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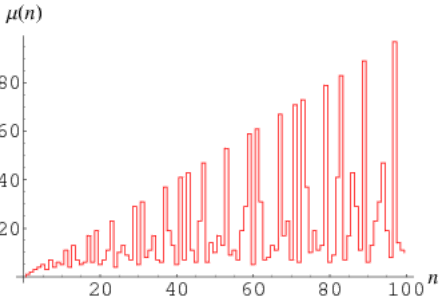
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Smarandache Function

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The Smarandache function $\mu(n)$ is the function first considered by Lucas (1883), Neuberg (1887), and Kempner (1918) and subsequently rediscovered by Smarandache (1980) that gives the smallest value for a given n at which $n \mid \mu(n)!$ (i.e., n divides $\mu(n)$ factorial). For example, the number 8 does not divide $1!$, $2!$, $3!$, but does divide $4! = 4 \cdot 3 \cdot 2 \cdot 1 = 8 \cdot 3$, so $\mu(8) = 4$.



For $n = 1, 2, \dots$, $\mu(n)$ is given by $1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 3, 7, 4, 6, 5, 11, \dots$ (OEIS [A002034](#)), where it should be noted that Sloane defines $\mu(1) = 1$, while Ashbacher (1995) and Russo (2000, p. 4) take $\mu(1) = 0$. The incrementally largest values of $\mu(n)$ are $1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, \dots$ (OEIS [A046022](#)), which occur at the values where $\mu(n) = n$. The incrementally smallest values of $\mu(n)$ relative to n are $\mu(n)/n = 1, 1/2, 1/3, 1/4, 1/6, 1/8, 1/12, 3/40, 1/15, 1/16, 1/24, 1/30, \dots$ (OEIS [A094404](#) and [A094372](#)), which occur at $n = 1, 6, 12, 20, 24, 40, 60, 80, 90, 112, 120, 180, \dots$ (OEIS [A094371](#)).

Formulas exist for immediately computing $\mu(n)$ for special forms of n . The simplest cases are

$$\begin{aligned}\mu(1) &= 1 \\ \mu(n!) &= n \\ \mu(p) &= p \\ \mu(p_1 p_2 \cdots p_k) &= p_k \\ \mu(p^\alpha) &= p^\alpha\end{aligned}$$

(1)
(2)
(3)
(4)
(5)

where p is a prime, p_i are distinct primes, $p_1 < p_2 < \dots < p_k$, and $\alpha \leq p$ (Kempner 1918). In addition,

$$\mu(P_p) = M_p$$

(6)

if P_p is the n th even perfect number and M_p is the corresponding Mersenne prime (Ashbacher 1997; Ruiz 1999a). Finally, if p is a prime number and $n \geq 2$ an integer, then

$$\mu(p^{p^n}) = p^{n+1} - p^n + p$$

(7)

(Ruiz 1999b).

The case p^α for $\alpha > p$ is more complicated, but can be computed by an algorithm due to Kempner (1918). To begin, define a_j recursively by

$$a_{j+1} = p a_j + 1$$

(8)

with $a_1 = 1$. This can be solved in closed form as

$$a_j = \frac{p^j - 1}{p - 1}.$$

(9)

Now find the value of v such that $a_v \leq \alpha < a_{v+1}$, which is given by

$$v = \lfloor \log_p [1 + \alpha(p - 1)] \rfloor,$$

(10)

where $\lfloor x \rfloor$ is the floor function. Now compute the sequences k_i and r_i according to the Euclidean algorithm-like procedure

$$\begin{aligned}\alpha &= k_v a_v + r_v \\ r_v &= k_{v-1} a_{v-1} + r_{v-1} \\ &\vdots \\ r_{\lambda+2} &= k_{\lambda+1} a_{\lambda+1} + r_{\lambda+1} \\ r_{\lambda+1} &= k_\lambda a_\lambda\end{aligned}$$

(11)
(12)
(13)
(14)
(15)

i.e., until the remainder $r_\lambda = 0$. At each step, k_i is the integer part of r_i / a_i and r_i is the remainder. For example, in the first step, $k_v = \lfloor \alpha / a_v \rfloor$ and $r_v = \alpha - k_v a_v$. Then

$$\mu(p^\alpha) = (p - 1) \alpha + \sum_{i=v}^{\lambda} k_i$$

(16)

(Kempner 1918).

