# Characteristic Functions in the prob package

## G. Jay Kerns

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## 1 Introduction

The characteristic function (c.f.) of a random variable X is defined by

$$\phi_X(t) = \mathbb{E}e^{itX}, \quad -\infty < t < \infty.$$

When the distribution of X is discrete with probability mass function (p.m.f.)  $p_X(x)$ , the c.f. takes the form

$$\phi_X(t) = \sum_{x \in S_X} e^{itx} p_X(x),$$

where  $S_X$  is the support of X. When the distribution of X is continuous with probability density function (p.d.f.)  $f_X(x)$ , the c.f. takes the form

$$\phi_X(t) = \int_{S_X} e^{itx} f_X(x) \, \mathrm{d}x.$$

Characteristic functions have many, many useful properties: for example, every c.f. is uniformly continuous and bounded in modulus (by 1). Furthermore, a random variable has a distribution symmetric about 0 if and only if its associated c.f. is real-valued. For details, see [7].

Most of the below formulas came from [8, 9, 10]. Some of them involve special mathematical functions and a classical reference for them is [2], but many of the definitions have made it to Wikipedia (http://www.wikipedia.org/) and selected links to the respective Wikipedia topics have been listed when appropriate.

Note that the returned value of a characteristic function is a *complex* number, and is represented as such in R, even for those c.f.'s which correspond to symmetric distributions. Thus, cfnorm(0) = 1 + 0i, and *not* cfnorm(0) = 1. Depending on the application, the respective c.f.'s may need to be wrapped in as.real().

All of the below functions were written in straight R code; it would likely be possible to speed up evaluation if for example they were written in C or some other language. I would welcome any contributions for improvement in the *prob* package.

There are three special cases: the noncentral Beta, noncentral Student's t, and Weibull distributions. For these the c.f.'s are integrated numerically and thus are subject to all of numerical integration's limitations and idiosyncracies. I would be especially interested in and appreciative of a reference for these cases to be improved.

## 2 Characteristic functions

The formulas for all characteristic functions supported in the prob package are listed below, in alphabetical order of the function name.

## 2.1 Beta distribution: cfbeta(t, shape1, shape2, ncp = 0)

Let  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  denote the shape1 and shape2 parameters, respectively. The p.d.f. is then

$$f_X(x) = \frac{\Gamma(\alpha + \beta)}{\Gamma(\alpha)\Gamma(\beta)} x^{\alpha - 1} (1 - x)^{\beta - 1}, \quad 0 < x < 1,$$

where  $\Gamma$  is the gamma function defined by

$$\Gamma(\alpha) = \int_0^\infty u^{\alpha - 1} e^{-u} du, \quad \alpha \neq 0, -1, -2, \dots$$

The characteristic function is given by

$$\phi_X(t) = {}_1F_1(\alpha; \alpha + \beta; it),$$

where  $_1F_1$  is Kummer's confluent hypergeometric function of the first kind, also known as Kummer's M, defined by

$$_{1}F_{1}(a;b;z) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{(a)_{n}z^{n}}{(b)_{n}n!},$$

with  $(a)_n = a(a+1)(a+2)\cdots(a+n-1)$  the rising factorial. We calculate  ${}_1F_1$  using kummerM in the fAsianOptions package.

As of the time of this writing, it seems that we must resort to calculating the characteristic function for the noncentral Beta by numerical integration according to the definition; see the source below. If you are aware of a way to more quickly/reliably calculate this c.f. with R, I would appreciate it if you would let me know.

