              + 0.012 b + 0.1 rad + 0.3 rm - 1.6 nox - 0.0007 tax
```

Rule 5/3: [189 cases, mean 24.76, range 12.7 to 50, est err 2.41]

```
if
    dis > 3.3175
then
    outcome = -24.62 + 1.13 crim + 10.4 rm - 0.0183 tax - 0.69 dis
              - 0.19 lstat - 0.043 age - 0.26 ptratio + 0.022 zn
```

Rule 5/4: [44 cases, mean 35.04, range 11.9 to 50, est err 6.37]

```
if
```

```
dis <= 3.3175
lstat <= 9.53
then
  outcome = 32.74 + 6.34 crim - 0.0468 tax - 0.87 lstat + 5.5 rm
            - 1.16 ptratio
```

Evaluation on training data (404 cases):

Average  error	1.91
Relative  error	0.29
Correlation coefficient	0.96

Attribute usage:

Conds	Model
65%	99% lstat
46%	56% nox
32%	71% rm
18%	88% dis
13%	95% ptratio
12%	65% crim
9%	55% tax
4%	56% age
	36% b
	34% rad
	23% indus
	12% zn

Time: 0.1 secs

For this model:

```
> cmPred <- predict(committeeModel, testPredictors)
> ## RMSE
> sqrt(mean((cmPred - testOutcome)^2))

[1] 2.870122

> ## R^2
> cor(cmPred, testOutcome)^2

[1] 0.8955536
```

## 4 Instance-Based Corrections

Another innovation in Cubist using nearest-neighbors to adjust the predictions from the rule-based model. First, a model tree (with or without committees) is created. Once a sample is predicted by this model, Cubist can find it's nearest neighbors and determine the average of these training set points. See Quinlan (1993a) for the details of the adjustment.

The development of rules and committees is independent of the choice of using instances. The original C code allowed the program to choose whether to use instances, not use them or let the program decide. Our approach is to build a model with the `cubist` function that is ignorant to the decision about instances. When samples are predicted, the argument `neighbors` can be used to adjust the rule-based model predictions (or not).

We can add instances to the previously fit committee model:

```
> instancePred <- predict(committeeModel, testPredictors, neighbors = 5)
> ## RMSE
> sqrt(mean((instancePred - testOutcome)^2))

[1] 2.693565

> ## R^2
> cor(instancePred, testOutcome)^2

[1] 0.9111374
```

Note that the previous models used the implicit default of `neighbors = 0` for their predictions.

To tune the model over different values of `neighbors` and `committees`, the `train` function in the `caret` package can be used to optimize these parameters. For example:

```
> library(caret)
> set.seed(1)
> cTune <- train(x = trainingPredictors, y = trainingOutcome,
+               "cubist",
+               tuneGrid = expand.grid(.committees = c(1, 10, 50, 100),
+                                     .neighbors = c(0, 1, 5, 9)),
+               trControl = trainControl(method = "cv"))
> cTune
```

