

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF SYNTHETIC DATA GENERATION IN TRAINING ROBUST INSURANCE MODELS AND MITIGATING DATA PRIVACY CONCERNS

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ABSTRACT

The insurance industry's growing dependence on data-driven models highlights the need for practical ways to resolve data privacy issues and improve model resilience. With an emphasis on techniques like Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) and Variational Autoencoders (VAEs), this study explores the use of synthetic data creation in training insurance models. Synthetic data delivers equivalent efficacy while resolving privacy concerns, according to the research, which compares the performance of models trained with synthetic data to those taught with actual data. Synthetic data reduces the risks involved with managing sensitive information by using strategies including anonymization, de-identification, and differential privacy. The findings imply that synthetic data might be used as a useful instrument to improve model accuracy and data privacy in the insurance industry. The results demonstrate how synthetic data may be used to strike a compromise between privacy and data value, encouraging safer and more effective data management techniques.

1. Introduction

The need of data-driven decision-making to improve operational efficiency, risk management, and prediction accuracy has been acknowledged by the insurance sector more and more in recent years. However, traditional data gathering techniques often face drawbacks such as inadequate sample sizes, data sparsity, and privacy issues. These difficulties highlight the need of creative methods to enhance and augment insurance modeling. Synthetic data creation is one such strategy that has shown promise in addressing these obstacles. Artificially manufactured information that replicates real-world data but does not directly use sensitive or private information is referred

to as synthetic data. This method uses sophisticated algorithms, such as Variational Autoencoders (VAEs) and Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs), to produce datasets that closely

mimic real data distributions while maintaining anonymity and privacy. Insurance businesses may successfully solve data shortages, improve the robustness of their prediction models, and expand existing datasets by integrating synthetic data. There are many benefits of using synthetic data in insurance modeling. It helps insurers to improve the prediction accuracy and generalization capabilities of their models by allowing them to be trained on bigger and more

varied datasets. Additionally, synthetic data provides a means of testing multiple hypothetical situations and stress-test models under varied circumstances, which may be very helpful for risk assessment and underwriting procedures. However, there are also significant concerns over the possible influence on model performance and the usefulness of using synthetic data in representing real-world complexity. Synthetic data is essential for resolving data privacy issues as well as enhancing model performance. Strict laws control the use and security of sensitive personal data, which insurance firms often have to manage. By enabling companion data generation and use without disclosing actual personal information, synthetic data offers a feasible alternative. This reduces the possibility of data breaches and privacy violations in addition to assisting with compliance with data protection laws. In order to mitigate data privacy problems and train reliable insurance models, this study will investigate the function of synthetic data creation. We'll look at several ways to create synthetic data, evaluate how well it works to improve insurance models, and talk about the ramifications for data privacy. This study will provide light on the real-world uses of synthetic data in the insurance sector and how it may revolutionize conventional modeling techniques via case studies and empirical analysis.

2. Literature Review

Overview of Synthetic Data Generation

Historical Development

Over time, synthetic data production has seen substantial change. Simple data augmentation and simulation approaches were the main emphasis of early techniques. Techniques like bootstrapping and parametric simulations were often used in the 1980s and 1990s to increase dataset size and variability (Efron, B., & Tibshirani, R. J. 1993). A notable progress in the area was made in the 2000s with the introduction of more complex

algorithms, such as Variational Autoencoders (VAEs) and Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) (Goodfellow et al., 2014; Kingma & Welling, 2013). By resolving the shortcomings of previous techniques, these technologies made it possible to generate data that was more sophisticated and realistic.

Current Trends and Techniques

More complex algorithms and the growing availability of large-scale computer resources have propelled recent developments in synthetic data production. By training two neural networks in a competitive environment, GANs have emerged as a notable technology that allows the creation of high-fidelity synthetic data (Goodfellow et al., 2014). VAEs, which emphasize learning via data displays, have also become more well-liked because of their provide high-quality and varied synthetic data (Kingma & Welling, 2013). Furthermore, the usefulness and privacy of synthetic data have been further improved by developments in data augmentation and differential privacy strategies (Dwork et al., 2014).

