

Signals And Systems by Alan V. Oppenheim: Notes

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0.1 Introduction

0.1.1 Signal Energy and Power

Motivation and definition

In many but not all, applications, the signals considered directly related to physical quantities capturing power and energy in a physical system. (for instance v^2/R for the power across a resistor)

As such it is a common and worthwhile convention to use similar terminology for power and energy for *any* continuous-time signal, denoted $x(t)$, or any discrete-time signal $x[n]$. In this case, the total energy over the time interval $t_1 \leq t \leq t_2$ in a continuous signal $x(t)$ is defined as

$$\int_{t_1}^{t_2} |x(t)|^2 dt$$

where $|x|$ denotes the magnitude of the (possibly complex) number x ; see that the time-averaged signal can be obtained by dividing by $(t_2 - t_1)$. Similarly for a discrete signal $x[n]$ over the interval $n_1 \leq n \leq n_2$ the total energy is

$$\sum_{n=n_1}^{n_2} |x[n]|^2$$

with the average power calculated by dividing by $(n_2 - n_1 + 1)$.

It is important to remember that the terms ‘power’ and ‘energy’ are used here *independently* of their relation to physical energy (they clearly don’t correlate since their units or scalings would differ). Nevertheless we will find it convenient to use these terms in a general fashion.

Power and energy over infinite intervals

Considering signals over an infinite time interval, meaning for $-\infty < t < +\infty$ or $-\infty < n < +\infty$. Here we define the total energy as the limits of the aforementioned equations increase without bound; in continuous time,

$$E_\infty \triangleq \lim_{T \rightarrow \infty} \int_{-T}^T |x(t)|^2 dt = \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} |x(t)|^2 dt$$

and in discrete time,

$$E_\infty \triangleq \lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \sum_{n=-N}^{+N} |x[n]|^2 = \sum_{n=-\infty}^{+\infty} |x[n]|^2$$

Note that these expressions may not converge; for instance say $x(t)$ or $x[n]$ equal some nonzero constant for all time: such signals have infinite energy, while signals with $E_\infty < \infty$ have finite energy.

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Analagously, we can define the time-averaged power over an infinite interval as

$$P_{\infty} \triangleq \lim_{T \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{2T} \int_{-T}^T |x(t)|^2 dt$$

and

$$P_{\infty} \triangleq \lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{2N+1} \sum_{n=-N}^{+N} |x[n]|^2$$

In continuous and discrete time respectively.

Intuition

See that with these definitions, we can identify three classes of signals: first those with finite total energy, meaning $E_{\infty} < \infty$. See that such a signal would have zero average power:

$$P_{\infty} = \lim_{T \rightarrow \infty} \frac{E_{\infty}}{2T} = 0$$

Second would be signals with finite average power P_{∞} ; see from the above expression that for $P_{\infty} > 0$, this requires that $E_{\infty} = \infty$.

Last would be signals for which neither P_{∞} nor E_{∞} are finite. An example of this might be $x(t) = t$.

Note on discrete signals

It is important to note that the discrete-time signal $x[n]$ is defined *only* for *integer* values of the independent variable.

0.1.2 Even and Odd signals

Definition

A continuous-time signal is *even* if

$$x(-t) = x(t)$$

while a discrete-time signal is *even* if

$$x[-n] = x[n]$$

These signals are referred to as *odd* if

$$x(-t) = -x(t)$$

$$x[-n] = -x[n]$$

Note that an odd signal must be 0 at $t = 0$ or $n = 0$ since the equations require that $x(0) = -x(0)$ and $x[0] = -x[0]$.

Decomposition

An important fact is that any signal can be broken into a sum of two signals, where one is even and the other odd. To see this, consider

$$\text{Ev}\{x(t)\} = \frac{1}{2}[x(t) + x(-t)]$$

which is referred to as the *even part* of $x(t)$. Similarly, the *odd part* of $x(t)$ is given by

$$\text{Od}\{x(t)\} = \frac{1}{2}[x(t) - x(-t)]$$

See that $x(t)$ is the sum of the two. Exactly analogous definitions hold in the discrete time case.



Figure 1.18 Example of the even-odd decomposition of a discrete-time signal.

