

Chapter 11

Curves and Vector Fields

11.1 Curves

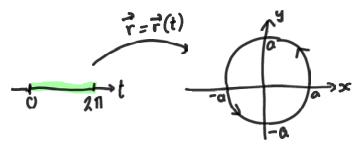
A parametric curve is a special case of a vector-valued function whose domains is an interval in \mathbb{R} .

Parametric Curve or Path

Definition 11.1. A parametric curve (curve or path) in \mathbb{R}^n is a non-constant continuous map $\mathbf{r}: I \to \mathbb{R}^n$ where I is an interval in \mathbb{R} . If the domain of \mathbf{r} is the interval [a, b], we say that \mathbf{r} is a parametric curve that "starts" at $\mathbf{r}(a)$, "ends" at $\mathbf{r}(b)$, and "runs" from $\mathbf{r}(a)$ to $\mathbf{r}(b)$. If $\mathbf{r}(a) = \mathbf{r}(b)$, we say that the parametric curve is *closed*.

Often, we refer to the function \mathbf{r} and its image in \mathbb{R}^n both as "the parametric curve."

Example 11.2. (FRY Example IV.1.0.1) Parametrize the circle $x^2 + y^2 =$

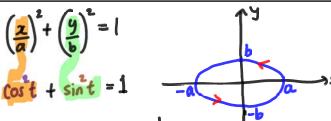


(ii) If we wonted to go clockwise,

$$\vec{r}(t) = \langle \alpha \cos t, -\alpha \sin t \rangle$$
 where $o \leq t \leq 2\pi$

(iii) Here's another $\vec{r}(t) = \langle \alpha \cos(2t), \alpha \sin(2t) \rangle$ where $\alpha \leq t \leq 1$

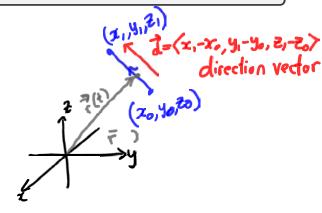
Example 11.3. (FRY Example IV.1.0.3) Parametrize the ellipse $x^2 + \frac{y^2}{b^2} = 1$. where a,b >0



- $\frac{z}{a} = \cos t \rightarrow z = a \cos t$
- y = sint -> y= bsint

So, $\vec{r}(t) = \langle a \cos t, b \sin t \rangle$, where $0 \le t \le 2\pi$ parametrizer the ellipse.

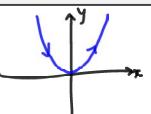
Example 11.4. Parametrize the line segment that runs from the point (x_0, y_0, z_0) to the point (x_1, y_1, z_1) .



 $\vec{r}(t) = \langle x_{0}, y_{0}, z_{0} \rangle + t \vec{d} , \text{ where } o \leq t \leq 1$ $= \langle x_{0}, y_{0}, z_{0} \rangle + t \langle x_{1} - x_{0}, y_{1} - y_{0}, z_{1} - z_{0} \rangle, o \leq t \leq 1$ $= \langle x_{0} + t(x_{1} - x_{0}), y_{0} + t(y_{1} - y_{0}), z_{0} + t(z_{1} - z_{0}) \rangle, o \leq t \leq 1$

Example 11.5. Parametrize $y = x^2$

$$\hat{\Gamma}(x) = \langle x, x^2 \rangle$$
Where $-\infty < x < \infty$



Example 11.6. Unparametrize $\mathbf{r}(t) = \langle t, t^2 \rangle$.

 a To "unparametrize" means to "hide" the parametrization and relate the components to each other directly.

Observe
$$y = t^2 = (t)^2 = x^2$$
.
 $\overrightarrow{r}(t) = \langle t, t^2 \rangle$ parametrizes $y = x^2$

11.2 Derivatives, Velocity, Etc.

The component-wise nature of the operations of addition and scalar multiplication on vectors allows us to calculate the derivative of a vector-valued function component by component.

