# Towards a Perfect Reconstruction Theory 

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#### Abstract

This paper presents some preliminary considerations on the general problems of missing/complementary information and perfect reconstruction, with the hope to attract the attention of the signal processing researchers that the rigorous derivation of a general theory of reconstruction should be desirable and possible.


## I. Problem Statement

There are numerous examples in signal processing where one argues in terms of an informal notion of information, such as: "This signal contains enough information to provide this or that"; or on the contrary, "information about this or that is missing in the data to achieve something", or: "This signal has the required information to go from some low resolution to a higher resolution", etc. The aim of this paper is to try to formalize mathematically such intuitive notions.

## A. Examples

Such arguments are generally related to some notion of "perfect reconstruction" of some data. Let us illustrate with some specific examples when considering a discrete-time sequence of real or complex-valued samples $X$.

- If we take the modulus $|X|$, then we say that the phase information is missing. In other words, the phase signal $\phi$ is needed to perfectly reconstruct the original signal by multiplication $X=|X| e^{i \phi}$.
- If we filter $X$ with some half-band low-pass filter: $Y=h * X$, then one loses information about the high frequencies in the signal, but adding the half-band high-pass filtered signal $g * X$ may yield to perfect reconstruction (just as in a perfect reconstruction filter bank). Here reconstruction occurs by addition instead of multiplication as in the preceding example.
- The wavelet coefficients corresponding to a given scale contain the necessary information to go from one coarse resolution to the next finer level of resolution. This example is similar to the preceding one.
- If we downsample a discrete-time signal $X$ by, say, discarding every other sample, then some information is lost. In general, interpolating the resulting signal is not enough to achieve perfect reconstruction of $X$.
- If we hide some information $X$ by shuffling, masking, or applying any type of one-way function, then, in principle, no information is lost because this transformation is
revertible-even though such a reconstruction can be hard to carry out.


## B. Formalization

Formally, one can define such problems using deterministic functional relationships: Let $X_{1}=f_{1}(X)$ and $X_{2}=f_{2}(X)$ be some deterministic functions of $X$. We say that $X_{2}$ contains the missing information to go from $X_{1}$ to $X$ if there exists some deterministic function $f$ such that $X=f\left(X_{1}, X_{2}\right)$. We then say that $X$ is perfectly reconstructed from $X_{1}$ and $X_{2}$. This statement can of course be generalized to $n$ signal components $X_{1}, X_{2}, \ldots, X_{n}$.

In this statement, there are two different subproblems: (i) determine whether such a reconstruction function $f$ exists;
(ii) find the simplest possible $f$ to achieve reconstruction efficiently. In this paper, we mainly focus on the first aspect (i). As a result, the problem is invariant by any bijective transformation on any signal $X$. For example, any encoded (reversible) version of $X$ is a signal of a different form, but is completely equivalent to $X$ as far as information is concerned:

Definition 1: We say that $X$ and $Y$ are equivalent (represent the same information) if there exists a bijective function $\phi$ such that $Y=\phi(X)$.
It is easily seen that this is an equivalence relation (in a certain considered set of signals). We may write formally $X \equiv Y$ in this case.

Definition 2: We say that $Y$ has less information than $X$ if there exists a (not necessarily bijective) function $f$ such that $Y=f(X)$. We write $Y \leqq X$.
Clearly, $Y \leqq X$ and $X \leqq Y$ is equivalent to $X \equiv Y$.

## C. Link With Information Theory

When speaking about information, one generally refers to Shannon's theory of information [9]. In this theory, signal samples $X$ are modeled as random variables or vectors. Shannon's theory is based on the definition of informational quantities such as (absolute) entropy $H(X)$ or mutual information $I(X ; Y)$. Such quantities are nonnegative numbers that measure information. A nice property is that they are compatible with the above notion of equivalence. Thus $X \equiv Y \Longrightarrow H(X)=H(Y)$ since $H(\phi(X))=H(X)$ for any bijective function $\phi$. Similarly, $X \equiv X^{\prime}$ and $Y \equiv Y^{\prime}$ imply $I(X ; Y)=I\left(X^{\prime} ; Y^{\prime}\right)$. Also, $X \leqq Y \Longrightarrow H(X) \leq H(Y)$.

