

Elastic Net Models

Walter K. Kremers, Mayo Clinic, Rochester MN

10 May 2025

Introduction

From our experience the relaxed lasso models involving a weighted average of coefficients between the fully penalized lasso model and the unpenalized regression model based upon the non zero terms (from the penalized lasso model) generally provides a balance between good fit and parsimony (fewer terms and so a simpler model). We understand may find advantage of the elastic net model which also involves a weighted average between a penalized and unpenalized regression models but allows for the penalty to involve a combination of L1 and L2 distance measures (See the vignette “An Introduction to glmnet” at <https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=glmnet>).

To allow one to investigate how the elastic net model may benefit their data the `nested.glmnet()` program can fit elastic net models for multiple values of both alpha, the mixing parameter for the L1 and L2 penalty metrics, and gamma, the mixing parameter between the penalized and unpenalized fits. As for the other models the `nested.glmnet()` function performs a “simple” nested cross validation of the elastic net model in parallel with all other fitted models, even if not involving all the advantages of the nested cross validation described by Bates, Hastie and Tibshirani.

In addition to comparing the nested cross validation performances of deviances, agreement and calibration one can graphically inspect the (non nested) cross validation deviance values for the candidate models as function of each of the alpha, gamma and lambda.

An example dataset

To demonstrate usage of *cv.stepreg* we first generate a data set for analysis, run an analysis and evaluate. Following the *Using glmnet* vignette, the code

```
# Simulate data for use in an example survival model fit
# first, optionally, assign a seed for random number generation to get applicable results
set.seed(116291950)
simdata=glmnet.simdata(nrows=1000, ncols=100, beta=NULL)
```

generates simulated data for analysis. We extract data in the format required for input to the *nested.glmnet* (and *glmnet*) programs.

```
# Extract simulated survival data
xs = simdata$xs          # matrix of predictors
y_ = simdata$y_          # vector of numerical responses
```

Inspecting the predictor matrix and outcome vector we see

```
# Check the sample size and number of predictors
print(dim(xs))
```

```
## [1] 1000 100
```

```
# Check the rank of the design matrix, i.e. the degrees of freedom in the predictors
Matrix::rankMatrix(xs)[[1]]
```

```
## [1] 94
```

```
# Inspect the first few rows and some select columns
print(round(xs[1:10,c(1:12,18:20)],digits=6))
```

```
##      X1 X2 X3 X4 X5 X6 X7 X8 X9 X10 X11 X12      X18      X19      X20
## [1,]  1  0  0  0  1  0  1  0  0  0  0  0  0 -1.208898  0.056971 -0.565631
## [2,]  1  1  0  0  0  0  0  0  0  1  0  0  0  0.395354  0.427313  0.185235
## [3,]  1  0  0  1  0  1  0  0  0  0  0  0  0  1.044608 -0.746960  0.964274
## [4,]  1  1  0  0  0  0  0  1  0  0  0  0  0  0.028859 -1.277651  0.203243
## [5,]  1  0  0  1  0  1  0  0  0  0  0  0  0 -1.205172 -1.287454 -1.698229
## [6,]  1  0  0  0  1  0  1  0  0  0  0  0  0 -1.158210 -0.068841  1.458800
## [7,]  1  0  0  0  1  0  0  0  1  0  0  0  0  0.151713  1.095396  1.476831
## [8,]  1  0  0  1  0  0  1  0  0  0  0  0  0 -0.139246 -0.424550  0.073340
## [9,]  1  1  0  0  0  0  0  1  0  0  0  0  0 -0.069326  0.172792  1.039656
## [10,] 1  0  0  1  0  0  1  0  0  0  0  0  0  0.677420  1.185946 -1.473551
```

```
summary(y_)
```

```
##      Min. 1st Qu.  Median      Mean 3rd Qu.      Max.
## -8.8964 -0.5874  1.3870  1.3148  3.3802  8.2972
```

