

An Exploration of a Bijective Mapping in the Integers

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Abstract

In this article we begin by considering the possible existence of two bijective integer valued functions where the sum of the functions is also bijective. An example of two such functions is produced. Some interesting properties of these functions, as well as the algorithm that is used to produce them, are both explored.

1 Preliminaries

Given two functions $f : \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$ and $g : \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$, define a new function $(f+g) : \mathbb{Z} \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$ by $(f+g)(n) = f(n) + g(n)$. Is it possible that f and g as well as $f+g$ could all be bijective? We will prove that it is possible by producing an example.

We begin by sequentially selecting and plotting points $(f(n), g(n))$ on a graphic grid that represents \mathbb{Z}^2 . We will work our way through all of \mathbb{Z} by considering n 's in the order $0, +1, -1, +2, -2, +3, -3, \dots$ and impose three sufficient conditions.

Selection Conditions:

1. We will select points $(f(n), g(n)) \in \mathbb{Z}^2$ such that for all $n \in \mathbb{Z}$, $f(n) + g(n) = n$. This will ensure that $(f+g)(n)$ is bijective.
2. If we are careful in our selection of points $(f(n), g(n))$ making sure that $f(n)$ never maps to the same value twice and $g(n)$ never maps to the same value twice, then both $f(n)$ and $g(n)$ will be injective.
3. And finally, if we are also careful in our selection of points $(f(n), g(n))$ making sure that $f(n)$ and $g(n)$ map to all elements of \mathbb{Z} , then $f(n)$ and $g(n)$ will be surjective.

In the next section we produce an example that meets these conditions.

2 A Mapping Algorithm

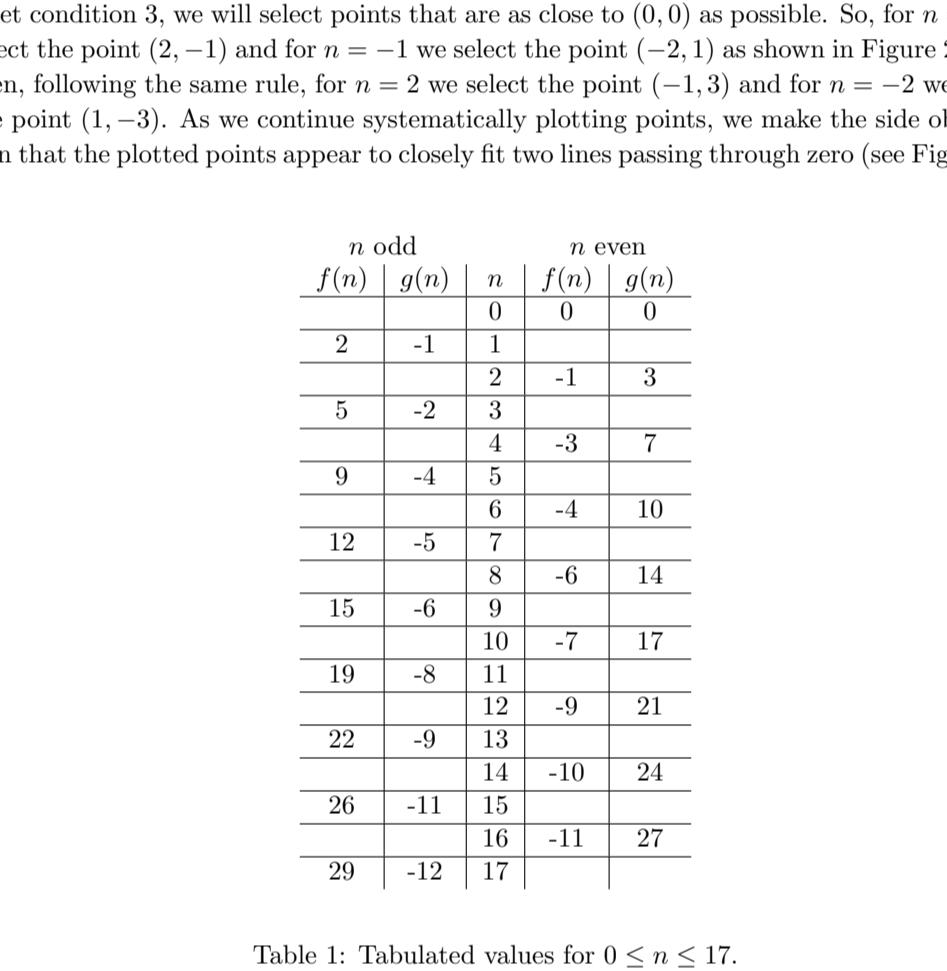


Figure 1: Beginning at the point plot of $(f(n), g(n))$ in \mathbb{Z}^2 on the left. The first dashed "keep-off" lines are shown on the right.

