

Numerical Solutions to Differential Equations

Lecture Notes #13 The Van der Pol Oscillator

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Outline

- 1 The Van der Pol Oscillator
 - Second order ODE \rightsquigarrow 2D system
 - 2D-system \rightsquigarrow Lienard Equation
- 2 Return to Physics — Circuit Analysis
 - R-C-L Circuit
- 3 The Van der Pol Oscillator, again...
 - (Physical) Stability Analysis of the Origin
 - Finally, Computations

Introduction

It's from Wikipedia, so it must be true™

The van der Pol oscillator was originally “discovered” by the Dutch electrical engineer and physicist Balthasar van der Pol (27 January 1889 – 6 October 1959).

Van der Pol found stable oscillations, now known as **limit cycles**, in electrical circuits employing vacuum tubes. When these circuits are driven near the limit cycle they become entrained, i.e. the driving signal pulls the current along with it.



Figure: An RCA 808 vacuum tube

Introduction

It's from Wikipedia, so it must be true™

Van der Pol and his colleague van der Mark reported in **Nature**¹ that at certain drive frequencies an irregular noise was heard. This irregular noise was always heard near the natural entrainment frequencies. This was **one of the first discovered instances of deterministic chaos**.

The van der Pol equation has a long history of being used in both the physical and biological sciences. For instance, in biology, Fitzhugh and Nagumo extended the equation in a planar field as a model for action potentials of neurons. The equation has also been utilized in seismology to model the two plates in a geological fault.

¹Balth van der Pol and J. van der Mark, *Frequency Demultiplication*, *Nature* **120**, 363–364 (10 September 1927); doi:10.1038/120363a0

The Van der Pol equation —

$$y'' - \mu(1 - y^2)y' + y = 0,$$

is a model of a non-linear electrical circuit, and the solution has a limit cycle.

y is the position coordinate

μ is a scalar parameter indicating the strength of the nonlinear damping.

$$y'' - \mu(1 - y^2)y' + y = 0$$

Depending on the damping coefficient μ we get varying behavior:

- When $\mu < 0$, the system will be damped, and $\lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} y(t) \rightarrow 0$.
- When $\mu = 0$, there is no damping, and we get a simple harmonic oscillator.
- When $\mu \geq 0$, the system will enter a limit cycle, where energy continues to be conserved.

As usual we can transform a higher-order ODE into a system of simultaneous ODEs (let $y_1 = y$, $y_2 = y'$):

$$\begin{bmatrix} y_1' \\ y_2' \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} y_2 \\ -y_1 + \mu(1 - y_1^2)y_2 \end{bmatrix}.$$

We can also introduce the (standard) transformation

$$\begin{cases} x = y \\ z = y' - \mu \left(y - \frac{y^3}{3} \right) \end{cases}$$

and let $F(y) = \mu \left(\frac{y^3}{3} - y \right)$.

Now,

$$x' = y' = \{\text{using the } z\text{-expression}\} = z + \mu \left(x - \frac{x^3}{3} \right)$$

and,

$$\begin{aligned} z' &= y'' - \mu y' (1 - y^2) \\ &= \underbrace{-\mu(x^2 - 1)y' - y}_{\text{From Eqn.}} - \mu(1 - x^2)y' = -y = -x \end{aligned}$$

This transformation puts the equation into the form:

$$\begin{bmatrix} x' \\ z' \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} z - \mu \left(\frac{x^3}{3} - x \right) \\ -x \end{bmatrix},$$

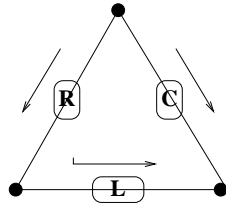
which is a particular case of **Lienard's Equation**

$$\begin{bmatrix} x' \\ z' \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} z - f(x) \\ -x \end{bmatrix},$$

with $f(x) = \mu \left(\frac{x^3}{3} - x \right)$.

Taking a Step Back: Where did the Equation Come From???

Consider the a simple circuit with a Resistor (R), a Capacitor (C), and an Inductor (L):



Let i_R , i_L , and i_C be the currents through the resistor, inductor, and capacitor respectively.

