

1. "Define the Fibonacci numbers as follows: $f(0) = 0, f(1) = 1$, and $f(n) = f(n - 2) + f(n - 1)$ for all integers $n > 1$. Prove by induction that, for all nonnegative integers n , the number of iterations used by Euclid's algorithm to compute $\gcd(f(n + 1), f(n))$ is n ."

Proof: The basis is $n = 0$, and indeed $\gcd(1, 0)$ uses no iterations. For the induction step, the first iteration changes the arguments from $(f(n + 1), f(n))$ to $(f(n), f(n - 1))$, and the induction hypothesis says it takes $n - 1$ more iterations to finish the computation.

The only hitch is that the theorem is false for almost all values of n . For your entertainment, find the flaw in the proof. (It's not hard to find once you know it's false, but I find the proof absolutely convincing if you don't suspect it's false.)

Answer:

The problem is in the inductive step. Notice that if I choose n to be equal to 2, then the inductive step says that $\gcd(f(3), f(2))$ reduces to $\gcd(f(2), f(1))$ in one step. Notice that $f(3) = 2$ and $f(2) = 1$. By applying one step of Euclid's algorithm on $\gcd(2, 1)$ we get $\gcd(1, 0) = \gcd(f(0), f(1))$ and not $\gcd(f(2), f(1))$.

2. Prove the following:

$$1 + \frac{1}{2^2} + \frac{1}{3^2} + \dots + \frac{1}{n^2} \leq 2, \quad n \geq 1$$

Hint1: Try replacing the right hand side of the inequality with something that will make the statement stronger.

Answer:

The problem here is the constant term at the rhs of the equation. If we try to apply standard induction techniques to approach this, we will soon find ourselves in a dead-end (I invite you to try it). We will solve this by actually proving a stronger statement:

$$\sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{i^2} \leq 2 - \frac{1}{n}$$

If we prove this, then the original statement follows, since $2 - \frac{1}{n} < 2$. Our basis is $n = 1$ for which we have that $\frac{1}{1} \leq 2 - \frac{1}{1}$, which holds with equality. Now assume that the statement holds for $n = k$ (hypothesis):

$$\sum_{i=1}^k \frac{1}{i^2} \leq 2 - \frac{1}{k}$$

We will prove that:

$$\sum_{i=1}^{k+1} \frac{1}{i^2} \leq 2 - \frac{1}{k+1}$$

Notice that:

$$\sum_{i=1}^{k+1} \frac{1}{i^2} = \sum_{i=1}^k \frac{1}{i^2} + \frac{1}{(k+1)^2}$$

By the hypothesis:

$$\sum_{i=1}^k \frac{1}{i^2} + \frac{1}{(k+1)^2} \leq 2 - \frac{1}{k} + \frac{1}{(k+1)^2}$$

Now all that is left is to prove that:

$$2 - \frac{1}{k} + \frac{1}{(k+1)^2} < 2 - \frac{1}{k+1}$$

which by transitivity of inequality, concludes the proof.

$$2 - \frac{1}{k} + \frac{1}{(k+1)^2} < 2 - \frac{1}{k+1} \Leftrightarrow \frac{1}{k+1} < \frac{1}{k} - \frac{1}{(k+1)^2}, k \geq 1 \Leftrightarrow$$

$$\frac{1}{(k+1)^2} < \frac{1}{k} - \frac{1}{k+1} \Leftrightarrow \frac{1}{(k+1)^2} < \frac{1}{k(k+1)}$$

which holds.