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Incorporating Model Error into the Actuary's Estimate of Uncertainty: A Practical Approach

A presentation to the 30th International Congress of Actuaries by Jamie Mackay and Dave Otto

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Session Description

0 Within the property/casualty insurance industry, increased interest is being placed on understanding the variability inherent in a point estimate of unpaid claims

- L. **//** The session will begin with a dilemma that confronts actuaries when relying upon a single model to measure the variability around a central estimate based on *multiple* models *!*
- \bullet We will then provide an overview of the basic building blocks to estimating reserve variability and will then address a component of reserve variability that is often overlooked: model uncertainty
- \bullet • This session will present **practical methodologies** for incorporating model uncertainty into the actuary's estimate of uncertainty and will use a case study to demonstrate their use

 \bullet Consider a situation where we have two models, Model A & Model B, that each produce a point estimate:

- \bullet Consider a situation where we have two models, Model A & Model B, that each produce a point estimate:
- \bullet Assume the actuary selects the central estimate to be the average of the point estimates from the two models:

Central Estimate $=$ $\frac{(Model\ A + Model\ B)}{2}$

• How do we estimate the uncertainty in our central estimate?

- \bullet One way might be to estimate uncertainty using one of our underlying models as the basis
	- \bullet Using Model B as the basis for estimating uncertainty:
- \bullet This raises two issues:
	- , **//** Central estimate (red) is not "central" within *i* distribution
	- Model A point (blue) estimate appears unlikely yet given 50% weight *!*

- \bullet The central estimate (red) is now "central" with distribution
- O However, the second issue remains:

Model A point estimate (blue) still appears unlikely yet given 50% weight

!

- \bullet It is common to estimate unpaid claims using more than one model
- \bullet It is rare for different models to produce point estimates that are equivalent
- \bullet Current approaches to estimating uncertainty tend to derive variability within the context of a single model
- \bullet Central estimate is often not equivalent to any single model.

How do we derive a suitable distribution of variability?

Incorporating Model Uncertainty

Overview of Approach

Uncertainty in an Actuarial Central Estimate

- \bullet Measuring uncertainty is a challenge in our profession because the unpaid claim process is unknown and the output from this process is not a repeatable exercise
- \bullet Many approaches exist to estimating the uncertainty in an unpaid claim estimate
	- \bullet . Mack, Bootstrapping, MCMC, practical stochasitic simulation
- Two common themes in these approaches:
	- Prediction error is comprised of parameter error and process error
	- A **single** model is assumed to be representative of the unpaid claim process **⁼**

Uncertainty in an Actuarial Central Estimate

- However, this is rarely the case, and actuaries will commonly employ multiple models
- We therefore need some way in which to reflect the additional implied uncertainty among the models

Our Approach

Our Approach

 Generate a distribution comprised of simulations about each model using current approaches:

 \bullet Bootstrapping; simulation from an assumed distribution; simulation from analytical models; simulating and scaling, etc.

Weighted sample

 Aggregating results across multiple years requires additional rigor:

 Rank Tying and **Model Tying** approaches are available to generate aggregate distributions

Weighted Sampling

Single Years

Start by creating simulated distributions for each of Model A and B:

- \bullet Create a 'Model Matrix' based on selected weighting
- \bullet In this case, we will use 50-50 weighting between Model A and B
- \bullet Simulations are pulled from each model based on this 'Model Matrix'

 \bullet Comparison of results from Weighted Sampling between Model A and Model B:

 \bullet Comparison of results from Weighted Sampling vs. Scaling:

 \bullet Adjusting our underlying weights will shift the resulting distribution accordingly:

Sampling of methods Multi-modal distributions

Model B Simulations

- So far, we have considered a scenario with just a single set of simulations
- What if we have multiple sets of predictions?
	- Multiple accident years, for example

Weighted Sampling

Multiple Years

 \bullet Again, for each time period, we can create a 'Model Matrix' based on the selected weighting

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A note on simulation tying

- \bullet Typically, the methods that are used to generate the simulations around each of the underlying models do not treat each accident year in isolation, but rather produce yearby-year results that are intrinsically related to each other
- \bullet This is reflected in each and every simulation, which we can think of as 'strings'
- \bullet This means that we are able to calculate the total unpaid amount for each simulation by simply summing across each row

 \bullet In this manner, any accident year correlation that is inherent to the model can be maintained

A note on simulation tying : Another Dilemma !

