

§ Differentiation of Vectors

Continuity: A vector function $\vec{u}(t)$ is said to be continuous at $t=t_0$ if it is defined in some neighbourhood of t_0 and

$$\lim_{t \rightarrow t_0} \vec{u}(t) = \vec{u}(t_0)$$

If we introduce a Cartesian coordinate system,

$$\vec{u}(t) = u_1(t) \mathbf{i} + u_2(t) \mathbf{j} + u_3(t) \mathbf{k}$$

then $\vec{u}(t)$ is continuous at t_0 if and only iff its three components (u_1, u_2, u_3) are continuous at t_0 .

Differentiability: A vector function $\vec{u}(t)$ is said to be differentiable at a pt t if the limit

$$\vec{u}'(t) = \lim_{\Delta t \rightarrow 0} \frac{\vec{u}(t+\Delta t) - \vec{u}(t)}{\Delta t}$$

exists. The vector $\vec{u}'(t)$ is called the derivative of $\vec{u}(t)$.

Note: To differentiate a vector fct, one differentiates each component separately. It can be shown that:

$$(i) (c\vec{u})' = c\vec{u}' \quad (c = \text{constant})$$

$$(ii) (\vec{u} + \vec{v})' = \vec{u}' + \vec{v}'$$

$$(iii) (\vec{u} \cdot \vec{v})' = \vec{u}' \cdot \vec{v} + \vec{u} \cdot \vec{v}'$$

$$(iv) (\vec{u} \times \vec{v})' = \vec{u}' \times \vec{v} + \vec{u} \times \vec{v}'$$

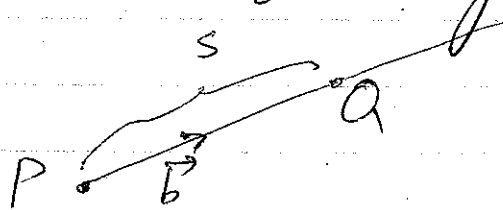
$$(v) (\vec{u} \cdot \vec{v} \times \vec{w})' = \vec{u}' \cdot \vec{v} \times \vec{w} + \vec{u} \cdot \vec{v}' \times \vec{w} + \vec{u} \cdot \vec{v} \times \vec{w}'$$

§ The Gradient Vector

We consider a scalar field given by a scalar function $f(x, y, z)$. We know that the first partial derivatives of f , i.e. $\frac{\partial f}{\partial x}$, $\frac{\partial f}{\partial y}$ & $\frac{\partial f}{\partial z}$ are the rates of change of f

in the x , y , & z directions, respectively. We may ask for the rate of change of f in any direction. This leads to the notion of directional derivatives.

Consider the following diagram:



We choose a pt P in space and a dirⁿ at P , given by a unit vector \vec{b} . Q can be a pt on C where C is the ray from P in the dirⁿ of \vec{b} . Then the directional derivative of f at P in the direction of \vec{b}

is given by:

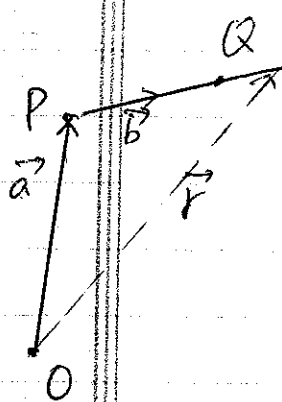
$$\frac{df}{ds} = \lim_{s \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(Q) - f(P)}{s} \quad (1)$$

where s = distance between P & Q . Obviously $\frac{df}{ds}$ is the rate of change of f at P in the direction of \vec{b} .

If P has the position vector \vec{a} , then the ray C can be represented in the form

$$\vec{r}(s) = x(s)\vec{i} + y(s)\vec{j} + z(s)\vec{k} \quad (2)$$

$$C = \vec{a} + s\vec{b}$$



$$\frac{df}{ds} = \frac{d}{ds} (f(x(s), y(s), z(s)))$$

$$= \frac{\partial f}{\partial x} \frac{dx}{ds} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial y} \frac{dy}{ds} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial z} \frac{dz}{ds} \quad (3)$$

From (2) :

$$\frac{d\vec{r}}{ds} = \frac{dx}{ds}\vec{i} + \frac{dy}{ds}\vec{j} + \frac{dz}{ds}\vec{k}$$

$$= \frac{d\vec{a}}{ds} + \frac{d}{ds}(s\vec{b}) = \vec{b}$$

This suggests that if we introduce the

vector $\text{grad } f = \frac{\partial f}{\partial x}\vec{i} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial y}\vec{j} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial z}\vec{k} \quad (4)$

Eq (3) can be written as:

$$\frac{df}{ds} = \nabla f \cdot \vec{b} \quad (5)$$

The vector $\text{grad } f$ is called the gradient of the scalar function f .

