



Why

Suppose a cashier needs to provide $c \in \mathbf{Z}_+$ cents in change, and wants to do so using the fewest (or most) number of coins, each worth a different number of cents. We can model this as a problem similar to the bounded knapsack problem, in which we have an equality constraint instead of an inequality one.

Definition

Given $w : \{1, \dots, n\} \rightarrow \mathbf{R}_+$, $b \in \mathbf{Z}_+^n$, find $x \in \mathbf{Z}_+^n$ to

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{minimize} && \sum_i x_i \\ & \text{subject to} && \sum_{j=1}^n w_j x_j = c \\ & && 0 \leq x \leq b, x \in \mathbf{Z}_n^+ \end{aligned}$$

This problem is often called a *change-making problem*. Without the budget constraints, it is called an *unbounded change-making problem*.

