

Physics II (PH 102)
Electromagnetism (Lecture 6)

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Charge Distributions: Continuous & Discrete

Continuous charge distributions:

- ▶ Linear Charge Density $\lambda(x)$ in 1D

$$\lambda(x) = \lim_{\Delta L \rightarrow 0} \frac{\Delta Q}{\Delta L} = \frac{dQ}{dL}$$

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Using Dirac δ -functions as Volume Charge Densities:

$$\rho(\mathbf{r}) = \sum_i q_i \delta^3(\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{r}_{0i}) = \sum_i q_i \delta(x - x_{0i}) \delta(y - y_{0i}) \delta(z - z_{0i})$$

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- ▶ a uniform surface distribution with **charge density σ** on a spherical shell of radius R

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Let S be a spherical shell of radius R with variable surface charge density, $\sigma(R, \theta, \phi) = \sigma_0 \cos \theta$. Find the total charge using spherical-polar system.

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$$Q = \oiint_S \sigma(\mathbf{r}) dA = \iint_{S_u} \sigma(\mathbf{r}) dA + \iint_{S_l} \sigma(\mathbf{r}) dA \equiv Q_u + Q_l$$

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Recall: Elemental area on a spherical surface is $dA = |\mathbf{N}| d\theta d\phi = R^2 \sin \theta d\theta d\phi$

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However, the integration on $\theta \in [\pi/2, \pi]$ for the lower hemisphere S_l yields $Q_l = -\pi \sigma_0 R^2$. Hence, the total charge on S is $Q = Q_u + Q_l = 0$.

Coulomb's Electrostatic Force Law

Let q_1 and q_2 be two point charges located at \mathbf{r}_1 and \mathbf{r}_2 . Then the electrostatic force exerted on q_2 by q_1 is

$$\mathbf{F}_{21}(\mathbf{r}_2) = k q_1 q_2 \frac{(\mathbf{r}_2 - \mathbf{r}_1)}{|\mathbf{r}_2 - \mathbf{r}_1|^3} = -\mathbf{F}_{12}(\mathbf{r}_1)$$

- ▶ In SI units, $k = 1/4\pi\epsilon_0$, where ϵ_0 is called **permittivity of free space**

$$\epsilon_0 = 8.85 \times 10^{-12} \frac{\text{C}^2}{\text{N m}}.$$

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- ▶ Experiments suggest that this law is valid for a very wide range of distance scales $\sim 10^{-18}$ m to 10^7 m.

Linear Superposition Principle holds for Coulomb's Law

Force \mathbf{F}_{AB} on a charge, say A , due to another charge, say B , is independent of presence of a third charge, say C . Total force on A is given by $\mathbf{F}_A = \mathbf{F}_{AB} + \mathbf{F}_{AC}$.

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- ▶ Easily generalize to several *source charges* $q_1, q_2, q_3 \dots$ in which case the total force on a *test charge* is

$$\mathbf{F}_{\text{Total}} = \mathbf{F}_1 + \mathbf{F}_2 + \mathbf{F}_3 + \dots = \sum_i \mathbf{F}_i$$

Fact

The superposition principle is a consequence of the Coulomb's force law bearing a linear dependence on each source charge, i.e., $F_{\text{test}} \propto q_{\text{source}}$

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*Would superposition principle hold, e.g., with a quadratic dependence of Coulomb's Law on each source charge, i.e., $F_{\text{test}} \propto q_{\text{source}}^2$? **NO***

Consider a situation with two source charges q_1 & q_2 located at the same point. Then, the net force F_{Total} on a test charge due to the combined source charge $(q_1 + q_2)$ would not be equal to the sum of the individual forces, $F_1 \propto q_1^2$ and $F_2 \propto q_2^2$, since $F_{\text{Total}} \propto (q_1 + q_2)^2 \neq q_1^2 + q_2^2 \implies F_{\text{Total}} \neq F_1 + F_2$

Electric Field due to Point-like Source Charges

If there are several discrete point source charges, q_i ($i = 1, \dots, n$), at locations \mathbf{r}'_i , then net Electric field at \mathbf{r} is defined as

$$\mathbf{E}_{\text{Total}}(\mathbf{r}) = \mathbf{E}_1(\mathbf{r}) + \mathbf{E}_2(\mathbf{r}) + \dots + \mathbf{E}_n(\mathbf{r}) = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{q_i (\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{r}'_i)}{|\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{r}'_i|^3}$$

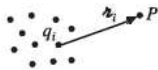
- ▶ Its unit is measured in Newton/Coulomb (N/C)
- ▶ Electric field is a vector quantity.
- ▶ Linear **Superposition Principle** holds for electric fields.
- ▶ Total electric or **Coulomb force** on a test charge Q_{test} at \mathbf{r} is

$$\mathbf{F}_{\text{Total}}(\mathbf{r}) = Q_{\text{test}} \mathbf{E}_{\text{Total}}(\mathbf{r}).$$

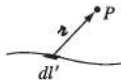
Electric Field: Discrete (Point-like) & Continuous Distributions