Kirchhoff's Current Law (KCL) says:

$$i_R = i_L = -i_C.$$

(Current into a node = current out of the node)

Quick Reference: Electronic Components

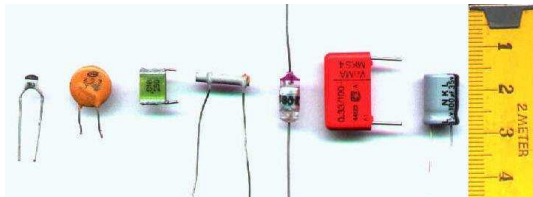
I/III



- **R** — A resistor is a two-terminal electrical or electronic component that resists an electric current by producing a voltage drop between its terminals in accordance with Ohm's law ($R = V/I$). The electrical resistance is equal to the voltage drop across the resistor divided by the current through the resistor.

Quick Reference: Electronic Components

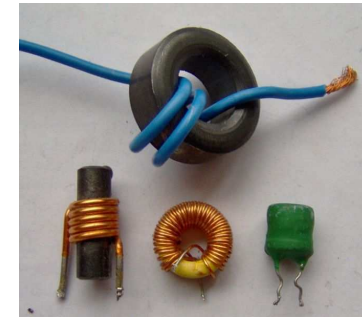
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- **C** — A capacitor is an electrical device that can store energy in the electric field between a pair of closely-spaced conductors (called 'plates'). When voltage is applied to the capacitor, electric charges of equal magnitude, but opposite polarity, build up on each plate. Capacitors are used as energy-storage devices. They can also be used to differentiate between high-frequency and low-frequency signals and this makes them useful in electronic filters.

Quick Reference: Electronic Components

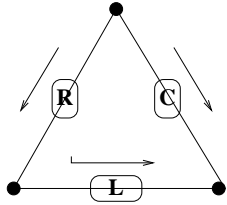
III/III



- **L** — Inductance is an effect which results from the magnetic field that forms around a current carrying conductor. Inductance is a measure of the generated electro-magnetic-field for a unit change in current. The inductance of a conductor is increased by **coiling** the conductor such that the magnetic flux encloses all of the coils.

Looking at the RCL circuit

Let α denote the lower left node, γ the lower right node, and β the top node in our circuit:



The **voltage drop** across each branch can be expressed as:

$$v_R = V(\beta) - V(\alpha), \quad v_L = V(\alpha) - V(\gamma), \quad v_C = V(\beta) - V(\gamma).$$

Kirchhoff's Voltage Law (KVL) says:

$$v_R + v_L - v_C = 0.$$

Ohm's and Faraday's Laws

The Resistor branch — Ohm's Law

The relation between the current flowing through a resistor and the voltage drop across the same resistor is governed by Ohm's law, ($i_R * R = v_R$) here we leave it as a general function:

$$f(i_R) = v_R.$$

The Inductor branch — Faraday's Law

The relation between current and voltage in the inductor branch is governed by Faraday's law:

$$L \frac{di_L(t)}{dt} = v_L(t),$$

$L > 0$ is the inductance.

More Physics

The Capacitor Branch

The relation between current and voltage in the capacitor branch is governed by the following (nameless) law:

$$C \frac{dv_C(t)}{dt} = i_C(t),$$

$C > 0$ is the capacitance.

Collecting the equations...

$$\begin{cases} i_R = i_L = -i_C & (\text{KCL}) \\ v_R + v_L - v_C = 0 & (\text{KVL}) \\ f(i_R) = v_R & (\text{Ohm's Law}) \\ L \frac{di_L(t)}{dt} = v_L(t) & (\text{Faraday's Law}) \\ C \frac{dv_C(t)}{dt} = i_C(t) & \end{cases}$$

For historical reasons, we elect to express our equations in terms of (i_L, v_C) :

$$\begin{cases} L \frac{di_L(t)}{dt} = v_L = v_C - f(i_L) \\ C \frac{dv_C(t)}{dt} = i_C(t) = -i_L(t) \end{cases}$$

Almost there...

