MATH 10
ASSIGNMENT 7: DOT PRODUCTS
NOV 10, 2019

Dot product

By Pythageorean theorem, for a vector $\mathbf{v} = \begin{bmatrix} x \\ y \\ z \end{bmatrix}$, its length is given by $\sqrt{x^2 + y^2 + z^2}$. It is common to denote the length of a vector $\mathbf{v}$ by $|\mathbf{v}|$:

$$|\mathbf{v}| = \sqrt{x^2 + y^2 + z^2}$$

A convenient tool for computing lengths is the notion of the *dot product*. The dot product of two vectors is a number (not a vector!) defined by

$$\begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ y_1 \\ z_1 \end{bmatrix} \bullet \begin{bmatrix} x_2 \\ y_2 \\ z_2 \end{bmatrix} = x_1x_2 + y_1y_2 + z_1z_2$$

The dot product has the following properties:

1. It is symmetric: $\mathbf{v} \bullet \mathbf{w} = \mathbf{w} \bullet \mathbf{v}$

2. It is linear as function of $\mathbf{v}$, $\mathbf{w}$:

$$(\mathbf{v}_1 + \mathbf{v}_2) \bullet \mathbf{w} = \mathbf{v}_1 \bullet \mathbf{w} + \mathbf{v}_2 \bullet \mathbf{w}$$
$$(c\mathbf{v}) \bullet \mathbf{w} = c(\mathbf{v} \bullet \mathbf{w})$$

3. $\mathbf{v} \bullet \mathbf{v} = |\mathbf{v}|^2$, or, equivalently, $|\mathbf{v}| = \sqrt{\mathbf{v} \bullet \mathbf{v}}$

4. Vectors $\mathbf{v}$, $\mathbf{w}$ are perpendicular iff $\mathbf{v} \bullet \mathbf{w} = 0$.

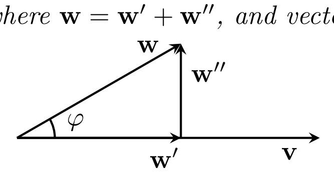
The first three properties are immediate from the definition. The last one follows from the Pythagorean theorem: if $\mathbf{v} \perp \mathbf{w}$, then by Pythagorenat theorem, $|\mathbf{v}|^2 + |\mathbf{w}|^2 = |\mathbf{v} - \mathbf{w}|^2 = (\mathbf{v} - \mathbf{w}) \bullet (\mathbf{v} - \mathbf{w}) = \mathbf{v} \bullet \mathbf{v} + \mathbf{w} \bullet \mathbf{w} + 2\mathbf{v} \bullet \mathbf{w}$.

From these properties one easily gets the following important result:

Theorem.

$$\mathbf{v} \bullet \mathbf{w} = \mathbf{v} \bullet \mathbf{w}' = |\mathbf{v}| \cdot |\mathbf{w}| \cos \varphi$$

where $\mathbf{w} = \mathbf{w}' + \mathbf{w}''$, *and vector* $\mathbf{w}'$ *is a multiple of* $\mathbf{v}$, $\mathbf{w}''$ *is perpendicular to* $\mathbf{v}$*:*



and φ *is the angle between vectors* $\mathbf{v}$, $\mathbf{w}$.

This theorem is commonly used to find the angle between two vectors:

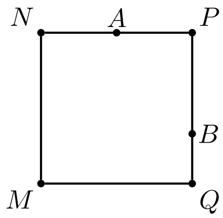
$$\cos \varphi = \frac{\mathbf{v} \bullet \mathbf{w}}{|\mathbf{v}| \cdot |\mathbf{w}|}$$

Homework

1. Prove that the triangle with vertices at $A(3,0)$, $B(1,5)$, and $C(2,1)$ is obtuse. Find the cosine of the obtuse angle.

2. Prove the law of cosines: in a triangle $\triangle ABC$, with sides $AB = c$, $AC = b$, $BC = a$, one has $c^2 = a^2 + b^2 - 2ab\cos\angle C$. [Hint: $c^2 = \overrightarrow{AB} \bullet \overrightarrow{AB}$, and $\vec{AB} = \overrightarrow{CB} - \overrightarrow{CA}$.]

3. On the sides of a square $MNPQ$, with side 1, the points A and B are taken so that $A \in NP$, $NA = \frac{1}{2}$, $B \in PQ$, and $QB = \frac{1}{3}$. Prove that $\angle AMB = 45°$.



4. Consider the plane given by equation $ax + by + cz = d$.

(a) Let $P_1 = (x_1, y_1, z_1)$, $P_2 = (x_2, y_2, z_2)$ be two points on this plane. Prove that then

$$a(x_1 - x_2) + b(y_1 - y_2) + c(z_1 - z_2) = 0.$$

(b) Prove that $\overrightarrow{P_1P_2}$ is perpendicular to vector $\mathbf{v} = (a, b, c)$.

(In such a situation, we say the plane is perpendicular to $\mathbf{v}$.)