Fitting an Elastic Net model

To fit the elastic net model we call the `neted.glmnet()` function line in the “An Introduction to glmnet” while now specifying a vector of candidate alpha values using the `alpha` option in the function call. For comparison we are also fitting the random forest model as well as the full model including all candidate predictors.

```
# Fit a relaxed lasso model informed by cross validation
nested_elastic_fit = nested.glmnet(xs, start=NULL, y_, event=NULL, family="gaussian", resample=NULL, f
                                dolasso=1, doxgb=0, dorf=1, doorf=0, doann=0, dorpart=0, dostep=0, c
                                alpha=seq(0,1,0.2), seed=791590258, track=0)
```

```
##
## seed$seedr[1] = 791590258
```

When `alpha` is not specified the value `c(1)` is used to fit models based only on the L1 penalty. By default the candidate values for `gamma` are `c(0, 0.25, 0.5, 0.75, 1)`, as suggested in the `glmnet` package.

A tabular summary of model performances

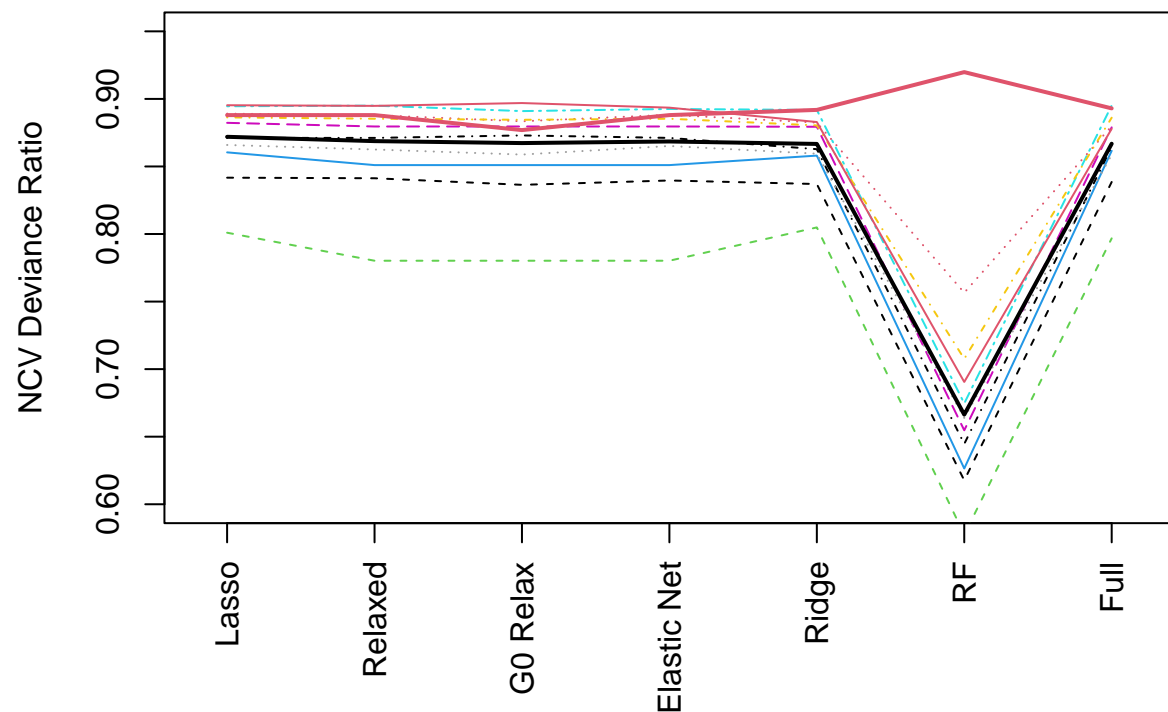
```
# Fit a relaxed lasso model informed by cross validation
summary(nested_elastic_fit)
```

```
## Sample information including number of records, number of columns in
## design (predictor, X) matrix, and df (rank) of design matrix:
## family      n xs.columns  xs.df null.dev/n
## gaussian    1000      100      94      7.96
##
## For LASSO, Random Forest (RF), average (Ave) model performance measures from the
## 10-fold (NESTED) Cross Validation are given together with naive summaries
## calculated using all data without cross validation
##
##           Ave DevRat Ave Int Ave Slope Ave R-square Ave Non Zero
## lasso      0.8720 -0.0268  1.0239      0.8749      56.6
## lassoR      0.8687 -0.0101  1.0097      0.8717      30.9
## lassoR0     0.8673  0.0133  0.9915      0.8696      19.4
## elastic net 0.8685 -0.0129  1.0077      0.8714      26.1
## ridge      0.8667 -0.0265  1.0201      0.8700      99.0
##
##           Naive DevRat Naive R-square Non Zero
## lasso      0.8880      0.9428      58
## lassoR      0.8880      0.9428      58
## lassoR0     0.8769      0.9364      14
## elastic net 0.8880      0.9428      58
## ridge      0.8919      0.9448      99
##
##           Ave DevRat Ave Int Ave Slope Ave R-square Ave Non Zero
## RF Simple   0.6663 -0.2819  1.2132      0.6922      56
##
##           Naive DevRat Naive R-square Non Zero
## RF Simple   0.9198      0.943      60
##
##           Ave DevRat Ave Int Ave Slope Ave R-square Ave Non Zero
## Full regression 0.8668      0      0      0.8701      94
##
##           Naive DevRat Naive R-square Non Zero
## Full regression 0.893      0.945      94
```

