

Title

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August 21, 2019

Contents

0.1 Exercises	1
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0.1 Exercises

Problem 1.

Let C denote the Cantor set.

1. Show that C contains point that is not an endpoint of one of the removed intervals.
2. Show that C is nowhere dense, meager, and has measure zero.
3. Show that C is uncountable.

Solution 1.

1. First we will characterize the endpoints of the removed intervals. Let C_n be the n Th stage of the deletion process that is used to define the Cantor set; then what remains is a union of intervals:

$$C_n = [0, \frac{1}{3^n}] \cup [\frac{2}{3^n}, \frac{3}{3^n}] \cup \dots \cup [\frac{3^n - 1}{3^n}, 1],$$

and so the endpoints are precisely the numbers of the form $\frac{k}{3^n}$ where $0 \leq k \leq 3^n$. Moreover, any endpoint appearing in C_n is never removed in any later step, and so all endpoints remaining in C are of this form where we allow $0 \leq n < \infty$.

Thus, our goal is to produce a number $x \in [0, 1]$ such that $x \neq \frac{k}{3^n}$ for any k or n , but also satisfies $x \in C$. So we will need a general characterization of all of the points in C .

Lemma: If $x \in C$, then one can find a ternary expansion for which all of the digits are either 0 or 2, i.e.

$$x = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} a_k 3^{-k} \quad \text{where } a_k \in \{0, 2\}.$$

Proof: By induction on the index k in a_k , first consider note that if $x \in C$ then $x \in C_1 = [0, 1] \setminus [\frac{1}{3}, \frac{2}{3}] = [0, \frac{1}{3}] \cup [\frac{2}{3}, 1]$. So if $x \in C_1$, then $x \notin (\frac{1}{3}, \frac{2}{3})$. But note that a_1 is computed in the following way:

$$a_1 = \begin{cases} 0 & 0 \leq x < \frac{1}{3}, \\ 1 & \frac{1}{3} \leq x < \frac{2}{3}, \\ 2 & \frac{2}{3} \leq x < 1. \end{cases}$$

Since the interval $(\frac{1}{3}, \frac{2}{3})$ is deleted in C_1 , we find that $a_1 = 1 \iff x = \frac{1}{3}$. In this case, however, we claim that we can find a ternary expansion of x that does not contain a 1. We first write

$$x = \frac{1}{3} = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} a_k 3^{-k} \quad \text{where } a_1 = 1, a_{k>1} = 0,$$

and then define

$$x' = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} b_k 3^{-k} \quad \text{where } b_1 = 0, b_{k>1} = 2.$$

The claim now is that $x = x'$, which follows from the fact that this is a geometric sum that can be written in closed form:

$$\begin{aligned} x' &= \sum_{k=2}^{\infty} (2) 3^{-k} \\ &= \left(\sum_{k=0}^{\infty} (2) 3^{-k} \right) - 2 - 2(3^{-1}) \\ &= 2 \left(\sum_{k=0}^{\infty} 3^{-k} \right) - 2 - 2(3^{-1}) \\ &= 2 \left(\frac{1}{1 - \frac{1}{3}} \right) - 2 - 2(3^{-1}) \\ &= 2 \left(\frac{3}{2} \right) - 2 - 2(3^{-1}) \\ &= 1 - \frac{2}{3} \\ &= \frac{1}{3} = x. \end{aligned}$$

In short, we have $\frac{1}{3} = (0.1)_3 = (0.222\cdots)_3$ as ternary expansions, and a similar proof shows that such an expansion without 1s can be found for any endpoint.

For the inductive step, consider a_n : the claim is that if $a_n = 1$, then $x \notin C_{n+1}$ – that is, it is contained in one of the intervals deleted at the $n + 1$ st stage. Writing the deleted interval at this stage as (a, b) , we find that $a_n = 1$ if and only if $x \in [a, b)$. Since $x \in C$, the only way a_n can be 1 is if x was in fact the endpoint a (since no previous digit was a 1, by hypothesis). However, as shown above, every such endpoint has a ternary expansion containing no 1s. \square

Therefore, if we can produce an x that satisfies $x \neq \frac{k}{3^n}$ for any k, n **and** x has no 1s in its ternary expansion, we will have an $x \in C$ that is not an endpoint.

So take

$$x = (0.\overline{02})_3 = (0.020202\cdots)_3.$$

This evidently has no 1s in its ternary expansion, and if we sum the corresponding geometric series, we find $x = \frac{1}{4}$. This is not of the form $\frac{k}{3^n}$ for any k, n , and thus fulfills both conditions.

2. We first show that C is nowhere dense by showing that the interior of its closure is empty, i.e. $(\overline{C})^\circ = \emptyset$.

