

Distributivity and $(-1)x = -x$

5210 [1964, 689]. *Proposed by T. J. Kaczynski, Evergreen Park, Illinois*

Let K be an algebraic system with two binary operations (one written additively, the other multiplicatively), satisfying:

- (1) K is an abelian group under addition,
- (2) $K - \{0\}$ is a group under multiplication, and
- (3) $x(y + z) = xy + xz$ for all $x, y, z \in K$.

Suppose that for some n , $0 = 1 + 1 + \dots + 1$ (n times). Prove that, for all $x \in K$, $(-1)x = -x$.

Solution by R.G. Bilyeu, North Texas State University. The last part of the hypothesis is unnecessary. If z denotes -1 , then $z + z + zz = z(1 + 1 + z) = z$, so $z(?) = 1$. Now $z(x + zx) = zx + x = x + zx$, so either $x + zx = 0$ or $z = 1$. In either case $z(?) = -x$.

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