

# Estimating real value from list of rounded numbers

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A list of difference values is given  $\{D_k, D_{k+1}, \dots, D_{k+m}\}$  ( $m > 0$ ) where  $D_n = \lfloor (n+1)R \rfloor - \lfloor nR \rfloor$  and  $R$  is a positive real number. Find a lower and upper bound for  $R$ .

## Summing parts of the list

Write out the sum. Most elements in this sum cancel out:

$$\begin{aligned} D_k + D_{k+1} + \dots + D_{k+m} &= \\ &= (\lfloor (k+1)R \rfloor - \lfloor kR \rfloor) + (\lfloor (k+2)R \rfloor - \lfloor (k+1)R \rfloor) + \\ &\dots + (\lfloor (k+m+1)R \rfloor - \lfloor (k+m)R \rfloor) \\ &= -\lfloor kR \rfloor + \lfloor (k+m+1)R \rfloor = \lfloor (k+m+1)R \rfloor - \lfloor kR \rfloor \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

Find lower and upper bounds for these terms:

$$\lfloor (k+m+1)R \rfloor - \lfloor kR \rfloor \geq \lfloor (m+1)R \rfloor + \lfloor kR \rfloor - \lfloor kR \rfloor = \lfloor (m+1)R \rfloor \quad (2)$$

and

$$\lfloor (k+m+1)R \rfloor - \lfloor kR \rfloor \leq \lfloor (m+1)R \rfloor + \lfloor kR \rfloor + 1 - \lfloor kR \rfloor = \lfloor (m+1)R \rfloor + 1 \quad (3)$$

so

$$\lfloor (m+1)R \rfloor \leq D_k + D_{k+1} + \dots + D_{k+m} \leq \lfloor (m+1)R \rfloor + 1 \quad (4)$$

or, using  $S_m = D_k + D_{k+1} + \dots + D_{k+m-1}$  (notice  $m$  was lowered by 1) for any  $k$ :

$$\lfloor mR \rfloor \leq S_m \leq \lfloor mR \rfloor + 1 \quad (5)$$

In words, sum any  $m$  sequential elements from the list and you will always be just below or just above  $m \cdot R$ .

## Reversing the argument

Suppose  $R$  is unknown but  $S_m$  is given. We reverse the formula using that  $S_m$  is a natural number:

$$S_m \leq \lfloor mR \rfloor + 1 \Leftrightarrow \lfloor mR \rfloor \geq S_m - 1 \Leftrightarrow mR \geq S_m - 1 \Leftrightarrow R \geq (S_m - 1)/m \quad (6)$$

and

$$\lfloor mR \rfloor \leq S_m \Leftrightarrow \lfloor mR \rfloor < S_m + 1 \Leftrightarrow mR < S_m + 1 \Leftrightarrow R < (S_m + 1)/m \quad (7)$$

so

$$\frac{S_m - 1}{m} \leq R < \frac{S_m + 1}{m} \quad (8)$$

## Example

Suppose the unknown  $R=8.7622$ . A random  $k$  is generated resulting in a difference list  $\{8, 9, 9, 9, 9, 8, 9, 9, 9, 8, 9, 9, 9, 8, 9\}$ .

The sum  $S_m = 131$  and  $m=15$ , formula (8) gives

$$8.66667 = \frac{130}{15} \leq R < \frac{132}{15} = 8.8$$