

Given an equation $Ax=b$, perturb b by δb .

This gives $A(x+\delta x) = b + \delta b$.

Subtracting $Ax=b$ gives

$$A\delta x = \delta b, \text{ or } \delta x = A^{-1}\delta b.$$

We want to know the relative change in x , $\frac{\|\delta x\|}{\|x\|}$, given the relative change in b , $\frac{\|\delta b\|}{\|b\|}$.

Applying norm rules on $Ax=b$...

$$\|b\| = \|Ax\| \leq \|A\|\|x\| \text{ or } \frac{\|A\|}{\|b\|} \geq \frac{1}{\|x\|} \quad (1)$$

and on $\delta x = A^{-1}\delta b$...

$$\|\delta x\| \leq \|A^{-1}\|\|\delta b\| \quad (2)$$

Combining (1) and (2) we find

$$\|\delta x\| \cdot \frac{1}{\|x\|} \leq (\|A^{-1}\|\|\delta b\|) \left(\frac{\|A\|}{\|b\|} \right)$$

or

$$\frac{\|\delta x\|}{\|x\|} \leq \underbrace{(\|A^{-1}\|\|A\|)}_K \frac{\|\delta b\|}{\|b\|}$$

The "condition number" K bounds the relative change in x due to relative change in b .

$$K = \|A\|\|A^{-1}\|$$

Now consider perturbing A .

$$(A + \Delta A)(x + \Delta x) = b$$

$$Ax + A\Delta x + \Delta Ax + \Delta A\Delta x = b.$$

Subtract $Ax = b$ and rearrange:

$$A\Delta x = -\Delta A(x + \Delta x)$$

$$\text{or} \\ \Delta x = -A^{-1}\Delta A(x + \Delta x).$$

Taking norms gives

$$\|\Delta x\| \leq \|A^{-1}\| \|\Delta A\| \|x + \Delta x\|.$$

Multiply by $1 = \frac{\|A\|}{\|A\|}$ and take x terms to LHS gives

$$\frac{\|\Delta x\|}{\|x + \Delta x\|} \leq \underbrace{(\|A\| \|A^{-1}\|)}_{K(A)} \frac{\|\Delta A\|}{\|A\|}.$$

Again, condition number dictates a bound on change in x .