
Postgraduate Certificate in Data-Driven Science Journalism

Data Science Fundamentals

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Data Science is a multidisciplinary field that combines statistics, machine learning, and computer science to extract insights and knowledge from data. In the Postgraduate Certificate in Data-Driven Science Journalism program, understanding the fundamentals of Data Science is crucial for effectively analyzing and interpreting data to create compelling stories based on evidence and facts. Below are some key terms and vocabulary that are essential for mastering Data Science fundamentals:

1. Data:

Data refers to facts, statistics, or information collected for analysis. It can be in various forms such as text, numbers, images, or videos. In Data Science, data is the foundation for making informed decisions and deriving insights.

Example: A dataset containing information about sales transactions, customer demographics, and product details.

2. Data Science:

Data Science is a field that involves using scientific methods, algorithms, and systems to extract knowledge and insights from structured and unstructured data. It encompasses data analysis, machine learning, data visualization, and more.

Example: Using machine learning algorithms to predict customer churn based on historical data.

3. Machine Learning:

Machine Learning is a subset of artificial intelligence that enables systems to learn from data without being explicitly programmed. It involves developing algorithms that can improve their performance over time based on experience.

Example: Training a model to classify emails as spam or non-spam based on their content.

4. Data Analysis:

Data Analysis is the process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming, and modeling data to discover useful information, suggest conclusions, and support decision-making. It involves techniques such as statistical analysis and data visualization.

Example: Analyzing social media data to identify trends and sentiments related to a specific topic.

5. Data Visualization:

Data Visualization is the graphical representation of data to visually communicate insights and patterns. It includes charts, graphs, maps, and other visual elements that help users understand complex data more easily.

Example: Creating a bar chart to compare sales performance across different regions.

6. Statistical Analysis:

Statistical Analysis involves using statistical methods to analyze data and draw conclusions. It helps in understanding patterns, relationships, and trends in the data, as well as making predictions based on probability.

Example: Conducting hypothesis testing to determine if there is a significant difference in sales between two marketing campaigns.

7. Predictive Analytics:

Predictive Analytics is the practice of using data, statistical algorithms, and machine learning techniques to identify the likelihood of future outcomes based on historical data. It helps in forecasting trends and making informed decisions.

Example: Predicting the demand for a product based on past sales data and market trends.

8. Data Mining:

Data Mining is the process of discovering patterns and relationships in large datasets through methods such as clustering, classification, and association rule mining. It helps in uncovering hidden insights and knowledge from data.

Example: Using association rule mining to identify purchasing patterns in a retail dataset.

9. Big Data:

Big Data refers to large volumes of data that cannot be processed or analyzed using traditional methods. It involves storing, managing, and analyzing massive datasets to extract valuable insights.

Example: Analyzing social media data from millions of users to understand consumer behavior and preferences.

10. Data Wrangling:

Data Wrangling, also known as data munging, is the process of cleaning, structuring, and enriching raw data into a format suitable for analysis. It involves tasks such as data cleaning, transformation, and normalization.

Example: Removing missing values and outliers from a dataset before performing statistical analysis.

11. Data Ethics:

Data Ethics refers to the moral principles and guidelines governing the collection, use, and sharing of data.

It involves ensuring data privacy, transparency, and fairness in all data-related activities.

Example: Implementing strict data protection measures to safeguard sensitive information collected from users.

12. Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA):

Exploratory Data Analysis is the initial step in analyzing data to summarize its main characteristics and uncover patterns, trends, and outliers. It helps in understanding the nature of the data before applying more complex analysis techniques.

Example: Visualizing the distribution of a variable using histograms and box plots.

13. Feature Engineering:

Feature Engineering is the process of creating new features or variables from existing data to improve the performance of machine learning models. It involves selecting, transforming, and combining features to make them more predictive.

Example: Creating a new feature by calculating the ratio of two existing variables in a dataset.

14. Model Evaluation:

Model Evaluation is the process of assessing the performance of a machine learning model on unseen data. It involves metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall, and F1 score to measure how well the model generalizes to new data.

Example: Calculating the confusion matrix to evaluate the performance of a classification model.

15. Overfitting and Underfitting:

Overfitting and Underfitting are common issues in machine learning where a model either learns the training data too well (overfitting) or fails to capture the underlying patterns (underfitting). Balancing model complexity is essential to avoid these problems.

Example: Adjusting the hyperparameters of a model to prevent overfitting on the training data.