#### **Source Code:**

```
function (t, shape1, shape2, ncp = 0)
    if (shape1 <= 0 || shape2 <= 0)
        stop("shape1, shape2 must be positive")
    if (identical(all.equal(ncp, 0), TRUE)) {
        require(fAsianOptions)
        kummerM((0+1i) * t, shape1, shape1 + shape2)
    }
    else {
        fr <- function(x) cos(t * x) * dbeta(x, shape1, shape2,</pre>
        fi <- function(x) sin(t * x) * dbeta(x, shape1, shape2,
            ncp)
        Rp <- integrate(fr, lower = 0, upper = 1)$value</pre>
        Ip <- integrate(fi, lower = 0, upper = 1)$value</pre>
        return(Rp + (0+1i) * Ip)
    }
}
<environment: namespace:prob>
```

## 2.2 Binomial distribution: cfbinom(t, size, prob)

Let n and p denote the size and prob arguments, respectively. Then the p.m.f. is

$$p_X(x) = \binom{n}{x} p^x (1-p)^{n-x}, \quad x = 0, 1, 2, \dots, n.$$

The characteristic function is given by

$$\phi_X(t) = [pe^{it} + (1-p)]^n.$$

```
function (t, size, prob)
{
    if (size <= 0)
        stop("size must be positive")
    if (prob < 0 || prob > 1)
        stop("prob must be in [0,1]")
        (prob * exp((0+1i) * t) + (1 - prob))^size
}
<environment: namespace:prob>
```

## 2.3 Cauchy Distribution: cfcauchy(t, location = 0, scale = 1)

Let  $\theta$  and  $\sigma$  denote the location and scale parameters, respectively. The p.d.f. is then

$$f_X(x) = \frac{1}{\pi\sigma} \frac{1}{\left[1 + \left(\frac{x-\theta}{\sigma}\right)^2\right]}, \quad -\infty < x < \infty.$$

The characteristic function is given by

$$\phi_X(t) = e^{it\theta - \sigma|t|}.$$

#### **Source Code:**

```
function (t, location = 0, scale = 1)
{
    if (scale <= 0)
        stop("scale must be positive")
    exp((0+1i) * location * t - scale * abs(t))
}
<environment: namespace:prob>
```

## 2.4 Chi-square Distribution: cfchisq(t, df, ncp = 0)

Let p and  $\delta$  denote the df and ncp parameters, respectively. The p.d.f. of the central chi-square distribution  $(\delta = 0)$  is then

$$f_X(x) = \frac{1}{\Gamma(p/2) \cdot 2^{p/2}} x^{p/2 - 1} e^{-x/2}, \quad x > 0.$$

One way to then write the p.d.f. of the noncentral chi-square distribution  $(\delta > 0)$  is with an infinite series:

$$f_X(x) = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \frac{e^{-\delta/2} (\delta/2)^k}{k!} f_{p+2k}(x), \quad x > 0,$$

where  $f_{p+2k}$  is the p.d.f. of a central chi-square distribution with p+2k degrees of freedom. The characteristic function in both cases is given by

$$\phi_X(t) = \frac{\exp\left\{\frac{i\delta t}{1-2it}\right\}}{(1-2it)^{p/2}}.$$

#### Source Code:

```
function (t, df, ncp = 0)
{
    if (df < 0 || ncp < 0)
        stop("df and ncp must be nonnegative")
    exp((0+1i) * ncp * t/(1 - (0+2i) * t))/(1 - (0+2i) * t)^(df/2)
}
<environment: namespace:prob>
```

## 2.5 Exponential Distribution: cfexp(t, rate = 1)

This is the special case of the Gamma distribution when  $\alpha = 1$ . See Section 2.7.

#### Source Code:

```
function (t, rate = 1)
{
    cfgamma(t, shape = 1, scale = 1/rate)
}
<environment: namespace:prob>
```

## 2.6 F Distribution: cff(t, df1, df2, ncp, kmax = 10)

Let p and q denote the df1 and df2 parameters, respectively, and let  $\lambda$  denote the noncentrality parameter ncp. We may write the p.d.f. for the central F distribution ( $\lambda = 0$ ) with

$$f_X(x) = \frac{\Gamma[(p+q)/2]}{\Gamma(p/2)\Gamma(q/2)} \left(\frac{p}{q}\right)^{p/2} x^{p/2-1} \left(1 + \frac{p}{q}x\right)^{-(p+q)/2}, \quad x > 0.$$