The value of $\mu(n)$ for general n is then given by

(17)

C2v point group

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$$\mu\left(p_1^{a_1}p_2^{a_2}\cdots p_r^{a_r}\right)=\max\left[\mu\left(p_1^{a_1}\right),\mu\left(p_2^{a_2}\right),\ldots,\mu\left(p_r^{a_r}\right)\right]$$

(Kempner 1918).

For all n

$$\mu\left(n\right)\geq\text{gpf}\left(n\right),\tag{18}$$

where $\text{gpf}\left(n\right)$ is the [greatest prime factor](#) of n .

$\mu\left(n\right)$ can be computed by finding $\text{gpf}\left(n\right)$ and testing if n divides $\text{gpf}\left(n\right)!$. If it does, then $\mu\left(n\right)=\text{gpf}\left(n\right)$. If it doesn't, then $\mu\left(n\right)>\text{gpf}\left(n\right)$ and Kempner's algorithm must be used. The set of n for which $n\nmid\text{gpf}\left(n\right)!$ (i.e., n does not divide $\text{gpf}\left(n\right)!$) has density zero as proposed by Erdős (1991) and proved by Kastanas (1994), but for small n , there are quite a large number of values for which $n\nmid\text{gpf}\left(n\right)!$. The first few of these are 4, 8, 9, 12, 16, 18, 24, 25, 27, 32, 36, 45, 48, 49, 50, ... (OEIS [A057109](#)). Letting $N\left(x\right)$ denote the number of positive integers $2\leq n\leq x$ such that $n\nmid\text{gpf}\left(n\right)!$, Akbik (1999) subsequently showed that

$$N\left(x\right)\ll x\exp\left(-\frac{1}{4}\sqrt{\ln x}\right).\tag{19}$$

This was subsequently improved by Ford (1999) and De Koninck and Doyon (2003), the former of which is unfortunately incorrect. Ford (1999) proposed the asymptotic formula

$$N\left(x\right)\sim\frac{\sqrt{\pi}\left(1+\ln 2\right)}{2^{3/4}}\left(\ln x\ln\ln x\right)^{3/4}x^{1-1/u_0}\rho\left(u_0\right)\tag{20}$$

where $\rho\left(u\right)$ is the [Dickman function](#), u_0 is defined implicitly through

$$\ln x=u_0\left(x^{1/u_0^2}-1\right),\tag{21}$$

and the constant needs correction (Ivić 2003). Ivić (2003) subsequently showed that

$$N\left(x\right)=x\left(2+O\left(\sqrt{\ln\ln x/\ln x}\right)\right)\times\int_2^x\rho\left(\ln x/\ln t\right)\frac{\ln t}{t^2}dt,\tag{22}$$

and, in terms of elementary functions,

$$N\left(x\right)=x\exp\left[-\sqrt{2\ln x\ln\ln x}\left(1+O\left(\ln\ln\ln x/\ln\ln x\right)\right)\right].\tag{23}$$

Tutescu (1996) conjectured that $\mu\left(n\right)$ never takes the same value for two consecutive arguments, i.e., $\mu\left(n\right)\neq\mu\left(n+1\right)$ for any n . This holds up to at least $n=10^9$ (Weisstein, Mar. 3, 2004).

Multiple values of n can have the same value of $k=\mu\left(n\right)$, as summarized in the following table for small k .

k	n such that $\mu\left(n\right)=k$
1	1
2	2
3	3, 6
4	4, 8, 12, 24
5	5, 10, 15, 20, 30, 40, 60, 120
6	9, 16, 18, 36, 45, 48, 72, 80, 90, 144, 180, 240, 360, 720