```
404 samples
 13 predictors
```

```
No pre-processing
Resampling: Cross-Validation (10 fold)
```

```
Summary of sample sizes: 363, 363, 363, 363, 362, 365, ...
```

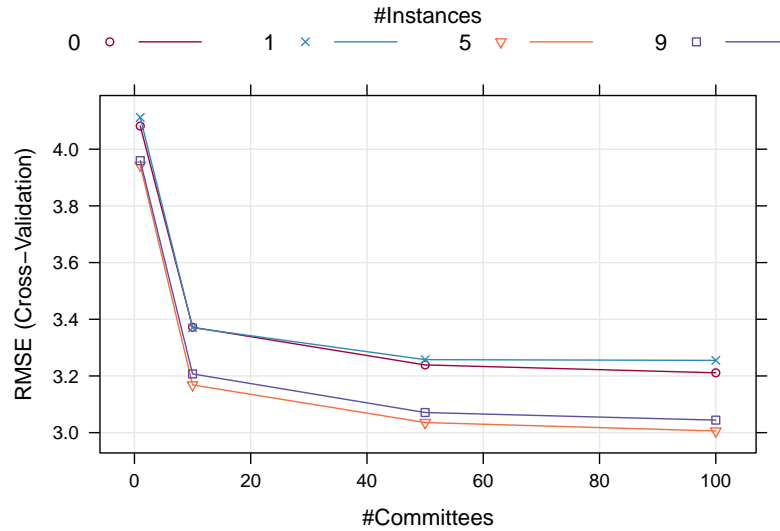


Figure 1: The relationship between performance and the two tuning parameters, as estimated using cross-validation.

Resampling results across tuning parameters:

committees	neighbors	RMSE	Rsquared	RMSE SD	Rsquared SD
1	0	4.08	0.792	1.3	0.15
1	1	4.11	0.795	1.25	0.14
1	5	3.94	0.805	1.27	0.141
1	9	3.96	0.802	1.33	0.149
10	0	3.37	0.86	0.935	0.0811
10	1	3.37	0.868	0.846	0.0725
10	5	3.17	0.877	0.941	0.0778
10	9	3.21	0.873	0.95	0.0798
50	0	3.24	0.87	0.982	0.0837
50	1	3.26	0.874	0.928	0.0801
50	5	3.04	0.885	1.02	0.0828
50	9	3.07	0.881	1.02	0.0844
100	0	3.21	0.871	1.02	0.085
100	1	3.25	0.874	0.985	0.0846
100	5	3.01	0.886	1.05	0.0853
100	9	3.04	0.882	1.06	0.0867

RMSE was used to select the optimal model using the smallest value.

The final values used for the model were committees = 100 and neighbors = 5.

Figure 1 shows the profiles of the tuning parameters produced using `plot(cTune)`.

It may also be useful to see how different models fit a single predictor:

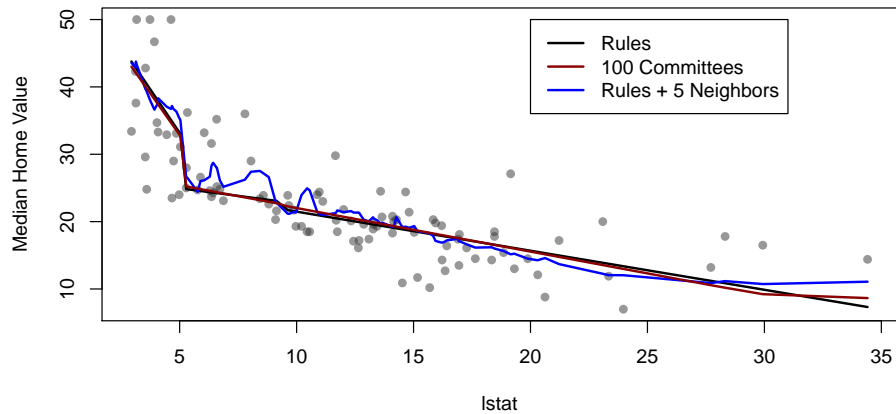


Figure 2: Different Cubist models for a single predictor.

```
> lstat <- trainingPredictors[, "lstat", drop = FALSE]
> justRules <- cubist(lstat, trainingOutcome)
> andCommittees <- cubist(lstat, trainingOutcome, committees = 100)
```

Figure 2 shows the model fits for the test data. For these data, there doesn't appear to be much of an improvement when committees or instances are added to the based rules.

## 5 Variable Importance

The `modelTree` method for Cubist shows the usage of each variable in either the rule conditions or the (terminal) linear model. In actuality, many more linear models are used in prediction than are shown in the output. Because of this, the variable usage statistics shown at the end of the output of the `summary` function will probably be inconsistent with the rules also shown in the output. At each split of the tree, Cubist saves a linear model (after feature selection) that is allowed to have terms for each variable used in the current split or any split above it. Quinlan (1992) discusses a smoothing algorithm where each model prediction is a linear combination of the parent and child model along the tree. As such, the final prediction is a function of all the linear models from the initial node to the terminal node. The percentages shown in the Cubist output reflect all the models involved in prediction (as opposed to the terminal models shown in the output).

The raw usage statistics are contained in a data frame called `usage` in the `cubist` object.

The `caret` package has a general variable importance method `varImp`. When using this function on a `cubist` argument, the variable importance is a linear combination of the usage in the rule

conditions and the model.

For example:

```
> summary(modelTree)
```

Call:

```
cubist.default(x = trainingPredictors, y = trainingOutcome)
```

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-----  
Target attribute `outcome'

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Model:

Rule 1: [88 cases, mean 13.81, range 5 to 27.5, est err 2.10]

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```
if
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then
  outcome = 34.81 - 1 dis - 0.72 ptratio - 0.056 age - 0.19 lstat + 1.5 rm
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```

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  lstat <= 9.59
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Rule 4: [128 cases, mean 31.31, range 16.5 to 50, est err 2.95]

