Callisto: Capturing the "Why" by Connecting Conversations with Computational Narratives

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Collaborative Data Science





Histogram for SalePrice

Computational notebooks allow data scientists to document and replicate the exploration process.

Code Explanatory text Intermediate output

Collaborative Data Science









Alice and Bob joined the shared notebook. They decided to explore outliers together.

Remove Outliers by Stats



In []: #data = data[(np.abs(stats.zscore(data)) < 5).all(axis=</pre> In []: ####### TODO ####### # any additional analysis In []: #print(np.unique(df train['YrSold'], return counts=True #np.where(df train['YrSold'] == 2007) abc = np.where(df_train['YrSold'] == 2008)[0] df subset = df train['SalePrice'] useful subset = dict(df subset) for x in abc: useful subset[x] х In []: # print(np.unique(df train['YearBuilt'], return counts= abc = np.where(df train['YrSold'] == 2008) abc = list(abc)[0]prices = [] for x in abc: prices.append(df_train['SalePrice'][x])

print(np.mean(prices) - np.mean(df_train['SalePrice']))

In [18]: np.unique(df_train['YrSold'])

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Out[18]: array([2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010])
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2 days later...





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What the hell is going on?



Out[18]: array([2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010])



- Difficult to maintain an updated explanation and a clean notebook during the exploration process (Rule et al. CHI18)
- Write lower quality code, change the execution order, or accidentally overwrite important analyses while iterating on different ideas (Kery et al., CHI19, Head et al., CHI19)
- Can be amplified in a collaborative setting where it is important to keep a shared understanding of past design decisions across team members (Wang et al., CSCW19, Koesten et al., CHI19, Kery et al., VL/HCC17)



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Data Science G 🕤 🖧	#houseprice 얇ㅣ옾3ㅣ�0ㅣ� Add a topic	
1 Threads	#houseprice	
hannels 🕀	@Alice created this channel today. This is the very beginning	
general	\mathscr{O} Set a purpose + Add an app $\ & \ & \ & \ & \ & \ & \ & \ & \ & \ $	
houseprice		
random		
Add a channel	Alice 2:53 AM joined #houseprice along with Bob.	
i <mark>rect Messages</mark> ⊕ 9 Slackbot	Bob 2:58 AM so I think we need to solve these 6 tasks	
Peggy (you)	it looks like it's related to trying to predict house prices from a r	
[#] Alice [#] Bob	Alice 2:59 AM yes	
Invite people	Bob 2:59 AM and luckily we have lots of helpful outline code.	
	let's look at this together	
,pps (+)	Alice 2:59 AM	S
Add apps	Pata and a stress of the stres	XOX
	LotArea is probably important, i put it in our list	E
	Alice 2:59 AM	





We propose to improve collaborative data science by connecting discussions with computational notebooks.



Formative Study

RQ: How can discussions be useful for explaining the data-exploration process?

Remove Outliers by Stats



- Six data science students working remotely in pairs
- Collected and analyzed 760 chat messages



Purpose1) Reflecting; 2) Planning; 3) Check-in; 4) Cooperation; 5) Out-of-scope



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Relevance 1) Ideas that were only discussed but never implemented 2) Ideas that had not yet been implemented when the message was sent, but appeared in the notebook later 3) Ideas that had been implemented in the notebook when the message was sent, but did not appear in the final notebook 4) Ideas that had been implemented when the message was sent and appeared in the final notebook

Formative Study

Purpose 1) Reflecting; 2) Planning; 3) Check-in; 4) Cooperation; 5) Out-of-scope

Relevance 1) Ideas that were only discussed but never implemented 2) Ideas that had not yet been implemented when the message was sent, but appeared in the notebook later 3) Ideas that had been implemented in the notebook when the message was sent, but did not appear in the final notebook; 4) Ideas that had been implemented when the message was sent and appeared in the final notebook

Granularity 1) Directly referred to a specific line of code 2) Directly referred to the output of a cell 3) High-level ideas across multiple cells

Chat messages are useful for explaining the exploration process.