To do so, we note that C is itself closed and so $C = \overline{C}$. To see why this is, consider C^c ; we'll show that it is open. By construction, C_1^c is the open interval $(\frac{1}{3}, \frac{2}{3})$ that is deleted, and similarly C_n^c is the finite union of the open intervals that are deleted at the n th stage. But then

$$C^c = \left(\bigcap C_n\right)^c = \bigcup C_n^c$$

is an infinite union of open sets, which is also open. So C is closed.

It is also the case that C has empty interior, so $C^\circ = \emptyset$. Towards a contradiction, suppose $x \in C$ is an interior point; then there is some neighborhood $N_\varepsilon(x) \subset C$. Since we are on the real line, we can write this as an interval $(x - \varepsilon, x + \varepsilon)$, which has length $2\varepsilon > 0$. Moreover, we have the containment

$$(x - \varepsilon, x + \varepsilon) \subset C \subset C_n$$

for every n .

Claim: The length of C_n is $(\frac{2}{3})^n$ where we define $C_0 = [0, 1]$. Letting L_n be the length of C_n , one easy way to see that this is the case is to note that L_n satisfies the recurrence relation

$$L_{n+1} = \frac{2}{3}L_n,$$

since an interval of length $\frac{1}{3}L_n$ is removed at each stage. With the initial conditions $L_0 = 1$, it can be checked that $L_n = (\frac{2}{3})^n$ solves this relation.

Now, since $x \in C = \bigcap C_n$, it is in every C_n . So we can choose n large enough such that

$$\left(\frac{2}{3}\right)^n \leq 2\varepsilon.$$

Letting $\mu(X)$ denote the length of an interval, we always have $C \subseteq C_n$ and so $\mu(C) \leq \mu(C_n)$.

Using the subadditivity of measures, we now have

$$\begin{aligned} (x - \varepsilon, x + \varepsilon) &\subset C \subset C_n \\ \implies \mu(x - \varepsilon, x + \varepsilon) &\leq \mu(C) \leq \mu(C_n) \\ &\implies 2\varepsilon \leq \left(\frac{2}{3}\right)^n, \end{aligned}$$

a contradiction. So C has no interior points.

But this means that

$$(\overline{C})^\circ = C^\circ = \emptyset,$$

and so C is nowhere dense.

To see that $\mu(C) = 0$, we can use the fact that for any sets, measures are additive over disjoint sets and we have

$$\mu(A) + \mu(X \setminus A) = \mu(X) \implies \mu(X \setminus A) = \mu(X) - \mu(A).$$

Here we will take $X = [0, 1]$, so $\mu(X) = 1$, and $A = C$ the Cantor set.

By tracing through the construction of the Cantor set, letting B_n be the length of the interval that is removed at each stage, we can deduce

$$\begin{aligned} B_1 &= \frac{1}{3} \\ B_2 &= \frac{2}{9} \\ &\dots \\ B_n &= \frac{2^n}{3^{n+1}}. \end{aligned}$$

We can identify $B_n = \mu(C_n^c)$, and using the fact that $C_n^c \cap C_{>n}^c = \emptyset$ and the fact that measures are additive over disjoint sets, we can compute

$$\begin{aligned} \mu(C) &= 1 - \mu(C^c) \\ &= 1 - \mu\left(\left(\bigcap_{n=0}^{\infty} C_n\right)^c\right) \\ &= 1 - \mu\left(\bigcup_{n=0}^{\infty} C_n^c\right) \\ &= 1 - \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \mu(C_n^c) \\ &= 1 - \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{2^n}{3^{n+1}} \\ &= 1 - \frac{1}{3} \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \left(\frac{2}{3}\right)^n \\ &= 1 - \frac{1}{3} \left(\frac{1}{1 - \frac{2}{3}}\right) \\ &= 1 - \frac{1}{3}(3) = 0, \end{aligned}$$

which is what we wanted to show. \square

3. Let $y \in [0, 1]$ be arbitrary, we will construct an element $x \in C$ such that $y = f(x)$. We first note that every number has a binary expansion, and we can write

$$y = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} y_k 2^{-k} \quad \text{where } y_k \in \{0, 1\}.$$

Now we construct

$$x = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} a_k 3^{-k} \quad \text{where } a_k = 2y_k \implies a_k \in \{0, 2\}.$$

By the characterization given in part (1), we see that $x \in C$ because it has no 1s in its ternary expansion. Moreover, under f , we have $a_k \mapsto \frac{1}{2}a_k = \frac{1}{2}(2a_k) = a_k$, and so $f(x) = y$ by construction.

This shows that C surjects onto $[0, 1]$, and in particular, $\#C \geq \#[0, 1]$ holds for the cardinalities of these sets. Since $[0, 1]$ is uncountable (say, by Cantor's diagonalization argument), this shows that C is uncountable.