We have

$$\begin{cases} L \frac{di_L}{dt} = v_c - f(i_L) \\ C \frac{dv_c}{dt} = -i_L. \end{cases}$$

By rescaling we can set $L = C = 1$, which with $(x = i_L, z = v_c)$ gives us **Lienard's Equation**

$$\begin{cases} x' = z - f(x) \\ z' = -x. \end{cases}$$

In the case $f(x) = R \cdot x$ (Linear Ohm's Law), $(x, z) = (0, 0)$ is an asymptotically stable equilibrium. (Every initial state tends to $(0, 0)$).

Van der Pol's Equation (again)

If we have an **active resistor** which follows Ohm's Generalized Law

$$v_R = R \left[\frac{i_R^3}{3} - i_R \right],$$

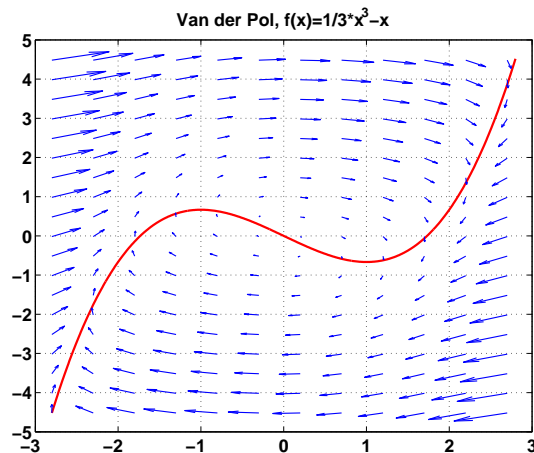
then $f(x) = \mu \left(\frac{x^3}{3} - x \right)$ in Lienard's Equation ($\mu = R$).

⇒ **Van der Pol's Equation.**

Van der Pol's Equation

[Phase Plane]

$$\begin{bmatrix} x' \\ z' \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} z - \mu \left(\frac{x^3}{3} - x \right) \\ -x \end{bmatrix}$$



Stability of the Origin

Linearizing around the origin gives us:

$$\begin{bmatrix} x' \\ z' \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \mu & 1 \\ -1 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} x \\ z \end{bmatrix},$$

with eigenvalues $\lambda_{\pm} = \frac{\mu \pm \sqrt{\mu^2 - 4}}{2}$, and eigenvectors

$$\vec{e}_+ = \begin{bmatrix} \frac{-2}{\mu - \sqrt{\mu^2 - 4}} \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}, \quad \vec{e}_- = \begin{bmatrix} \frac{-2}{\mu + \sqrt{\mu^2 - 4}} \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}.$$

Stability of the Origin: Eigenvalue Structure

μ	λ_{\pm}	Comment
$[-\infty, 0)$	$\text{Real}(\lambda_{\pm}) < 0$	Origin Stable
0	$\lambda_{\pm} = \pm i$	Marginally Stable/Unstable
$(0, \infty]$	$\text{Real}(\lambda_{\pm}) > 0$	Origin Unstable
$(0, 2)$	$\text{Imag}(\lambda_{\pm}) \neq 0$	
$[2, \infty]$	$\text{Imag}(\lambda_{\pm}) = 0$	

