

We have:

$$f(t + \delta t, x) = f(t, x) + u\delta t \frac{f(t, x - 1) - f(t, x)}{\delta x}$$

As usual, let $C \equiv \frac{u\delta t}{\delta x}$. Now put in a sine wave: $f(t = 0, x) = \exp(ikx/\delta x)$. Plug this in to get $f(\delta t)$:

$$f(\delta t, x) = \exp(ikx/\delta x) + C [\exp(ik(x - \delta x)/\delta x) - \exp(ikx/\delta x)]$$

factor out the exponential and we have:

$$f(\delta t, x) = \exp(ikx/\delta x) [1 + C \exp(-ik) - C]$$

We become unstable when the magnitude of the term in square brackets becomes larger than unity. To find the critical k , we need to find the value of C when that magnitude becomes equal to 1. Split the complex exponential up into sin/cos, so we have:

$$1 + C \cos(k) - C - iC \sin(k)$$

which has magnitude

$$(1 + C \cos(k) - C)^2 + C^2 \sin^2(k)$$

$$1 + C^2 \cos^2(k) + C^2 + 2C \cos(k) - 2C - 2C^2 \cos(k) + C^2 \sin^2(k)$$

This equals 1 for the marginally stable k , which cancels the first one. So we are left with:

$$C^2 \cos^2(k) + C^2 + 2C \cos(k) - 2C - 2C^2 \cos(k) + C^2 \sin^2(k) = 0$$

Replace $\sin^2(k)$ with $1 - \cos^2(k)$:

$$C^2 \cos^2(k) + C^2 + 2C \cos(k) - 2C - 2C^2 \cos(k) + C^2 - C^2 \cos^2(k) = 0$$

Cancel and group like terms together:

$$2C^2 + 2C \cos(k) - 2C - 2C^2 \cos(k) = 0$$

Cancel out a $2C$ and group terms with and without a $\cos(k)$:

$$\cos(k)(1 - C) + (C - 1) = 0$$

$$\cos(k)(1 - C) = 1 - C$$

$$\cos(k) = 1$$

Since $\cos(k)$ is always less than or equal to one, there is *no* non-zero value of k for which $C > 1$ is stable. Rather, either all scales are stable, or all scales are unstable.