

Chebyshev polynomials

I cannot avoid temptation to explain this

Consider polynomials

$$P_n(x) = \cos n \arccos x$$

Fix n .

Lemma Let $P(x)$ be an arbitrary polynomial such that a polynomial $P(x) - T_n(x)$ is a polynomial of order $\leq n - 1$. Then there exists $x_0 \in [-1, 1]$ such that

$$P(x_0) > 1,$$

i.e. every polynomial which has the same leading term as polynomial $P_n(x)$ has norm greater than 1.

We suppose that

$$\|P\| = \max_{x \in [-1, 1]} |P(x)|.$$

This lemma implies that Chebyshev polynomials have minimum norm: i.e. in the space of V_n of polynomials

$$V_n = \{P(x): P(x) = x^n + \text{terms of order } < n\}$$

the norm of Chebyshev polynomial

$$T_n(x) = \frac{P_n(x)}{2^n}$$

is minimal:

$$\text{for every } P \in V_n, \quad \|P\| \geq \frac{1}{2^n},$$

and

$$\|P\| = \frac{1}{2^n} \Leftrightarrow P = T_n(x)$$

We suppose that

$$\|P\| = \max_{x \in [-1, 1]} |P(x)|.$$

Proof of the lemma

Let $P(x)$ be an arbitrary polynomial such that $P(x) - T_n(x)$ has order less than n . Show that this implies that its norm is greater than 1. Suppose that $\|P\| \leq 1$. Consider values of polynomial P at the points

$$x_k = \cos \frac{k\pi}{n}, k = 0, 1, 2, 3, \dots, n$$

Note that polynomial $P_n(x)$ takes values ± 1 alternatively at these points:

$$P_n(x_0) = 1, P_n(x_1) = -1, P_n(x_2) = 1, \text{ and so on.}$$

Hence at these points the polynomial $P(x)$ has to be positive or negative alternatively:

$$P_n(x_0) > 0, P_n(x_1) < 0, P_n(x_2) > 0, \text{ and so on.}$$

since $\|P\| < 1$. Hence the polynomial $P(x)$ has at least n roots. On the other hand $P(x) - P_n(x)$ has order $\leq n - 1$. Contradiction.