

Re: On the muliplication of negative numbers

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.physics.relativity/2008-07/msg02848.html>

- *From:* The TimeLord <math-n-physics-not@xxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Mon, 28 Jul 2008 15:27:08 -0500
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Am Mon, 28 Jul 2008 13:24:20 +0200 schrieb "harry"
<harald.vanlintelButNotThis@xxxxxxx> in 1217244260_798@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx:

"Dirk Van de moortel" <dirkvandemoortel@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
wrote in message [news:g6k7qu\\$1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:news:g6k7qu$1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)

Uncle Ben <ben@xxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message

[...]

$$\text{sq.rt.}(16) = 4 \text{ or } -4.$$

No, we write
 $\text{sqrt}(16) = 4$
and
 $-\text{sqrt}(16) = -4$

Dirk Vdm

It's storm in a wine (or whine) glass:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Square_root Harald

I'm somewhat with Dirk Vdm here. By tradition in math, $\text{sqrt}(x)$ is a function and defined as per that web site, which is consistent with Dirk Vdm's point. However, by the same tradition, $y=x^{(1/2)}$ when defined as an inverse of $x=y^2$, is not really considered a function and so the solution set of $y=x^{(1/2)}$ would be y in $\{-x,x\}$.

Yeah it is usually understood by mathematicians, physicists and engineers and quibbling is usually straining at a gnat; but sometimes we need to be reminded of the mathematical definition.

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// The TimeLord says:
// Pogo 2.0 = We have met the aliens, and they are us!

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