18.311: Principles of Applied Mathematics Lecture 17

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Compute whole curves in (x, t) plane where $(1+t^*C'(s)) = 0$. Show corresponds to places where $\rho_x = \infty$. Talk a little about envelopes. Recall last lecture: pictures of the envelope of characteristics.

Example (Mach Cone): plane at x=y=0 "now", moving along y=0 at speed c>1. Then the wave front emitted a time interval t before is at:

$$(x+c*t)^2 + y^2 = t^2$$
, for $t > 0$ [A]
 $(x+c*t)*c = t$ [B]

[A] + [B] is the envelope equation.

- Use [B] to solve for x in terms of t.
- Plug [B] in [A] and get y in terms of t.
- Eliminate t to get $x = -\sqrt{(c^2-1)/c}*|y|$.

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