FRY Defn IV.1.1.1 Derivative of $\mathbf{r}(t)$

Definition 11.7. Let $\mathbf{r}: I \to \mathbb{R}^n$ be a vector-valued function on an interval $I \subseteq \mathbb{R}$. Its derivative is defined to be

$$\mathbf{r}'(t) = \frac{d\mathbf{r}}{dt}(t) = \lim_{h \to 0} \frac{\mathbf{r}(t+h) - \mathbf{r}(t)}{h},$$

or, equivalently, as

$$\mathbf{r}'(t) = \frac{d\mathbf{r}}{dt}(t) = \lim_{\Delta t \to 0} \frac{\mathbf{r}(t + \Delta t) - \mathbf{r}(t)}{\Delta t},$$

when the limit exists. We say that \mathbf{r} is differentiable at $t \in I$ when the derivative of \mathbf{r} exists at t. We say that \mathbf{r} is differentiable on I if it is differentiable at every point in I.

If $\mathbf{r}(t) = \langle x_1(t), x_2(t), \dots, x_n(t) \rangle$, then

$$\mathbf{r}'(t) = \langle x_1'(t), x_2'(t), \dots, x_n'(t) \rangle,$$

that is, the derivative of $\mathbf{r}(t)$ can be found by differentiating each of its components.

For example, if $\mathbf{r}(t) = \langle t, \sin t, e^t \rangle$ where $t \in \mathbb{R}$, then $\mathbf{r}'(t) = \langle 1, \cos t, e^t \rangle$ for $t \in \mathbb{R}$.

FRY Defn IV.1.1.3 Arithmetic of differentiation

Theorem 11.8. Let I be an interval in \mathbb{R} (possibly all of \mathbb{R}). Let f and **g** be differentiable vector-valued functions and a(t) and b(t) be real-valued differentiable functions on I. Let $c, d \in \mathbb{R}$ be constants. Then

(a)
$$\frac{d}{dt} [c \mathbf{f}(t) + d \mathbf{g}(t)] = c \mathbf{f}'(t) + d \mathbf{g}'(t)$$

(b)
$$\frac{d}{dt}[a(t)\mathbf{f}(t)] = a'(t)\mathbf{f}(t) + a(t)\mathbf{f}'(t)$$

(c)
$$\frac{d}{dt} [\mathbf{f}(t) \cdot \mathbf{g}(t)] = \mathbf{f}'(t) \cdot \mathbf{g}(t) + \mathbf{f}(t) \cdot \mathbf{g}'(t)$$

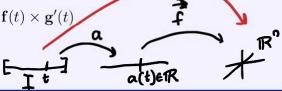
$$dt \left[\mathbf{f}(t) + a\mathbf{g}(t) \right] = a'(t)\mathbf{f}(t) + a(t)\mathbf{f}'(t)$$

$$(c) \frac{d}{dt} \left[\mathbf{f}(t) \cdot \mathbf{g}(t) \right] = \mathbf{f}'(t) \cdot \mathbf{g}(t) + \mathbf{f}(t) \cdot \mathbf{g}'(t)$$

$$(d) \frac{d}{dt} \left[\mathbf{f}(t) \times \mathbf{g}(t) \right] = \mathbf{f}'(t) \times \mathbf{g}(t) + \mathbf{f}(t) \times \mathbf{g}'(t)$$

$$(e) \frac{d}{dt} \left[\mathbf{f}(a(t)) \right] = \mathbf{f}'(a(t)) a'(t)$$

(e)
$$\frac{d}{dt} [\mathbf{f}(a(t))] = \mathbf{f}'(a(t)) a'(t)$$



Example 11.9. (FRY Example IV.1.1.2)

Let $\mathbf{f}(t) = \langle t^2, t^4, t^6 \rangle$, $\mathbf{g}(t) = \langle e^{-t}, e^{-3t}, e^{-5t} \rangle$, $a(t) = t^2$, and $b(t) = \sin(t)$. Use these functions to see some of the identities described in the theorem above in action.

let
$$\vec{r} : \vec{I} \subseteq \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R}^n$$
 Suppose \vec{r} is differentiable at $t \in \vec{I}$.