For the most general source charge distribution, with volume charge density ρ , surface charge density σ , linear charge density λ , as well as discrete point charges, the electric field at a point $P(\mathbf{r})$ by virtue of the **Superposition Principle** has the expression

$$\mathbf{E}_P(\mathbf{r}) = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{q_i (\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{r}'_i)}{|\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{r}'_i|^3} + \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_C \frac{\lambda(\mathbf{r}') (\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{r}')}{|\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{r}'|^3} dl' \\ + \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \iint_S \frac{\sigma(\mathbf{r}') (\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{r}')}{|\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{r}'|^3} da' + \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \iiint_V \frac{\rho(\mathbf{r}') (\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{r}')}{|\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{r}'|^3} d\tau'$$



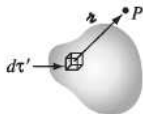
(a) Discrete charges



(b) Line charge, λ



(c) Surface charge, σ



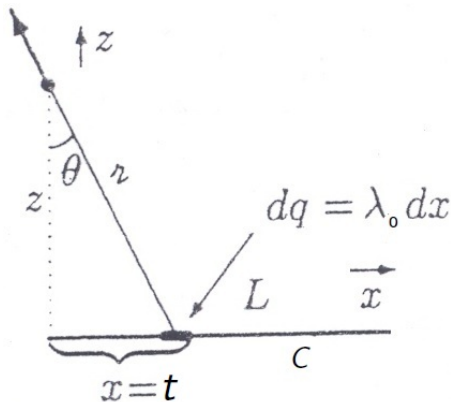
(d) Volume charge, ρ

Electric Field due to a Linear Distribution

Example

Consider the straight line segment $C : \mathbf{r}'(t) = (t, 0, 0); x = t \in [0, L]$ along the x -axis with uniform linear charge density λ_0 . Calculate the Electric field at the target point $\mathbf{r} = (0, 0, z)$, assuming $z \gg L$.

$$\mathbf{E}(\mathbf{r}) = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_C \frac{\lambda(\mathbf{r}') (\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{r}')}{|\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{r}'|^3} d\ell'$$



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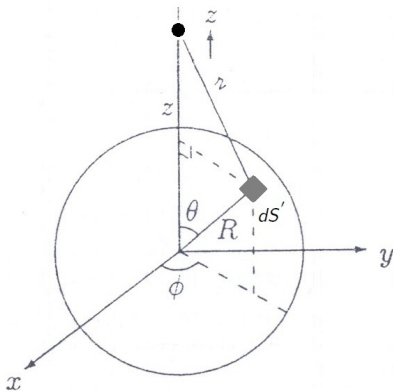
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Electric Field due to a Surface Distribution

Example

Consider a spherical conducting shell of radius R with uniform surface charge density σ_0 . Calculate the Electric field at the target point $\mathbf{r} = (0, 0, z)$.

$$\mathbf{E}(\mathbf{r}) = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \iint_S \frac{\sigma(\mathbf{r}') (\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{r}')}{|\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{r}'|^3} dS'$$



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- ▶ Parametric form $\mathbf{r}'(\theta, \phi) = R(\sin \theta \cos \phi \hat{\mathbf{i}} + \sin \theta \sin \phi \hat{\mathbf{j}} + \cos \theta \hat{\mathbf{k}})$
- ▶ $\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{r}'(\theta, \phi) = -R(\sin \theta \cos \phi) \hat{\mathbf{i}} - R(\sin \theta \sin \phi) \hat{\mathbf{j}} + (z - R \cos \theta) \hat{\mathbf{k}}$
- ▶ $|\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{r}'(\theta, \phi)| = \sqrt{R^2 + z^2 - 2Rz \cos \theta}$
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 &= \frac{\sigma_0}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \int_0^\pi \int_0^{2\pi} \frac{R^2 \sin \theta d\theta d\phi}{(R^2 + z^2 - 2Rz \cos \theta)^{3/2}} \\
 &\quad \times \left[-R \sin \theta \cos \phi \hat{\mathbf{i}} - R \sin \theta \sin \phi \hat{\mathbf{j}} + (z - R \cos \theta) \hat{\mathbf{k}} \right]
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Divergence of Electric Field due to a Point Charge

Suppose a point (source) charge of magnitude q located at $\mathbf{r}' = (x', y', z')$. Then the volume charge density at any target point $\mathbf{r} = (x, y, z)$ can be expressed as $\rho(\mathbf{r}) = q\delta^3(\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{r}')$ and the Electric field at $\mathbf{r} \in \mathbb{R}^3$ is

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Recall: Divergence of *Inverse Square* field is $\nabla \cdot \frac{\hat{\mathbf{r}}}{r^2} = 4\pi\delta^3(\mathbf{r})$

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Divergence of Electric Field due to Continuous Volume Distribution

Now we extend the result to arbitrary charge distribution with volume density ρ

$$\mathbf{E}(\mathbf{r}) = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \iiint_V \frac{\rho(\mathbf{r}') (\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{r}')}{|\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{r}'|^3} d^3r'.$$

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Application of Gauss's Differential Law

Example

Find the corresponding charge density for the Electric field in space given by

$$\mathbf{E}(\mathbf{r}) = Ae^{-\lambda r}(1 + \lambda r)\frac{\hat{\mathbf{r}}}{r^2}$$

where A and λ are constants.

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Then,

$$\rho(\mathbf{r}) = \epsilon_0 \nabla \cdot \mathbf{E}(\mathbf{r}) = -\epsilon_0 A \frac{\lambda^2}{r} e^{-\lambda r}$$