

1 Abstract

- Using Monte Carlo to approximate π ;
- Introduce Monte Carlo basics.

2 Problem

Approximate the value π .

3 Analysis

Consider the following question:

- You shoot a square $(-1, 1)^2$. Suppose your shot is uniform in this square, then what is the probability you have a successful shot? We say “your shot is successful”, if your shot belongs to the unit ball B_1 .

The answer is

$$\text{Prob of succesful shot} = \frac{\text{Area of } B_1}{\text{Area of } (-1, 1)^2} = \frac{\pi}{4}.$$

This means that, as long as one can approximate probability of successful shot, one can approximate π by multiplying 4. This can be done by computer:

- Simulate many uniform shots, and compute the ratio of successful shots.

4 Implementation

Pseudocode:

- Generate N iid points

$$\{(X_i, Y_i) : i = 1, 2, \dots, N, X_i, Y_i \sim U(-1, 1)\};$$

- Count n , the number of points satisfying

$$X_i^2 + Y_i^2 < 1.$$

- Compute

$$\hat{\pi} = 4 \cdot \frac{n}{N}.$$

5 Monte Carlo basics