

Assignment 2: 1.10.18

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Question:

Write the direction ratios of the vector $\mathbf{a} = \hat{i} + \hat{j} - \hat{k}$ and hence calculate its direction cosines.

Solution:

Given vector:

$$\mathbf{a} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix} \quad (1)$$

\therefore The direction ratios are 1, 1 and -1.

Now,

$$\begin{aligned} \|\mathbf{a}\| &= \sqrt{3} \\ \Rightarrow \frac{\mathbf{a}}{\|\mathbf{a}\|} &= \begin{pmatrix} \frac{1}{\sqrt{3}} \\ \frac{1}{\sqrt{3}} \\ \frac{-1}{\sqrt{3}} \end{pmatrix} \end{aligned}$$

Thus we see that the direction cosines are $1/\sqrt{3}$, $1/\sqrt{3}$ and $-1/\sqrt{3}$.

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