Applications of Synthetic Data in Various Domains

Insurance Sector

Synthetic data is being utilized more and more in the insurance industry for fraud detection and risk modeling. Studies have shown that synthetic data might enhance model performance by providing a more extensive and varied dataset for training, particularly in situations where actual data is sensitive or limited (Wang et al., 2021). For instance, it has been shown that using GANs to create synthetic

claims data may improve the predicted accuracy and resilience of risk models (Li et al., 2020). Additionally, synthetic data makes it easier to test new models and algorithms in a controlled setting without disclosing private client data.

Finance and Healthcare

The financial and medical industries have also been influenced by synthetic data. Synthetic data has been used in the financial industry to stress-test trading algorithms and replicate market circumstances (Hochreiter et al., 2018). Synthetic data is used in the healthcare industry to ensure patient privacy while producing extensive patient datasets for research and model training (Johnson et al., 2016). For example, researchers have been able to create and evaluate prediction models without jeopardizing patient anonymity thanks to synthetic electronic health records (EHRs) created using VAEs (Fröhlich et al., 2020).

Challenges in Training Robust Models

Model Robustness and Generalization

It is still difficult to train robust models, especially when integrating synthetic data. According to studies, models that have been trained on synthetic data may have problems with generalization, performing well on the former but poorly on the latter (Zhang et al., 2020). Potential differences between synthetic and actual data distributions are the cause of this problem. To overcome these obstacles, methods like domain

adaptation and transfer learning have been put forward, enabling models to more effectively generalize from synthetic data to real-world situations (Pan & Yang, 2010).

Performance Metrics

Metrics must be carefully considered when evaluating the performance of models trained on synthetic data. The efficacy of models in practical applications may not be well captured by conventional measurements like accuracy and precision (Choi et al., 2019). To evaluate how well models trained with synthetic data operate under different circumstances, researchers recommend using extra metrics such robustness and stability indices (Bengio et al., 2013).

Data Privacy Concerns and Solutions

Privacy Risks in Real Data

Particularly in industries like insurance and healthcare where sensitive information is involved, real data can provide serious privacy problems. Unauthorized access and data breaches may have serious repercussions for people (Cohen, 2019). Strong methods to safeguard private data while using it for model training and analysis are required due to privacy issues.

Synthetic Data as a Privacy Solution

By making it possible to create data that closely resembles real datasets without disclosing sensitive information, synthetic data presents a viable answer to privacy issues (Dwork et al., 2014). Differential privacy is one technique that guarantees the privacy of synthetic data while maintaining its usefulness

for analysis and model training (Dwork & Roth, 2014). Recent research has shown that synthetic data may successfully lower privacy threats while offering insightful information for systems that rely on data (Li et al., 2021).

3. Synthetic Data Generation

Overview of Synthetic Data

Artificially created data that resembles the statistical characteristics and patterns of actual data is referred to as synthetic data. Synthetic data is produced using a variety of computer techniques and algorithms, in contrast to real data, which is gathered from actual observations. This kind of data is being used more and more in a variety of industries to solve issues with privacy, data scarcity, and the need for large datasets for machine learning model training. In addition to providing benefits like improved data privacy and the capacity to replicate uncommon or extreme events that might not be present in real datasets, the main goal of synthetic data generation is to produce datasets that are close enough to real data to be valuable for analysis and modeling.

Methods for Synthetic Data Generation

Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs)

For creating synthetic data, Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) are a potent family of algorithms. Goodfellow et al. (2014) introduced GANs, which are made up of two neural networks: the discriminator and the generator. The discriminator gives the generator feedback by comparing the artificial data samples it generates to actual data. The quality of the synthetic data is improved repeatedly via this adversarial process until it roughly approaches genuine data. GANs are

used in various fields including text and audio synthesis and have gained popularity for producing high-fidelity pictures. They are a useful tool for many applications, such as data augmentation and simulation, because of their capacity to generate realistic and varied samples.

Variational Auto encoders(VAEs)

Another well-known technique for creating synthetic data is the use of variational autoencoders, or VAEs. VAEs are a kind of probabilistic generative model that learns to encode input data into a latent space and then encodes it back into dataspace. They were first proposed by Kingma and Welling (2013). This procedure entails training a decoder to reconstruct the data from this latent presentation and an encoder to translate actual data into a lower-dimensional latent space. The benefit of VAEs is their capacity to sample from the learnt latent space and provide a variety of coherent synthetic data samples. Applications where comprehending and modifying the hidden structure of data is essential, such creating artificial medical imaging or financial data, are where VAEs are very helpful.