Evidently, $X$ and $Y$ can have the same quantity of information as measured by entropy, yet they may not represent the same information (they may even be completely independent). In other words, the reverse implication $H(X)=H(Y) \Longrightarrow X \equiv Y$ does not hold. For this reason, Shannon himself [10], [11] defined the "true" information contained in $X$ as $X$ itself, modulo any reversible transformation:

Definition 3: The "true" information contained in $X$ is the equivalence class of $X$ for the equivalence relation $\equiv$.
We may, therefore, identify $X$ with its equivalence class and write $X=Y$ instead of $X \equiv Y$. Also, the relation $Y \leqq X$ is compatible with the equivalence relation and we simply write $Y \leq X$. It is easily seen that it constitutes a partial order (reflexive, transitive, and antisymmetric) on the considered set of signals.

## D. Missing (Complementary) Information and Perfect Reconstruction

With the above notations, the problems studied in this paper can be formally written as follows:

1) The missing information problem: Given $X_{1} \leq X$, how can a missing information $X_{2} \leq X$ be determined such that $X \leq\left(X_{1}, X_{2}\right)$ (hence $X=\left(X_{1}, X_{2}\right)$ )?
2) The perfect reconstruction problem: Under which condition on $X_{1} \leq X$ and $X_{2} \leq X$ can we reconstruct $X \leq\left(X_{1}, X_{2}\right)$ (hence $X=\left(X_{1}, X_{2}\right)$ )?
Notice that the pair $\left(X_{1}, X_{2}\right)$ can be seen as the supremum of $X_{1}$ and $X_{2}$, denoted by $X_{1} \vee X_{2}$, for the considered partial order $\leq$. Indeed,

$$
\begin{equation*}
\left(X_{1} \leq X \text { and } X_{2} \leq X\right) \Longleftrightarrow X_{1} \vee X_{2} \leq X \tag{1}
\end{equation*}
$$

We may interpret $X_{1} \vee X_{2}$ as their total information. Similarly, the infimum of $X_{1}$ and $X_{2}$, denoted by $X_{1} \wedge X_{2}$, for the considered partial order $\leq$, is defined by

$$
\begin{equation*}
\left(X_{1} \geq X \text { and } X_{2} \geq X\right) \Longleftrightarrow X_{1} \wedge X_{2} \geq X \tag{2}
\end{equation*}
$$

Shannon used the term common information [11] for $X_{1} \wedge X_{2}$ : it is the greatest information contained in both $X_{1}$ and $X_{2}$.

It is clear that the missing information problem, as it is stated, is trivial since one can obviously choose $X_{2}=X$ to achieve perfect reconstruction. To avoid such a trivial solution, it is important to impose that $X_{2}$ is not redundant with respect to $X_{1}$ (does not share any information with $X_{2}$ ) in the following sense:

Definition 4: We say that $X_{1}$ and $X_{2}$ are not redundant if $X_{1} \wedge X_{2}=0$, where 0 is any constant (deterministic random variable). We also write $X_{1} \perp X_{2}$.
In other words, $X_{1}$ and $X_{2}$ share no common information: any function of both $X_{1}$ and $X_{2}$ is constant.

Remark 1: If $X_{1}, X_{2}$ are statistically independent (noted $X_{1} \Perp X_{2}$ ) then they are not redundant: $X_{1} \Perp X_{2} \Longrightarrow X_{1} \perp$ $X_{2}$ since as is easily seen, any quantity that is determined by both $X_{1}$ and $X_{2}$ is necessarily constant.

