



Why

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Definition

The *event sigma algebra* of $A \in \mathcal{F}$ where (Ω, \mathcal{F}) is a measurable space is the set sub- σ -algebra $\{\emptyset, A, A^c, \Omega\}$.

A family of events are *independent* if the event sigma algebras are independent.

Notation

Let (X, \mathcal{A}, μ) be a probability space. Let $A \in \mathcal{A}$ be an event. The sigma algebra generated by A is $\{\emptyset, A, X - A, X\}$. We denote it by $\sigma(A)$.

Let $B \in \mathcal{A}$. If A is independent of B we write $A \perp B$.

Equivalent Condition

Proposition 1. *Two events are independent if and only if the measure of their intersection is the product of their measures.*

Proof. Let (X, \mathcal{A}, μ) be a probability space. Let $A, B \in \mathcal{A}$.

(\Rightarrow) If $A \perp B$, then by definition $A \in \sigma(A)$ and $B \in \sigma(B)$ and so:

$$\mu(A \cap B) = \mu(A)\mu(B).$$

¹Future editions will include

(\Leftarrow) Conversely, let $a \in \sigma(A)$ and $b \in \sigma(B)$. If $a = \emptyset$ or $b = \emptyset$ then $a \cap b = \emptyset$. So

$$\mu(a \cap b) = \mu(\emptyset) = \mu(a)\mu(b),$$

since one of the two measures on the right hand side is zero. On the other hand, if $a = X$, then $a \cap b = b$ and so

$$\mu(a \cap b) = \mu(b) = \mu(a)\mu(b),$$

since $\mu(a) = \mu(X) = 1$. Likewise if $b = X$.

So it remains to verify $\mu(a \cap b) = \mu(a)\mu(b)$ for the cases $a \in \{A, X - A\}$ and $b \in \{B, X - B\}$. If $a = A$, and $b = B$, then the identity follows by hypothesis. Next, observe that $A \cap (X - B) = A - (A \cap B)$ and $(A \cap B) \subset A$ so $\mu(X) < \infty$ allows us to deduce:

$$\begin{aligned} \mu(A \cap (X - B)) &= \mu(A - (A \cap B)) \\ &= \mu(A) - \mu(A \cap B) \\ &= \mu(A)(1 - \mu(B)) \\ &= \mu(A)\mu(X - B). \end{aligned}$$

Similar for $X - A$ and B . Finally, recall that $\mu(A \cup B) = \mu(A) + \mu(B) - \mu(A \cap B)$. So then,

$$\begin{aligned} \mu((X - A) \cap (X - B)) &= 1 - \mu(A \cup B) \\ &= 1 - \mu(A) - \mu(B) + \mu(A \cap B) \\ &= 1 - \mu(A) - \mu(B) + \mu(A)\mu(B) \\ &= (1 - \mu(A))(1 - \mu(B)) \\ &= \mu(X - A)\mu(X - B). \end{aligned}$$

□

