Wave Math

0x15

last updated 2025-06-23

1 Simple 2D Damped Wave Equation

The simplest 2D damped wave equation is

$$\frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial t^2} = c^2 \left(\frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial y} \right) - \mu \frac{\partial u}{\partial t} \text{ or } D_t^2 u = c^2 (D_x^2 u + D_y^2 u) - \mu D_t u$$

For wave magnitude u(x, y, t) (vertical displacement of fluid, etc...) at point (x, y) and time t, wave speed c, and damping coefficient $\mu \geq 0$ (think fluid viscosity).

2 Descretising the Simple 2D Case

Fixing space scales $\Delta x = \Delta y$ and time scale Δt , we let $u_{j,k}^n$ be the numerically calculated value of $u(x_j, y_k, t_n)$ (note that it can be thought $x_j = j\Delta x$ and $y_k = k\Delta y$ as they are in denominations of grid cells, and t_n is the *n*th timestep so $t_n = n\Delta t$ assuming we're starting from 0 time).

Then for each term applying the limit definition of derivative for forward, backward, and centered difference we get:

First order spatial derivatives:

Forward:
$$\frac{\partial u(x_j, y_k, t_n)}{\partial x} = \lim_{\Delta x \to 0} \frac{u(x_j + \Delta x, y_k, t_n) - u(x_j, y_k, t_n)}{\Delta x} \approx \frac{u_{j+1,k}^n - u_{j,k}^n}{\Delta x}$$
Backward:
$$\frac{\partial u(x_j, y_k, t_n)}{\partial x} = \lim_{\Delta x \to 0} \frac{u(x_j, y_k, t_n) - u(x_j - \Delta x, y_k, t_n)}{\Delta x} \approx \frac{u_{j,k}^n - u_{j-1,k}^n}{\Delta x}$$
Centered:
$$\frac{\partial u(x_j, y_k, t_n)}{\partial x} = \lim_{\Delta x \to 0} \frac{u(x_j + \frac{1}{2}\Delta x, y_k, t_n) - u(x_j - \frac{1}{2}\Delta x, y_k, t_n)}{2\Delta x} \approx \frac{u_{j+1,k}^n - u_{j-1,k}^n}{2\Delta x}$$

And then the same for $\frac{\partial u(x_j, y_k, t_n)}{\partial y}$.

Second order Spatial Derivatives: via taking a Forward difference of a backward derivative (seen below) or vice versa.

$$\begin{split} \frac{\partial^{2} u(x_{j}, y_{k}, t_{n})}{\partial x^{2}} &= \lim_{\Delta x \to 0} \frac{\frac{(u(x_{j} + \Delta x, y_{k}, t_{n}) - u(x_{j} - \Delta x + \Delta x, y_{k}, t_{n}) - (u(x_{j}, y_{k}, t_{n}) - u(x_{j} - \Delta x, y_{k}, t_{n}))}{\Delta x} \\ &= \lim_{\Delta x \to 0} \frac{u(x_{j} + \Delta x, y_{k}, t_{n}) - 2u(x_{j}, y_{k}, t_{n}) + u(x_{j} - \Delta x, y_{k}, t_{n})}{\Delta x^{2}} \approx \frac{u_{j+1,k}^{n} - 2u_{j,k}^{n} + u_{j-1,k}^{n}}{\Delta x^{2}} \end{split}$$

And similarly, the same for $\frac{\partial^2 u(x_j, y_k, t_n)}{\partial y^2}$

Time Derivatives (1st and 2nd order):

1st Forward:
$$\frac{\partial u(x_j, y_k, t_n)}{\partial t} = \lim_{\Delta t \to 0} \frac{u(x_j, y_k, t_n + \Delta t) - u(x_j, y_k, t_n)}{\Delta t} \approx \frac{u_{j,k}^{n+1} - u_{j,k}^n}{\Delta t}$$
1st Backward:
$$\frac{\partial u(x_j, y_k, t_n)}{\partial t} = \lim_{\Delta t \to 0} \frac{u(x_j, y_k, t_n) - u(x_j, y_k, t_n - \Delta t)}{\Delta t} \approx \frac{u_{j,k}^{n-1} - u_{j,k}^{n-1}}{\Delta t}$$
1st Centered:
$$\frac{\partial u(x_j, y_k, t_n)}{\partial t} = \lim_{\Delta t \to 0} \frac{u(x_j, y_k, t_n + \frac{1}{2}\Delta t) - u(x_j, y_k, t_n - \frac{1}{2}\Delta t)}{2\Delta t} \approx \frac{u_{j,k}^{n+1} - u_{j,k}^{n-1}}{2\Delta t}$$
2st Forward of Backward:
$$\frac{\partial^2 u(x_j, y_k, t_n)}{\partial t^2} = \lim_{\Delta x \to 0} \frac{u(x_j, y_k, t_n + \Delta t) - 2u(x_j, y_k, t_n) + u(x_j, y_k, t_n - \Delta t)}{\Delta n^2}$$

$$\approx \frac{u_{j,k}^{n+1} - 2u_{j,k}^n + u_{j,k}^{n-1}}{\Delta t^2}$$

Plugging into the DE: (remember, we want to solve for the current cell at the next time, so $u_{j,k}^{n+1}$. As such I will be using the centered time derivative) Additionally, I will assume the grid cells are perfect squares, so $\Delta x = \Delta y$.