- \bullet What happens when we mix samples from different models in simulation 'strings'
- \bullet Where a break occurs in a 'string', we destroy any correlation that may have been included in our model

A note on simulation tying : Another Dilemma !

- \bullet What happens when we mix samples from different models in simulation 'strings'
- \bullet Where a break occurs in a 'string', we destroy any correlation that may have been included in our model
- \bullet If we simply randomly-arrange our samples across simulations, we essentially destroy any year-by-year correlation in our results and we are no longer able to sum across the rows to get the total (unless this is desired)

 \bullet Going back to our sampled simulations - because we sampled independently for each time period, we have broken the links intrinsic to the underlying model(s)

Sampled Simulations

Model B Simulations

Model A Simulations

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 \bullet With this example (equal weighting for each accident period), we can get around the problem by sampling just one time and ensuring that we pick the same simulation for every time period

Model B Simulations

- 0 This approach achieves the objective in that each individual accident period reflects the desired weighting *and* we maintain the correlation inherent to each individual simulation
- 0 *However…*

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- …what if our selected weightings vary for each origin year?
- \bullet In this case, we need to sample independently to maintain appropriate year-by-year representation

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- \bullet We require some manner of rearranging our simulations to reflect underlying correlations
- \bullet Going back to our earlier example, sampling individually by years, we suggest 2 ways in which to achieve this....

Sampled Simulations

Model B Simulations

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Model A Simulations

Model Matrix

1) Rank Tying:

Rearrange the sampled simulations themselves using a 'borrowed' correlation matrix

Sampled Simulations

Model B Simulations

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2) Model Tying:

Rearranging the Weighted Samples 'Model Matrix' prior to pulling through the reserves from the underlying model

Model B Simulations

Model A Simulations

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Aggregating Results

Rank Tying

 \bullet This approach involves rearranging the sampled, simulated reserves

Model Matrix

Sampled Simulations

Model B Simulations

Model A Simulations

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- \bullet We can 'borrow' a correlation matrix from one of the underlying models
- \bullet We do this by calculating the reserve ranks for each year for the underlying models

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- \bullet We then select which model to use as the basis for our rank-tying (in this case, Model B)...
- \bullet …and reorder the sampled simulations accordingly on a year-by-year basis

Sampled Simulations: Re-ordered by Model B

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 \bullet Once rearranged, we can then sum across the rows to calculate a total reserve for each simulation

Sampled Simulations: Re-ordered by Model B

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Aggregating Results Rank Tying: Summary

- \bullet Rank Tying is a means of combining simulations across origin periods while maintaining the same parameter variance dependency structure associated with one of the underlying projection models
- \bullet In essence, this approach assumes that the introduction of model uncertainty does not produce any dependency across origin periods
- \bullet Rank Tying dependencies across accident years:
	- \bullet Process Error = None
	- \bullet Parameter Error = Select a single model for source
	- \bullet Model Error = None
- \bullet *Should* there be correlation among accident years for model uncertainty?
	- \bullet It may be argued that if a model is biased to overestimate or underestimate then it will likely have a similar bias across all origin periods

Aggregating Results

Model Tying

- \bullet This method also involves reordering the simulations
- \bullet However, in this case, we will be rearranging at the 'Model Matrix' stage, prior to pulling through the reserves from the underlying model

Model Matrix

Sampled Simulations

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Model B Simulations

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- \bullet We wish to reorder the 'Model Matrix' to maximize the degree to which 'A's in one year are grouped with 'A's in other years, and the degree to which 'B's are grouped with 'B's
- \bullet We do this to maximize the correlation of the method selected in each of the accident years

Model B Simulations

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 \bullet We can now select the samples from our underlying methods using the sampling 'Model Matrix' reordered such that we maximize the 'model correlation'…

• ...allowing us to simply sum across the sampled simulation 'strings' to derive our set of total simulated reserves

Model Matrix: Re-ordered

Sampled Simulations

Model B Simulations

Model A Simulations

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Aggregating Results Model Tying: Summary

- \bullet Using the Method Tying approach ensures that, where possible, the original 'strings' of simulations through each year are kept intact, thereby inherently including the dependencies implied by the underlying models
- \bullet However, where perfect 'string's aren't possible due to changing weights, we are essentially breaking origin period correlation caused by parameter error within a model, as we are combining simulations from different models randomly.