0.1.3 Differences between continuous and discrete periodic complex exponentials

The continuous-time *complex exponential signal* is of the form

$$x(t) = Ce^{at}$$

where C and a are, in general, complex numbers. An important class of complex exponentials is obtained by constraining a to be purely imaginary:

$$x(t) = e^{i\omega t}$$

Periodicity and harmonic relations (purely imaginary power)

An important property of this signal is that it is periodic; recall that $x(t)$ will be periodic with period T if

$$e^{i\omega t} = e^{i\omega(t+T)}$$

this means

$$e^{i\omega(t+T)} = e^{i\omega t} e^{i\omega T} \implies e^{i\omega T} = 1$$

If $\omega = 0$ then this is satisfied for any T . If $\omega \neq 0$, see that the *fundamental period* T_0 of $x(t)$ —that is, the smallest positive value of T for which this holds—is

$$T_0 = \frac{2\pi}{|\omega|}$$

(the signals $e^{i\omega_0 t}$ and $e^{-i\omega_0 t}$ have the same fundamental period) Naturally, there is a set of exponentials periodic to a common period T_0 . These are said to be *harmonically related* complex exponentials; the necessary condition they satisfy is

$$e^{i\omega T_0} = 1$$

which implies that

$$\omega T_0 = 2\pi k, \quad k = 0, \pm 1, \pm 2, \dots$$

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Cont.

We had

$$\omega T_0 = 2\pi k, \quad k = 0, \pm 1, \pm 2, \dots$$

if we define

$$\omega_0 = \frac{2\pi}{T_0}$$

this means that the harmonic frequencies ω must be integer multiples of ω_0 :

$$\phi_k(t) = e^{ik\omega_0 t}, \quad k = 0, \pm 1, \pm 2, \dots$$

For $k = 0$, $\phi_k(t)$ is a constant, while for any other value of k , $\phi_k(t)$ is periodic with fundamental frequency $|k|\omega_0$ and fundamental period

$$\frac{2\pi}{|k|\omega_0} = \frac{T_0}{|k|}$$

Each $\phi_k(t)$ itself defines a fundamental frequency and a corresponding fundamental period. (see that $|k|\omega_0 \cdot T_0/|k| = 2\pi$, so this scaled down period is the corresponding period for this scaled up frequency. Each frequency is unique, point here is that they are also periodic with T_0 , but with fundamental periods getting proportionally smaller.)

Note that the k th harmonic $\phi_k(t)$ is still periodic with T_0 ; it goes through exactly $|k|$ of its fundamental periods during any time interval of length T_0 . (the term ‘harmonic’ is consistent with its use in music, where it refers to tones resulting from variations in acoustic pressure at frequencies that are integer multiples of a fundamental frequency)

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Discrete case

As in continuous time, an important signal in discrete time is the *complex exponential signal*, defined as

$$x[n] = C\alpha^n$$

where C and α are, in general, complex numbers. See that this could also be expressed as

$$x[n] = Ce^{\beta n}$$

where $\alpha = e^\beta$. See that we can constrain β to be purely imaginary:

$$x[n] = e^{i\omega_0 n}$$

Periodicity properties of Discrete-time complex exponentials

While there are many similarities between continuous and discrete-time signals, there are a number of important differences. For the continuous time signal $e^{i\omega_0 t}$, we know that

- The larger the magnitude of ω_0 , the higher the rate of oscillation of the signal
- $e^{i\omega_0 t}$ is periodic for any value of ω_0

These properties are different in the discrete-time case.

Given the first property, consider the discrete-time complex exponential with frequency $\omega_0 + 2\pi$:

$$e^{i(\omega_0+2\pi)n} = e^{i2\pi n}e^{i\omega_0 n} = e^{i\omega_0 n}$$

(see that this is a direct result of the fact that we iterate through discrete time as integers) The exponential at frequency $\omega_0 + 2\pi$ is the *same* as that at frequency ω_0 . This is unlike the continuous-time case where each distinct ω_0 represents a distinct signal.

In discrete time, the signal with frequency ω_0 is identical to the signals with frequencies $\omega_0 \pm 2\pi, \omega_0 \pm 4\pi$, and so on. Therefore when considering discrete time complex exponentials, see that we need only consider a frequency interval of length 2π in which to choose ω_0 , such as $0 \leq \omega_0 < 2\pi$ or $-\pi \leq \omega_0 < \pi$.