$$\begin{split} \frac{u_{j,k}^{n+1} - 2u_{j,k}^n + u_{j,k}^{n-1}}{\Delta t^2} &= c^2 \left(\frac{u_{j+1,k}^n - 2u_{j,k}^n + u_{j-1,k}^n}{\Delta x^2} + \frac{u_{j,k+1}^n - 2u_{j,k}^n + u_{j,k-1}^n}{\Delta y^2} \right) - \mu \frac{u_{j,k}^{n+1} - u_{j,k}^{n-1}}{2\Delta t} \\ &= \frac{u_{j,k}^{n+1} - 2u_{j,k}^n + u_{j,k}^{n-1}}{\Delta t^2} + \mu \frac{u_{j,k}^{n+1} - u_{j,k}^{n-1}}{2\Delta t} = c^2 \left(\frac{u_{j+1,k}^n - 2u_{j,k}^n + u_{j-1,k}^n}{\Delta x^2} + \frac{u_{j,k+1}^n - 2u_{j,k}^n + u_{j,k-1}^n}{\Delta x^2} \right) \\ &= u_{j,k}^{n+1} - 2u_{j,k}^n + u_{j,k}^{n-1} + \frac{\mu \Delta t}{2} (u_{j,k}^{n+1} - u_{j,k}^{n-1}) = \frac{c^2 \Delta t^2}{\Delta x^2} \left(u_{j+1,k}^n - 2u_{j,k}^n + u_{j-1,k}^n + u_{j,k+1}^n - 2u_{j,k}^n + u_{j,k-1}^n \right) \\ &= u_{j,k}^{n+1} - 2u_{j,k}^n + u_{j,k}^{n-1} + \frac{\mu \Delta t}{2} u_{j,k}^{n+1} - \frac{\mu \Delta t}{2} u_{j,k}^{n+1} = \frac{c^2 \Delta t^2}{\Delta x^2} \left(u_{j+1,k}^n + u_{j,k+1}^n - 2u_{j,k}^n + u_{j,k+1}^n \right) - \frac{4c^2 \Delta t^2}{\Delta x^2} u_{j,k}^n \\ &= u_{j,k}^{n+1} + \frac{\mu \Delta t}{2} u_{j,k}^{n+1} = \frac{c^2 \Delta t^2}{\Delta x^2} \left(u_{j+1,k}^n + u_{j,k+1}^n \right) - \frac{4c^2 \Delta t^2}{\Delta x^2} u_{j,k}^n + \frac{\mu \Delta t}{2} u_{j,k}^{n-1} + 2u_{j,k}^n - u_{j,k}^{n-1} \\ &= u_{j,k}^{n+1} \left(1 + \frac{\mu \Delta t}{2} \right) = \frac{c^2 \Delta t^2}{\Delta x^2} \left(u_{j+1,k}^n + u_{j,k+1}^n \right) + \left(2 - \frac{4c^2 \Delta t^2}{\Delta x^2} \right) u_{j,k}^n + \left(\frac{\mu \Delta t}{2} - 1 \right) u_{j,k}^{n-1} \\ &= \frac{c^2 \Delta t^2}{\Delta x^2 (1 + \frac{\mu \Delta t}{2})} \left(u_{j+1,k}^n + u_{j,k+1}^n \right) + \frac{2 - 4c^2 \Delta t^2 / \Delta x^2}{1 + \frac{\mu \Delta t}{2}} u_{j,k}^n + \frac{\mu \Delta t}{1 + \frac{\mu \Delta t}{2}} u_{j,k}^{n-1} \\ &= \frac{2c^2 \Delta t^2}{\Delta x^2 (1 + \frac{\mu \Delta t}{2})} \left(u_{j+1,k}^n + u_{j,k+1}^n \right) + \frac{4 - 8c^2 \Delta t^2 / \Delta x^2}{2 + \mu \Delta t} u_{j,k}^n + \frac{\mu \Delta t}{2 + \mu \Delta t} u_{j,k}^{n-1} \\ &= \frac{2c^2 \Delta t^2}{\Delta x^2 (2 + \mu \Delta t)} \left(u_{j+1,k}^n + u_{j,k+1}^n \right) + \frac{4 - 8c^2 \Delta t^2 / \Delta x^2}{2 + \mu \Delta t} u_{j,k}^n + \frac{\mu \Delta t}{2 + \mu \Delta t} u_{j,k}^{n-1} \\ &= \frac{2c^2 \Delta t^2}{\Delta x^2 (2 + \mu \Delta t)} \left(u_{j+1,k}^n + u_{j,k+1}^n \right) + \frac{4 - 8c^2 \Delta t^2 / \Delta x^2}{2 + \mu \Delta t} u_{j,k}^{n-1} + \frac{\mu \Delta t}{2 + \mu \Delta t} u_{j,k}^{n-1} \right)$$

