

Some special symmetric matrices: Suppose  $A$  is an  $m \times n$  matrix (we don't need  $m=n$ ).

Then  $A^T A$  and  $A A^T$  are both symmetric (not usually the same)

$\uparrow$   $n \times n$                        $\uparrow$   $m \times m$

What's special about  $A^T A$ ? For one thing, its eigenvalues are not just real numbers. They are also positive (or 0).

Why? Suppose  $A^T A \vec{x} = \lambda \vec{x}$  with  $\vec{x} \neq \vec{0}$ .

Then

$$\begin{aligned} \vec{x}^T A^T A \vec{x} &= \lambda (\vec{x}^T \vec{x}) \\ \parallel &\quad \parallel \\ (A\vec{x})^T A\vec{x} &\quad \lambda (\vec{x}^T \vec{x}) \end{aligned} \rightarrow \lambda = \frac{(A\vec{x}) \cdot (A\vec{x})}{\vec{x} \cdot \vec{x}} = \frac{\|A\vec{x}\|^2}{\|\vec{x}\|^2} \geq 0$$

"Spectral Theorem"

Let's arrange the eigenvalues in decreasing order:

$$\lambda_1 \geq \lambda_2 \geq \dots \geq \lambda_r > \lambda_{r+1} = 0, \dots, \lambda_n = 0$$

$$\vec{v}_1, \vec{v}_2, \dots, \vec{v}_r, \underbrace{\vec{v}_{r+1}, \dots, \vec{v}_n}_{\text{Basis for } N(A^T A)} \leftarrow \begin{array}{l} \text{Orthonormal basis} \\ \text{of eigenvectors} \\ \text{spectral Theorem} \end{array}$$

Since each  $\lambda_i \geq 0$ , we can take their square roots:  $\sigma_i = +\sqrt{\lambda_i}$

$\uparrow$

called the singular values of  $A$

$\uparrow$

Also a basis for  $N(A)$ , because  $N(A) = N(A^T A)$ .

Why? If  $\vec{x}$  in  $N(A)$ , then  $A\vec{x} = \vec{0}$ , so  $A^T A \vec{x} = A^T \vec{0} = \vec{0} \rightarrow \vec{x}$  is also in  $N(A^T A)$ . On the other hand, if  $A^T A \vec{x} = \vec{0}$ , then

$$\begin{aligned} \vec{x}^T A^T A \vec{x} &= \vec{x}^T \vec{0} = 0 \\ \parallel &\quad \parallel \\ (A\vec{x})^T A\vec{x} &= \|A\vec{x}\|^2 \rightarrow A\vec{x} = \vec{0}. \end{aligned}$$

So  $\vec{x}$  is in  $N(A)$  as well.

Note that  $\dim N(A^T A) = \dim N(A) = n - r$ , where  $r = \text{rank}(A)$  (31)  
 $\nearrow$   
same as rank of  $A^T A$ .

So the non-zero singular values  $\sigma_1, \sigma_2, \dots, \sigma_r$  go along with  $\text{rank}(A)$ -many orthonormal eigenvectors  $\vec{v}_1, \vec{v}_2, \dots, \vec{v}_r$ :  $A^T A \vec{v}_i = \sigma_i^2 \vec{v}_i$

For  $i=1, 2, \dots, r$ , let's define  $\vec{u}_i = \frac{1}{\sigma_i} A \vec{v}_i$  (vectors in  $\mathbb{R}^m$  since  $A$  is  $m \times n$ )

What's special about  $\vec{u}_1, \vec{u}_2, \dots, \vec{u}_r$ ?

(1) They are an orthonormal set in  $\mathbb{R}^m$ :

$$\vec{u}_i^T \vec{u}_j = \frac{1}{\sigma_i \sigma_j} (A \vec{v}_i)^T (A \vec{v}_j) = \frac{1}{\sigma_i \sigma_j} \vec{v}_i^T \underbrace{A^T A}_{\sigma_j^2 \vec{v}_j} \vec{v}_j$$

$$= \frac{\sigma_j}{\sigma_i} \vec{v}_i^T \vec{v}_j = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } i=j \\ 0 & \text{if } i \neq j \end{cases}$$

$\nearrow$  Because  $\{\vec{v}_1, \dots, \vec{v}_n\}$  is orthonormal.