Also see that because of this the discrete exponential $e^{i\omega_0 n}$ does *not* have a continually increasing rate of oscillation as ω_0 increases in magnitude; the signals will oscillate faster until we reach $\omega_0 = \pi$, after which the rate of oscillation decreases until we reach $\omega_0 = 2\pi$, at which the same constant sequence as $\omega_0 = 0$ is produced.

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The second property we wish to consider concerns the periodicity of the discrete time complex exponential. In order for the signal $e^{i\omega_0 n}$ to be periodic with period $N > 0$ we must have

$$e^{i\omega_0(n+N)} = e^{i\omega_0 n}$$

or equivalently

$$e^{i\omega_0 N} = 1$$

For this to hold, $\omega_0 N$ must be a multiple of 2π . That is, there must be an integer m such that

$$\omega_0 N = 2\pi m$$

or equivalently

$$\frac{\omega_0}{2\pi} = \frac{m}{N}$$

The signal $e^{i\omega_0 n}$ is periodic if $\omega_0/2\pi$ is a rational number and is not periodic otherwise.

Fundamental period

Recall the idea of a *fundamental period*; in this case it would mean the smallest N such that $\omega_0 N = 2\pi m$ holds (this is unlike the continuous case where there is always some T where $\omega_0 T = 2\pi$); see that this occurs when m and N do not have any factors in common.

See that from this we can derive a *fundamental frequency* as

$$\frac{2\pi}{N} = \frac{\omega_0}{m}$$

(see that this frequency is always equal or lower—intuitively, to have a different wave that completes one oscillation in N time, its frequency will either be equal or lower)

To summarize

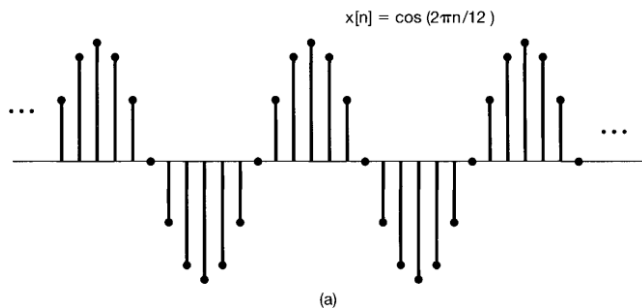
TABLE 1.1 Comparison of the signals $e^{i\omega_0 t}$ and $e^{i\omega_0 n}$.

$e^{i\omega_0 t}$	$e^{i\omega_0 n}$
Distinct signals for distinct values of ω_0	Identical signals for values of ω_0 separated by multiples of 2π
Periodic for any choice of ω_0	Periodic only if $\omega_0 = 2\pi m/N$ for some integers $N > 0$ and m .
Fundamental frequency ω_0	Fundamental frequency* ω_0/m
Fundamental period $\omega_0 = 0$: undefined $\omega_0 \neq 0$: $\frac{2\pi}{\omega_0}$	Fundamental period* $\omega_0 = 0$: undefined $\omega_0 \neq 0$: $m \left(\frac{2\pi}{\omega_0} \right)$

*Assumes that m and N do not have any factors in common.

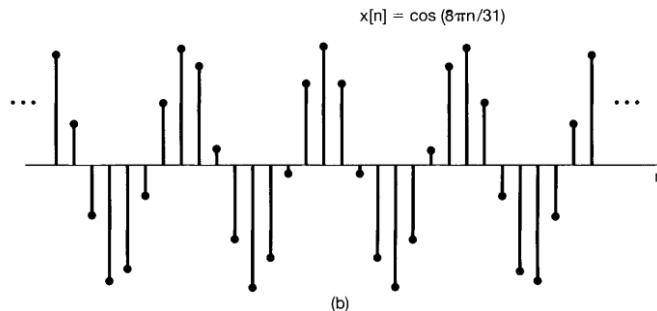
0.1.4 Intuition for discrete-time periodicity

Consider the sequence $x[n] = \cos(2\pi n/12)$:



we can think of this as a set of samples of the continuous-time sinusoid $x(t) = \cos(2\pi t/12)$ at integer time points. In this case, see that both $x(t)$ and $x[n]$ are periodic with fundamental period 12. That is, the values of $x[n]$ repeat every 12 points, exactly in step with the fundamental period of $x(t)$.