The characteristic function for central F is given by

$$\phi_X(t) = \frac{\Gamma[(p+q)/2]}{\Gamma(q/2)} \Psi\left(\frac{p}{2}, 1 - \frac{q}{2}; -\frac{q}{p}it\right),$$

where  $\Psi$  is Kummer's confluent hypergeometric function of the second kind, also known as Kummer's U, defined by

$$\Psi(a,b;z) = \frac{\pi}{\sin \pi b} \left( \frac{{}_1F_1(a;b;z)}{\Gamma(1+a-b)\Gamma(b)} - z^{1-b} \frac{{}_1F_1(1+a-b;\,2-b;\,z)}{\Gamma(a)\Gamma(2-b)} \right).$$

See [1] in the references. Kummer's U is calculated with kummerU, again from the fAsianOptions package.

The p.d.f. of the noncentral F distribution ( $\lambda \neq 0$ ) as

$$f_X(x) = f_{p,q}(x) e^{-\lambda/2} \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \left\{ \left( \frac{\frac{1}{2} \lambda px}{q + px} \right)^k \cdot \frac{(p+q)(p+q+2) \cdots (p+q+2 \cdot \overline{k-1})}{k! \, p(p+2) \cdots (p+2 \cdot \overline{k-1})} \right\}, \quad x > 0,$$

where  $f_{p,q}$  is the p.d.f. of the central F distribution. The characteristic function for the noncentral F distribution is given by

$$\phi_X(t) = e^{-\lambda/2} \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \frac{(\lambda/2)^k}{k!} {}_1F_1\left(\frac{p}{2} + k; -\frac{q}{2}; -\frac{qit}{p}\right),$$

where  $_1F_1$  is Kummer's confluent hypergeometric function of the first kind defined above; see Section 2.1. For the purposes of calculation, we may only use a finite sum to approximate the infinite series, thus the user should specify an upper value of k to be used, denoted kmax, which has the default value of kmax = 10.

## 2.7 Gamma Distribution: cfgamma(t, shape, rate = 1, scale = 1/rate)

Let  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  denote the shape and scale parameters, respectively. The p.d.f. is then

$$f_X(x) = \frac{1}{\Gamma(\alpha)\beta^{\alpha}} x^{\alpha-1} e^{-x/\beta}, \quad x > 0.$$

The characteristic function is given by

$$\phi_X(t) = (1 - \beta i t)^{-\alpha}.$$

#### **Source Code:**

```
function (t, shape, rate = 1, scale = 1/rate)
{
    if (rate <= 0 || scale <= 0)
        stop("rate must be positive")
        (1 - scale * (0+1i) * t)^(-shape)
}
<environment: namespace:prob>
```

## 2.8 Geometric Distribution: cfgeom(t, prob)

This is the special case of the Negative Binomial distribution when r = 1; see Section 2.12.

#### Source Code:

```
function (t, prob)
{
    cfnbinom(t, size = 1, prob = prob)
}
<environment: namespace:prob>
```

## 2.9 Hypergeometric Distribution: cfhyper(t, m, n, k)

The p.m.f. takes the form

$$p_X(x) = \frac{\binom{m}{x}\binom{n}{k-x}}{\binom{m+n}{k}}, \quad x = 0, \dots, k; \ x \le m; \ k-x \le n.$$

The characteristic function is given by

$$\phi_X(t) = \frac{{}_{2}F_{1}\left(-k,\,-m;\,n-k+1;\,\mathrm{e}^{it}\right)}{{}_{2}F_{1}\left(-k,\,-m;\,n-k+1;\,1\right)},$$

where  $_2F_1$  is the Gaussian hypergeometric series defined by

$$_{2}F_{1}(a, b; c; z) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{(a)_{n}(b)_{n}}{(c)_{n}} \frac{z^{n}}{n!},$$

with  $(a)_n$  the rising factorial defined as above in Section 2.1. See [3] in the References for details concerning  ${}_2F_1$ . We calculate it by means of the hypergeo function in the hypergeo package.