Let $a\left(k\right)$ denote the smallest inverse of $\mu\left(n\right)$, i.e., the smallest n for which $\mu\left(n\right)=k$. Then $a\left(k\right)$ is given by

$$a\left(k\right)=\left[\text{gpf}\left(k\right)\right]^{e+1},\tag{24}$$

where

$$e=\sum_{i=1}^{\left\lfloor\log_{\text{gpf}\left(k\right)}\left(n-1\right)\right\rfloor}\left\lfloor\frac{n-1}{\left[\text{gpf}\left(k\right)\right]^i}\right\rfloor\tag{25}$$

(J. Sondow, pers. comm., Jan. 17, 2005), where $\text{gpf}\left(k\right)$ is the [greatest prime factor](#) of k and $\left\lfloor x\right\rfloor$ is the [floor function](#). For $k=1,2,\ldots$, $a\left(k\right)$ is given by 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 7, 32, 27, 25, 11, 243, ... (OEIS [A046021](#)). Some values of $\mu\left(n\right)$ first occur only for very large n . The sequence of incrementally largest values of $a\left(k\right)$ is 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 32, 243, 4096, 59049, 177147, 134217728, ... (OEIS [A092233](#)), corresponding to $n=1,2,3,4,5,6,8,12,16,24,27,32,\ldots$ (OEIS [A092232](#)).

To find the number of n for which $\mu\left(n\right)=k$, note that by definition, n is a divisor of $\mu\left(n\right)!$ but not of $\left(\mu\left(n\right)-1\right)!$. Therefore, to find all n for which $\mu\left(n\right)$ has a given value, say all n with $\mu\left(n\right)=k$, take the set of all divisors of $k!$ and omit the divisors of $\left(k-1\right)!$. In particular, the number $b\left(k\right)$ of n for which $\mu\left(n\right)=k$ for $k>1$ is exactly

$$b\left(k\right)=d\left(k!\right)-d\left(\left(k-1\right)!\right),\tag{26}$$

where $d\left(m\right)$ denotes the number of divisors of m , i.e., the [divisor function](#) $\sigma_0\left(m\right)$. Therefore, the numbers of integers n with $\mu\left(n\right)=1,2,\ldots$ are given by 1, 1, 2, 4, 8, 14, 30, 36, 64, 110, ... (OEIS [A038024](#)).

In particular, equation (26) shows that the inverse Smarandache function $a\left(n\right)$ always exists since for every n there is an m with $\mu\left(m\right)=n$ (hence a smallest one $a\left(n\right)$), since $d\left(n!\right)-d\left(\left(n-1\right)!\right)>0$ for $n>1$.

Sondow (2006) showed that $\mu\left(k\right)$ unexpectedly arises in an irrationality bound for e , and conjectures that the inequality $n^2<\mu\left(n\right)!$ holds for [almost all](#) n , where "for almost all" means except for a set of density zero. The exceptions are 2, 3, 6, 8, 12, 15, 20, 24, 30, 36, 40, 45, 48, 60, 72, 80, ... (OEIS [A122378](#)).

Since $\text{gpf}\left(n\right)=\mu\left(n\right)$ for almost all n (Erdős 1991, Kastanas 1994), where $\text{gpf}\left(n\right)$ is the [greatest prime factor](#), an equivalent conjecture is that the inequality $n^2<\text{gpf}\left(n\right)!$ holds for almost all n . The exceptions are 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, 15, 16, 18, 20, 24, 25, 27, 30, 32, 36, ... (OEIS [A122380](#)).

D. Wilson points out that if

$$I\left(n,p\right)=\frac{n-\Sigma\left(n,p\right)}{p-1},\tag{27}$$

is the power of the [prime](#) p in $n!$, where $\Sigma\left(n,p\right)$ is the sum of the base- p digits of n , then it follows that

$$a(n) = \min_{p|n} p^{J(n-1,p)+1},$$

where the minimum is taken over the **primes** p dividing n . This minimum appears to always be achieved when p is the **greatest prime factor** of n .

SEE ALSO:
[Factorial](#), [Greatest Prime Factor](#), [Pseudosmarandache Function](#), [Smarandache Ceil Function](#), [Smarandache Constants](#), [Smarandache-Kurepa Function](#), [Smarandache Near-to-Primorial Function](#), [Smarandache-Wagstaff Function](#)

Portions of this entry contributed by [Jonathan Sondow](#) ([author's link](#))

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