Formative Study

Chat messages are difficult to follow.

Notebook elements are frequently referred to in chat messages.

Overview



Design of Callisto





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	Jupyter	ice	
Alice 3:30pm Executed a modified cell @@ -1,7 +1,7 @@ # scatter plot grlivarea/s + data.plot.scatter(x= <mark>'Grliv</mark>	Current Notebook 5 minutes ago House Price Prediction Is there a linear relationship between GrLivArea and SalePrice?	Chat	
Bob 3:31pm Executed a modified cell	<pre>In [8]: # scatter plot grlivarea/saleprice B A data.plot.scatter(x='GrLivArea', y='SalePrice'); </pre>	search Alice What about these outlie Bob Let me check their value	Q 3:30pm rs? marker 3:31pm ss.
Alice 3:35pm Executed a modified cell		Bob They were both sold in 2 Alice Financial crash?	3:33pm 2008 cell 3:34pm
	In []:	Write your message	*



	Jupyter	Alice
Alice 3:30pm Executed a modified cell @@ -1,7 +1,7 @@ # scatter plot grlivarea/s	Current Notebook To minutes ago Click on Click on	references in chat
+ data.plot.scatter(x="GrLiv Bob 3:31pm Executed a modified cell	Is there a linear relationship between GrLivArea and SalePrice? In [8]: # scatter plot grlivarea/saleprice B A data.plot.scatter(x='GrLivArea', y='SalePrice');	Chat search Q Alice 3:30pm What about these outlier ? marker
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Executed a modified cell		Alice Subprime What about these outliers? marker Bob Si31pm Let me check their values. Select one message Bob
Alice 3:35pm Executed a modified cell	In []: View the snapshot o the notebook	They were both sold in 2008 cell Alice 3:34pm Financial crash? F Snapshot */>Edit Link (1) Cancel (1)



	Jupyter	Filter Rob Alice
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	In []: In []:	gate to diff view Diff 'D) Edit Link (1) Cancel (2)







From notebook content to messages -- "why changes were made"





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Two Stage Evaluation





- Stage 1: the real-time collaboration study
 - Participants working in pairs on a data science task in real time (N = 8 + 4)
 - 90 minute lab session
- Stage 2: the follow-up study
 - A third individual joining the shared project using Callisto or a lite version with no contextual links (N = 20)

Stage 1: The Real-time Collaboration Study



- Manual references (7.5/101 messages per group)
 - Mostly use cell pointers
 - I can know my collaborator's cursor so it is easy to know what she is talking about. So we didn't use much references, only a few cell links. (P3, expert)
- Automatically inferred references
 - 92% are connected to the correct context



- Comparing how a new collaborator followed up with an ongoing collaborative project
 - Explore the notebook and answer five questions related to prior analysis
 - Use the tool in depth to follow up on their work
- Merging and modifying the collaboration assets (the notebook history, chat messages, and their connections) produced in Stage 1



• Questionnaire score -- significantly improved

Control Condition	Experiment Condition	
The need to chec	k chat messages	
• Difficult to follow the chat messages	 Keep the filtering mode enabled Go back and forth to check context of messages Better understand how a code change resulted in an output change 	





The result looks much better!







- Reducing the Burden of Communication
 - Hesitant to make accurate and polished references, or to create references
 - Remote collaborators co-design a shared artifact that changes over time
- Improving the Accuracy of Contextual Links
 - E.g., if a message describes a future action, the relevant cell may not exist when the message is sent
- Towards Generating Meta-Narratives
 - Not only need to understand the computational narrative itself but also how that narrative evolved—the meta-narrative behind the narrative

Callisto: Capturing the "Why" by Connecting Conversations with Computational Narratives

- empirical evidence of the challenges that data scientists encounter when catching up with an ongoing group project
- the design of Callisto with a set of features to make chat messages more useful for understanding the past exploration process in the notebook
- empirical insights into how users engage with and perceive these features
- evidence that creating mappings between messages, notebook elements, and versions helps data scientists understand and follow up on the exploration pipeline





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Steve Oney Assistant Professor Michigan SI