A graphical summary of model performances

Model deviance ratios, measures of agreement (r-square or concordance) and linear calibration coefficients obtained from nested cross validation can be displayed graphically, including values from calculated from individual fold values, the averages over the folds and the naive values obtained basing calculations on the training data are displayed. Here we present only the figure for deviance ratios.

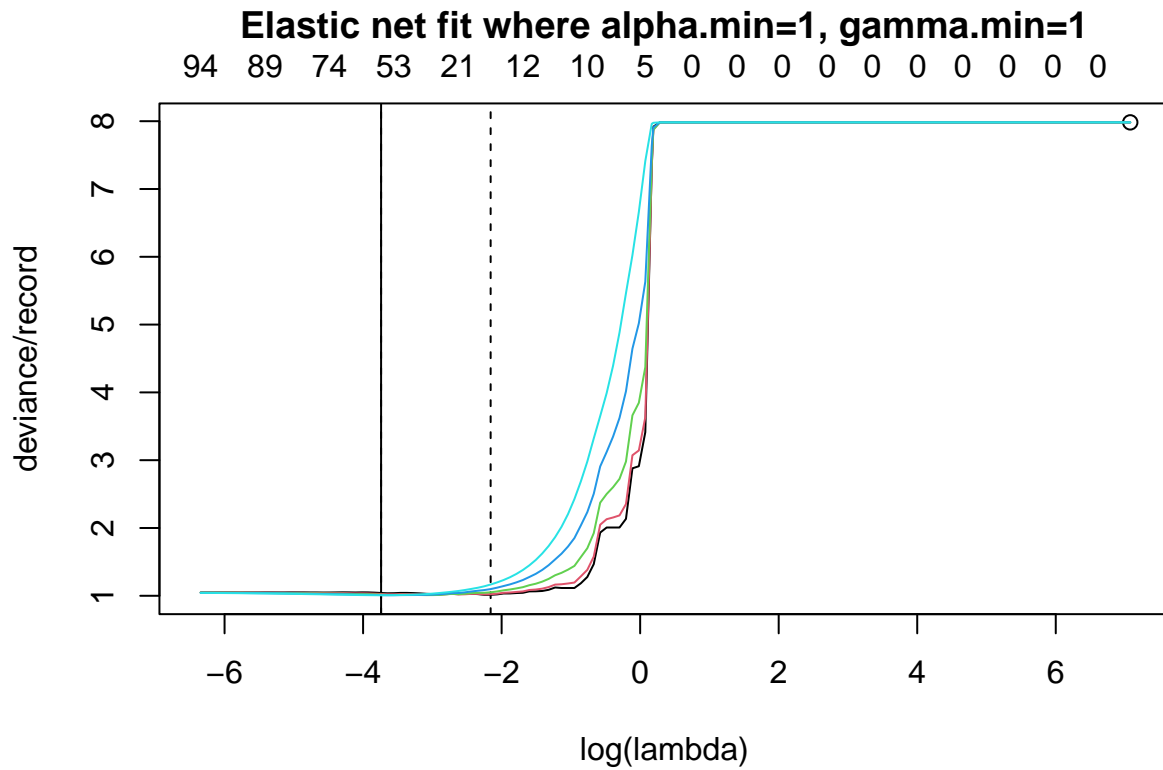
```
# Fit a relaxed lasso model informed by cross validation
plot(nested_elastic_fit, ylim=c(0.6,0.95))
```