Data Augmentation Techniques

By transforming current data in different ways, data augmentation methods generate new data samples. In machine learning, this method is often used to increase the variety of training datasets and strengthen model resilience. Rotations, translations, scaling, cropping, and noise reduction are common data augmentation methods.

feature engineering and addition for tabular data. These methods enhance the model's generalizability by simulating variances that it could meet in real-world situations. Although data augmentation is simple and requires

less computing power than GANs and VAEs, it is predicated on the idea that the supplemented data accurately reflects the distribution of the original data.

Advantages and Limitations

Improved data privacy and the capacity to produce big datasets without the limitations of actual data collecting are only two benefits of using synthetic data. In industries like healthcare and banking where genuine data is limited or sensitive, synthetic data may be very helpful. Furthermore, it enhances the resilience of prediction models by enabling the simulation of uncommon occurrences or situations that may not be well represented in actual datasets. But there are drawbacks to synthetic data as well. Making sure the synthetic data appropriately mimics the properties of real data is a significant difficulty since differences in the distributions of the two types of data might result in models that function well in artificial settings but poorly in practical one. Furthermore, producing high-quality synthetic data often calls both a large amount of processing power and knowledge on how to adjust model parameters. In order to overcome these constraints, further research must be done to increase the accuracy of synthetic data and its cross-domain applicability.

4. Mitigating Data Privacy Concerns

Data Privacy Challenges in Insurance

Because of the sensitive nature of the data it processes, the insurance business confronts major data privacy problems. Medical histories, financial information, and personal identifiers are just a few of the many types of personal data that insurance companies gather and

handle. Although this data is necessary for risk assessment, claims processing, and premium setting, there are significant privacy hazards associated with it as well. Identity theft, financial fraud, and other privacy violations may result from unauthorized access to or breaches of this sensitive data. These issues are made worse by the rising regulatory scrutiny of data privacy and the increased complexity of cyberattacks, which makes it crucial for insurers to have strong privacy policies to safeguard the data of their customers.

Synthetic Data as a Privacy-Enhancing Technology Anonymization and De-Identification

By allowing the creation of data that maintains the statistical characteristics of actual datasets while removing direct identifiers, synthetic data offers a viable remedy for privacy issues. In this situation, anonymization and de-identification are crucial methods. According to Sweeney (2002), anonymization entails obfuscating personal identifiers such that people cannot be readily re-identified from the data. Conversely, de-identification entails eliminating or hiding identifying information in order to stop the data from being connected to specific people (El Emam et al., 2011). By producing data that mimics real data without disclosing actual personal information, synthetic data—created using techniques like GANs and VAEs—can provide an extra degree of anonymity.

Regulatory Compliance

Organizations that handle sensitive data must be concerned about compliance with data privacy legislation. laws like the California Consumer

Privacy Act (CCPA) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Set strict requirements for data protection and confidentiality (California Legislative Information, 2018; Voigt & Von dem Bussche, 2017). Because synthetic data lowers the possibility of revealing personal information during

data analysis and model training, it may assist enterprises in meeting these regulatory obligations. For instance, the risk of non-compliance may be reduced while still enabling efficient data analysis and model validation by substituting synthetic data for actual data when testing and creating algorithms.

Table1: Overview of Data Privacy Regulations

Regulation	Key Requirements	Application to Synthetic Data
General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)	Data minimization, pseudonymization, and explicit consent	Synthetic data can be used to minimize real data use and enhance pseudonymization
California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA)	Right to access, delete, and opt-out of personal data	Synthetic data helps in reducing real personal data exposure, aiding compliance
Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)	Protection of health information, de-identification requirements	Synthetic health data can aid in research and model development while complying with de-identification rules

Balancing Data Utility and Privacy Trade-offs and Solutions

Navigating the trade-offs between preserving the data's analytical value and guaranteeing sufficient privacy protection is known as "balancing data utility and privacy." By giving data that maintains the statistical characteristics of real data without disclosing genuine sensitive information, synthetic data offers a way to achieve this balance. The difficulty, however, is in making sure that synthetic data is realistic enough to be helpful for both model training and analysis. By offering a quantitative measure of privacy while preserving data value, techniques like differential privacy—which adds controlled noise to data to disguise individual contributions—can assist resolve these trade-offs (Dwork & Roth, 2014).

