EECS 16A Designing Information Devices and Systems I
Summer 2020 Discussion 1A

1. Span basics

(a) What is span $\left\{ \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 2 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}, \begin{bmatrix} 2 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} \right\}$?

Answer: span $\left\{ \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 2 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}, \begin{bmatrix} 2 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} \right\}$ contains any vector $\vec{v}$ that can be written as

$$\vec{v} = \alpha_1 \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 2 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} + \alpha_2 \begin{bmatrix} 2 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

We realize that any vector whose last component is 0 can be written in this form and any vector whose last component is nonzero cannot. Hence, the required span is the set of all vectors that can be written in the form $\begin{bmatrix} * \\ * \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}$.

(b) Is $\begin{bmatrix} 5 \\ 5 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}$ in span $\left\{ \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 2 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}, \begin{bmatrix} 2 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} \right\}$?

Answer: Yes. We realize from inspection that

$$\begin{bmatrix} 5 \\ 5 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} = \frac{5}{3} \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 2 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} + \frac{5}{3} \begin{bmatrix} 2 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

(c) What is a possible choice for $\vec{v}$ that would make span $\left\{ \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 2 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}, \begin{bmatrix} 2 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}, \vec{v} \right\} = \mathbb{R}^3$?

Answer: From part (a), we realize that any vector whose last component is 0 can be written as a linear combination of the two vectors already in the set. Hence, if we include, for example, $\begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$ into the set, then we should be able to reach any vector in $\mathbb{R}^3$. Any vector whose last component is non-zero is a valid addition to the set to achieve the desired span.

(d) For what values of b_1, b_2, b_3 is the following system of linear equations consistent? ("Consistent" means there is at least one solution.)

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 \\ 2 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \vec{x} = \begin{bmatrix} b_1 \\ b_2 \\ b_3 \end{bmatrix}$$

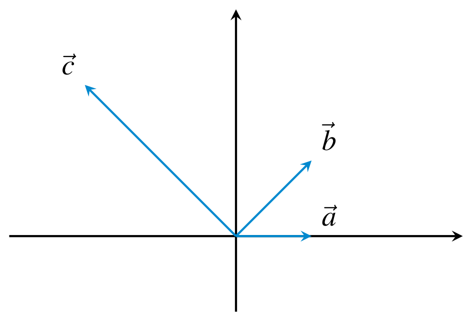
Answer: For the system of linear equations to be consistent, there must exist some x such that the equality above holds. Performing matrix vector multiplication, we can rewrite the above equality as

$$x_1 \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 2 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} + x_2 \begin{bmatrix} 2 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} = \vec{b}$$

The question now becomes: which vectors $\vec{b}$ can be written in the above form i.e as a linear combination of the columns of A? This is exactly the definition of span, and the answer must be the same as that from part (a).

2. Visualizing Span

We are given a point $\vec{c}$ that we want to get to, but we can only move in two directions: $\vec{a}$ and $\vec{b}$. We know that to get to $\vec{c}$, we can travel along $\vec{a}$ for some amount α, then change direction, and travel along $\vec{b}$ for some amount β. We want to find these two scalars α and β, such that we reach point $\vec{c}$. That is, $\alpha\vec{a} + \beta\vec{b} = \vec{c}$.



(a) First, consider the case where $\vec{a} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}$, $\vec{b} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$, and $\vec{c} = \begin{bmatrix} -2 \\ 2 \end{bmatrix}$. Draw these vectors on a sheet of paper. Now find the two scalars α and β, such that we reach point $\vec{c}$. What are these scalars if we use $\vec{a} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$ and $\vec{b} = \begin{bmatrix} 2 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$ instead?

Answer: First set: $\alpha = -4, \beta = 2$
Second set: $\alpha = 6, \beta = -4$

(b) Formulate the system of equations as a matrix to find the unknowns, α, β, in terms of the vectors $\vec{a}, \vec{b}, \vec{c}$.