3 Expanding to 3D

Similarly to the 2D case, expanding to 3D is

$$\frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial t^2} = c^2 \left(\frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial y} + \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial z} \right) - \mu \frac{\partial u}{\partial t} \text{ or } D_t^2 u = c^2 (D_x^2 u + D_y^2 u + D_z^2 u) - \mu D_t u \text{ or } \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial t^2} = c^2 \nabla^2 u - \mu \frac{\partial u}{\partial t}$$

With the discretization of $\frac{\partial^2 u}{dz^2}$ following similarly to that of x and y (and of course $u(x_j,y_k,z_\ell,t_n)=u^n_{j,k,\ell}$). And similarly the assumption $\Delta x=\Delta y=\Delta z$.

$$\begin{split} \frac{u_{j,k,\ell}^{n+1}-2u_{j,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j,k,\ell}^{n-1}}{\Delta t^2} &= c^2 \left(\frac{u_{j+1,k,\ell}^{n}-2u_{j,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j-1,k,\ell}^{n}}{\Delta x^2} + \frac{u_{j,k+1,\ell}^{n}-2u_{j,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j,k-1,\ell}^{n}}{\Delta y^2} + \frac{u_{j,k,\ell+1}^{n}-2u_{j,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j,k,\ell-1}^{n}}{\Delta z^2} \right) - \mu \frac{u_{j,k,\ell}^{n+1}-u_{j,k,\ell}^{n-1}}{2\Delta t} \\ \frac{u_{j,k,\ell}^{n+1}-2u_{j,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j,k,\ell}^{n-1}}{\Delta t^2} + \mu \frac{u_{j,k,\ell}^{n+1}-u_{j,k,\ell}^{n-1}}{2\Delta t} &= c^2 \left(\frac{u_{j+1,k,\ell}^{n}-2u_{j,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j-1,k,\ell}^{n}}{\Delta x^2} + \frac{u_{j,k+1,\ell}^{n}-2u_{j,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j,k-1,\ell}^{n}}{\Delta x^2} + \frac{u_{j,k,\ell+1}^{n}-2u_{j,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j,k,\ell-1}^{n}}{\Delta x^2} \right) \\ u_{j,k,\ell}^{n+1}-2u_{j,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j,k,\ell}^{n-1} + \frac{\mu^2}{2}(u_{j,k,\ell}^{n+1}-u_{j,k,\ell}^{n-1}) &= \frac{c^2}{2x^2} \left(u_{j+1,k,\ell}^{n}-2u_{j,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j-1,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j,k+1,\ell}^{n}-2u_{j,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j,k+1,\ell}^{n}-2u_{j,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j,k+1,\ell}^{n}-2u_{j,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j,k,\ell+1}^{n}-2u_{j,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j,k,\ell+1}^{n}} \right) \\ u_{j,k,\ell}^{n+1}+\frac{\mu^2}{2}u_{j,k,\ell}^{n+1}-2u_{j,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j,k,\ell}^{n-1}-2u_{j,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j-1,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j-1,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j,k+1,\ell}^{n}-2u_{j,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j,k,\ell+1}^{n}-2u_{j,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j,k,\ell+1}^{n}} \right) \\ u_{j,k,\ell}^{n+1}+\frac{\mu^2}{2}u_{j,k,\ell}^{n+1}-2u_{j,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j,k,\ell}^{n-1}-2u_{j,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j,k,\ell+1}^{n}+u_{j,k,\ell+1}^{n}-2u_{j,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j,k,\ell+1}^{n}-6u_{j,k,\ell}^{n}} \right) \\ u_{j,k,\ell}^{n+1}+\frac{\mu^2}{2}u_{j,k,\ell}^{n+1}-2u_{j,k,\ell}^{n}+u_{j,k,\ell+1}^{n}+u_{j,k,\ell+1}^{n}-u_{j,k,\ell+1}^{n}-u_{j,k,\ell+1}^{n}+u_{j,k,\ell+1}^{n}-u_{j$$