(2) They form a basis of the column space  $C(A)$ :  
orthonormal

- They are linearly independent because they are orthonormal.
- They are in the column space, because  $C(A) = \text{set of all } A \vec{x} \text{ for } \vec{x} \text{ in } \mathbb{R}^n$ .
- They are enough for a basis since  $\dim C(A) = \text{rank } r$ .

(3) They are eigenvectors for  $A A^T$ !

$$A A^T \vec{u}_i = \frac{1}{\sigma_i} \underbrace{A A^T A}_{\sigma_i^2 \vec{v}_i} \vec{v}_i = \sigma_i A \vec{v}_i = \sigma_i \left( \frac{A \vec{v}_i}{\sigma_i} \right) = \sigma_i^2 \vec{u}_i$$

$\nwarrow$  same eigenvalue  $\lambda_i$



Now remember one of the big theorems:

~~$C(A)$~~   $C(A)^\perp = N(A^T)$  in  $\mathbb{R}^m$

We can get an orthonormal basis of  $\mathbb{R}^m$  by combining

$\{\vec{u}_1, \vec{u}_2, \dots, \vec{u}_r\}$  with  $\{\vec{u}_{r+1}, \dots, \vec{u}_m\}$

orthonormal basis  
of  $C(A)$ , also  
eigenvectors for  $AA^T$

orthonormal basis of  $N(A^T)$ , same as  
 $N(\text{AAT})$ , so also eigenvectors for  $AA^T$   
(with eigenvalue 0).

Conclusion: For any  $m \times n$  matrix  $A$ , we've shown that we can  
find orthonormal bases of both  $\mathbb{R}^m$  and  $\mathbb{R}^n$  that are "good for  $A$ ":

$\mathbb{R}^m = \{\underbrace{\vec{u}_1, \dots, \vec{u}_r}_{\text{basis of } N(A^T)}, \underbrace{\vec{u}_{r+1}, \dots, \vec{u}_m}_{\text{orthonormal basis of eigenvectors for } AA^T}\}$

$AA^T \vec{u}_i = \sigma_i^2 \vec{u}_i$

$\mathbb{R}^n = \{\underbrace{\vec{v}_1, \dots, \vec{v}_r}_{\text{basis of } N(A)}, \underbrace{\vec{v}_{r+1}, \dots, \vec{v}_n}_{\text{orthonormal basis of eigenvectors for } A^T A}\}$

$A^T A \vec{v}_i = \sigma_i^2 \vec{v}_i$

Moreover,  $A \vec{v}_i = \sigma_i \vec{u}_i$

We can use this equation to derive the singular value decomposition (SVD) of  $A$ :

Write:  $V = \begin{bmatrix} \vec{v}_1 & \vec{v}_2 & \dots & \vec{v}_n \end{bmatrix}$ ,  $U = \begin{bmatrix} \vec{u}_1 & \vec{u}_2 & \dots & \vec{u}_m \end{bmatrix}$ ,  $\Sigma = \begin{bmatrix} \sigma_1 & \dots & 0 \\ & \ddots & \\ 0 & & \sigma_r & \dots & 0 \\ & & & \ddots & \\ & & 0 & & 0 \end{bmatrix}$

$n \times n$  orthogonal matrix       $m \times m$  orthogonal matrix       $m \times n$  "diagonal" matrix

Now let's calculate:

$$AV = A \begin{bmatrix} \vec{v}_1 & \vec{v}_2 & \dots & \vec{v}_n \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} A\vec{v}_1 & A\vec{v}_2 & \dots & A\vec{v}_r & \vec{0} & \dots & \vec{0} \end{bmatrix}$$

$A\vec{v}_i = \sigma_i \vec{u}_i$  if  $i \leq r$        $A\vec{v}_i = \vec{0}$  if  $i > r$ .

$$= \begin{bmatrix} \sigma_1 \vec{u}_1 & \sigma_2 \vec{u}_2 & \dots & \sigma_r \vec{u}_r & \vec{0} & \dots & \vec{0} \end{bmatrix}$$

Can write  
 $\vec{0} = 0 \vec{u}_{r+1}, \vec{0} = 0 \vec{u}_{r+2}$   
 $\dots \vec{0} = 0 \vec{u}_m$