By introducing the differential operator $\nabla \equiv \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \vec{i} + \frac{\partial}{\partial y} \vec{j} + \frac{\partial}{\partial z} \vec{k}$, we have

$$\text{grad } f \equiv \nabla f = \frac{\partial f}{\partial x} \vec{i} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial y} \vec{j} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial z} \vec{k}$$

e.g. $\vec{b} = \vec{i}$ (i.e. directional derivative in the x -dirⁿ)

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{df}{ds} = \vec{b} \cdot \nabla f &= \vec{i} \cdot \left(\frac{\partial f}{\partial x} \vec{i} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial y} \vec{j} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial z} \vec{k} \right) \\ &= \frac{\partial f}{\partial x} \quad (\text{as expected}) \end{aligned}$$

Similarly for $\vec{b} = \vec{j}, \vec{k}$ for $\frac{df}{dy}, \frac{df}{dz}$.

Example: Find the directional derivative $\frac{df}{ds}$ of $f(x, y, z) = 2x^2 + 3y^2 + z^2$ at the point $(2, 1, 3)$ in the direction of the vector $\vec{a} = \vec{i} - 2\vec{k}$

$$\nabla f = \frac{\partial f}{\partial x} \vec{i} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial y} \vec{j} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial z} \vec{k}$$

$$\nabla f = 4x \vec{i} + 6y \vec{j} + 2z \vec{k}$$

and at $P(2, 1, 3)$,

$$\nabla f = 8 \vec{i} + 6 \vec{j} + 6 \vec{k}$$

$$\vec{a} = \vec{i} - 2 \vec{k}$$

\vec{b} = unit vector in the direction of \vec{a}

$$= \frac{\vec{a}}{|\vec{a}|} = \frac{\vec{i} - 2\vec{k}}{\sqrt{5}}$$

$$\therefore \frac{\partial f}{\partial s} = (8 \vec{i} + 6 \vec{j} + 6 \vec{k}) \cdot \left(\frac{\vec{i} - 2\vec{k}}{\sqrt{5}} \right)$$

$$= \frac{8 - 12}{\sqrt{5}} = -\frac{4}{\sqrt{5}}$$

Note :

1. The length & dirⁿ of grad f are independent of the particular choice of Cartesian coordinates

2. ∇f has the direction of maximum increase of f at P .

$$\frac{\partial f}{\partial s} = \nabla f \cdot \vec{b} = |\nabla f| |\vec{b}| \cos \theta$$

where θ is the angle between ∇f and \vec{b} . We see that $\frac{\partial f}{\partial s}$ is maximum when $\cos \theta = 1$ or $\theta = 0$ and then

$\frac{df}{ds} = |\text{grad } f|$. This shows that the

direction of maximum increase is in the dirⁿ of ∇f .

3. Consider a differentiable scalar $f(x, y, z)$ in space. $f(x, y, z) = C =$ constant represents a surface S in space. With C assuming different values, we obtain a family of surfaces which are called the "level surfaces" of f . Since by definition, f has a unique value at each pt in space, it follows that there passes one and only one level surface of f thru each pt.

Let a curve C in space represented by $r(t) = x(t)\vec{i} + y(t)\vec{j} + z(t)\vec{k}$. if we now require that C lies on S , then

$$f(x(t), y(t), z(t)) = C$$

$$\Rightarrow \frac{df}{dt} = 0$$

$$\Rightarrow \frac{df}{dx} \dot{x} + \frac{df}{dy} \dot{y} + \frac{df}{dz} \dot{z} = 0$$

$$\Rightarrow \nabla f \cdot \vec{v} = 0$$

where $\vec{v} = \dot{x}\vec{i} + \dot{y}\vec{j} + \dot{z}\vec{k}$ is tangent to C .

