

Sets of Functions that are Uncountable

Exposition by William Gasarch

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The set of all Functions from \mathbb{N} to \mathbb{N}

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Then we can list them out f_1, f_2, \dots

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Consider the function

$$F(x) = f_x(x) + 1.$$

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F cannot be f_1 since $F(1) \neq f_1(1)$.

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For all i , F cannot be f_i since $F(i) \neq f_i(i)$.

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For all i , F cannot be f_i since $F(i) \neq f_i(i)$.

So F is NOT on the list and IS from \mathbb{N} to \mathbb{N} , contradiction.

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For future proofs you must check both properties.

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$$F(x) = f_x(x) + 2.$$

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We want to define F so that $F(x) \neq f_x(x)$ AND $F(x)$ is a square.

$$F(x) = (f_x(x) + 1)^2$$

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Make sure this is not $f_x(x)$:

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Only has complex solutions, so can't happen.

The set of all Constant Functions With Domain \mathbb{N}

The set of constant functions is countable since here they are:

$$f_1(x) = 1$$

$$f_2(x) = 2$$

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1) F is NOT on the list. Good!

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$$F(x) = f_x(x) + 1.$$

- 1) F is NOT on the list. Good!
- 2) But F is not constant. So proof fails.

Intuition

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NOT quite right: Some elements of \mathbb{R} are easy to describe, e.g.,

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Let A be an infinite set.

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Let A be an infinite set.

- ▶ If every element of A can be represented with a finite number of bits then A is countable

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Rule of Thumb

Let A be an infinite set.

- ▶ If every element of A can be represented with a finite number of bits then A is countable
- ▶ If an infinite number of elements of A require an infinite number of bits to be represented, then A is NOT countable.