Starting with $n = 0$, we note that, to meet condition 1, the point $(f(0), g(0))$ will need to be on the line labeled $n = 0$ in Figure 1. Let's (somewhat arbitrarily) start by selecting the point $(0,0)$. Next we draw two dashed "keep-off" lines $f(n) = 0$ and $g(n) = 0$. If we make sure that no other points that are selected lie on a keep-off line, then we will have met condition 2.

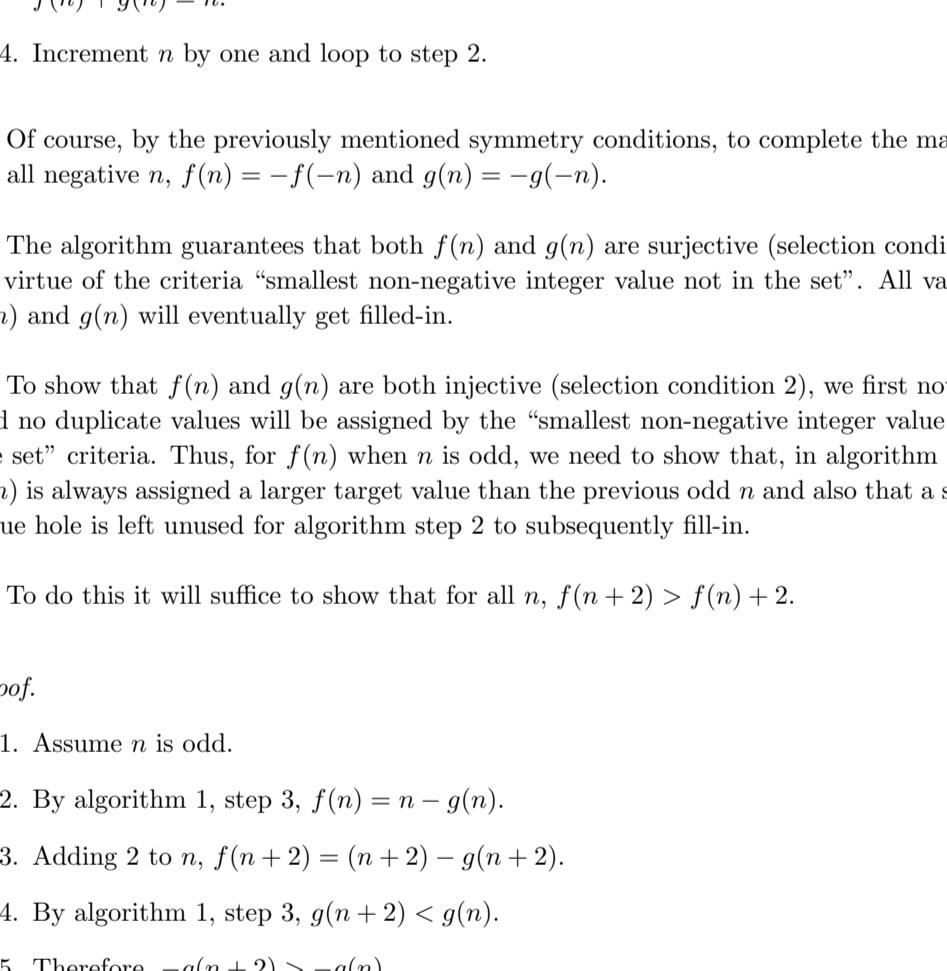


Figure 2: Evolving point selection.