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0 This may be a desirable effect

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Example

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Aggregating Results Model Tying: Summary

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- 0 This may be a desirable effect
- 0 Pre-sorting the original sets of simulations (prior to sampling) imposes a proxy dependency between models
- \bullet Rank Tying dependencies across accident years:
	- 0 Process Error = None
	- 0 Parameter Error = Yes, to the extent selection weights between models implies it should exist
	- 0 Model Error = Yes

 \bullet In a situation where equal weights are applied to each accident year, this approach will yield very similar results to the method suggested earlier – i.e. sampling just once and ensuring that the same simulation is picked for each time period:

Aggregating Results

Summary

Aggregating Results Summary

- \bullet We have outlined three ways in which yearly reserve uncertainty estimates can be aggregated to determine the variability around the **total** (i.e. all year) unpaid loss estimates:
	- \bullet Weighted sampling at a **total** level
	- \bullet Weighted sampling and re-arranging **sampled simulations** with **Rank Tying**
	- \bullet Weighted sampling and re-arranging the **Model Matrix** with **Model Tying**
- \bullet It is not always easy to predict how the approaches will compare as it depends on the weightings employed and the results of the respective models across accident years

Aggregating Results Summary

- All three approaches are scalable to allow for the incorporation of multiple models and multiple accident years in the estimate of reserve uncertainty
- Furthermore, the Rank Tying and Method Tying approaches involve sampling at the individual year level and therefore also support the ability to apply weights specific to each accident year

 \bullet This allows actuaries to reflect the same weighting philosophy in their uncertainty estimate as employed in their selection of the central estimate

Case Study

Application of Approach

Case Study Underlying Models

- Three models are investigated
- For the central estimate, each model is given equal weight (for each accident year)

Case Study Variability around individual models

- \bullet Three models are investigated
- \bullet For the central estimate, each model is given equal weight (for each accident year)
- \bullet Traditional methods are used to produce predictive distribution around each model (based on Bootstrap approach)

Case Study Variability around multiple models

- We are now faced with the challenge of deriving an estimate of the uncertainty around our prediction, reflecting each model used
- \bullet We can employ alternative methods for deriving the uncertainty for individual accident years:
	- \bullet Model scaling (using model B)
	- \bullet Weighted sampling (using weights)

Case Study Aggregating the results

- \bullet Finally, we must aggregate the individual accident year results to calculate the total variability estimate
- \bullet With the Model Scaling approach, the total estimate is relatively easily to derive as we are utilizing the simulation strings from a single underlying model

Case Study Aggregating the results

• Similarly, we can utilize the Rank Tying and Model Tying approaches to derive the total variability estimate for our weighted samples:

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Incorporating Model Error into Actuary's Estimate of Uncertainty

Summary

Summary

- three components:
- The uncertainty of a prediction is comprised of

three components:

 A number of commonly-employed approaches

compute uncertainty under the assumption that a

single model is representative of the phenomenon

 Model e • A number of commonly-employed approaches compute uncertainty under the assumption that a single model is representative of the phenomenon
- \bullet **Model error** is evident when the actuary places reliance on multiple models as being instructive of their central estimate of unpaid amounts

- \bullet **Rank Tying** and **Model Tying** are practical approaches that can be used to incorporate model uncertainty into an aggregation of multiple predictions (e.g. multiple accident years)
- \bullet What we produce is a predictive distribution (or a range around our predictions)
- \bullet Such approaches allow the actuary to tackle their analysis of uncertainty in an intuitively similar manner to how they derive their central estimate – i.e. with the use of multiple models and application of weights

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