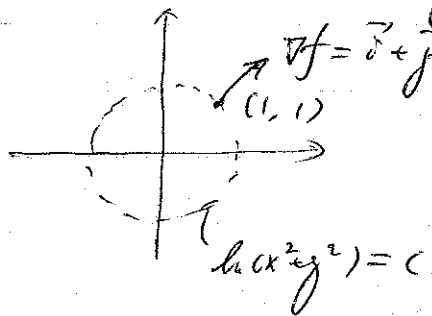
$$\nabla f \cdot \vec{r} = 0 \Rightarrow \nabla f \perp \vec{r}$$

$$\Rightarrow \nabla f \text{ is normal to the surface.}$$

Example,

$$f(x, y) = \ln(x^2 + y^2)$$

$$\nabla f = \frac{\partial f}{\partial x} \vec{i} + \frac{\partial f}{\partial y} \vec{j} = \frac{2x}{x^2 + y^2} \vec{i} + \frac{2y}{x^2 + y^2} \vec{j}$$



$$\text{at } x=y=1$$

$$\nabla f = \vec{i} + \vec{j}$$

§ Divergence of a Vector Field

Let $\vec{v}(x, y, z) = v_1 \vec{i} + v_2 \vec{j} + v_3 \vec{k}$ be a differentiable vector. Then

$$\text{div } \vec{v} = \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial v_2}{\partial y} + \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial z}$$

is called the divergence of \vec{v} .

Another common notation is:

$$\text{div } \vec{v} = \nabla \cdot \vec{v} = \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial x} \vec{i} + \frac{\partial}{\partial y} \vec{j} + \frac{\partial}{\partial z} \vec{k} \right) \cdot (v_1 \vec{i} + v_2 \vec{j} + v_3 \vec{k})$$

$$= \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial v_2}{\partial y} + \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial z}$$

Note : $\vec{v} \cdot \nabla \neq \nabla \cdot \vec{v}$

Example : Continuity equation in fluid mechanics

$$\frac{\partial \rho}{\partial t} + \frac{\partial (\rho v_1)}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial (\rho v_2)}{\partial y} + \frac{\partial (\rho v_3)}{\partial z} = 0$$

or
$$\frac{\partial \rho}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot (\rho \vec{v}) = 0$$

$\rho = \text{density}$, $\vec{v} = \text{velocity}$

For incompressible fluid, $\rho = \text{constant}$, it becomes

$$\frac{\partial \rho}{\partial t} + \rho \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x} + v_1 \frac{\partial \rho}{\partial x} + \rho \frac{\partial v_2}{\partial y} + v_2 \frac{\partial \rho}{\partial y} + \rho \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial z} + v_3 \frac{\partial \rho}{\partial z} = 0$$

$$\Rightarrow \rho \left(\frac{\partial v_1}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial v_2}{\partial y} + \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial z} \right) = 0$$

or
$$\boxed{\nabla \cdot \vec{v} = 0}$$
 since $\rho \neq 0$

This is the condition of incompressibility

§ Curl of a Vector Field

$$\text{curl } \vec{V} \equiv \nabla \times \vec{V} = \begin{vmatrix} \vec{i} & \vec{j} & \vec{k} \\ \frac{\partial}{\partial x} & \frac{\partial}{\partial y} & \frac{\partial}{\partial z} \\ v_1 & v_2 & v_3 \end{vmatrix}$$
$$= \left(\frac{\partial v_3}{\partial y} - \frac{\partial v_2}{\partial z} \right) \vec{i} + \left(\frac{\partial v_1}{\partial z} - \frac{\partial v_3}{\partial x} \right) \vec{j} + \left(\frac{\partial v_2}{\partial x} - \frac{\partial v_1}{\partial y} \right) \vec{k}$$

is called the curl of the vector field \vec{V} .

Example: Vorticity in fluid mechanics

$$\nabla \times \vec{V} = \vec{\zeta} = \omega \times \vec{r}$$

where $\vec{\zeta}$ = vorticity of a fluid element
 $= \zeta_x \vec{i} + \zeta_y \vec{j} + \zeta_z \vec{k}$

The vorticity components $\zeta_x, \zeta_y, \zeta_z$ are related to the angular speed (turns) of the fluid element about its own axis in the corresponding directions.

If $\nabla \times \vec{V} = 0$, the flow is irrotational

note: $\nabla \times (\nabla f) = \vec{0}$ for any twice differentiable scalar field f .

hence if a vector fct is the gradient of a scalar fct, its curl is the zero vector. For rotational flow, $\nabla \times \vec{v} = \vec{f} = 0$, $\vec{v} = \nabla \phi$, i.e.