Now consider the signal $x[n] = \cos(8\pi n/31)$:



This can also be viewed as a set of samples of $x(t) = \cos(8\pi t/31)$ at integer points in time. But now see that in this case $x(t)$ is periodic with fundamental period $31/4$, while $x[n]$ is periodic with fundamental period 31.

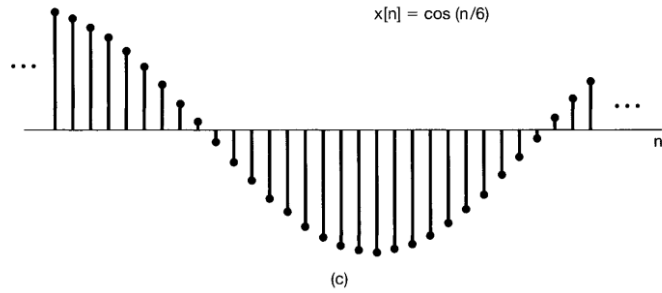
This difference stems from the fact that the discrete-time signal is defined only for integer values of the independent variable—there is no sample at time $t = 31/4$, when $x(t)$ completes one period, or at $t = 2 \cdot 31/4$ or $t = 3 \cdot 31/4$, when $x(t)$ has completed two or three periods. Only at sample $t = 4 \cdot 31/4 = 31$, when $x(t)$ has completed *four* periods is the discrete sequence defined.

This manifests as the pattern of $x[n]$ not repeating with each cycle of positive and negative values, but rather only after four of such cycles, specifically 31 points.

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Finally consider the signal $x[n] = \cos(n/6)$:



In this case, the values of $x(t)$ at integer sample points *never repeat*, as these sample points never span an interval that is an exact multiple of the period, 12π , of $x(t)$.

Thus, $x[n]$ is *not periodic*, although the eye visually interpolates between the sample points, suggesting *the envelope* $x(t)$ which is periodic.

0.1.5 Difference in harmonic relations in discrete and continuous periodic exponentials

As in continuous time, it is also of considerable value in discrete-time to consider sets of harmonically related periodic exponentials—that is, *periodic exponentials with a common period N* .

We know that these are precisely the signals which are at frequencies which are multiples of $2\pi/N$; that is

$$\phi_k[n] = e^{ik(2\pi/N)n}, \quad k = 0, \pm 1, \dots$$

In the continuous-time case, all the harmonically related complex exponentials $e^{ik(2\pi/T_0)t}$, $k = 0, \pm 1, \pm 2, \dots$ are distinct. However, recall that for discrete signals we have

$$e^{i(\omega_0+2\pi)n} = e^{i2\pi n} e^{i\omega_0 n} = e^{i\omega_0 n}$$

(this is a direct result of the fact that we iterate through discrete time as integers) As such the harmonically related complex exponentials *are not all unique in discrete time*; specifically,

$$\begin{aligned} \phi_{k+N}[n] &= e^{i(k+N)(2\pi/N)n} \\ &= e^{ik(2\pi/N)n} e^{i2\pi n} = \phi_k[n] \end{aligned}$$

See that this implies that there are only N distinct periodic exponentials in the set of $\phi_k[n]$; meaning

$$\phi_0[n] = 1, \phi_1[n] = e^{i(2\pi/N)n}, \phi_2[n] = e^{i2(2\pi/N)n}, \dots, \phi_{N-1}[n] = e^{i(N-1)(2\pi/N)n}$$

are all distinct, but any other $\phi_k[n]$ would just be identical to one of them. (for instance $\phi_N[n] = \phi_0[n]$ or $\phi_{-1}[n] = \phi_{N-1}[n]$.)

0.1.6 More on complex exponential and sinusoidal signals

Continuous case

A continuous-time *complex exponential signal* is of the form

$$x(t) = Ce^{at}$$

where C and a are, in general, complex numbers.