That is, $\lim_{\Delta t \to 0} \frac{\vec{r}(t + \Delta t) - \vec{r}(t)}{\Delta t} = \lim_{\Delta t \to 0} \frac{1}{\Delta t} (\vec{r}(t + \Delta t) - \vec{r}(t)) = \vec{r}'(t)$

That is, $\lim_{\Delta t \to 0} \frac{\vec{r}(t + \Delta t) - \vec{r}(t)}{\Delta t} = \lim_{\Delta t \to 0} \frac{1}{\Delta t} (\vec{r}(t + \Delta t) - \vec{r}(t)) = \vec{r}'(t)$

Observe that

$$\sum_{\alpha \in T} \vec{r}(t) = \lim_{\Delta t \to 0} \frac{\vec{r}(t + \Delta t) - \vec{r}(t)}{\Delta t} = \lim_{\Delta t \to 0} \frac{\vec{r}(t + \Delta t)}$$

$$\lim_{\Delta t \to 0} \frac{1}{\Delta t} \left(\overrightarrow{r}(t + \Delta t) - \overrightarrow{r}(t) \right) = \overrightarrow{r}(t)$$

$$= ||\overrightarrow{r}(t) \Delta t||$$

$$= ||\overrightarrow{r}(t)|| \Delta t$$

In the limit, $ds = ||\vec{r}'(t)|| dt$

A consequence of the definition of the derivative being

$$\mathbf{r}'(t) = \frac{d\mathbf{r}}{dt}(t) = \lim_{\Delta t \to 0} \frac{\mathbf{r}(t + \Delta t) - \mathbf{r}(t)}{\Delta t}$$

is that when Δt is small,

- The vector $\mathbf{r}(t+\Delta t) \mathbf{r}(t)$ has roughly the same direction as the tangent vector to the curve at $\mathbf{r}(t)$ that points in the direction of increasing t; and
- $\|\mathbf{r}(t + \Delta t) \mathbf{r}(t)\|$ has roughly the same length as the portion of the curve between $\mathbf{r}(t)$ and $\mathbf{r}(t + \Delta t)$.

FRY Lemma IV.1.1.4, The tangent vector, unit tangent vector, and arclength

Lemma 11.10. Let I be an interval in \mathbb{R} (possibly all of \mathbb{R}). Let \mathbf{i} be a differentiable vector-valued function with a nonzero continuous derivative at every $t \in I$. Then

- (a) $\mathbf{r}'(t)$ is a tangent vector to the curve at $\mathbf{r}(t)$ that points in the direction of increasing t.
- (b) The unit tangent vector $\hat{\mathbf{T}}(t)$ to the curve at $\mathbf{r}(t)$ pointing in the direction of increasing t is given by

$$\hat{\mathbf{T}}(t) = \frac{\mathbf{r}'(t)}{\|\mathbf{r}'(t)\|}.$$

(c) The arclength (or length), s(t), of the part of the curve between $\mathbf{r}(a)$, where $a \in I$, and $\mathbf{r}(t)$ is given by

arclength function
$$s(t) = \int_a^t \|\mathbf{r}'(\tau)\| d\tau = \int_a^t \left\| \frac{d\mathbf{r}}{d\tau}(\tau) \right\| d\tau$$
$$= \int_a^t \sqrt{(x'(\tau))^2 + (y'(\tau))^2 + (z'(\tau))^2} d\tau.$$

(d) The arclength (or length) of the curve from $\mathbf{r}(a)$ to $\mathbf{r}(b)$, where $a, b \in I$ with $a \leq b$, equals $\int_a^b \|\mathbf{r}'(t)\| \ dt$.

 $[^]a$ A vector-valued function with a nonzero continuous derivative at every point in its domain is also called a regular function.

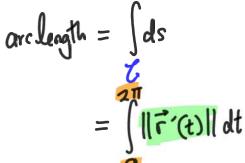
Example 11.11. (FRY Example IV.1.1.6)

Find the arclength of the parametric curve

$$\mathbf{r}(t) = \langle \cos(t), \sin(t) \rangle$$

from t = 0 to $t = 2\pi$.

