

Mathematical Principles in Visual Computing:
Sylvester Resultant
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SS2021

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Sylvester Matrix and Sylvester Resultant

Let's consider two polynomials of a *single* unknown x :

$$f(x) = a_m x^m + a_{m-1} x^{m-1} + \dots + a_1 x + a_0$$

$$g(x) = b_n x^n + b_{n-1} x^{n-1} + \dots + b_1 x + b_0$$

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Sylvester matrix of f and g :

$$\text{Syl}(f, g) = \begin{bmatrix} a_m & & \dots & & & & a_0 \\ & \ddots & & & & & \\ & & a_m & & \dots & & a_0 \\ b_n & & \dots & & & & b_0 \\ & \ddots & & & & & \\ & & \dots & & & & \\ & & & b_n & & \dots & b_0 \end{bmatrix} \left. \begin{array}{l} \vphantom{\begin{bmatrix} a_m \\ \vdots \\ a_m \\ b_n \\ \vdots \\ b_n \end{bmatrix}} \right\} n \text{ rows} \\ \left. \begin{array}{l} \vphantom{\begin{bmatrix} a_m \\ \vdots \\ a_m \\ b_n \\ \vdots \\ b_n \end{bmatrix}} \\ \vphantom{\begin{bmatrix} a_m \\ \vdots \\ a_m \\ b_n \\ \vdots \\ b_n \end{bmatrix}} \end{array} \right\} m \text{ rows}$$

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$\det(\text{Syl}(f, g))$ is called the Sylvester Resultant of f and g .

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$$\begin{aligned} p_1(x, y) &= 6x^2 + 3xy - xy^2 + y + 1 \\ p_2(x, y) &= x^2y + 5x + 4y - 1 \end{aligned} \quad \begin{cases} p_1(x, y) = 0 \\ p_2(x, y) = 0 \end{cases}$$

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Let's consider y as a constant, and write these two polynomials as polynomials in x :

$$\begin{aligned} p_{1,y}(x) &= 6x^2 + (3y - y^2)x + (y + 1) \\ p_{2,y}(x) &= yx^2 + 5x + (4y - 1) \end{aligned}$$

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$\det(\text{Syl}(p_{1,y}, p_{2,y}))$ is a polynomial in y (only)!

$$\det(\text{Syl}(p_{1,y}, p_{2,y})) = 4y^6 - 20y^5 + 153y^4 - 310y^3 + 781y^2 - 276y + 36$$

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→ First solve for y (we will see later how it can be done). 