$m \times n$  matrix; multiplying columns  
 by  $\sigma_i$  = multiply on right with  
 an  $m \times n$  diagonal-like matrix

$$= \begin{bmatrix} \vec{u}_1 & \vec{u}_2 & \dots & \vec{u}_m \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \sigma_1 & & & 0's \\ & \sigma_2 & & \\ & & \ddots & \\ & & & \sigma_r & 0 \dots 0 \\ 0's & & & & & 0 \end{bmatrix} = U \Sigma$$

$m \times m$        $m \times n$

(we will have columns of 0's on the right if  $n > m$ , and we will have rows of 0's at the bottom if  $m > n$ )

We calculated  $AV = U\Sigma$ . Also,  $V$  is orthogonal,  $V^{-1} = V^T$ .

So  $\boxed{A = U\Sigma V^T}$  ← the singular value decomposition (SVD)

SVD shows that any  $m \times n$  matrix  $A$  can be factored as:

$$(\overset{\uparrow}{m \times m \text{ orthogonal}}) (\overset{\uparrow}{m \times n \text{ diagonal-like}}) (\overset{\uparrow}{n \times n \text{ orthogonal}})$$

columns are the left  
singular vectors (orthonormal  
 basis of eigenvectors  
 for  $AA^T$ )

diagonal entries  
 are the singular  
values (square  
 roots of the positive  
 real eigenvalues of  
 $AA^T$  and  $ATA$ )

rows  $\uparrow$   
~~columns~~ are the right  
singular vectors  
 (orthonormal basis of  
 eigenvectors for  $ATA$ .)



Example (Problem 7.2.4)

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

Let's find the SVD. First find eigenvalues and eigenvectors of  $A^T A$ .

$$A^T A = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 2 & 1 \\ 1 & 2 \end{bmatrix}$$

Eigenvalues:  $\det(A^T A - \lambda I) =$

$$\begin{vmatrix} 2-\lambda & 1 \\ 1 & 2-\lambda \end{vmatrix} = (2-\lambda)^2 - 1 = \lambda^2 - 4\lambda + 3 = (\lambda-3)(\lambda-1) = 0$$

So  $\lambda_1 = 3 > \lambda_2 = 1 > 0 \rightsquigarrow \sigma_1 = \sqrt{3}, \sigma_2 = 1$  (square roots)

Eigenvectors for  $\lambda=3$ : Solve  $(A^T A - 3I)\vec{x} = \vec{0}$

$$\begin{bmatrix} -1 & 1 \\ 1 & -1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} \rightsquigarrow x_1 = x_2 \rightsquigarrow \vec{x} = x_2 \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}. \text{ The orthonormal}$$

basis vector  $\vec{v}_1$  should be a unit vector:  $\vec{v}_1 = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$

Eigenvectors for  $\lambda=1$ : Solve  $(A^T A - I)\vec{x} = \vec{0}$ .

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} \rightsquigarrow x_1 + x_2 = 0 \rightsquigarrow \vec{x} = x_2 \begin{bmatrix} -1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}.$$

$\vec{v}_2$  should be a unit vector:  $\vec{v}_2 = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{bmatrix} -1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$ .

Note that  $\vec{v}_1 \perp \vec{v}_2$ , ~~should~~ so  $\{\vec{v}_1, \vec{v}_2\}$  is indeed an orthonormal

basis of  $\mathbb{R}^2$ . Get orthogonal matrix  $V = \begin{bmatrix} 1/\sqrt{2} & -1/\sqrt{2} \\ 1/\sqrt{2} & 1/\sqrt{2} \end{bmatrix}$

Left singular vectors  $\vec{u}_1, \vec{u}_2, \vec{u}_3$

$$\vec{u}_1 = \frac{1}{\sigma_1} A \vec{v}_1 = \frac{1}{\sqrt{3}} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 1/\sqrt{2} \\ 1/\sqrt{2} \end{bmatrix} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{6}} \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 2 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\vec{u}_2 = \frac{1}{\sigma_2} A \vec{v}_2 = \frac{1}{1} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} -1/\sqrt{2} \\ 1/\sqrt{2} \end{bmatrix} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{bmatrix} -1 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

What about  $\vec{u}_3$ ?