Graphical presentations of cross validation deviances

```
# Fit a relaxed lasso model informed by cross validation
plot(nested_elastic_fit , type="elastic")
```

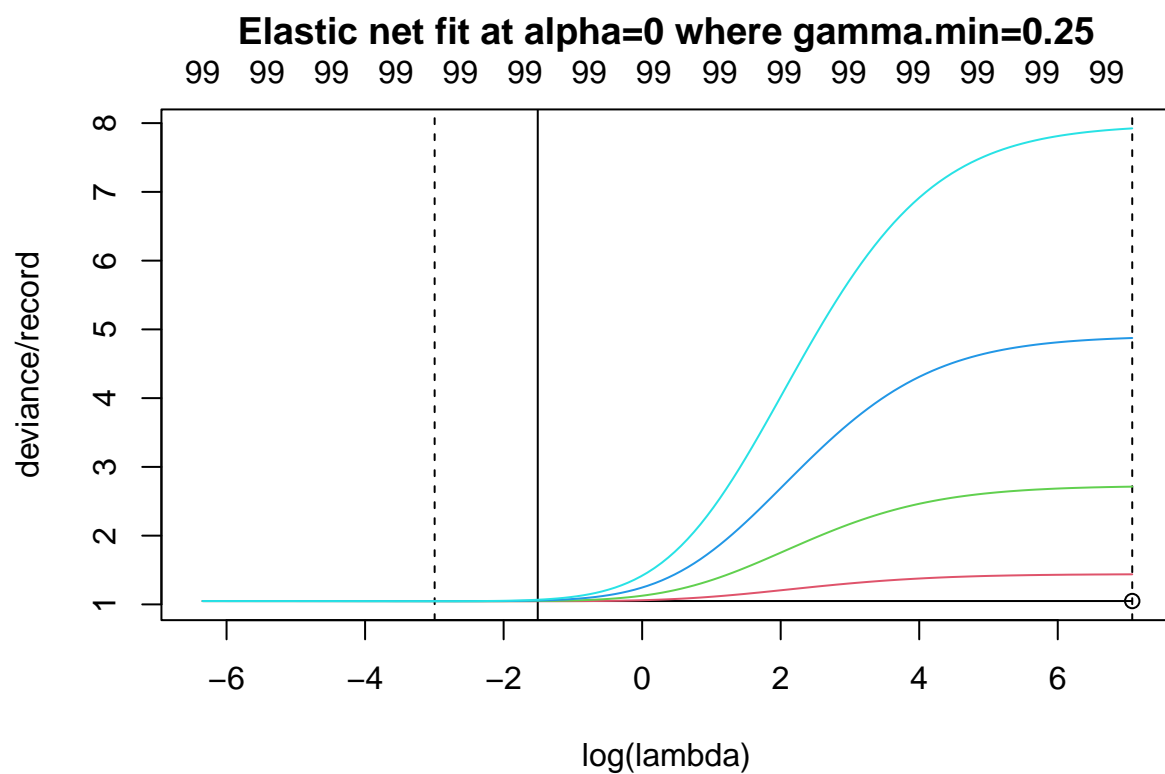
```
## Elastic Net tuned for alpha, gamma and lambda minimizing CV average deviance (maximizing log likelihood)
## alpha.min= 1, gamma.min = 1, log(lambda) = -3.74, df = 58, deviance = 1.0081
```



