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• Let
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 and suppose that $z_t = \begin{cases} -\frac{1}{2}, & t = 1, \\ 1, & t \text{ is even,} \\ -1, & t \text{ is odd.} \end{cases}$

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 Another popular instantiation of the online learning problem is the online linear optimization problem, which is characterized by a linear loss function (a, z) = a[⊤]z.

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- No matter how we choose the first action a_1^{FTL} , it will hold that FTL has a cumulative loss greater than (or equal) T 3/2, while the best action in hindsight has a cumulative loss of -1/2.
- Thus, FTL's cumulative regret is at least *T* − 1, which is linearly growing in *T*.

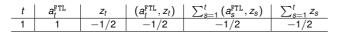
Indeed, note that

$$a_{t+1}^{\text{FTL}} = \arg\min_{a \in \mathcal{A}} \sum_{s=1}^{t} (a, z_s) = \arg\min_{a \in [-1, 1]} a \sum_{s=1}^{t} z_s$$
$$= \begin{cases} -1, & \text{if } \sum_{s=1}^{t} z_s > 0, \\ 1, & \text{if } \sum_{s=1}^{t} z_s < 0, \\ \text{arbitrary, if } \sum_{s=1}^{t} z_s = 0. \end{cases}$$

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t	a_t^{FTL}	Zt	(a_t^{FTL}, z_t)	$\sum_{s=1}^{t} (a_s^{\texttt{FTL}}, z_s)$	$\sum_{s=1}^{t} z_s$
1	1	-1/2	-1/2	-1/2	-1/2
2	1	1	1	1 -1/2	1/2

× < 0 × × ×

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1	1	-1/2	-1/2	-1/2	-1/2
2	1	1	1	1 -1/2	1/2
3	-1	-1	1	2 -1/2	-1/2

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t	$a_t^{\rm FTL}$	z_t	(a_t^{FTL}, z_t)	$\sum_{s=1}^{t} \left(a_{s}^{\texttt{FTL}}, z_{s} \right)$	$\sum_{s=1}^{t} z_s$
1	1	-1/2	-1/2	-1/2	-1/2
2	1	1	1	1 -1/2	1/2
3	-1	-1	1	2 - 1/2	-1/2
:	:		-		:
Т	(-1) ^{<i>T</i>}	(−1) ^{<i>T</i>}	1	<i>T</i> − 1 − 1/2	(-1/2) ^T

× × ×

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• The best action has cumulative loss

$$\inf_{a \in \mathcal{A}} \sum_{s=1}^{T} (a, z_s) = \inf_{a \in [-1, 1]} a \underbrace{\sum_{s=1}^{T} z_s}_{=(-1/2)^T} = -1/2.$$

× 0 0 × 0 × ×

- Thus, we see: FTL can fail for online linear optimization problems, although it is well suited for online quadratic optimization problems!
- The reason is that the action selection of FTL is not stable enough (caused by the loss function), which is fine for the latter problem, but problematic for the former.
- One has to note that the online linear optimization problem example above, where FTL fails, is in fact an adversarial learning setting: The environmental data is generated in such a way that the FTL learner is fooled in each time step.

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