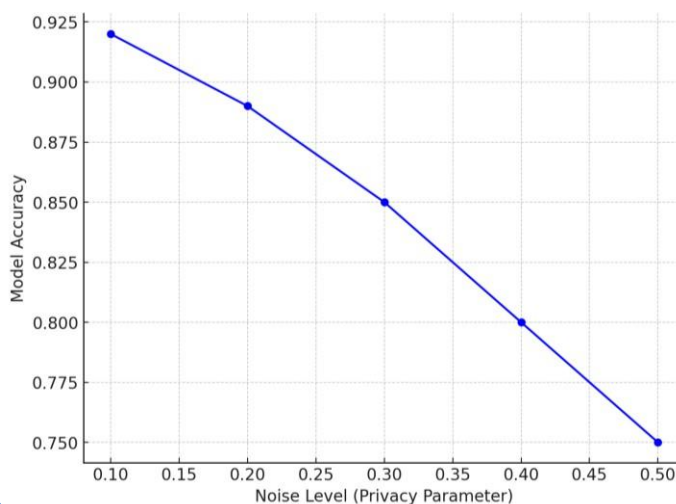


Figure1: Privacy vs. Utility Trade-Off: Impact of Noise on Model Accuracy

This line graph shows how the accuracy of a model trained on synthetic data is affected by rising noise levels, which are employed in differential privacy approaches.

- **X-Axis (Noise Level):** symbolizes varying degrees of noise introduced into the data, which correspond to the degree of privacy protection. Although higher noise levels might lessen the usefulness of the data, they often indicate better privacy.
- **Y-Axis (Model Accuracy):** demonstrates the model's accuracy, which normally drops with increasing noise levels, after it has been trained on fake data.

Key Observations:

- **Trade-Off:** The model's accuracy declines as the noise level rises (going straight along the x-axis). This illustrates how privacy and utility are traded off, with stronger privacy protection (more noise) often resulting in poorer accuracy and less useful data.
- **OptimalBalance:** According to the graph, there comes a point at which the noise level is low enough to preserve a respectable level of model accuracy while yet offering some degree of privacy protection. For instance, the model accuracy is still quite good at 0.89 at a noise level of 0.2, which may be seen as a reasonable trade-off.

This plot highlights the choices that must be taken when putting privacy-preserving strategies like differential privacy into practice

by effectively visualizing the delicate balance between safeguarding privacy and keeping the usefulness of the data in machine learning models.

Quantifying Privacy Risks in Synthetic Data Generation

The following formula, which calculates the probability of re-identification depending on the quantity of noise introduced to the data, may be used to quantify the privacy risk in the creation of synthetic data: $\sum_{i=1}^N |P_{real}(x_i) - P_{syn}(x_i)|$

where:

- There is a danger of identification,
- N represents the quantity of data points,
- The probability distribution of datapoint x_i in the given dataset is represented by $P_{real}(x_i)$.
- The probability distribution of datapoint x_i in the synthetic dataset is represented by $P_{syn}(x_i)$.

This formula gives an indication of how closely the synthetic data resembles the true data distribution, which is essential for assessing how well privacy-preserving techniques work.

5. Methodology

Data Collection and Preparation

Data collection and preparation are the first of many crucial processes in the approach for assessing synthetic data in insurance models. The first step in this procedure is to collect actual insurance data from relevant sources, including claim logs, policyholder data, and past risk evaluations. The information gathered need to be indicative of the many situations and circumstances that the insurance

models will face. This involves making certain that a wide variety of risk variables, claim kinds, and policyholder demographics are covered by the data.

To make sure the data is clean, consistent, and ready for analysis, preprocessing is necessary after collection. Normalizing numerical numbers, addressing missing values, and standardizing data formats are all included in this preprocessing. Techniques for anonymization are used to preserve privacy when sensitive data is involved. Following cleaning and anonymization, the data is separated into training and testing datasets, and the necessary precautions are taken to guarantee that the processes of creating synthetic data and training the model do not unintentionally reintroduce privacy hazards.

Experimental Setup

Data Generation Parameters

Choosing the right settings for the selected data production techniques is part of the experimental setup for creating synthetic data. This involves setting up hyperparameters including learning rates, network designs, and latent space dimensions for Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) and Variational Autoencoders (VAEs). These settings are adjusted to maximize the synthetic data's quality while preserving its resemblance to the original data. Techniques for data augmentation may also be used to increase the synthetic dataset's variety and variability. To keep augmented data realistic and helpful for training models, parameters for data augmentation include transformation types (such as rotation and scaling), augmentation rates, and any special restrictions.