Here we see that all curves for different values of gamma are for the same loss minimizing value for alpha of 1. We can also plot the curves for other values of alpha, for example 0 corresponding to a pure L2 penalty.

```
# Fit a relaxed lasso model informed by cross validation
plot(nested_elastic_fit , type="elastic", alpha = 0)
```

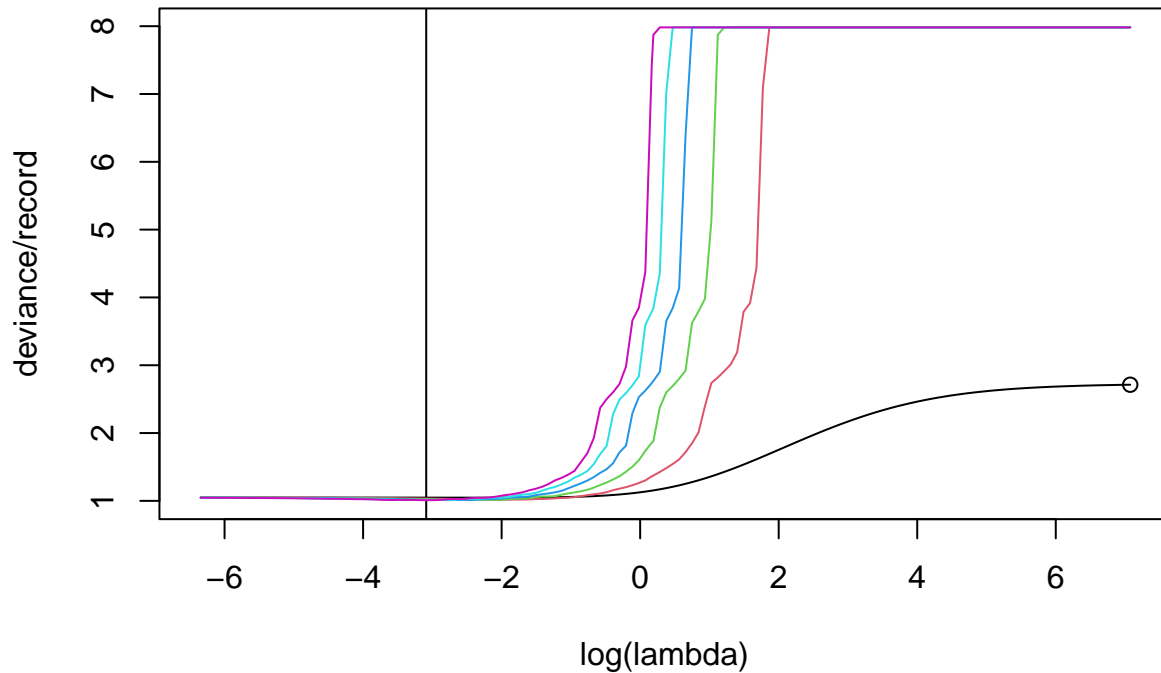
```
## Elastic Net at alpha = 0 tuned for gamma and lambda minimizing CV average deviance (maximizing log l)
##   gamma.min = 0.25, log(lambda) = -1.507, df = 99, deviance = 1.0468
```



We can also plot the deviance curves for different values of alpha when specifying a single value for gamma.

```
# Fit a relaxed lasso model informed by cross validation
plot(nested_elastic_fit , type="elastic", gamma = 0.5)
```

Elastic net fit at gamma = 0.5 where alpha.min = 1



```
## Elastic Net at gamma = 0.5 tuned for alpha and lambda minimizing CV average deviance (maximizing log
##   alpha.min = 1, log(lambda) = -3.088, df = 33, deviance = 1.0097
```