This is the unit circle T



$$= \int_{0}^{2\pi} 1 dt$$

$$= \int_{0}^{2\pi} 1 dt$$

$$\vec{r}(t) = \langle cost, sint \rangle$$
, $c = t = 27$

$$\|\vec{r}'(t)\| = \sqrt{\left(\operatorname{Sint}\right)^2 + \left(\operatorname{cost}\right)^2}$$

$$= \sqrt{\operatorname{Sin}^2 t + \operatorname{cos}^2 t}$$

$$= \sqrt{1}$$

FRY Lemma IV.1.1.5

Lemma 11.12. Let I be an interval in \mathbb{R} (possibly all of \mathbb{R}). Let $\mathbf{r}(t) = \langle x(t), y(t), z(t) \rangle$ be a differentiable vector-valued function with nonzero continuous derivative at every $t \in I$. Suppose that $\mathbf{r}(t)$ describes the position of a particle at time t.

- (a) The position of the particle at time t is given by $\mathbf{r}(t) = \langle x(t), y(t), z(t) \rangle$.
- (b) The velocity of the particle at time t is given by

$$\mathbf{v}(t) = \mathbf{r}'(t) = \langle x'(t), y'(t), z'(t) \rangle.$$

(c) The speed of the particle at time t is given by

$$\frac{ds}{dt}(t) = \|\mathbf{v}(t)\| = \|\mathbf{r}'(t)\| = \sqrt{(x'(t))^2 + (y'(t))^2 + (z'(t))^2}.$$

(d) The acceleration of the particle at time t is given by

$$\mathbf{a}(t) = \mathbf{v}'(t) = \mathbf{r}''(t) = \langle x''(t), y''(t), z''(t) \rangle.$$

(e) The distance travelled between times t_0 and t is

$$s(t) - s(t_0) = \int_{t_0}^t \|\mathbf{r}'(\tau)\| d\tau = \int_{t_0}^t \|\mathbf{v}(\tau)\| d\tau$$
$$= \int_{t_0}^t \sqrt{(x'(\tau))^2 + (y'(\tau))^2 + (z'(\tau))^2} d\tau.$$

^aNote that the velocity of the particle at time t may be written as its speed multiplied by the direction: $\mathbf{v}(t) = \frac{ds}{dt} \,\hat{\mathbf{T}}(t)$, where $\hat{\mathbf{T}}(t) = \frac{\mathbf{r}'(t)}{\|\mathbf{r}'(t)\|}$ is the unit tangent vector.

$$x^{2} + y^{2} = \left[3\cos(2\pi t)\right]^{2} + \left[3\sin(2\pi t)\right]^{2} = 9\cos(2\pi t) + 9\sin^{2}(2\pi t)$$

$$= 9\left[\cos^{2}(2\pi t) + \sin^{2}(2\pi t)\right] = 9(1) = 9$$

Example 11.13. At time t, the position of a particle is described by $\mathbf{r}(t) = \langle 3\cos(2\pi t), 3\sin(2\pi t) \rangle$. Determine its velocity, speed, and acceleration at time t. For this particular motion, describe any relations that you see in terms of the directions of the position, velocity, and acceleration vectors.

$$7(t) = \langle 3\cos(2\pi t), 3\sin(2\pi t) \rangle \quad 0 = t = 1$$

$$= \langle 3(-\sin(2\pi t) \cdot 2\pi), 3\cos(2\pi t) \cdot 2\pi \rangle \quad (t)$$

$$= \langle -6\pi \sin(2\pi t), 6\pi \cos(2\pi t) \rangle, \quad \text{the curve of } t = 1$$

Note
$$\vec{V}(t) \cdot \vec{r}(t)$$

= $(-6\pi \sin(2\pi t), 6\pi \cos(2\pi t)) \cdot (3\cos(2\pi t), 3\sin(2\pi t))$
= $-18\pi \sin(2\pi t)\cos(2\pi t) + 18\pi \sin(2\pi t)\cos(2\pi t)$