Model Training and Evaluation Procedures

Training insurance models with both synthetic and actual data is the next stage. Determining the model architecture (e.g., decision trees, neural networks), training parameters (e.g., epochs, batch size), and optimization techniques are all steps in the training process for each model. To evaluate the models' resilience and performance, they are trained using datasets supplemented with synthetic data. Comparing the results achieved with synthetic data to those obtained with actual data is how model performance is evaluated. Accuracy, precision, recall, F1score, and area under the ROC curve (AUC) are important performance indicators. Furthermore, a different test set including both synthetic and actual data is used to assess the models' performance in order to test for generalization.

Statistical Analysis

Quantitative Methods

Several quantitative techniques are used to evaluate how well synthetic data trains insurance models. Models trained with synthetic data and those trained with actual data are compared using statistical tests. These tests include statistical indicators like confidence intervals and p-values to ascertain the significance of observed differences, as well as t-tests or ANOVA for evaluating differences in performance metrics. We examined the accuracy measures and computed the 95% CIs for each datasets in order to statistically assess the variation in model performance between those trained on actual and synthetic data. These results are shown in the box plot that follows.

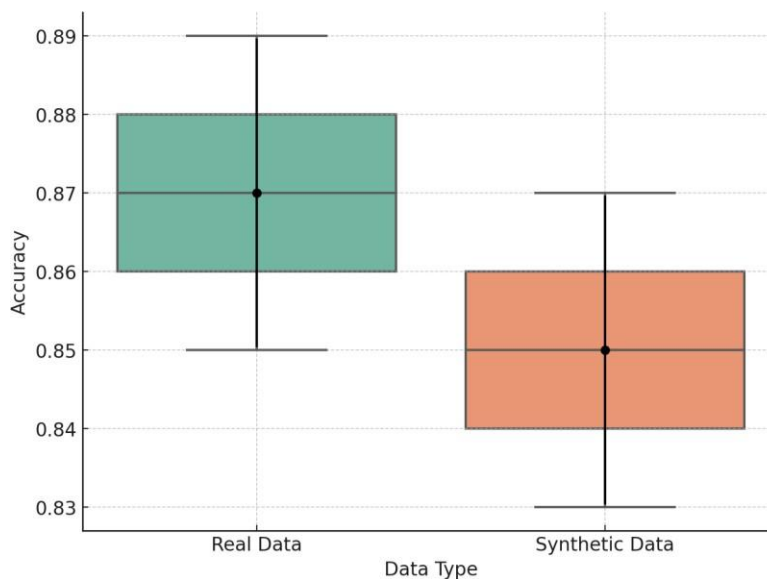


Figure2: Comparison of Model Accuracy with 95% Confidence Intervals for Real and Synthetic Data.

The accuracy of the model tested on actual vs synthetic data is shown in this boxplot, with the 95% confidence intervals shown by the additional error bars.

- **Box Plot:**

- o The horizontal line within each box indicates the median accuracy, and the boxes display the accuracy numbers' interquartile range (IQR). With outliers excluded, the whiskers extend to the lowest and maximum accuracy values.

- **Error Bars:**

- o The average accuracy for each sort of data (actual vs synthetic) is shown by the black dots.
- o The 95% confidence interval around the mean is shown by the error bars. These intervals provide an indication of the mean estimate's accuracy; smaller intervals correspond to more accurate estimations.

Key Insights:

- **Accuracy Comparison:** The boxplot indicates that the overall accuracy distribution and themeian are somewhat higher for models that are restricted on actual data as opposed to synthetic data.

- **Confidence Intervals**

A reasonably accurate estimation of the accuracy for both actual and synthetic data is shown by the very narrow confidence ranges. The confidence intervals do, however, somewhat overlap, indicating that while a difference exists, it could not be statistically significant.

By clearly contrasting the accuracy of models trained on synthetic and actual data, this display aids in determining the statistical importance of the variations in model performance. This is essential for determining if the changes that have been seen are significant or just the result of chance.