It needs to be a unit basis vector of

$$N(AA^T) = N(A^T)$$

Solve  $A^T \vec{x} = \vec{0}$ :  $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \xrightarrow{\text{Row 1} - \text{Row 2}} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & -1 \\ 0 & 1 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{matrix} x_1 = x_3 \\ x_2 = -x_3 \end{matrix}$

So  $\vec{x} = x_3 \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ -1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$ .  $\vec{u}_3$  needs to be a unit vector:  $\vec{u}_3 = \frac{1}{\sqrt{3}} \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ -1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$

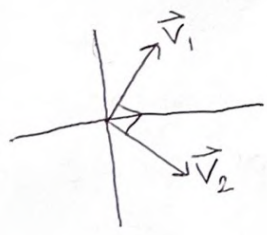
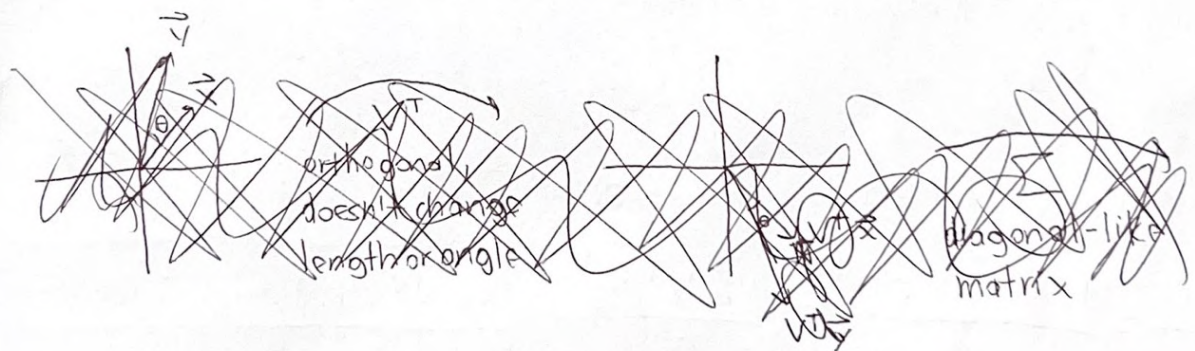
We can now write  $U = \begin{bmatrix} 1/\sqrt{6} & -1/\sqrt{2} & 1/\sqrt{3} \\ 2/\sqrt{6} & 0 & -1/\sqrt{3} \\ 1/\sqrt{6} & 1/\sqrt{2} & 1/\sqrt{3} \end{bmatrix}$  ← Note that the columns are  $\perp$

Finally, the SVD is  $A = U \Sigma V^T = \begin{bmatrix} 1/\sqrt{6} & -1/\sqrt{2} & 1/\sqrt{3} \\ 2/\sqrt{6} & 0 & -1/\sqrt{3} \\ 1/\sqrt{6} & 1/\sqrt{2} & 1/\sqrt{3} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \sqrt{3} & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 1/\sqrt{2} & 1/\sqrt{2} \\ -1/\sqrt{2} & 1/\sqrt{2} \end{bmatrix}$

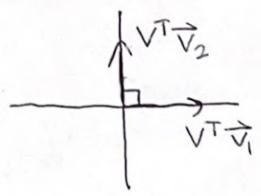
Check this is correct:  $U \Sigma V^T = \begin{bmatrix} 1/\sqrt{2} & -1/\sqrt{2} \\ 2/\sqrt{2} & 0 \\ 1/\sqrt{2} & 1/\sqrt{2} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 1/\sqrt{2} & 1/\sqrt{2} \\ -1/\sqrt{2} & 1/\sqrt{2} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} = A \checkmark$

What are some things we can do with SVD?

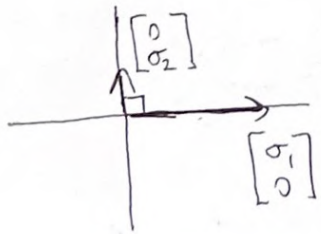
Geometry  $A = U \Sigma V^T$



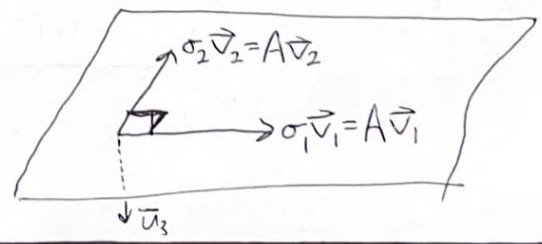
$V^T$ , orthogonal, doesn't change length or angle



$\Sigma$ , just scales the x and y-axis vectors



$U$ , orthogonal, doesn't change length or angle





So SVD breaks  $A$  up into three pieces, and only  $\Sigma$  changes the lengths of vectors. (36)

This gives us a way to measure the "size" of  $A$ , i.e., what is the maximum possible amount that  $A$  can stretch a vector.