=0
That is, v(t) ⊥r(t)

↑ perpendicular

For circular trajectories,

1 perpendicular. The velocity vector
is perpendicular to
the position vector.

$$\exists \text{ speed} = \|\vec{v}(t)\|$$

$$= \int (-6\pi \sin(2\pi t))^{2} + (6\pi \cos(2\pi t))^{2}$$

$$= \int \frac{36\pi^{2} \sin^{2}(2\pi t) + 36\pi^{2} \cos^{2}(2\pi t)}{\sin^{2}(2\pi t) + \cos^{2}(2\pi t)} = \int 36\pi^{2} = 6\pi$$

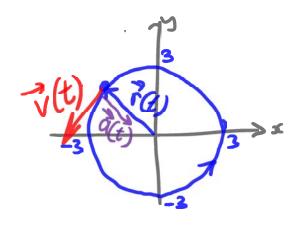
1 acceleration

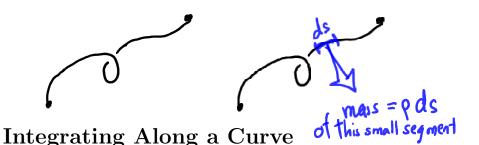
$$\vec{V}(t) = \langle -6\pi \sin(2\pi t), 6\pi \cos(2\pi t) \rangle$$

$$\vec{a}(t) = \vec{v}'(t) = \vec{r}''(t)$$

$$= \langle -12\pi^2 \cos(2\pi t), -12\pi^2 \sin(2\pi t) \rangle$$

Recall
$$\vec{r}(t) = \langle 3\cos(2\pi t), 3\sin(2\pi t) \rangle$$
. Notice That $\vec{a}(t) = -4\pi^2 \vec{r}(t)$





Let \mathcal{C} be a (smooth, regular) curve with parametrization $\mathbf{r}(t)$ where $a \leq t \leq b$. If ρ is a continuous mass density function along the curve \mathcal{C} , then

mass of
$$C = \int_a^b \rho(\mathbf{r}(t)) \|\mathbf{r}'(t)\| dt = \int_C \rho ds$$
.

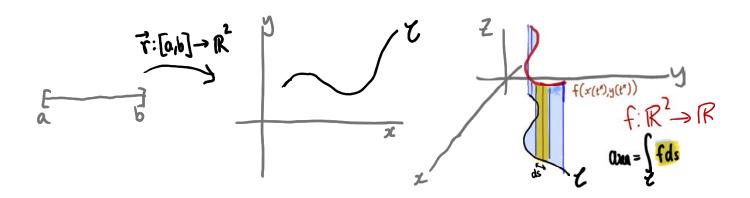
Example 11.14. (FRY Exercise IV.1.6.1.4)

11.3

A hoop traces out the curve $x^2 + y^2 = 1$ where x and y are measured in metres. At a point (x, y), its density is x^2 kg per metre. What is the mass of the hoop?

$$arclength$$

$$= \int_{c}^{2\pi} e^{(x,y)} = \int_{c}^$$



More generally,

FRY Defn IV.1.6.1 Integral of f over parametric curve

Definition 11.15. Let \mathcal{C} be a curve parametrized by $\mathbf{r}(t) = \langle x(t), y(t), z(t) \rangle$, where $a \leq t \leq b$. Let f be a continuous function along \mathbf{C} . Then

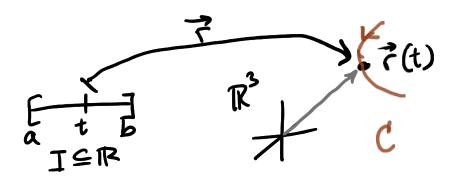
$$\int_{\mathcal{C}} f \ ds = \int_{a}^{b} f\left(\mathbf{r}(t)\right) \|\mathbf{r}'(t)\| \ dt = \int_{a}^{b} f\left(x(t), y(t), z(t)\right) \|\mathbf{r}'(t)\| \ dt.$$