Euler identity and ‘combined’ sinusoidal form

Recall euler’s identity:

$$e^{i\omega_0 t} = \cos(\omega_0 t) + i \sin(\omega_0 t)$$

See that the scaled and phase-delayed sinusoid can be written in terms of these periodic complex exponentials with the same fundamental period:

$$A \cos(\omega_0 t + \phi) = \frac{A}{2} e^{i\phi} e^{i\omega_0 t} + \frac{A}{2} e^{-i\phi} e^{-i\omega_0 t}$$

We can also express

$$A \cos(\omega_0 t + \phi) = A \operatorname{Re}\{e^{i(\omega_0 t + \phi)}\}$$

and

$$A \sin(\omega_0 t + \phi) = A \operatorname{Im}\{e^{i(\omega_0 t + \phi)}\}$$

Energy and power

Periodic signals—and in particular, the complex periodic exponential signal—are examples of signals with infinite total energy but finite average power. Calculating the total energy and of the periodic exponential signal over one period:

$$\begin{aligned} E_{\text{period}} &= \int_0^{T_0} |e^{i\omega_0 t}|^2 dt \\ &= \int_0^{T_0} 1 dt = T_0 \end{aligned}$$

(The absolute value of a complex number is its magnitude. Think of the absolute value as the (possibly multidimensional) distance from zero.) Calculating the average power:

$$P_{\text{period}} = \frac{1}{T_0} E_{\text{period}} = 1$$

Since there are an infinite number of periods as t ranges from $-\infty$ to $+\infty$, the total energy integrated over all time is infinite. However, since the average power over each period is 1, averaging over multiple periods always yields an average power of 1. That is, the complex periodic exponential signal has finite average power equal to

$$P_{\infty} = \lim_{T \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{2T} \int_{-T}^T |e^{i\omega_0 t}|^2 dt = 1$$

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General continuous complex exponential signals

In the most general case Ce^{at} where both C and a are complex, see that since C and a can be just

$$C = |C|e^{i\theta}, \quad a = r + i\omega_0$$

we can express the general complex signal as

$$Ce^{at} = |C|e^{i\theta}e^{(r+i\omega_0)t} = |C|e^{rt}e^{i(\omega_0 t + \theta)}$$

we can expand this further as

$$Ce^{at} = |C|e^{rt} \cos(\omega_0 t + \theta) + i|C|e^{rt} \sin(\omega_0 t + \theta)$$

Discrete case

As in continuous time, the discrete time *complex exponential signal* is defined by

$$x[n] = C\alpha^n$$

where C and α are, in general, complex numbers. This could alternatively be expressed in the form

$$x[n] = Ce^{\beta n}$$

where $\alpha = e^\beta$.

Euler identity and ‘combined’ sinusoidal form

As with the continuous case, constraining β to be purely imaginary, we have Euler’s identity

$$e^{i\omega_0 n} = \cos \omega_0 n + i \sin \omega_0 n$$

and

$$A \cos(\omega_0 n + \phi) = \frac{A}{2} e^{i\phi} e^{i\omega_0 n} + \frac{A}{2} e^{-i\phi} e^{-i\omega_0 n}$$

General discrete complex exponential signals

As with the continuous case, for complex C and α , we have

$$C = |C|e^{i\theta}, \quad \alpha = |\alpha|e^{i\omega_0}$$

so the general complex exponential signal can be expressed as

$$C\alpha^n = |C||\alpha|^n \cos(\omega_0 n + \theta) + i|C||\alpha|^n \sin(\omega_0 n + \theta)$$

0.1.7 Unit impulse and Unit step functions

Discrete-Time

One of the simplest discrete-time signals is the *unit impulse/unit sample*, defined as

$$\delta[n] = \begin{cases} 0, & n \neq 0 \\ 1, & n = 0 \end{cases}$$

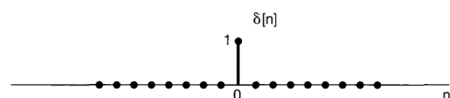


Figure 1.28 Discrete-time unit impulse (sample).

Another basic discrete-time signal is the discrete-time *unit step*, denoted by $u[n]$ and defined by

$$u[n] = \begin{cases} 0, & n < 0 \\ 1, & n \geq 0 \end{cases}$$



Figure 1.29 Discrete-time unit step sequence.

