

Re: On the multiplication of negative numbers

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Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.physics.relativity/2008-07/msg02854.html>

- *From:* "Dirk Van de moortel" <dirkvandemoortel@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Mon, 28 Jul 2008 23:41:53 +0200
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The TimeLord <math-n-physics-not@xxxxxxx> wrote in message
HvCdnXUVX4kBthPVnZ2dnUVZ_sTinZ2d@xxxxxxxxxxxx

Am Mon, 28 Jul 2008 13:24:20 +0200 schrieb "harry"
<harald.vanlintelButNotThis@xxxxxxx> in 1217244260_798@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx:

"Dirk Van de moortel"
<dirkvandemoortel@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
wrote in message [news:g6k7qu\\$21\\$1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:news:g6k7qu$21$1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)

Uncle Ben <ben@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message

[...]

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

And so is the wiki article :-)

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

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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 $\{-x,x\}$.

Or formally one can define

$$x^{(1/2)} = \{ -\sqrt{x}, \sqrt{x} \}$$

and turn it into a proper function from the reals onto the powerset of the reals. No problem.

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.

Something on this group (I think it was called "Androcles") started the quibbling – ant it never stopped :-)

Dirk Vdm

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