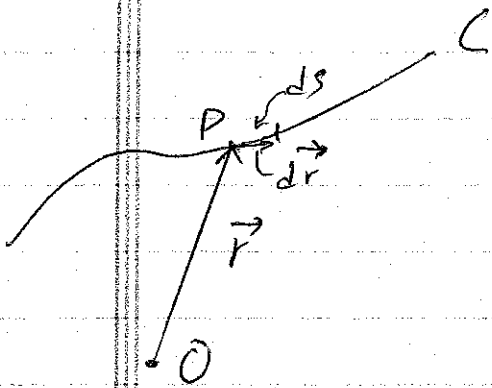
the velocity can be represented as the gradient of a scalar fct ϕ . ϕ is called the velocity potential.

§ Line Integrals

Let \vec{F} : a vector fct in a 3-D space

C : a space curve

\vec{r} : position vector from an origin O to the space curve C .



With each pt P of C , we have

$$d\vec{r} = \frac{d\vec{r}}{ds} ds = \vec{u} ds$$

where \vec{u} is a unit tangent vector to C at P . (note: $d\vec{r}$ has as its length ds along C at P and as its dir $\hat{=}$ the direction of the curve at P .)

$$\vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r} = (\vec{F} \cdot \vec{u}) ds$$

= product of the component of \vec{F} in the direction of C at P and the differential length ds .

$$\text{Finally, } \int_C \vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r} = \int_C \vec{F} \cdot \vec{u} ds$$

is known as the line integral of \vec{F} along C . In particular, if \vec{F} = force acting on a particle, then

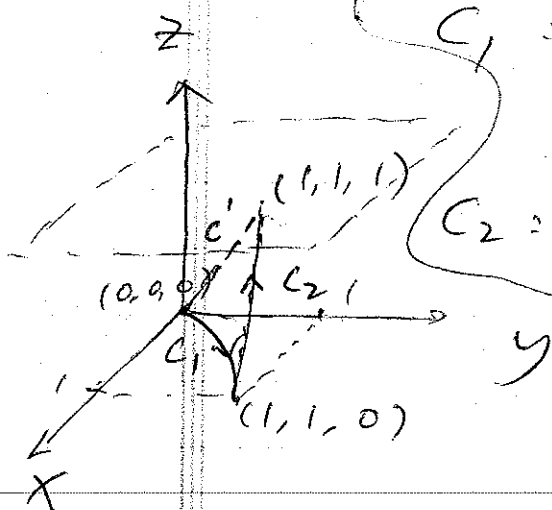
$\int_C \vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r}$ = work done by the force in moving the particle along C .

$$\text{Let } \vec{F} = P(x, y, z) \vec{i} + Q(x, y, z) \vec{j} + R(x, y, z) \vec{k}$$
$$\text{and } \vec{r} = x \vec{i} + y \vec{j} + z \vec{k}$$

then

$$\int_C \vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r} = \int_C P dx + \int_C Q dy + \int_C R dz$$

Example: $\vec{F} = yz\vec{i} + xy\vec{j} + xz\vec{k}$



$C_1 = (0, 0, 0) \rightarrow (1, 1, 0)$
 along $x=y^2, z=0$

$C_2 = (1, 1, 0) \rightarrow (1, 1, 1)$
 along $x=y=1$

$F \cdot d\vec{r} = yz dx + xy dy + xz dz$

along $C_1 = x=y^2, z=0$

$\therefore dx = 2y dy, dz = 0$

$F \cdot d\vec{r} = y^3 dy$

$\Rightarrow \int_{C_1} F \cdot d\vec{r} = \int_0^1 y^3 dy = \frac{y^4}{4} \Big|_0^1 = \frac{1}{4}$

along $C_2, x=y=1 \Rightarrow dx=dy=0$

$\int_{C_2} F \cdot d\vec{r} = \int_0^1 z dz = \frac{1}{2}$

$\therefore \int_{C_1+C_2} F \cdot d\vec{r} = \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} = \frac{3}{4}$

Consider an alternate path C' which goes straight from $(0, 0, 0)$ to $(1, 1, 1)$ (shown in red on the sketch)

along C' : $x=y=z \Rightarrow dx=dy=dz$

$$\int_{C'} \vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r} = \int_0^1 z^2 dz + z^2 dz + z^2 dz$$

(all in terms of z)

$$= 3 \int_0^1 z^2 dz = z^3 \Big|_0^1 = 1$$

Note: $\int \vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r}$ depends on the path

chosen going from $(0, 0, 0)$ to $(1, 1, 1)$.

In some cases, $\int \vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r}$ is path independent. If \vec{F} can be represented as the gradient of a scalar fct, say ϕ , then $\int \vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r}$ is path independent.

