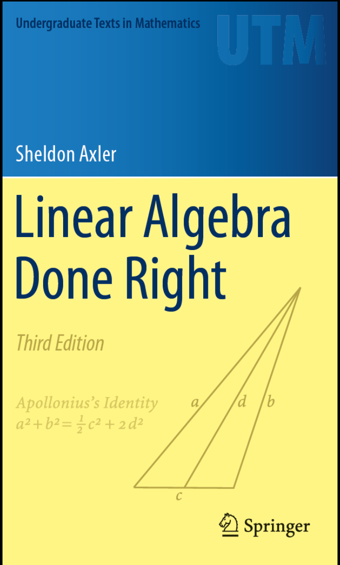
Block Diagonal Matrices



Definition of Block Diagonal Matrix

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A *block diagonal matrix* is a square matrix of the form

$$\begin{pmatrix} A_1 & & 0 \\ & \ddots & \\ 0 & & A_m \end{pmatrix},$$

where $A_1, \dots, A_m$ are square matrices lying along the diagonal and all the other entries of the matrix equal 0.

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Example: The 5-by-5 matrix

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 4 \end{pmatrix} & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \begin{pmatrix} 2 & -3 \\ 0 & 2 \end{pmatrix} & & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & & & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 7 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} & \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & & \end{pmatrix}$$

is a block diagonal matrix with

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} A_1 & & 0 \\ & A_2 & \\ 0 & & A_3 \end{pmatrix},$$

where

$$A_1 = \begin{pmatrix} 4 \end{pmatrix}, \quad A_2 = \begin{pmatrix} 2 & -3 \\ 0 & 2 \end{pmatrix}, \quad A_3 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 7 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}.$$

Block Diagonal Matrix with Upper-Triangular Blocks

Block diagonal matrix with upper-triangular blocks

Suppose V is a complex vector space and $T \in \mathcal{L}(V)$. Let $\lambda_1, \ldots, \lambda_m$ be the distinct eigenvalues of T, with multiplicities $d_1, \ldots, d_m$. Then there is a basis of V with respect to which T has a block diagonal matrix of the form

$$\begin{pmatrix} A_1 & & 0 \\ & \ddots & \\ 0 & & A_m \end{pmatrix},$$

where each A_j is a d_j-by-d_j upper-triangular matrix of the form

$$A_j = \begin{pmatrix} \lambda_j & & * \\ & \ddots & \\ 0 & & \lambda_j \end{pmatrix}.$$

Example of Block Diagonal

Suppose $T \in \mathcal{L}(\mathbf{C}^3)$ is defined by

$$T(z_1, z_2, z_3) = (6z_1 + 3z_2 + 4z_3, 6z_2 + 2z_3, 7z_3).$$

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The matrix of T (with respect to the standard basis) is

$$\begin{pmatrix} 6 & 3 & 4 \\ 0 & 6 & 2 \\ 0 & 0 & 7 \end{pmatrix},$$

which is an upper-triangular matrix but is not of the form promised by our result.

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The eigenvalues of T are 6 and 7 with corresponding generalized eigenspaces

$$G(6, T) = \operatorname{span}\big((1, 0, 0), (0, 1, 0)\big),$$
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$$G(6,T) = \operatorname{span}\big((1,0,0),(0,1,0)\big),$$
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The matrix of T with respect to this basis is

$$\begin{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 6 & 3 \\ 0 & 6 \end{pmatrix} & \begin{matrix} 0 \\ 0 \end{matrix} \\ \begin{matrix} 0 & 0 \end{matrix} & \begin{pmatrix} 7 \end{pmatrix} \end{pmatrix},$$

which is a matrix of the appropriate block diagonal form.

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