#### **Source Code:**

```
function (t, m, n, k)
{
    if (m < 0 || n < 0 || k < 0)
        stop("m, n, k must be positive")
    hypergeo:::hypergeo(-k, -m, n - k + 1, exp((0+1i) * t))/hypergeo:::hypergeo(-k, -m, n - k + 1, 1)
}
<environment: namespace:prob>
```

## 2.10 Logistic Distribution: cflogis(t, location = 0, scale = 1)

Let  $\mu$  and  $\sigma$  denote the location and scale parameters, respectively. The p.d.f. is then

$$f_X(x) = \frac{e^{-(x-\mu)/\sigma}}{\sigma \left(1 + e^{-(x-\mu)/\sigma}\right)^2}, \quad -\infty < x < \infty.$$

The characteristic function is given by

$$\phi_X(t) = e^{i\mu t} \frac{\pi \sigma t}{\sinh(\pi \sigma t)},$$

where

$$\sinh(x) = \frac{e^x - e^{-x}}{2} = -i\sin ix,$$

see [4] in the References.

#### Source Code:

```
function (t, location = 0, scale = 1)
{
    if (scale <= 0)
        stop("scale must be positive")
    ifelse(identical(all.equal(t, 0), TRUE), return(1), return(exp((0+1i) * location) * pi * scale * t/sinh(pi * scale * t)))
}
<environment: namespace:prob>
```

## 2.11 Lognormal Distribution: cflnorm(t, meanlog = 0, sdlog = 1)

Let  $\mu$  and  $\sigma$  denote the meanlog and sdlog parameters, respectively. The p.d.f. is then

$$f_X(x) = \frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{1}{x} e^{-(\ln x - \mu)^2/2\sigma^2}, \quad -\infty < x < \infty.$$

The characteristic function is uniquely complicated and delicate. See [5] in the References. For fast numerical computation an algorithm due to Beaulieu is used, see [11].

#### Source Code:

```
function (t, meanlog = 0, sdlog = 1)
    if (sdlog \le 0)
         stop("sdlog must be positive")
    if (identical(all.equal(t, 0), TRUE)) {
         return(1 + (0+0i))
    }
    else {
         t <- t * exp(meanlog)
         Rp1 <- integrate(function(y) exp(-log(y/t)^2/2/sdlog^2) *</pre>
             cos(y)/y, lower = 0, upper = t)$value
        \label{eq:reconstruction} $$\operatorname{Rp2} \leftarrow \operatorname{integrate(function(y) \ exp(-log(y * t)^2/2/sdlog^2) *} $$
             cos(1/y)/y, lower = 0, upper = 1/t)$value
         Ip1 <- integrate(function(y) exp(-log(y/t)^2/2/sdlog^2) *</pre>
             sin(y)/y, lower = 0, upper = t)$value
         Ip2 <- integrate(function(y) exp(-log(y * t)^2/2/sdlog^2) *</pre>
             sin(1/y)/y, lower = 0, upper = 1/t)$value
         return((Rp1 + Rp2 + (0+1i) * (Ip1 + Ip2))/(sqrt(2 * pi) *
             sdlog))
    }
}
<environment: namespace:prob>
```

## 2.12 Negative Binomial Distribution: cfnbinom(t, size, prob, mu)

Let r and p denote the size and prob parameters, respectively. We may write the p.m.f. as

$$p_X(x) = {r+x-1 \choose r-1} p^r (1-p)^x, \quad x = 0, 1, 2, \dots$$

The characteristic function is given by

$$\phi_X(t) = \left(\frac{p}{1 - (1 - p)e^{it}}\right)^r.$$

```
function (t, size, prob, mu)
{
   if (size <= 0)
        stop("size must be positive")
   if (prob <= 0 || prob > 1)
        stop("prob must be in (0,1]")
   if (!missing(mu)) {
        if (!missing(prob))
            stop("'prob' and 'mu' both specified")
        prob <- size/(size + mu)
   }
   (prob/(1 - (1 - prob) * exp((0+1i) * t)))^size
}
<environment: namespace:prob>
```