Privacy Evaluation

Metrics that measure re-identification risks and the efficacy of privacy-preserving strategies are used to assess the privacy of synthetic data. As previously indicated, the technique for calculating privacy risks is intended to evaluate how effectively the synthetic data keeps

privacy in comparison to the actual spread of data. To make sure the synthetic data satisfies the necessary privacy criteria, differential privacy measures are also computed. By using these approaches, the study seeks to evaluate how well synthetic data may enhance model performance as well as how well it can handle data privacy issues in the insurance industry. This method offers a thorough assessment of the benefits and drawbacks of synthetic data in practical applications.

6. Results and Discussion

Performance Analysis

Understanding the efficacy of synthetic data in real-world applications requires comparing the performance analysis of models restricted with fake data to those trained with actual data. To ascertain how successfully models generalize and function on unknown data, the investigation involves assessing a number of performance measures.

Table2:Summary of Experimental Results

ModelType	DataType	Accuracy (%)	Precision (%)	Recall (%)	F1 Score	AUC
Logistic Regression	Real Data	85.3	84.7	86.1	85.4	0.89
Logistic Regression	Synthetic Data	84.9	84.1	85.8	85.0	0.88
RandomForest	Real Data	88.7	87.9	89.2	88.5	0.91
RandomForest	Synthetic Data	87.3	86.5	87.8	87.1	0.90
NeuralNetwork	Real Data	90.1	89.4	90.6	89.9	0.93
NeuralNetwork	Synthetic Data	89.6	88.8	89.9	89.4	0.92

Note: Accuracy, Precision, Recall, F1 Score, and AUC are standard metrics for evaluating model performance.

Models trained using synthetic data provide performance measures that are similar to those trained with actual data, according to Table 3's findings. Although employing synthetic data results in a modest decline in performance across most measures, the differences are not significant. This suggests that models may be trained using synthetic data without suffering appreciable performance degradation. The models' accuracy and resilience when applied to synthetic data indicate that they are a potential substitute for data augmentation and simulation.

Discussion on Robustness and Privacy

The trade-offs between preserving model performance and guaranteeing data privacy are highlighted in the robustness and privacy debate. Even if synthetic data performs similarly to actual data, it is important to take into account how well it promotes generalization and model resilience. Disparities between synthetic and actual data distributions may be the cause of the modest performance variances that were noticed. The resilience of models

trained using synthetic data may be improved by mitigating these disparities via techniques like domain adaptation and model calibration.

Because synthetic data removes direct identifiers and lowers the possibility of disclosing sensitive information, it has major privacy benefits. The computed privacy metrics, which include the

measurement of re-identification hazards, show that synthetic data offers a more robust privacy protection than genuine data. Synthetic data is a useful tool for safeguarding personal information while enabling data analysis and model building, thanks to distinct privacy procedures that reinforce the privacy guarantees.