Answer:

$$\begin{cases} \alpha a_1 + \beta b_1 = c_1 \\ \alpha a_2 + \beta b_2 = c_2 \end{cases}$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} a_1 & b_1 \\ a_2 & b_2 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \alpha \\ \beta \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} c_1 \\ c_2 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} \vec{a} & \vec{b} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \alpha \\ \beta \end{bmatrix} = \vec{c} \tag{1}$$

3. Span Proofs

Given some set of vectors $\{\vec{v}_1, \vec{v}_2, \ldots, \vec{v}_n\}$, show the following:

(a)

$$\text{span}\{\vec{v}_1, \vec{v}_2, \ldots, \vec{v}_n\} = \text{span}\{\alpha\vec{v}_1, \vec{v}_2, \ldots, \vec{v}_n\}, \text{ where } \alpha \text{ is a non-zero scalar}$$

In other words, we can scale our spanning vectors and not change their span.

(b)

$$\text{span}\{\vec{v}_1, \vec{v}_2, \ldots, \vec{v}_n\} = \text{span}\{\vec{v}_2, \vec{v}_1, \ldots, \vec{v}_n\}$$

In other words, we can swap the order of our spanning vectors and not change their span.

Answer:

(a) Suppose we have some arbitrary $\vec{q} \in \text{span}\{\vec{v}_1, \vec{v}_2, \ldots, \vec{v}_n\}$. For some scalars a_i:

$$\vec{q} = a_1\vec{v}_1 + a_2\vec{v}_2 + \cdots + a_n\vec{v}_n = \left(\frac{a_1}{\alpha}\right)\alpha\vec{v}_1 + a_2\vec{v}_2 + \cdots + a_n\vec{v}_n.$$

Scalar multiplication cancels out. Thus, we have shown that $\vec{q} \in \text{span}\{\alpha\vec{v}_1, \vec{v}_2, \ldots, \vec{v}_n\}$. Therefore, we have $\text{span}\{\vec{v}_1, \vec{v}_2, \ldots, \vec{v}_n\} \subseteq \text{span}\{\alpha\vec{v}_1, \vec{v}_2, \ldots, \vec{v}_n\}$. Now, we must show the other direction. Suppose we have some arbitrary $\vec{r} \in \text{span}\{\alpha\vec{v}_1, \vec{v}_2, \ldots, \vec{v}_n\}$. For some scalars b_i:

$$\vec{r} = b_1(\alpha\vec{v}_1) + b_2\vec{v}_2 + \cdots + b_n\vec{v}_n = (b_1\alpha)\vec{v}_1 + b_2\vec{v}_2 + \cdots + b_n\vec{v}_n.$$

Thus, we have shown that $\vec{r} \in \text{span}\{\vec{v}_1, \vec{v}_2, \ldots, \vec{v}_n\}$. Therefore, we now have $\text{span}\{\alpha\vec{v}_1, \vec{v}_2, \ldots, \vec{v}_n\} \subseteq \text{span}\{\vec{v}_1, \vec{v}_2, \ldots, \vec{v}_n\}$. Combining this with the earlier result, the spans are thus the same.

(b) Suppose $\vec{q} \in \text{span}\{\vec{v}_1, \vec{v}_2, \ldots, \vec{v}_n\}$. For some scalars a_i:

$$\vec{q} = a_1\vec{v}_1 + a_2\vec{v}_2 + \cdots + a_n\vec{v}_n = a_2\vec{v}_2 + a_1\vec{v}_1 + \cdots + a_n\vec{v}_n$$

Swapping the order in addition does not affect the sum, so $\text{span}\{\vec{v}_1, \vec{v}_2, \ldots, \vec{v}_n\} \subseteq \text{span}\{\vec{v}_2, \vec{v}_1, \ldots, \vec{v}_n\}$. Similarly, starting with some $\vec{r} \in \text{span}\{\vec{v}_2, \vec{v}_1, \ldots, \vec{v}_n\}$, again swapping the order does not affect the sum, so putting both together, the spans are thus the same.