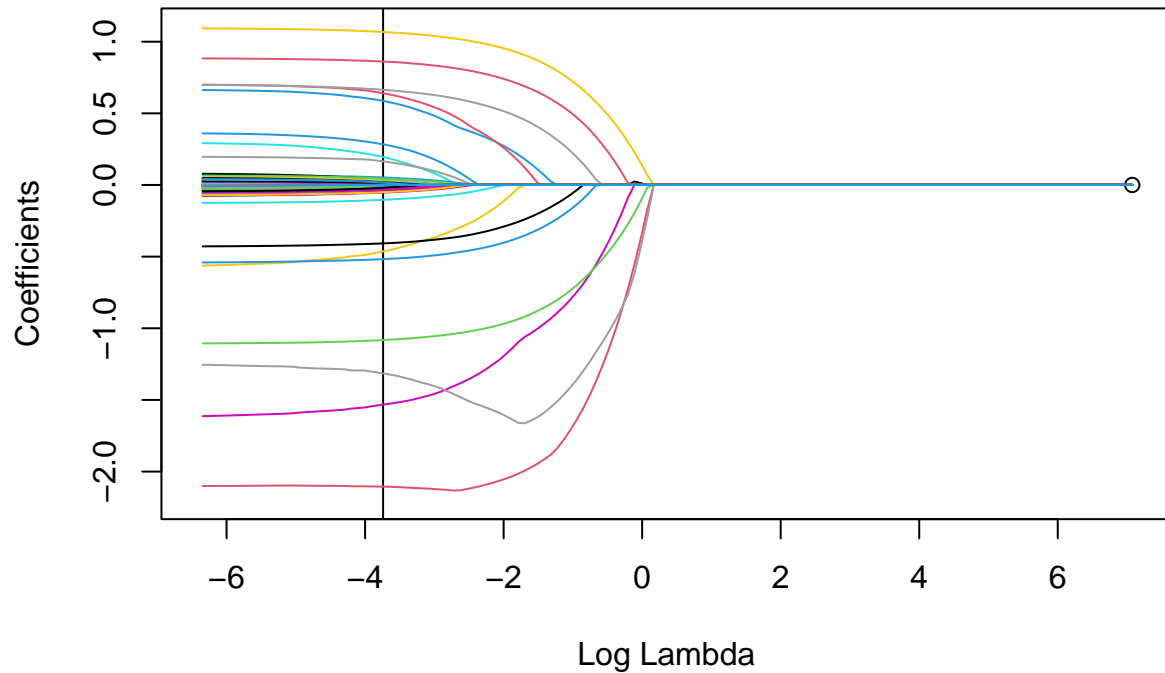
Graphical presentations of beta estimates

Similary we can plot the beta estimates for the optimizing values for alpha and gamma as a function of lambda.

```
# Fit a relaxed lasso model informed by cross validation
plot(nested_elastic_fit , type="elastic", coefs=1)
```

```
##   For Elastic net fit where alpha.min = 1 and gamma.min = 1,
##   log(lambda.min) = -3.74
```