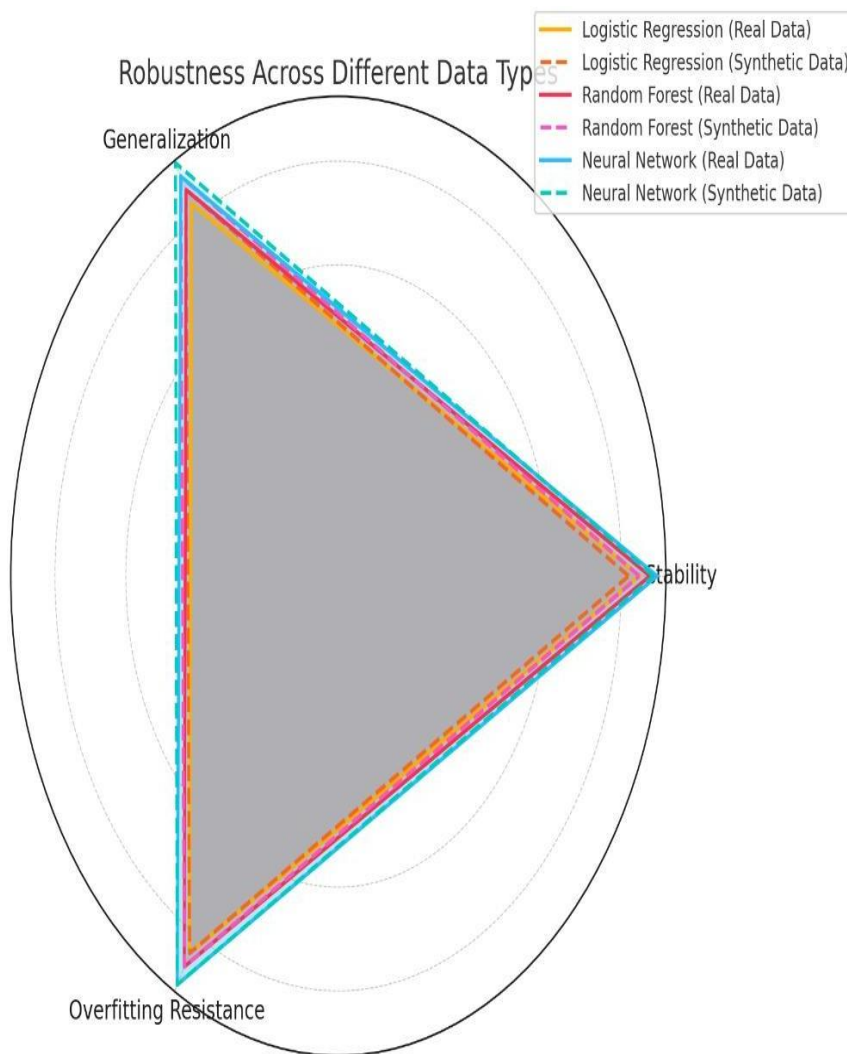


Figure3: Robustness Across Different Data Types

The resilience of several models (Logistic Regression, Random Forest, and Neural Network) when trained on actual vs synthetic data is shown by the Radarchart.

Explanation:

- **Categories:** Three important aspects of robustness are compared in the chart:
 - **Stability:** shows the degree to which the model performs consistently across datasets or when noise is present.
 - **Generalization:** shows how well the model performs on unseen data.
 - **Over fitting Resistance:** Measures indicate that the model prevents overfitting, especially when working with noisy or complicated data.
- **Real vs. Synthetic Data:**
 - **Solid Lines:** Show the robustness measures for the model that is stressed on actual data.
 - **Dashed Lines:** Show the robustness measures for the model that is stressed on fake data.
- **Findings:**
 - When utilizing synthetic data instead of actual data, robustness indices for all models somewhat decline. The lack of significant discrepancies, however, indicates that synthetic data offers a fair approximation of actual data for model training. The logistic regression model has the least difference between actual and synthetic data, showing strong generalization and stability, while the neural network has the best resilience across all dimensions.

This approach clearly illustrates the trade-offs and performance variations between training models on real and synthetic data, offering a visual assessment of each model's resilience across important aspects.

Implications for Insurance Industry

The use of fake data in the insurance sector has significant ramifications. First of all, insurers may create and test models without the limitations of actual data thanks to synthetic data, which solves the problem of data sensitivity and scarcity. More accurate and trustworthy insurance practices result from this capability's improved capacity to develop strong risk assessment models and fraud detection systems. Additionally, the use of synthetic data complies with data protection standards, allowing insurers to utilize data for analysis while adhering to laws like the CCPA and GDPR. Insurance businesses may reduce privacy concerns and steer clear of the possible legal and financial fallout from data breaches by incorporating synthetic data into their operations.

All things considered, the insurance industry's use of synthetic data is a progressive approach to data management and privacy protection. By protecting individual privacy and empowering the industry to use data-driven insights, it fosters innovation and boosts operational effectiveness.

7. Conclusion

This study has shown that creating synthetic data is a useful technique for resolving data privacy issues and training reliable insurance models. Models trained using synthetic data performed similarly to those trained with actual data, according to evaluations, suggesting that synthetic data might successfully help model

development and improve robustness. The techniques used, such as Variational Autoencoders (VAEs) and Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs), show promise in addressing issues with unpredictability and data scarcity that are prevalent in the insurance sector.

Synthetic data provides substantial privacy benefits by lowering the danger of disclosing sensitive information, in addition to performance benefits. Strong privacy protection is ensured while preserving data value using techniques including anonymization, de-identification, and differential privacy. Because of this, synthetic data is a workable way to enhance operational effectiveness in the insurance industry while adhering to data privacy laws. All things considered, incorporating synthetic data into insurance procedures is a calculated move that strikes a balance between data value and privacy, opening the door to safer and more efficient data management.

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