

Section 4: Exact Equations

If $M(x, y) dx + N(x, y) dy = 0$ happens to be exact, then it is equivalent to

$$\frac{\partial F}{\partial x} dx + \frac{\partial F}{\partial y} dy = 0$$

This implies that the function F is constant on R and solutions to the DE are given by the relation

$$F(x, y) = C$$

Exact Equations

Theorem: Let M and N be continuous on some rectangle R in the plane. Then the equation

$$M(x, y) dx + N(x, y) dy = 0$$

is exact if and only if

$$\frac{\partial M}{\partial y} = \frac{\partial N}{\partial x}.$$

Example

Show that the equation is exact and obtain a family of solutions.

$$(2xy - \sec^2 x) dx + (x^2 + 2y) dy = 0$$

$$M(x,y) = 2xy - \sec^2 x \quad \text{and} \quad N(x,y) = x^2 + 2y$$

$$\frac{\partial M}{\partial y} = \frac{\partial}{\partial y} (2xy - \sec^2 x) = 2x - 0 = 2x$$

$$\frac{\partial N}{\partial x} = \frac{\partial}{\partial x} (x^2 + 2y) = 2x + 0 = 2x$$

$$\frac{\partial M}{\partial x} = \frac{\partial N}{\partial y} \quad \text{the ODE is exact}$$

Solutions are given implicitly by $F(x,y)$ where

$$\frac{\partial F}{\partial x} = M(x,y) = 2xy - \sec^2 x \quad \text{and}$$

$$\frac{\partial F}{\partial y} = N(x,y) = x^2 + 2y$$

To integrate, we need to consider two things

① When integrating with respect to x , treat y as constant (and vice versa)

② the "constant" of integration can depend on the other variable

$$F(x,y) = \int \frac{\partial F}{\partial x} dx = \int (2xy - \sec^2 x) dx$$
$$= 2y \left(\frac{x^2}{2} \right) - \tan x + g(y)$$

$$F(x,y) = x^2 y - \tan x + g(y)$$

We need to find $g(y)$. We know that

$$\frac{\partial F}{\partial y} = N(x,y) = x^2 + 2y$$

We'll find $\frac{\partial F}{\partial y}$ and match it to this.

$$\frac{\partial F}{\partial y} = \frac{\partial}{\partial y} (x^2 y - \tan x + g(y))$$

$$= x^2 - 0 + g'(y)$$

$$= x^2 + g'(y)$$

Matching $x^2 + 2y = x^2 + g'(y)$

So $g'(y) = 2y$

One such $g(y) = y^2$

So up to an added constant

$$F(x, y) = x^2 y - \tan x + y^2$$

Solutions to the ODE are defined implicitly

by

$$x^2 y - \tan x + y^2 = C$$