## 2.13 Normal Distribution: cfnorm(t, mean = 0, sd = 1)

Let  $\mu$  and  $\sigma$  denote the mean and sd parameters, respectively. The p.d.f. is

$$f_X(x) = \frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-(x-\mu)^2/2\sigma^2}, \quad -\infty < x < \infty.$$

The characteristic function is given by

$$\phi_X(t) = e^{i\mu t + \sigma^2 t^2/2}.$$

#### Source Code:

```
function (t, mean = 0, sd = 1)
{
    if (sd <= 0)
        stop("sd must be positive")
    exp((0+1i) * mean - (sd * t)^2/2)
}
<environment: namespace:prob>
```

## 2.14 Poisson Distribution: cfpois(t, lambda)

Let  $\lambda$  denote the lambda parameter. The p.m.f. is

$$p_X(x) = e^{-\lambda} \frac{\lambda^x}{x!}, \quad x = 0, 1, 2, \dots$$

The characteristic function is given by

$$\phi_X(t) = \exp\left\{\lambda(e^{it} - 1)\right\}.$$

#### Source Code:

```
function (t, lambda)
{
    if (lambda <= 0)
        stop("lambda must be positive")
    exp(lambda * (exp((0+1i) * t) - 1))
}
<environment: namespace:prob>
```

## 2.15 Wilcoxon Signed Rank Distribution: cfsignrank(t, n)

See ?dsignrank for a discussion of the p.m.f. for this distribution; it is sufficient for our purposes to know that  $f_X$  is supported on the integers x = 0, 1, ..., n(n+1)2. Since the support is finite, we may calculate the characteristic function according to the definition:

$$\phi_X(t) = \sum_{x=0}^{n(n+1)/2} e^{itx} f_X(x),$$

where  $f_X$  is given by dsignrank().

#### Source Code:

## 2.16 Student's t Distribution: cft(t, df, ncp)

Let p denote the **df** parameter. The p.d.f. is

$$f_X(x) = \frac{\Gamma[(p+1)/2]}{\sqrt{p\pi}\Gamma(p/2)} \left(1 + \frac{x^2}{p}\right)^{-(p+1)/2}, \quad -\infty < x < \infty.$$

The formula used for the characteristic function was published by Hurst, see [12]. The characteristic function is given by

$$\phi_X(t) = \frac{K_{p/2}(\sqrt{p}|t|) \cdot (\sqrt{p}|t|)^{p/2}}{\Gamma(p/2)2^{p/2-1}},$$

where  $K_{\nu}$  is the modified Bessel Function of the second kind, defined by

$$K_{\nu}(x) = \frac{\pi}{2} \frac{I_{-\nu}(x) - I_{-\nu}(x)}{\sin(\nu \pi)},$$

and  $I_{\alpha}$  is the modified Bessel Function of the first kind, defined by

$$I_{\alpha}(x) = i^{-\alpha} J_{\alpha}(ix),$$

with  $J_{\alpha}(x)$  being a Bessel function of the first kind, defined by

$$J_{\alpha}(x) = \sum_{m=0}^{\infty} \frac{(-1)^m}{m!\Gamma(m+\alpha+1)} \left(\frac{x}{2}\right)^{2m+\alpha}.$$

Whew! See [6] in the References.