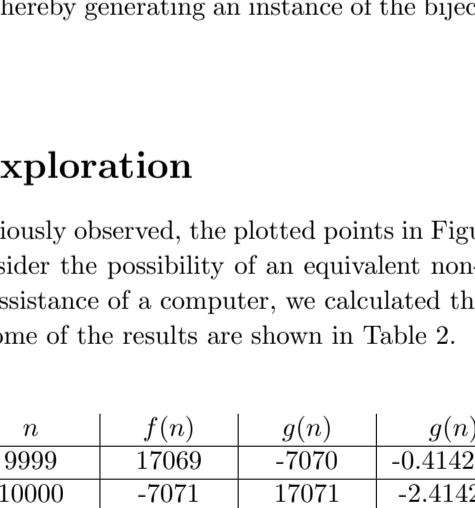


Figure 3: Plotted points up to $n = \pm 6$.

As we work our way through values of n , we note that the points we select need to lie on their respective diagonal line as shown in the evolving plot Figure 2. In a systematic effort to meet condition 3, we will select points that are as close to $(0,0)$ as possible. So, for $n = 1$ we select the point $(2, -1)$ and for $n = -1$ we select the point $(-2, 1)$ as shown in Figure 2. And then, following the same rule, for $n = 2$ we select the point $(-1, 3)$ and for $n = -2$ we select the point $(1, -3)$. As we continue systematically plotting points, we make the side observation that the plotted points appear to closely fit two lines passing through zero (see Figure 3).

n odd	n even	
	$f(n)$	$g(n)$
	0	0
2	-1	1
5	-2	3
9	-4	5
12	-5	7
15	-6	9
19	-8	11
22	-9	13
26	-11	15
29	-12	17

Table 1: Tabulated values for $0 \leq n \leq 17$.

In an attempt to discover an algebraic (as opposed to geometric) definition for our sequence of $f(n)$ and $g(n)$ values, we continue with a list of values as shown in Table 1. Note that because of the symmetries $f(-n) = -f(n)$ and $g(-n) = -g(n)$, we can, without loss of generality, use a table that gives values only for $n \geq 0$ as shown in Table 1. The table has been split into columns for odd and even values of n . Note that when n is odd, $f(n)$ is positive and $g(n)$ is negative. For all even values of n greater than zero, $f(n)$ is negative and $g(n)$ is positive.

Observation of the evolving pattern leads to the following algorithm for specifying the sequence of values for $f(n)$ and $g(n)$:

Mapping Algorithm 1: (A strongly recursive definition.)

1. Initialise n equal to zero.
2. If n is even, set $f(n)$ equal to -1 times the smallest non-negative integer value not in the set of the absolute values of already used $f(n)$'s. Then assign $g(n)$ such that $f(n) + g(n) = n$.
3. If n is odd, set $g(n)$ equal to -1 times the smallest non-negative integer value not in the set of the absolute values of already used $g(n)$'s. Then assign $f(n)$ such that $f(n) + g(n) = n$.
4. Increment n by one and loop to step 2.

Of course, by the previously mentioned symmetry conditions, to complete the mapping, for all negative n , $f(n) = -f(-n)$ and $g(n) = -g(-n)$.

The algorithm guarantees that both $f(n)$ and $g(n)$ are surjective (selection condition 3) by virtue of the criteria "smallest non-negative integer value not in the set". All values of $f(n)$ and $g(n)$ will eventually get filled-in.

To show that $f(n)$ and $g(n)$ are both injective (selection condition 2), we first note that and no duplicate values will be assigned by the "smallest non-negative integer value not in the set" criteria. Thus, for $f(n)$ when n is odd, we need to show that, in algorithm step 3, $f(n)$ is always assigned a larger target value than the previous odd n and also that a smaller value hole is left unused for algorithm step 2 to subsequently fill-in.

For even n ,

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{f(n)}{n} = -\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \quad (1)$$

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{g(n)}{n} = 1 + \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \quad (2)$$

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{g(n)}{f(n)} = -\left(1 + \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}\right) \quad (3)$$

and for odd n ,

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{f(n)}{n} = 1 + \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \quad (4)$$

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{g(n)}{n} = -\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \quad (5)$$

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{g(n)}{f(n)} = -\left(\frac{1}{1 + \sqrt{2}}\right) \quad (6)$$

4 A Variation

5 A Generalisation

6 Conclusion