```
if
  rm > 6.23
  lstat <= 9.59
then
```

```
outcome = -1.13 + 1.6 crim - 0.93 lstat + 8.6 rm - 0.0141 tax
          - 0.83 ptratio - 0.47 dis - 0.019 age - 1.1 nox
```

Evaluation on training data (404 cases):

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Attribute usage:

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41%	78%	rm
	100%	ptratio
	90%	age
	90%	dis
	62%	crim
	59%	b
	41%	tax
	38%	indus

Time: 0.0 secs

```
> modelTree$usage
```

	Conditions	Model	Variable
1	78	100	lstat
2	59	53	nox
3	41	78	rm
4	0	100	ptratio
5	0	90	age
6	0	90	dis
7	0	62	crim
8	0	59	b
9	0	41	tax
10	0	38	indus
11	0	0	zn
12	0	0	chas
13	0	0	rad

```
> library(caret)
> varImp(modelTree)
```

	Overall
lstat	89.0
nox	56.0

rm	59.5
ptratio	50.0
age	45.0
dis	45.0
crim	31.0
b	29.5
tax	20.5
indus	19.0
zn	0.0
chas	0.0
rad	0.0

It should be noted that this variable importance measure does not capture the influence of the predictors when using the instance-based correction.

## 6 Exporting the Model

As previously mentioned, this code is a port of the command-line C code. To run the C code, the training set data must be converted to a specific file format as detailed on the RuleQuest website. Two files are created. The `file.data` file is a header-less, comma delimited version of the data (the `file` part is a name given by the user). The `file.names` file provides information about the columns (eg. levels for categorical data and so on). After running the C program, another text file called `file.models`, which contains the information needed for prediction.

Once a model has been built with the R `cubist` package, the `exportCubistFiles` can be used to create the `.data`, `.names` and `.model` files so that the same model can be run at the command-line.

## 7 Current Limitations

There are a few features in the C code that are not yet operational in the R package:

- only continuous and categorical predictors can be used (the original source code allows for other data types)
- there is an option to let the C code decide on using instances or not. The choice is more explicit in this package
- non-standard predictor names are not currently checked/fixed
- the C code supports binning of predictors

Many of these features will be implemented in the future.



## 8 About the Cubist C Code and Our Approach

This section may be interesting or important to those of you who care about the implementation (if you exist at all).

The cubist sources are written to take specific data files from the file system, pull them into memory, run the computations, then write the results to a text file that is also saved to the file system. The code makes use of a lot of global variables (especially for the data). The code has been around for a while and, after reading it, one can tell that the author put in a lot of time to catch many special cases. At Pfizer, we have pushed millions of samples through the non-GPL code without any substantive errors.

So the approach here is to pass in the training data as strings that mimic the formats that one would use with the command line version and get back the textual representation that would be saved to the `.model` file also as a string. The prediction function would then pass the model text string (and the data text string if instances are used) to the C code for prediction.

We did this for a few reasons. First, this approach would require us to re-write `main()` and touch as little of the original code as possible (otherwise we would have to write a parser for the data and try to get it into the global variable structure with complete fidelity). Second, most modeling functions implicitly assume that the data matrix is all numeric, thus factors are converted to dummy variables etc. Cubist doesn't want categorical data split into dummy variables based on how it does splits. Thus, we would have to pass in the numeric and categorical predictors separately unless we want to get really fancy.

## 9 Session Information

- R version 2.14.0 (2011-10-31), x86\_64-apple-darwin9.8.0
- Locale: C/en\_US.UTF-8/en\_US.UTF-8/C/en\_US.UTF-8/en\_US.UTF-8
- Base packages: base, datasets, grDevices, graphics, methods, stats, utils
- Other packages: Cubist 0.0.12, caret 5.14-023, cluster 1.14.1, codetools 0.2-8, foreach 1.3.2, iterators 1.0.5, lattice 0.20-0, mlbench 2.1-0, plyr 1.7.1, reshape 0.8.4, reshape2 1.2.1
- Loaded via a namespace (and not attached): compiler 2.14.0, grid 2.14.0, stringr 0.6, tools 2.14.0

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