See that the discrete-time unit impulse is the *first difference* of the discrete-time step:

$$\delta[n] = u[n] - u[n-1]$$

Conversely, the discrete-time unit step is the *running sum* of the unit sample:

$$u[n] = \sum_{m=-\infty}^n \delta[m]$$

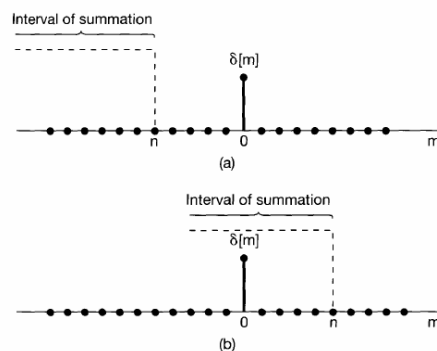


Figure 1.30 Running sum of eq. (1.66): (a) $n < 0$; (b) $n > 0$.

Since the only nonzero value of the unit sample is at 0, the running sum is 0 for $n < 0$ and 1 for $n \geq 0$.

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Alternative form

we had the discrete-time unit step as the running sum of the unit sample:

$$u[n] = \sum_{m=-\infty}^n \delta[m]$$

See that by changing the variable of summation from m to $k = n - m$, we can rewrite this as

$$u[n] = \sum_{k=-\infty}^0 \delta[n - k]$$

and equivalently

$$u[n] = \sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \delta[n - k]$$

An interpretation of this is a superposition of delayed impulses; we can view the unit step as the sum of unit impulses $\delta[n]$ (nonzero at $n = 0$), $\delta[n - 1]$ (nonzero at $n = 1$), and all other $\delta[n - k]$ for integer k extending to infinity.

Sampling property

See that the unit impulse can also be used to sample the value of a signal at $n = 0$; since $\delta[n]$ is nonzero (and equal to 1) only for $n = 0$, it follows that

$$x[n]\delta[n] = x[0]\delta[n]$$

More generally, if we consider a unit impulse $\delta[n - n_0]$ at $n = n_0$, then

$$x[n]\delta[n - n_0] = x[n_0]\delta[n - n_0]$$

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Continuous-Time

The continuous-time *unit step function* $u(t)$ is defined in a similar manner to its discrete-time counterpart:

$$u(t) = \begin{cases} 0, & t < 0 \\ 1, & t > 0 \end{cases}$$

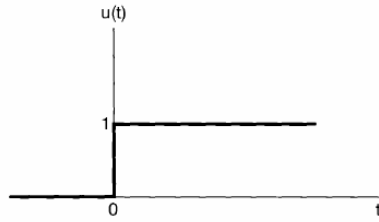


Figure 1.32 Continuous-time unit step function.

Note that the unit step is *discontinuous* at $t = 0$. The continuous-time *unit impulse* $\delta(t)$ is related to the unit step in a manner analagous to that of their discrete counterparts; in particular, the continuous-time unit step is the *running integral* of the unit impulse:

$$u(t) = \int_{-\infty}^t \delta(\tau) d\tau$$

It also follows that the continuous-time unit impulse can be thought of as the *first derivative* of the continuous-time unit step:

$$\delta(t) = \frac{du(t)}{dt}$$

In contrast to discrete-time, there is some formal difficulty with this equation as a representation of the unit impulse—since $u(t)$ is discontinuous at $t = 0$ and consequently is not formally differentiable.

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We get around this by considering an approximation to the unit step $u_\Delta(t)$, rising from the value 0 to 1 in a short time interval of length Δ :

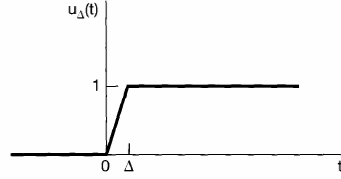


Figure 1.33 Continuous approximation to the unit step, $u_\Delta(t)$.

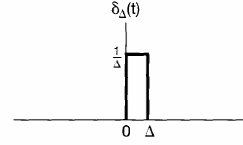


Figure 1.34 Derivative of $u_\Delta(t)$.