16. Bias-Variance Tradeoff:

The Bias-Variance Tradeoff is a key concept in machine learning that aims to find the right balance between bias (underfitting) and variance (overfitting). It involves minimizing errors due to bias and variance to improve model performance.

Example: Tuning the complexity of a model to reduce both bias and variance for optimal performance.

17. Feature Selection:

Feature Selection is the process of selecting the most relevant features from a dataset to improve model performance and reduce computational complexity. It helps in eliminating irrelevant or redundant features

that do not contribute to the predictive power of the model.

Example: Using techniques like Recursive Feature Elimination to select the best features for a predictive model.

18. Regression Analysis:

Regression Analysis is a statistical technique used to model the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. It helps in predicting continuous outcomes based on the input variables.

Example: Building a regression model to predict house prices based on features like size, location, and number of bedrooms.

19. Classification:

Classification is a supervised learning technique used to categorize data into predefined classes or labels. It involves training a model on labeled data to predict the class of new instances based on their features.

Example: Classifying email messages as spam or non-spam using a classification algorithm.

20. Clustering:

Clustering is an unsupervised learning technique used to group similar data points into clusters based on their characteristics. It helps in identifying patterns and structures in the data without the need for predefined labels.

Example: Segmenting customers into distinct groups based on their purchasing behavior using clustering algorithms.

21. Natural Language Processing (NLP):

Natural Language Processing is a branch of artificial intelligence that focuses on enabling computers to understand, interpret, and generate human language. It involves tasks such as text classification, sentiment analysis, and language translation.

Example: Analyzing customer reviews to extract sentiment and feedback using NLP techniques.

22. Deep Learning:

Deep Learning is a subset of machine learning that uses artificial neural networks with multiple layers to model complex patterns and relationships in data. It excels in tasks such as image recognition, speech recognition, and natural language processing.

Example: Training a deep learning model to recognize objects in images with high accuracy.

23. Data Journalism:

Data Journalism is a form of journalism that involves using data analysis and visualization techniques to

uncover, explain, and present news stories. It combines traditional reporting skills with data-driven insights to create compelling narratives.

Example: Investigating government spending using public datasets to uncover corruption and inefficiencies.

24. Data Storytelling:

Data Storytelling is the art of using data, visualizations, and narratives to communicate insights and findings in a compelling and engaging way. It involves transforming complex data into a coherent and impactful story for the audience.

Example: Creating an interactive data visualization to illustrate the impact of climate change on global temperatures.

25. Data Literacy:

Data Literacy refers to the ability to read, interpret, and communicate data effectively. It involves understanding data sources, formats, and analysis techniques to make informed decisions and contribute meaningfully to data-driven projects.

Example: Training journalists in data literacy skills to enhance their ability to analyze and report on complex datasets.

26. Data Bias:

Data Bias refers to systematic errors in data collection or analysis that result in unfair, inaccurate, or misleading conclusions. It can arise from sampling biases, algorithmic biases, or human biases and needs to be addressed to ensure fairness and integrity in data-driven projects.

Example: Identifying gender bias in a recruitment algorithm that favors male candidates over female candidates.

27. Data Privacy:

Data Privacy refers to the protection of personal information collected by organizations and individuals. It involves ensuring that data is collected, stored, and used ethically and securely to prevent unauthorized access or misuse.

Example: Implementing data encryption and access controls to safeguard sensitive information from data breaches.

28. Data Security:

Data Security involves protecting data from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, disruption, modification, or destruction. It includes measures such as encryption, authentication, and backup to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of data.

Example: Implementing multi-factor authentication to secure access to a database containing confidential

information.

29. Data Governance:

Data Governance refers to the overall management of data assets within an organization. It involves policies, procedures, and controls to ensure that data is accurate, consistent, secure, and compliant with regulations.

Example: Establishing data governance guidelines to standardize data quality and usage across departments.

30. Data Integration:

Data Integration is the process of combining data from multiple sources into a unified view for analysis and decision-making. It involves techniques such as data cleaning, transformation, and loading to create a cohesive and reliable dataset.

Example: Merging customer data from sales, marketing, and support systems to create a 360-degree view of customer interactions.

By mastering these key terms and concepts in Data Science fundamentals, journalists in the Postgraduate Certificate in Data-Driven Science Journalism program can effectively analyze, interpret, and communicate data-driven stories with accuracy, clarity, and impact.