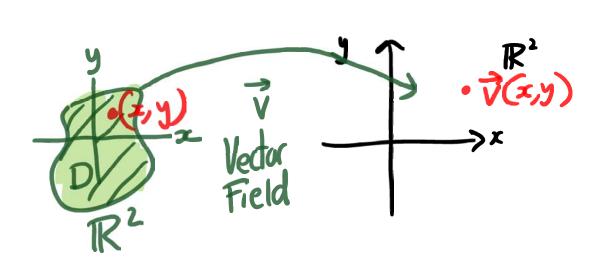
In the special case that the curve C lies in \mathbb{R}^2 and is described by the function y = f(x), then for a continuous function g(x, y),

$$\int_{C} g \ ds = \int_{a}^{b} g(x, f(x)) \sqrt{1 + (f'(x))^{2}} \ dx.$$

The reason this works is because we can use the parametrization $\mathbf{r}(x) = \langle x, f(x) \rangle$ in which case $g(\mathbf{r}(x)) = g(x, f(x))$ and $\|\mathbf{r}'(x)\| = \|\langle 1, f'(x) \rangle\| = \sqrt{1 + (f'(x))^2}$.

Example 11.16. (FRY Exercise IV.1.6.1.5) **segmen**Let f(x, y, z) = xy + z and \mathcal{C} be the straight line from (1, 2, 3) to (2, 4, 5). Evaluate $\int_{\mathcal{C}} f \, ds$.





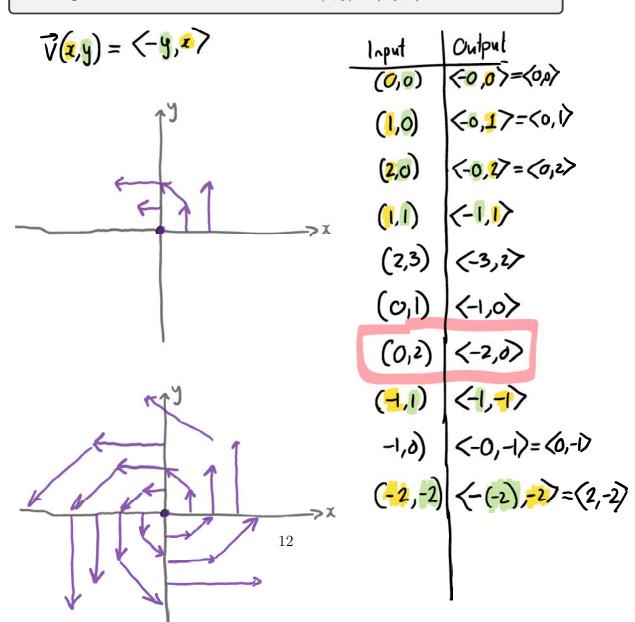
11.4 Vector Fields: Definitions and First Examples

FRY Defn IV.2.1.1, What is a vector field?

Definition 11.17. A vector field is a function that assigns to each point (x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_n) in a subset D of \mathbb{R}^n a vector $\mathbf{v} = \langle v_1, v_2, \ldots, v_n \rangle$ in \mathbb{R}^n .

We will primarily work with vector fields in \mathbb{R}^2 and \mathbb{R}^3 .

Example 11.18. Sketch the vector field $\mathbf{v}(x,y) = \langle -y, x \rangle$.



If we use unit vectors ("directions") where we can, we get a direction field of a given vector field:

FRY Defn IV.2.1.8, What is a direction field?

Definition 11.19. Let ${\bf v}$ be a vector field. Then, the direction field of ${\bf v}$ is the vector field defined by

$$\mathbf{D}(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n) = \begin{cases} \frac{\mathbf{v}(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n)}{\|\mathbf{v}(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n)\|}, & \text{if } \mathbf{v}(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n) \neq \mathbf{0} \\ \mathbf{0}, & \text{if } \mathbf{v}(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n) = \mathbf{0}. \end{cases}$$

Example 11.20. Sketch the direction field for the vector field $\mathbf{v}(x,y) = x\hat{\imath} + y\hat{\jmath} = \langle x,y \rangle$.

11.5 References

References:

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