The missing information problem becomes the
1') Complementary information problem: Given $X_{1} \leq X$, how can the complementary information $X_{2} \leq X$ be determined such that $X_{1} \wedge X_{2}=0$ and $X_{1} \vee X_{2}=X$ ?
It would also be possible to allow for some (small) common information between $X_{1}$ and $X_{2}$ in another variant $1^{\prime \prime}$ ) of missing information problem. The issue is then how to quantity the common information. We shall not address this version of the missing information problem here.

## E. Continuous vs. Discrete Variables

Suppose $X$ takes values in a continuum set of reals. Then equivalence $X=Y$ requires an infinite precision of the values of the signal. This is a problem because the corresponding information measure (absolute entropy) $H(X)$ is necessarily infinite, since the number of bits needed to represent $X$ is infinite.

On the other hand, the differential entropy $h(X)$ of a continuous random variable is not invariant by a reversible function: $h(\phi(X)) \neq h(X)$ in general for bijective $\phi$, and $h(X)$ can even take negative values. Therefore it is not an adequate measure of information. In fact, one can establish the link between the differential entropy $h(X)$ and the (absolute or genuine) entropy $H(X)$ as follows. Let $X_{\Delta}$ be a quantized version of $X$ with regularly spaced discrete values $\{0, \pm \Delta, \pm 2 \Delta, \ldots\}$. Then under some mild conditions [1], [8],

$$
\begin{equation*}
H\left(X_{\Delta}\right)+\log \Delta \rightarrow h(X) \tag{3}
\end{equation*}
$$

as $\Delta \rightarrow 0$. Thus in the limiting case $\Delta=0, H(X)=+\infty$ while $h(X)$ can be finite. For discrete $X=X_{\Delta}$, however, it can be checked that $h\left(X_{\Delta}\right)=-\infty$.

For all these reasons, one is naturally led to restrict the complementary information and perfect reconstruction problems to the case of discrete variables. When given continuous variables $X$, one can either

- solve the problem only for discrete variables $X_{\Delta}$ within a given tolerance $\Delta$ on the values taken by the signal samples;
- or solve the problem for discrete variables $X_{\Delta}$ for arbitrarily small $\Delta>0$, for which the limit of solutions for $\Delta \rightarrow 0$ would constitute a solution for the original continuous case.
In the remainder of this paper, we only consider discrete random variables. Based of the information theoretic study of the lattice of information in [3], Section II solves the complementary information problem as stated by Shannon in [11], following the concept of communication class due to Gács and Körner [5]. Section III reviews the developments in [3] to give a necessary condition for perfect reconstruction and provides some solutions to the perfect reconstruction problem. Section IV concludes.


## II. Finding the Complementary Information

## A. Common Information

First, we need to show the existence of common information $X \wedge Y$. Such a common information is both a function of $X$
and of $Y$, of the form $f(X)=g(Y)$. As a consequence, any pair $(x, y)$ with nonzero probability $\mathbb{P}(X=x, Y=y)>0$ will be such that the two values $f(x)$ and $g(y)$ coincide. More generally, we adopt the following definition:

Definition 5: Two values $x$ and $y$ communicate: $x \sim y$ or $y \sim x$, if there exists a "path" $x y_{1} x_{1} y_{2} \cdots y_{n} x_{n} y$ in which all transitions are of non zero probability: $\mathbb{P}\left(X=x, Y=y_{1}\right)>$ $0, \mathbb{P}\left(Y=y_{1}, X=x_{1}\right)>0, \ldots, \mathbb{P}\left(X=x_{n}, Y=y\right)>0$.
Strictly speaking, the relation $x \sim y$ is not an equivalence relation because $x$ and $y$ do not belong to the same set of possible values of $X$ and $Y$, respectively. However, by concatenating paths non zero transition probabilities, it is easily seen to be transitive in the sense that $x_{1} \sim y_{1}, y_{1} \sim x_{2}$ and $x_{2} \sim y_{2}$ imply $x_{1} \sim y_{2}$.

