Characteristic Functions in the *prob* package

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Contents

1 Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 Binomial distribution: `cfbinom(t, size, prob)`

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

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

The characteristic function is given by

$$\phi_X(t) = \left[p\mathrm{e}^{it} + (1-p)\right]^n.$$

Source Code:

```
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>
```

2.2 Cauchy Distribution: `cfcauchy(t, location = 0, scale = 1)`

Let θ and σ denote the `location` and `scale` parameters, respectively. The p.d.f. is then

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

The characteristic function is given by

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

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>
```

2.3 Chi-square Distribution: `cfchisq(t, df, ncp = 0)`

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

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

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

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

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>
```

2.4 Exponential Distribution: `cfexp(t, rate = 1)`

This is the special case of the Gamma distribution when $\alpha = 1$. See Section 2.5.

Source Code:

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

2.5 Gamma Distribution: `cfgamma(t, shape, rate = 1, scale = 1/rate)`

Let α and β denote the `shape` and `scale` parameters, respectively. The p.d.f. is then

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

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>
```

2.6 Geometric Distribution: `cfgeom(t, prob)`

This is the special case of the Negative Binomial distribution when $r = 1$; see Section 2.10.

Source Code:

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

2.7 Hypergeometric Distribution: `cfhyper(t, m, n, k)`

The p.m.f. takes the form

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

The characteristic function is given by

$$\phi_X(t) = \frac{{}_2F_1\left(-k,\, -m;\, n-k+1;\, \mathrm{e}^{it}\right)}{{}_2F_1\left(-k,\, -m;\, n-k+1;\, 1\right)},$$

where ${}_2F_1$ is the *Gaussian hypergeometric series* defined by

$${}_2F_1(a,\, b;\, c;\, z) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{(a)_n (b)_n}{(c)_n} \frac{z^n}{n!},$$

with $(a)_n$ the rising factorial defined as above in Section **??**. 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>
```

2.8 Logistic Distribution: `cflogis(t, location = 0, scale = 1)`

Let μ and σ denote the `location` and `scale` parameters, respectively. The p.d.f. is then

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

The characteristic function is given by

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

where

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

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>
```

2.9 Lognormal Distribution: `cflnorm(t, meanlog = 0, sdlog = 1)`

Let μ and σ denote the `meanlog` and `sdlog` parameters, respectively. The p.d.f. is then

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

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 <= 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) *
            cos(y)/y, lower = 0, upper = t)$value
        Rp2 <- integrate(function(y) exp(-log(y * t)^2/2/sdlog^2) *
            cos(1/y)/y, lower = 0, upper = 1/t)$value
        Ip1 <- integrate(function(y) exp(-log(y/t)^2/2/sdlog^2) *
            sin(y)/y, lower = 0, upper = t)$value
        Ip2 <- integrate(function(y) exp(-log(y * t)^2/2/sdlog^2) *
            sin(1/y)/y, lower = 0, upper = 1/t)$value
        return((Rp1 + Rp2 + (0+1i) * (Ip1 + Ip2))/(sqrt(2 * pi) *
            sdlog))
    }
}
<environment: namespace:prob>
```

2.10 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

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

The characteristic function is given by

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

Source Code:

```
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>
```

2.11 Normal Distribution: `cfnorm(t, mean = 0, sd = 1)`

Let μ and σ denote the `mean` and `sd` parameters, respectively. The p.d.f. is

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

The characteristic function is given by

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

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>
```

2.12 Poisson Distribution: `cfpois(t, lambda)`

Let λ denote the `lambda` parameter. The p.m.f. is

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

The characteristic function is given by

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

Source Code:

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

2.13 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 $x = 0, 1, \ldots, n(n+1)2$. Since the support is finite, we may calculate the characteristic function according to the definition:

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

where f_X is given by `dsignrank()`.

Source Code:

```
function (t, n)
{
    sum(exp((0+1i) * t * 0:((n + 1) * n/2)) * dsignrank(0:((n +
        1) * n/2), n))
}
<environment: namespace:prob>
```

2.14 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_ν 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_α 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.

Source Code:

```
function (t, df, ncp)
{
    if (missing(ncp))
        ncp <- 0
    if (df <= 0)
        stop("df must be positive")
    if (identical(all.equal(ncp, 0), TRUE)) {
        ifelse(identical(all.equal(t, 0), TRUE), 1 + (0+0i),
            as.complex(besselK(sqrt(df) * abs(t), df/2) * (sqrt(df) *
                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)
    }
}
<environment: namespace:prob>
```

2.15 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

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

Source Code:

```
function (t, min = 0, max = 1)
{
    if (max < min)
        stop("min cannot be greater than max")
    ifelse(identical(all.equal(t, 0), TRUE), 1 + (0+0i), (exp((0+1i) *
        t * max) - exp((0+1i) * t * min))/((0+1i) * t * (max -
        min)))
}
<environment: namespace:prob>
```

2.16 Weibull Distribution: `cfweibull(t, shape, scale = 1)`

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

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

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.

Source Code:

```
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)
    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>
```

2.17 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 $x = 0, 1, \ldots, mn$. Since the support is finite, we may calculate the characteristic function according to the definition:

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

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`
- 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

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[2] Abramowitz, Milton; Stegun, Irene A., eds. (1965) *Handbook of Mathematical Functions with Formulas, Graphs, and Mathematical Tables*, New York: Dover

[3] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypergeometric_series

[4] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyperbolic_function

[5] http://anziamj.austms.org.au/V32/part3/Leipnik.html

[6] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bessel_function

[7] Lukacs, E. (1970). *Characteristic Functions*, Second Edition. London: Griffin.

[8] Johnson, N. L., Kotz, S., and Kemp, A. W. (1992) *Univariate Discrete Distributions*, Second Edition. New York: Wiley.

[9] Johnson, N. L., Kotz, S. and Balakrishnan, N. (1995) *Continuous Univariate Distributions*, volume 1. Wiley, New York.

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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.

[12] Hurst, S. (1995) The Characteristic Function of the Student-t Distribution, Financial Mathematics Research Report No. FMRR006-95, Statistics Research Report No. SRR044-95.