Remember: length of a vector  $\vec{x}$ :  $\|\vec{x}\| = \sqrt{x_1^2 + x_2^2 + \dots + x_n^2}$



The size of  $A$ , or norm of  $A$ ,  $\|A\|$ , is the maximum possible ratio  $\|A\vec{x}\| / \|\vec{x}\|$  (where  $\vec{x} \neq \vec{0}$ )

↪ This is the factor that  $A$  stretches  $\vec{x}$ .

Theorem  $\|A\| =$  largest singular value  $\sigma_1$ .

Proof: First let's show  $\|A\| \geq \sigma_1$  by showing  $\|A\vec{v}_1\| / \|\vec{v}_1\| = \sigma_1$ :

$$\|A\vec{v}_1\| / \|\vec{v}_1\| = \|\underbrace{U}_{\uparrow 1} \Sigma V^T \vec{v}_1\| = \left\| U \Sigma \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \\ \vdots \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} \right\| = \left\| U \begin{bmatrix} \sigma_1 \\ 0 \\ \vdots \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} \right\| = \|\sigma_1 \vec{u}_1\| = \sigma_1 \|\vec{u}_1\| = \sigma_1.$$

Now let's show  $\|A\| \leq \sigma_1$  by showing  $\|A\vec{x}\| / \|\vec{x}\| \leq \sigma_1$  for all  $\vec{x} \neq \vec{0}$ :

$$\frac{\|A\vec{x}\|}{\|\vec{x}\|} = \frac{\|U \Sigma V^T \vec{x}\|}{\|\vec{x}\|} = \frac{\|\Sigma V^T \vec{x}\|}{\|\vec{x}\|} = \frac{\sqrt{(\sigma_1 (V^T \vec{x})_1)^2 + \dots + (\sigma_r (V^T \vec{x})_r)^2}}{\|\vec{x}\|}$$

Because  $\sigma_1$  is the biggest singular value

Because  $U$  is orthogonal, doesn't change length.

Because  $V^T$  is orthogonal, doesn't change lengths.

$$\leq \frac{\sqrt{\sigma_1^2 ((V^T \vec{x})_1)^2 + \dots + (V^T \vec{x})_n^2}}{\|\vec{x}\|} = \frac{\sigma_1 \|V^T \vec{x}\|}{\|\vec{x}\|} = \frac{\sigma_1 \|\vec{x}\|}{\|\vec{x}\|} = \sigma_1$$

So  $\|A\| \geq \sigma_1$  and  $\|A\| \leq \sigma_1 \implies \|A\| = \sigma_1$  ✓



This shows that  $\sigma_1$  is the maximum amount that  $A$  stretches vectors, and that the vectors that get stretched the most are in  $\text{span}(\vec{v}_1)$ .

Example  ~~$A = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$~~   $A = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$ . We saw that the biggest singular vector is  $\sigma_1 = \sqrt{3}$ , and  $\vec{v}_1 = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$ .

So for example  $\begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$  gets stretched by a factor of  $\sqrt{3}$ :

$$\frac{\|A\vec{x}\|}{\|\vec{x}\|} = \frac{\left\| \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} \right\|}{\left\| \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} \right\|} = \frac{\left\| \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 2 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} \right\|}{\left\| \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} \right\|} = \frac{\sqrt{1+4+1}}{\sqrt{1+1}} = \frac{\sqrt{6}}{\sqrt{2}} = \sqrt{3}$$

Another application: SVD gives a good way writing a rank  $r$  matrix  $A$  as a sum of  $r$  rank-1 matrices:

Theorem  $A = \sigma_1 \vec{u}_1 \vec{v}_1^T + \sigma_2 \vec{u}_2 \vec{v}_2^T + \dots + \sigma_r \vec{u}_r \vec{v}_r^T$

↳ "outer product," column vector  $\times$  row vector, has rank = 1 because every row is a multiple of  $\vec{v}_i^T$ .

