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Artificial Intelligence (AI) — Assessment of the robustness of neural networks —

Part 1: Overview



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Foreword

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Introduction

When designing an AI system, several properties are often considered desirable, such as robustness, resiliency, reliability, accuracy, safety, security, privacy. A definition of robustness is provided in [3.6](#). Robustness is a crucial property that poses new challenges in the context of AI systems. For example, in AI systems there are some risks specifically tied to the robustness of AI systems. Understanding these risks is essential for the adoption of AI in many contexts. This document aims at providing an overview of the approaches available to assess these risks, with a particular focus on neural networks, which are heavily used in industry, government and academia.

In many organizations, software validation is an essential part of putting software into production. The objective is to ensure various properties including safety and performance of the software used in all parts of the system. In some domains, the software validation and verification process is also an important part of system certification. For example, in the automotive or aeronautic fields, existing standards, such as ISO 26262 or Reference [\[2\]](#), require some specific actions to justify the design, the implementation and the testing of any piece of embedded software.

The techniques used in AI systems are also subject to validation. However, common techniques used in AI systems pose new challenges that require specific approaches in order to ensure adequate testing and validation.

AI technologies are designed to fulfil various tasks, including interpolation/regression, classification and other tasks.

While many methods exist for validating non-AI systems, they are not always directly applicable to AI systems, and neural networks in particular. Neural network systems represent a specific challenge as they are both hard to explain and sometimes have unexpected behaviour due to their non-linear nature. As a result, alternative approaches are needed.

Methods are categorized into three groups: statistical methods, formal methods and empirical methods. This document provides background on these methods to assess the robustness of neural networks.

It is noted that characterizing the robustness of neural networks is an open area of research, and there are limitations to both testing and validation approaches.