As of the time of this writing, it seems that we must resort to calculating the characteristic function for the noncentral Student's t by numerical integration according to the definition; see the source below. If you are aware of a way to more quickly/reliably calculate this c.f. with R, I would appreciate it if you would let me know.

```
abs(t))^(df/2)/(gamma(df/2) * 2^(df/2 - 1))))
}
else {
    fr <- function(x) cos(t * x) * dt(x, df, ncp)
        fi <- function(x) sin(t * x) * dt(x, df, ncp)
        Rp <- integrate(fr, lower = -Inf, upper = Inf)$value
        Ip <- integrate(fi, lower = -Inf, upper = Inf)$value
        return(Rp + (0+1i) * Ip)
}
}
</pre>

</
```

## 2.17 Continuous Uniform Distribution: cfunif(t, min = 0, max = 1)

Let a and b denote the min and max parameters, respectively. The p.d.f. is

$$f_X(x) = \frac{1}{b-a}, \quad a < x < b.$$

The characteristic function is given by

$$\phi_X(t) = \frac{e^{itb} - e^{ita}}{(b-a)it}.$$

#### Source Code:

#### 2.18 Weibull Distribution: cfweibull(t, shape, scale = 1)

Let a and b denote the shape and scale parameters, respectively. The p.d.f. is

$$f_X(x) = \frac{a}{b} \left(\frac{x}{b}\right)^{a-1} e^{-(x/b)^a}, \quad 0 < x < \infty.$$

At the time of this writing, we must resort to calculating the characteristic function according to the definition; see the source below. If you know of a way to more quickly/reliably calculate this c.f. with R, I would appreciate it if you would let me know.

```
function (t, shape, scale = 1)
{
   if (shape <= 0 || scale <= 0)
       stop("shape and scale must be positive")
   fr <- function(x) cos(t * x) * dweibull(x, shape, scale)</pre>
```

```
fi <- function(x) sin(t * x) * dweibull(x, shape, scale)
   Rp <- integrate(fr, lower = 0, upper = Inf)$value
   Ip <- integrate(fi, lower = 0, upper = Inf)$value
   return(Rp + (0+1i) * Ip)
}
<environment: namespace:prob>
```

## 2.19 Wilcoxon Rank Sum Distribution: cfwilcox(t, m, n)

See ?dwilcox for a discussion of the p.m.f. for this distribution; it is sufficient for our purposes to know that  $f_X$  is supported on the integers x = 0, 1, ..., mn. Since the support is finite, we may calculate the characteristic function according to the definition:

$$\phi_X(t) = \sum_{x=0}^{mn} e^{itx} f_X(x),$$

where  $f_X$  is given by dwilcox().

#### Source Code:

```
function (t, m, n)
{
    sum(exp((0+1i) * t * 0:(m * n)) * dwilcox(0:(m * n), m, n))
}
<environment: namespace:prob>
```

#### 3 R Session information

> toLatex(sessionInfo())

- R version 2.8.1 (2008-12-22), i486-pc-linux-gnu
- Locale: LC\_CTYPE=en\_US.UTF-8;LC\_NUMERIC=C;LC\_TIME=en\_US.UTF-8;LC\_COLLATE=en\_US.UTF-8;LC\_MONETARY=C;L 8;LC\_PAPER=en\_US.UTF-8;LC\_NAME=C;LC\_ADDRESS=C;LC\_TELEPHONE=C;LC\_MEASUREMENT=en\_US.UTF-8;LC\_IDENTIFICATION=C
- Base packages: base, datasets, graphics, grDevices, methods, stats, tcltk, utils
- Other packages: prob 0.9-2, svGUI 0.9-43, svMisc 0.9-45, svSocket 0.9-42

## References

- [1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confluent\_hypergeometric\_function
- [2] Abramowitz, Milton; Stegun, Irene A., eds. (1965) Handbook of Mathematical Functions with Formulas, Graphs, and Mathematical Tables, New York: Dover
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- [11] Beaulieu, N.C. (2008) Fast convenient numerical computation of lognormal characteristic functions, *IEEE Transactions on Communications*, **56** (3): 331–333.
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