Elastic net fit where $\alpha.\min=1$ and $\gamma.\min = 1$

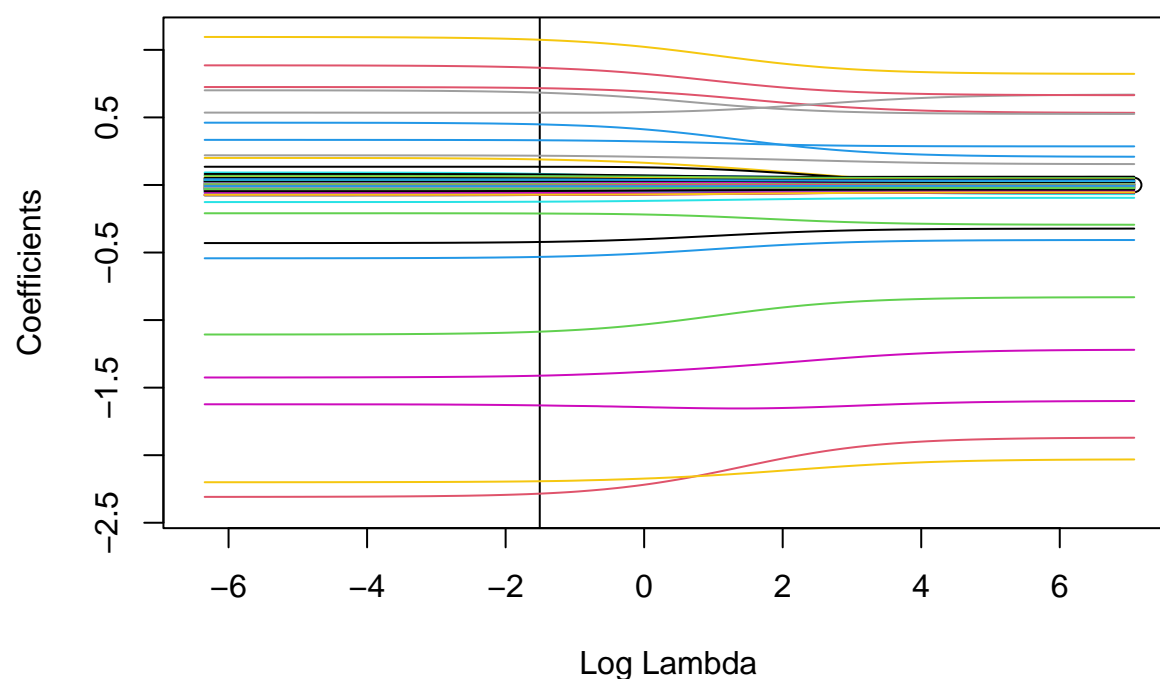


Similarly we can plot beta's for other values of alpha and gamma, specifying either alpha, gamma or both. If we specify only one of alpha or gamma, the plot will search for the other value minimizing the cross validation deviance.

```
# Fit a relaxed lasso model informed by cross validation  
plot(nested_elastic_fit , type="elastic", coefs=1, alpha=0)
```

```
## For elastic net fit at alpha = 0  
## gamma.min = 0.25 and log(lambda.min) = -1.5072
```


Elastic net fit at alpha = 0, and gamma.min = 0.25



corresponding to relaxed model restricting the penalty to the L2 metric.