Also considering the derivative:

$$\delta_\Delta(t) = \frac{du_\Delta(t)}{dt}$$

The unit step changes from value 0 to 1 instantaneously and can be thought of an idealisation of $u_\Delta(t)$ for Δ so short that its duration doesn't matter for any practical purpose. Formally, $u(t)$ is the limit of $u_\Delta(t)$ as $\Delta \rightarrow 0$.

Consider the derivative again; $\delta_\Delta(t)$ is a short pulse, of duration Δ and unit area for any value of Δ . As $\Delta \rightarrow 0$, $\delta_\Delta(t)$ becomes narrower and higher while maintaining its unit area. Its limiting form

$$\delta(t) = \lim_{\Delta \rightarrow 0} \delta_\Delta(t)$$

can then be thought of as an idealisation of the short pulse $\delta_\Delta(t)$ as the duration Δ becomes insignificant:

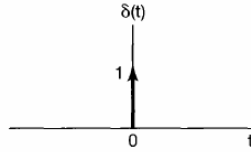


Figure 1.35 Continuous-time unit impulse.

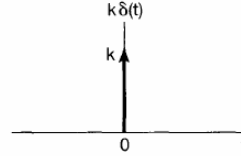


Figure 1.36 Scaled impulse.

$\delta(t)$ has, in effect, no duration but unit area. The arrow at $t = 0$ indicates the area of the pulse is concentrated at $t = 0$ and the height of the arrow and the '1' next to the arrow is used to represent the *area* of the impulse. More generally, a scaled impulse $k\delta(t)$ will have an area k , and thus

$$ku(t) = \int_{-\infty}^t k\delta(\tau)d\tau$$

A scaled impulse, where the height of the arrow is chosen to be proportional to the area of the impulse.

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Alternative form

As with discrete time, the relationship between the continuous time unit step and impulse can be rewritten in a different form, by changing the variable of integration from τ to $\sigma = t - \tau$:

$$u(t) = \int_{-\infty}^t \delta(\tau) d\tau = \int_{\infty}^0 \delta(t - \sigma)(-d\sigma)$$

or equivalently

$$u(t) = \int_0^{\infty} \delta(t - \sigma) d\sigma$$

(This negation after inversion of the limits of the integral can be derived from the first fundamental theorem. For a more intuitive understanding, consult the definition of the Riemann sum:

$$\sum_{i=0}^{n-1} f(t_i)(x_{i+1} - x_i)$$

Considering the $d\tau$, or respectively $d\sigma$, as the width of the step between two arguments of the sum, if we change the direction in which we integrate, the step also changes its sign. In the discrete sum, the summands are not multiplied by this step.)

Sampling property

As with discrete-time, the continuous-time impulse has a very important sampling property; consider

$$x_1(t) = x(t)\delta_{\Delta}(t)$$

By construction, $x_1(t)$ is zero outside the interval $0 \leq t \leq \Delta$. See that for Δ sufficiently small so that $x(t)$ is approximately constant over this interval:

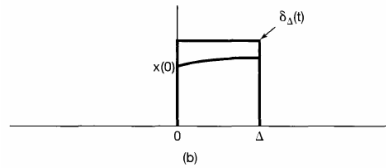
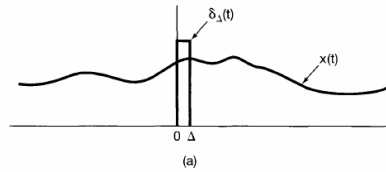


Figure 1.39 The product $x(t)\delta_{\Delta}(t)$: (a) graphs of both functions; (b) enlarged view of the nonzero portion of their product.

so we have

$$x(t)\delta_{\Delta}(t) \approx x(0)\delta_{\Delta}(t)$$

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Cont.

