

Assignment 1

Sri Harsha CH

Abstract—This document explains the concept of finding the unit vector making an angle of θ with the positive direction of the x axis.

1 PROBLEM

Write down a unit vector in the xy -plane, making an angle of 30° with the positive direction of the x -axis.

2 EXPLANATION

Unit vector can be found from direction vector which depends on the slope. The slope(m) is given by:

$$m = \tan \theta$$

and the direction vector is obtained from slope as:

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ m \end{pmatrix}$$

The direction vector of x axis is given by $\begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$ as the slope (m) of x axis is zero.

Now, let us consider a unit vector \mathbf{a} in the xy -plane, and given this vector makes an angle of 30° with the positive direction of the x -axis.

Substituting $\theta = 30^\circ$ in slope equation, we get:

$$m = \tan 30^\circ = \frac{1}{\sqrt{3}}$$

and the direction vector is:

$$\mathbf{a} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ \frac{1}{\sqrt{3}} \end{pmatrix}$$

To find a unit vector with the same direction as direction vector, we divide by the magnitude of the vector.

$$\hat{a} = \frac{\mathbf{a}}{|\mathbf{a}|}$$

$$|\mathbf{a}| = \sqrt{(1)^2 + \left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{3}}\right)^2} = \frac{2}{\sqrt{3}}$$

\Rightarrow The unit vector is given by:

$$\hat{a} = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{1}{\frac{2}{\sqrt{3}}} \\ \frac{\frac{1}{\sqrt{3}}}{\frac{2}{\sqrt{3}}} \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\hat{a} = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{\sqrt{3}}{2} \\ \frac{1}{2} \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\Rightarrow \boxed{\hat{a} = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{\sqrt{3}}{2} \\ \frac{1}{2} \end{pmatrix}}$$

3 SOLUTION

The unit vector that makes an angle of 30° with the positive direction of the x -axis is:

$$\Rightarrow \boxed{\hat{a} = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{\sqrt{3}}{2} \\ \frac{1}{2} \end{pmatrix}}$$