Numerical values for beta and predicted

To extract beta's or calculate predicted we use the `predict()` function. By default predictions are given for the lasso model. Alternatively one may specify the model type as "lasso", "elastic" or "ridge".

```
# get betas ...
betas = predict(nested_elastic_fit)
```

```
##      gamma.min = 1   lambda.min = 0.02375409   df = 59   deviance = 1.0081
```

```
betas
```

```
## $beta_
##      (Intercept)          X1          X2          X3          X4
## 2.362494e+00  0.000000e+00 -2.105075e+00  0.000000e+00  5.865327e-01
##           X5          X6          X7          X8          X9
## 1.952103e-01  0.000000e+00 -4.634601e-01  1.650215e-01  0.000000e+00
##          X10         X11         X12         X13         X14
## 6.400439e-01  0.000000e+00  2.837661e-01 -1.182710e-02 -1.532684e+00
##          X15         X16         X17         X18         X19
## 1.348014e-13 -1.315465e+00  0.000000e+00  8.617157e-01 -1.082013e+00
##          X20         X21         X22         X23         X24
```

```

## -5.173393e-01 -1.034883e-01 -4.166578e-02 1.067433e+00 6.640276e-01
## X25 X26 X27 X28 X29
## -4.077089e-01 0.000000e+00 -1.089376e-02 5.251897e-02 0.000000e+00
## X30 X31 X32 X33 X34
## 0.000000e+00 9.403054e-03 1.620520e-02 3.611231e-02 -4.367165e-02
## X35 X36 X37 X38 X39
## 0.000000e+00 0.000000e+00 -3.111932e-02 0.000000e+00 2.756439e-02
## X40 X41 X42 X43 X44
## 3.210557e-02 -4.764198e-02 1.821047e-02 4.405780e-02 0.000000e+00
## X45 X46 X47 X48 X49
## -8.634518e-03 0.000000e+00 0.000000e+00 0.000000e+00 9.658628e-03
## X50 X51 X52 X53 X54
## 0.000000e+00 0.000000e+00 0.000000e+00 1.053695e-02 -3.338629e-02
## X55 X56 X57 X58 X59
## 3.743556e-03 0.000000e+00 9.387409e-03 0.000000e+00 5.558458e-03
## X60 X61 X62 X63 X64
## 1.970052e-02 -1.222905e-02 -5.282828e-02 3.003265e-02 0.000000e+00
## X65 X66 X67 X68 X69
## -9.070911e-03 0.000000e+00 0.000000e+00 0.000000e+00 0.000000e+00
## X70 X71 X72 X73 X74
## -4.847424e-02 0.000000e+00 0.000000e+00 0.000000e+00 -1.011700e-02
## X75 X76 X77 X78 X79
## 0.000000e+00 3.413472e-03 0.000000e+00 3.633437e-03 -5.029406e-02
## X80 X81 X82 X83 X84
## -1.110065e-02 1.054073e-02 0.000000e+00 -8.875924e-03 -1.246646e-02
## X85 X86 X87 X88 X89
## 2.291093e-02 0.000000e+00 0.000000e+00 0.000000e+00 1.915288e-02
## X90 X91 X92 X93 X94
## 0.000000e+00 0.000000e+00 1.665436e-02 0.000000e+00 -1.928135e-02
## X95 X96 X97 X98 X99
## 0.000000e+00 0.000000e+00 -1.965333e-02 0.000000e+00 -2.165041e-03
## X100
## 0.000000e+00
##
## $beta
## (Intercept) X2 X4 X5 X7
## 2.362494e+00 -2.105075e+00 5.865327e-01 1.952103e-01 -4.634601e-01
## X8 X10 X12 X13 X14
## 1.650215e-01 6.400439e-01 2.837661e-01 -1.182710e-02 -1.532684e+00
## X15 X16 X18 X19 X20
## 1.348014e-13 -1.315465e+00 8.617157e-01 -1.082013e+00 -5.173393e-01
## X21 X22 X23 X24 X25
## -1.034883e-01 -4.166578e-02 1.067433e+00 6.640276e-01 -4.077089e-01
## X27 X28 X31 X32 X33
## -1.089376e-02 5.251897e-02 9.403054e-03 1.620520e-02 3.611231e-02
## X34 X37 X39 X40 X41
## -4.367165e-02 -3.111932e-02 2.756439e-02 3.210557e-02 -4.764198e-02
## X42 X43 X45 X49 X53
## 1.821047e-02 4.405780e-02 -8.634518e-03 9.658628e-03 1.053695e-02
## X54 X55 X57 X59 X60
## -3.338629e-02 3.743556e-03 9.387409e-03 5.558458e-03 1.970052e-02
## X61 X62 X63 X65 X70
## -1.222905e-02 -5.282828e-02 3.003265e-02 -9.070911e-03 -4.847424e-02
## X74 X76 X78 X79 X80

```

```
## -1.011700e-02  3.413472e-03  3.633437e-03 -5.029406e-02 -1.110065e-02
##           X81           X83           X84           X85           X89
##  1.054073e-02 -8.875924e-03 -1.246646e-02  2.291093e-02  1.915288e-02
##           X92           X94           X97           X99
##  1.665436e-02 -1.928135e-02 -1.965333e-02 -2.165041e-03
```

```
# predicted ...
preds = predict(nested_elastic_fit , xs)
```

```
##      gamma.min = 1    lambda.min =  0.02375409    deviance = 1.0081
```

```
preds[1:10]
```

```
## [1] -2.10717422 -0.06894307  1.47968865  2.03575200  3.31775663 -2.40491613
## [7]  1.21467420  0.71839384  0.21358677 -0.86919865
```

For this case the best lasso model is the “fully” penalized (relaxed) lasso model.

```
# get betas ...
betas = predict(nested_elastic_fit, type="elastic" )
betas

# predicted ...
preds = predict(nested_elastic_fit , xs, type="elastic" )
preds[1:10]
```

For this analysis the best elastic net model is the same as the best lasso model, so we suppressed here the printing out of the same numbers.