Problem 2.

1. Show that X is G_δ iff X^c is F_σ .
2. Show that X closed $\implies X$ is G_δ and X open $\implies X$ is F_σ .
3. Give an example of an F_σ set that is not G_δ , and a set that is neither.

Solution 2.

1. To show the forward direction, suppose X is a F_σ , so $X = \bigcup_{i \in \mathbb{N}} A_i$ with each A_i an closed set. By definition, each A_i^c is open, and we have

$$X^c = \left(\bigcup_{i \in \mathbb{N}} A_i \right)^c = \bigcap_{i \in \mathbb{N}} A_i^c,$$

which exhibits X^c as a countable intersection of closed sets, making it an G_δ .

The reverse direction proceeds analogously: supposing X^c is G_δ , we can write $X^c = \bigcap_{i \in \mathbb{N}} B_i$ with each B_i open, where B_i^c is closed by definition, and

$$X = (X^c)^c = \left(\bigcap_{i \in \mathbb{N}} B_i \right)^c = \bigcup_{i \in \mathbb{N}} B_i^c$$

which exhibits X as a union of closed sets, and thus an F_σ .

2. Suppose X is closed, we want to then write X as a countable intersection of open sets. For every $x \in X$ and every $n \in \mathbb{N}$, define

$$\begin{aligned} B_n(x) &= \left\{ y \in \mathbb{R}^n \mid |x - y| \leq \frac{1}{n} \right\}, \\ V_n &= \bigcup_{x \in X} B_n(x), \\ W &= \bigcap_{n \in \mathbb{N}} V_n. \end{aligned}$$

Explicitly, we have

$$W = \bigcap_{n \in \mathbb{N}} \bigcup_{x \in X} B_n(x),$$

and the claim is that W is a G_δ and $W = X$.

To see that the V_n are open, note that n is fixed and each $B_n(x)$ is an open ball around a point x . Any union of open sets is open, and thus so is V_n . By construction, W is then a countable intersection of open sets, and thus W is a G_δ by definition.

We show $W = X$ in two parts. To see that $X \subseteq W$, note that if $x \in X$, then $x \in B_n(x)$ for every n and thus $x \in V_n$ for every n as well. But this means that $x \in \bigcap_n V_n$, and so $x \in W$.

To see that $W \subseteq X$, let $w \in W$ be arbitrary. If $w \in X$, there is nothing to check, so suppose $w \notin X$ towards a contradiction.

Since $w \in \bigcap_n V_n$, it is in V_n for every n . But this means that there is some particular x_0 such that $w \in B_n(x_0)$ for every n as well, and moreover since we assumed $w \notin X$, we have $w \neq x_0$.

Then, letting $N_\varepsilon(w)$ be an arbitrary neighborhood of w , we can find an n large enough such that $B_n(x) \subset N_\varepsilon(w)$. This means that $x_0 \neq w$ can be found in every neighborhood of w , which makes w a limit point of X . However, since we assumed X was closed, it contains all of its limit points, which would force $w \in X$, a contradiction. \square

Now suppose X is an open set, we want to show it is an F_σ and can thus be written as a countable union of closed sets. We can use the fact that X^c is closed, and by the previous result, X^c is thus a G_δ . But by an earlier result, X^c is a $G_\delta \iff (X^c)^c = X$ is an F_σ , and we are done.

3. We want to construct a set that can be written as a countable union of closed sets, but not as a countable intersection of open sets. Note that in \mathbb{R} with the usual topology, singletons are closed, and so $\{p\}^c$ is an open set for any point p .

With this motivation, consider $X = \mathbb{Q}$ and $X^c = \mathbb{R} \setminus \mathbb{Q}$. We can write

$$\mathbb{Q} = \bigcup_{q \in \mathbb{Q}} \{q\},$$

which exhibits X as a countable union of closed sets because \mathbb{Q} itself is countable. So \mathbb{Q} is an F_σ set. Suppose towards a contradiction that \mathbb{Q} is also G_δ , so we have $\mathbb{Q} = \bigcap_{i \in \mathbb{N}} O_i$ with each O_i open. So each O_i covers \mathbb{Q} , i.e. $\mathbb{Q} \subseteq O_i$, which forces each O_i to be dense in \mathbb{R} .

But now note that we can write

$$\mathbb{R} \setminus \mathbb{Q} = \mathbb{R} \setminus \bigcup_{q \in \mathbb{Q}} \{q\} = \bigcap_{q \in \mathbb{Q}} \mathbb{R} - \{q\},$$

where we can note that $\mathbb{R} - \{q\}$ is an open, dense subset of \mathbb{R} for each q .