Proof: $\vec{F} = \nabla\phi = \frac{\partial\phi}{\partial x}\vec{i} + \frac{\partial\phi}{\partial y}\vec{j} + \frac{\partial\phi}{\partial z}\vec{k}$

$$\Rightarrow \int \vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r} = \int \left(\frac{\partial\phi}{\partial x}\vec{i} + \frac{\partial\phi}{\partial y}\vec{j} + \frac{\partial\phi}{\partial z}\vec{k} \right) \cdot (dx\vec{i} + dy\vec{j} + dz\vec{k})$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 &= \int \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial x} dx + \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial y} dy + \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial z} dz \\
 &= \int d\phi = \phi_2 - \phi_1
 \end{aligned}$$

where ϕ_1 & ϕ_2 are the values of ϕ at the end pts of the curve. Hence it is independent of path.

So, under what condition, when \vec{F} can be represented as $\nabla\phi$? i.e. $\vec{F} = \nabla\phi$.

Since $\nabla \times \nabla\phi \equiv 0$, (vector identity)

ϕ exists iff $\nabla \times \vec{F} = 0$

If $\vec{F} = P(x,y,z)\vec{i} + Q(x,y,z)\vec{j} + R(x,y,z)\vec{k}$

$$\begin{aligned}
 \nabla \times \vec{F} &= \vec{i} \left(\frac{\partial R}{\partial y} - \frac{\partial Q}{\partial z} \right) + \vec{j} \left(\frac{\partial P}{\partial z} - \frac{\partial R}{\partial x} \right) \\
 &\quad + \vec{k} \left(\frac{\partial Q}{\partial x} - \frac{\partial P}{\partial y} \right)
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\nabla \times \vec{F} = 0 \Rightarrow \boxed{
 \begin{aligned}
 \frac{\partial R}{\partial y} &= \frac{\partial Q}{\partial z} \\
 \frac{\partial P}{\partial z} &= \frac{\partial R}{\partial x} \\
 \frac{\partial Q}{\partial x} &= \frac{\partial P}{\partial y}
 \end{aligned}
 } \quad (*)$$

i.e. when (*) is satisfied, then a scalar fct $\phi(x, y, z)$ exists s.t.

$$\vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r} = \nabla\phi \cdot d\vec{r} = d\phi$$

For a closed curve :

$$\oint_C \vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r} = 0 \quad \text{if (*) is satisfied.}$$

(otherwise it may or may not vanish)

Example : $\vec{F} = y^2 \vec{i} + 2(xy+z) \vec{j} + 2y \vec{k}$

$\begin{matrix} P \\ Q \\ R \end{matrix}$

(i) $\frac{\partial P}{\partial y} \stackrel{?}{=} \frac{\partial Q}{\partial x}$

$\begin{matrix} 2y \\ 2y \end{matrix}$

(yes)

(ii) $\frac{\partial P}{\partial z} \stackrel{?}{=} \frac{\partial R}{\partial x}$

$\begin{matrix} 0 \\ 0 \end{matrix}$

(yes)

(iii) $\frac{\partial Q}{\partial z} \stackrel{?}{=} \frac{\partial R}{\partial y}$

$\begin{matrix} 2 \\ 2 \end{matrix}$

(yes)

$\therefore \nabla \times \vec{F} = 0 \quad \& \quad \vec{F} = \nabla\phi$

To determine $\phi(x, y, z)$, we have

$$\vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r} = d\phi = y^2 dx + 2(xy+z)dy + 2y dz$$

Compared with $d\phi = \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial x} dx + \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial y} dy + \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial z} dz$

we have:

$$\frac{\partial \phi}{\partial x} = y^2 \quad (a)$$

$$\frac{\partial \phi}{\partial y} = 2(xy+z) \quad (b)$$

$$\frac{\partial \phi}{\partial z} = 2y \quad (c)$$

(a) gives: $\phi = xy^2 + f(y, z)$

$$\Rightarrow \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial y} = 2xy + \frac{\partial f(y, z)}{\partial y}$$

Comparing with (b) gives:

$$\frac{\partial f(y, z)}{\partial y} = 2z$$

$$\Rightarrow f(y, z) = 2yz + g(z)$$

$$\therefore \phi = xy^2 + 2yz + g(z)$$

$$\Rightarrow \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial z} = 2y + g'(z)$$

Comparing with (c) gives,

$$g'(z) = 0 \Rightarrow g(z) = C$$

$$\therefore \boxed{\phi = xy^2 + 2yz + C}$$