Proof Two matrices  $A$  and  $B$  are equal if  $A\vec{x} = B\vec{x}$  for every  $\vec{x}$  in  $\mathbb{R}^n$ .

Here  $\{\vec{v}_1, \dots, \vec{v}_n\}$  is a basis, so can write  $\vec{x} = c_1 \vec{v}_1 + c_2 \vec{v}_2 + \dots + c_n \vec{v}_n$ .

Then  $(\sigma_1 \vec{u}_1 \vec{v}_1^T + \dots + \sigma_r \vec{u}_r \vec{v}_r^T) (\underbrace{c_1 \vec{v}_1 + \dots + c_n \vec{v}_n}_{\vec{x}}) =$

$$\sigma_1 c_1 \vec{u}_1 \vec{v}_1^T \vec{v}_1 + \dots + \sigma_r c_r \vec{u}_r \vec{v}_r^T \vec{v}_r + \text{a bunch of 0's (because } \vec{v}_i^T \vec{v}_j = 0 \text{ if } i \neq j.)$$

$$= c_1 (\underbrace{\sigma_1 \vec{u}_1}_{A\vec{v}_1}) + \dots + c_r (\underbrace{\sigma_r \vec{u}_r}_{A\vec{v}_r}) + c_{r+1} \underbrace{\vec{0}}_{A\vec{v}_{r+1}} + \dots + c_n \underbrace{\vec{0}}_{A\vec{v}_n}$$

$$= A(c_1 \vec{v}_1 + \dots + c_r \vec{v}_r + c_{r+1} \vec{v}_{r+1} + \dots + c_n \vec{v}_n) = A\vec{x} \quad \checkmark$$



Example If  $A = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$ , then  $A = \sigma_1 \vec{u}_1 \vec{v}_1^T + \sigma_2 \vec{u}_2 \vec{v}_2^T$

$$= \sqrt{3} \begin{bmatrix} 1/\sqrt{6} \\ 2/\sqrt{6} \\ 1/\sqrt{6} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 1/\sqrt{2} & 1/\sqrt{2} \end{bmatrix} + 1 \begin{bmatrix} -1/\sqrt{2} \\ 0 \\ 1/\sqrt{2} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} -1/\sqrt{2} & 1/\sqrt{2} \end{bmatrix}$$

$\sigma_1 \quad \vec{u}_1 \quad \vec{v}_1^T \quad \sigma_2 \quad \vec{u}_2 \quad \vec{v}_2^T$

$$= \frac{1}{2} \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 2 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 \end{bmatrix} + \frac{1}{2} \begin{bmatrix} -1 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} -1 & 1 \end{bmatrix} = \frac{1}{2} \left( \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 2 & 2 \\ 1 & 1 \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} 1 & -1 \\ 0 & 0 \\ -1 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \right) = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} = A \checkmark$$

Application in Image processing: Represent a digital photograph as an  $m \times n$  matrix:

$$A = \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} \dots \end{bmatrix}}_n \left. \vphantom{\begin{bmatrix} \dots \end{bmatrix}} \right\}_m \quad \begin{matrix} mn \text{ pixels in} \\ \text{the image} \end{matrix}$$

$n$  components

$$\text{Or } A = \sigma_1 \underbrace{\vec{u}_1}_{\substack{\uparrow \\ m \text{ components}}} \vec{v}_1^T + \dots + \sigma_r \vec{u}_r \vec{v}_r^T \quad r(m+n) \text{ vector components}$$

If  $r$  is much smaller than  $m, n$ , then it's more efficient to transmit or store  $r(m+n)$  vector components than  $mn$  matrix entries.

However, even if  $r$  is not much smaller than  $m$  or  $n$ , many of the singular values  $\sigma_i$  are often very small. So we may be able to

write  $A \approx \sigma_1 \vec{u}_1 \vec{v}_1^T + \dots + \sigma_s \vec{u}_s \vec{v}_s^T$  where  $s$  is much smaller than  $m$  and  $n$ .

Image compression. We lose a little information by throwing out some terms, but it might not make a difference.