Also, as $\mu \rightarrow \infty$

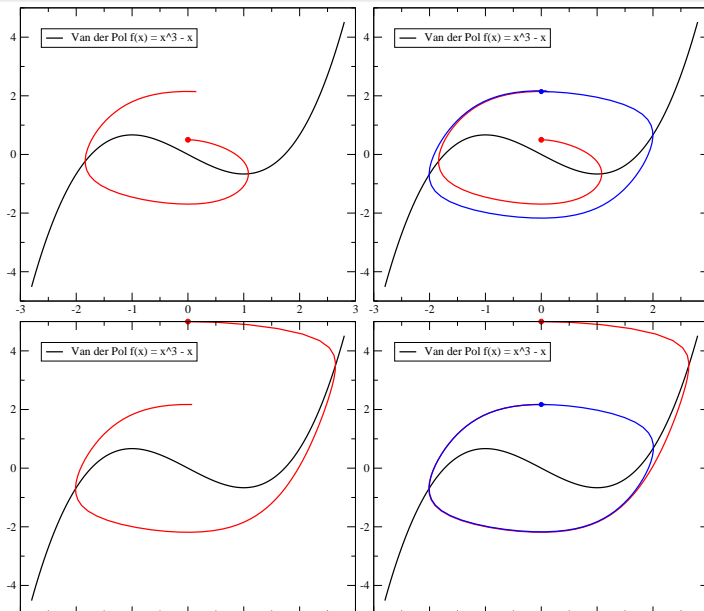
$$\lambda_+ \sim \mu, \quad \text{and} \quad \lim_{\mu \rightarrow \infty} \lambda_- \rightarrow 0.$$

Leading to more “skew” in the solution...

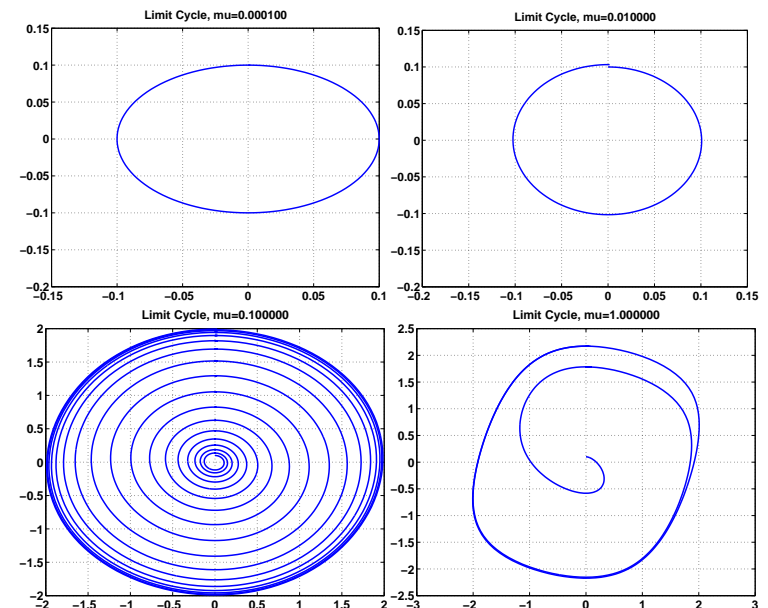
Code Fragments, 9-stage, 7th-order RK

```
f = inline(' [y(2) + mu*y(1) - mu*y(1)^3/3; -y(1)] ', 'mu', 't', 'y');
y = [0; 0.1]; ctr=0;
while( go == 1 );
    yn = y(:,ctr+1);
    k1 = f(mu,t, yn);
    k2 = f(mu,t+h/6, yn + h*k1/6);
    k3 = f(mu,t+h/3, yn + h*k2/3);
    k4 = f(mu,t+h/2, yn + h*(k1/8+3*k3/8));
    k5 = f(mu,t+2*h/11, yn + h*(148*k1/1331 + 150*k3/1331 - 56*k4/1331));
    k6 = f(mu,t+2*h/3, yn + h*(-404*k1/243 - 170*k3/27 + 4024*k4/1701 + ...
        10648*k5/1701));
    k7 = f(mu,t+6*h/7, yn + h*(2466*k1/2401 + 1242*k3/343 - ...
        19176*k4/16807 - 51909*k5/16807 + 1053*k6/2401));
    k8 = f(mu,t, yn + h*(5*k1/154+96*k4/539-1815*k5/20384- ...
        405*k6/2464+49*k7/1144));
    k9 = f(mu,t+h, yn + h*(-113*k1/32 - 195*k3/22 + 32*k4/7 ...
        + 29403*k5/3584 - 729*k6/512 + 1029*k7/1408 + 21*k8/16));
    ynext = yn + h*(32*k4/105 + 1771561*k5/6289920 + 243*k6/2560 + ...
        16807*k7/74880 + 77*k8/1440 + 11*k9/270);
    y = [y ynext]; ctr = ctr+1;
end
```