We had, for small Δ ,

$$x(t)\delta_{\Delta}(t) \approx x(0)\delta_{\Delta}(t)$$

since $\delta(t)$ is the limit as $\Delta \rightarrow 0$ of $\delta_{\Delta}(t)$, it follows that

$$x(t)\delta(t) = x(0)\delta(t)$$

By the same argument, we have an analogous expression for an impulse concentrated at an arbitrary point, say t_0 . That is,

$$x(t)\delta(t - t_0) = x(t_0)\delta(t - t_0)$$

0.1.8 Basic system properties

General form

A general formula for a continuous first-order linear differential equation is

$$\frac{dy(t)}{dt} + ay(t) = bx(t)$$

where $x(t)$ is the input, $y(t)$ the output, and a, b constants. An example of this might be

$$\frac{dv(t)}{dt} + \frac{\rho}{m}v(t) = \frac{1}{m}f(t)$$

Discrete cases have general first-order linear difference equations of the form

$$y[n] + ay[n-1] = bx[n]$$

Considering the earlier example, if we let $v[n] = v(n\Delta)$ and $f[n] = f(n\Delta)$ and approximate $dv(t)/dt$ at $t = n\Delta$ by the first backward difference:

$$\frac{v(n\Delta) - v((n-1)\Delta)}{\Delta}$$

we can obtain

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{v[n] - v[n-1]}{\Delta} + \frac{\rho}{m}v[n] &= \frac{1}{m}f[n] \\ v[n] - v[n-1] + \frac{\rho\Delta}{m}v[n] &= \frac{\Delta}{m}f[n] \\ v[n] \left(1 + \frac{\rho\Delta}{m}\right) - v[n-1] &= \frac{\Delta}{m}f[n] \\ v[n] \frac{m + \rho\Delta}{m} - v[n-1] &= \frac{\Delta}{m}f[n] \\ v[n] - \frac{m}{m + \rho\Delta}v[n-1] &= \frac{\Delta}{m + \rho\Delta}f[n]\end{aligned}$$

which is in the general form as described above.

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Basic system properties

Memory

A system is said to be *memoryless* if its output for each value of the independent variable is dependent only on the *input at that same time*.

For instance, the system

$$y[n] = (2x[n] - x^2[n])^2$$

is memoryless, since the value of $y[n]$ at any particular time n_0 depends only on the value of $x[n]$ at that time. Other examples of memoryless systems include the input-output relationship of a resistor, with input $x(t)$ taken to be current and output $y(t)$ voltage:

$$y(t) = Rx(t)$$

where R is the resistance. The *identity system*, whose output is identical to its input, is also memoryless

$$y(t) = x(t)$$

Written in discrete time:

$$y[n] = x[n]$$

An example of a discrete-time system *with memory* is an *accumulator* or *summer*

$$y[n] = \sum_{k=-\infty}^n x[k]$$

see that the accumulator must store or ‘remember’ information about the past inputs up to current time. Another example of a system with memory is a *delay*

$$y[n] = x[n - 1]$$

While the concept of memory in a system would typically suggest storing *past* input and output values, our formal definition also leads to our referring to a system as having memory if the current output is dependent on *future* values of the input and output (noncausal systems).

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Causality

A system is *causal* if the output at any time depends only on values of the input at the present time and in the past. Such a system is often referred to as being *nonanticipative*, as the system output does not ‘anticipate’ future values of the input.

Consequently, if two inputs to a causal system are identical up to some point in time t_0 or n_0 , the corresponding outputs must also be equal up to this same time. For instance the capacitor:

$$y(t) = \frac{1}{C} \int_{-\infty}^t x(\tau) d\tau$$

is a causal system, with input taken to be current, output voltage, and C capacitance. The capacitor voltage responds only to the present and past values of the input.

Examples of *noncausal* systems might be

$$y[n] = x[n] - x[n+1]$$

or

$$y(t) = x(t+1)$$

See that all memoryless systems are causal, since the output responds only to the current value of the input in such systems.

An example of a noncausal system might be when averaging data over an interval to smooth out fluctuations and keep only the trend. Such an averaging system might look like

$$y[n] = \frac{1}{2M+1} \sum_{k=-M}^{+M} x[n-k]$$

More examples

Consider

$$y[n] = x[-n]$$

see that for $n < 0$ the output depends on a future value of the input, and hence the system is not causal. Another example: consider

$$y(t) = x(t) \cos(t+1)$$

This can be rewritten as

$$y(t) = x(t)g(t)$$

Thus only the current value of the input $x(t)$ influences the current value of the output $y(t)$. This system is causal (and, in fact, memoryless).
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Invertibility and inverse systems