

Finding a Unit Vector on a Plane having Cartesian Vector Co-ordinates (Points / Vertices)

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Let there be a 3-D Plane formed by the Points A(1,0,1), B(0,2,2) and C(3,3,0).

Let \vec{a} , \vec{b} , and \vec{c} be the position vectors of points A, B and C respectively.

$$\begin{aligned}\vec{a} &= 1\hat{i} + 0\hat{j} + 1\hat{k} \\ \vec{b} &= 0\hat{i} + 2\hat{j} + 2\hat{k} \\ \vec{c} &= 3\hat{i} + 3\hat{j} + 0\hat{k}\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}\vec{v}_1 &= \overrightarrow{AB} = \vec{b} - \vec{a} = -1\hat{i} + 2\hat{j} + 1\hat{k} \\ \vec{v}_2 &= \overrightarrow{AC} = \vec{c} - \vec{a} = 2\hat{i} + 3\hat{j} - 1\hat{k}\end{aligned}$$

Let \vec{u} be a vector that is perpendicular to the plane.

$$\begin{aligned}\vec{u} &= \overrightarrow{AB} \times \overrightarrow{AC} = \begin{vmatrix} \hat{i} & \hat{j} & \hat{k} \\ v_{1x} & v_{1y} & v_{1z} \\ v_{2x} & v_{2y} & v_{2z} \end{vmatrix} = \begin{vmatrix} \hat{i} & \hat{j} & \hat{k} \\ -1 & 2 & 1 \\ 2 & 3 & -1 \end{vmatrix} \\ &= [(v_{1y} \cdot v_{2z}) - (v_{1z} \cdot v_{2y})] \hat{i} - [(v_{1x} \cdot v_{2z}) - (v_{1z} \cdot v_{2x})] \hat{j} \\ &\quad + [(v_{1x} \cdot v_{2y}) - (v_{1y} \cdot v_{2x})] \hat{k} \\ &= -5\hat{i} + 1\hat{j} - 7\hat{k} \\ &= (-5, 1, -7)\end{aligned}$$

Let \hat{n} be the unit vector.

$$\begin{aligned}\left\| \frac{\vec{u}}{u} \right\| &= \frac{\|\vec{u}\|}{u} = \frac{u}{u} = 1 \\ \|\vec{u}\| &= \sqrt{u_x^2 + u_y^2 + u_z^2} = \sqrt{75} = 5\sqrt{3} \\ \therefore \hat{n} &= \frac{\vec{u}}{\|\vec{u}\|} = \frac{(-5, 1, -7)}{5\sqrt{3}} = \left(-\frac{1}{\sqrt{3}}, \frac{1}{5\sqrt{3}}, -\frac{7}{5\sqrt{3}} \right)\end{aligned}$$