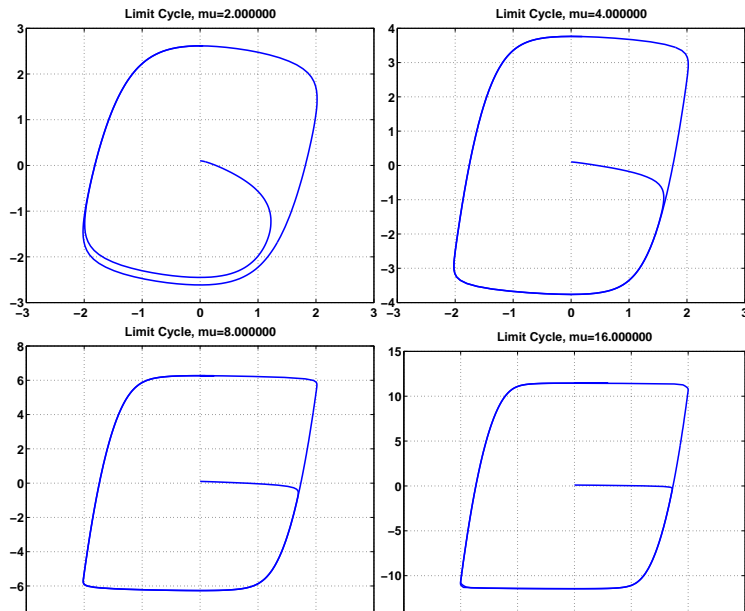
Limit Cycles for $\mu = 1$



Solutions for $\mu \in \{0.0001, 0.01, 0.1, 1\}$



Solutions for $\mu \in \{2, 4, 8, 16\}$

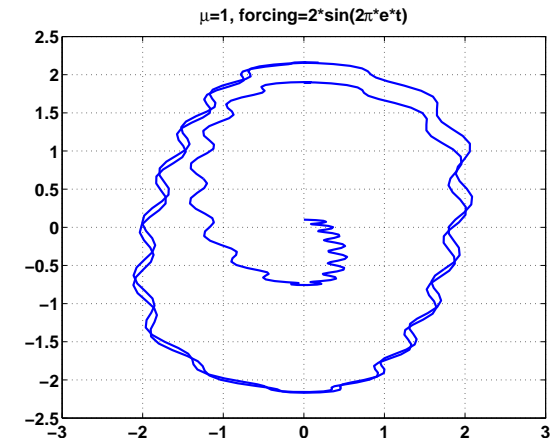


The Van der Pol Oscillator

— (25/27)

Forced Oscillation

$$y'' - \mu(1 - y^2)y' + y + A \sin(\omega t) = 0, [\mu, A, \omega] = [1, 2, 2\pi e]$$

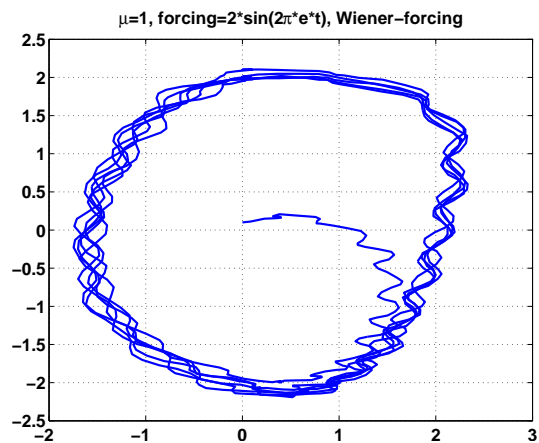


The Van der Pol Oscillator

— (26/27)

Randomly Forced Oscillation

$$y'' - \mu(1 - y^2)y' + y + A \sin(\omega t) + W(t) = 0, [\mu, A, \omega] = [0.001, 50, 2\pi e]$$



Where $W(t)$ is a Wiener process.

The Van der Pol Oscillator

— (27/27)