Engineering Mathematics
Section 2.2

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Section 2.2
Separable Differential Equations

Definition. A differential equation that is equivalent to one of the form

$$f(y)y' = g(x) \tag{1}$$

is said to be **separable**. When in this form, It can be solved by integrating each side. The result is

$$F(y) = G(x) + C \tag{2}$$

where F is an anti-derivative of f and G is an anti-derivative of g.

$$F(y) = \int f(y)dy \text{ and } G(x) = \int g(x)dx$$

Equation (2) gives an implicit description of the solutions. It may or may not be possible to solve it for y explicitly.

Although lacking in mathematical rigor, a helpful notational device is to replace y' in

$$f(y)y' = g(x) \tag{1}$$

with

$$\frac{dy}{dx}$$

multiply each side of the resulting equation by dx resulting in

$$f(y)dy = g(x)dx$$

and supply an integral sign to each side resulting in

$$\int f(y)dy = \int g(x)dx + C.$$

Example 1. Solve

$$y' = \frac{y^2+1}{xy+y}.$$

Solution. The given d.e. is equivalent to

$$y' =$$

which is equivalent to

$$y' = .$$

This is of the form given in equation (1).

Next we have

$$=$$

Then

$$\int dy = \int dx + C$$

so

$$\int dy = \int dx + C.$$

For all x in some interval. Integrating each side we have

$$= + C.$$

This gives an implicit description of the solutions. We will try to solve for y.

or

.

Exponentiating, this becomes

.

Note that

Remember that $e^{\ln z} = z$ for all $z > 0$. Thus

.

So

or

An initial condition is needed to determine whether to use $+$ or $-$.

Example 2. Solve (find the general solution to)

$$y' = 3x(1 + y^2).$$

Solution. The given d.e. is equivalent to

This is of the form given in Equation (1). Continuing, we have

so

Thus

$$y =$$

Examples.

Additional Examples: See Section 2.2 of the text and the notes presented on the board in class.

Suggested Problems. Do the odd numbered problems for section 2.2. The answers are posted on Dr. Walker's web site.