Definition 6 (Communication Class [5]): The communication class $C(x, y)$ as the set of all $\left(x^{\prime}, y^{\prime}\right)$ such that $x^{\prime} \sim y$ and $x \sim y^{\prime}$.
By transitivity, two classes are either equal or distinct. Therefore, the distinct communication classes partition the set of all values $(x, y)$ for which $\mathbb{P}(X=x)>0$ and $\mathbb{P}(Y=y)>0$.
We may identify any communication class $C$ to its characteristic function $1_{(x, y) \in C}$ so that $C(X, Y)$ is seen as a binary random variable. In fact, this is the common information of $X$ and $Y$ :

Theorem 1 (Common Information): $X \wedge Y=C(X, Y)$.
Proof: If $Z=f(X)=g(Y)$ a.s. then $Z$ is constant for each pair $(x, y)$ such that $x \sim y$. Thus $Z$ is a function of $C(X, Y)$.

Remark 2: An intuitive illustration of the concept of common information is as follows. Consider the stochastic matrix $\mathbb{P}(X=x, Y=y)$ which, after adequate permutations of rows/columns, has the "block diagonal" form

$$
\mathbb{P}_{X, Y}=\left(\begin{array}{lllllll}
C_{1} & & & & & &  \tag{4}\\
& C_{2} & & & \mathbf{0} & & \\
& & \ddots & & & & \\
\mathbf{0} & & & C_{k} & & & \\
& & & & 0 & & \\
& & & & & \ddots & \\
& & & & & & 0
\end{array}\right)
$$

where the number $k$ of blocks is maximal. The $k$ rectangular matrices then represent the $k$ different equivalence classes, and the probability $\mathbb{P}(C(X, Y)=i)$ is the sum of all entries in block $C_{i}$. Thus the effective computation of the common information is equivalent to the non-trivial identification of a "block diagonal" structure in a stochastic matrix. The algorithm proposed in [3] has quadratic complexity in the total number of possible values of $X$ and $Y$.

Remark 3: From the above considerations, every pair $X, Y$ has a infimum $X \wedge Y$ and a supremum $X \vee Y$. Therefore, the considered set of signals forms a lattice, which Shannon called "the lattice of information" (LoI) [11]. See [3] for a detailed study of the mathematical properties of the LoI.

## B. Complementary Information

The existence of the complementary information was stated by Shannon [11] without proof. We present a simple, explicit construction.

Theorem 2 (Complementary Information): If $X_{1} \leq X$, there exists a complementary information $X_{2}$ such that $X_{1} \vee X_{2}=$ $X$ and $X_{1} \wedge X_{2}=0$.

Proof: Since $X_{1} \leq X$, we simply have $X_{1}=X_{1} \wedge$ $X=C\left(X_{1}, X\right)$. Thus, a given class $C\left(X_{1}, X\right)=x_{1}$ has only one value $X_{1}=x_{1}$ per class, corresponding in general to several values of $X$, say, $x_{1}^{x_{1}}, x_{2}^{x_{1}}, \ldots, x_{k_{x_{1}}}^{x_{1}}$. Now let $X_{2} \in$ $\left\{1, \ldots, k_{X_{1}}\right\}$ be the unique index such that $X=X_{X_{2}}^{X_{1}}$. By construction, $X_{2} \leq X_{1} \vee X=X$, and since $X_{1} \leq X$, one also has $X_{1} \vee X_{2} \leq X$. But the formula $X=X_{X_{2}}^{X_{1}}$ shows that $X \leq X_{1} \vee X_{2}$, hence equality $X_{1} \vee X_{2}=X$ holds. Finally, the value $X_{2}=1$ connects each pair $\left(x_{1}, x_{2}\right)$, so there is only one class according to $\left(X_{1}, X_{2}\right)$, i.e. $X_{1} \wedge X_{2}=0$.
Note that the complementary information $X_{2}$ is not uniquely determined by $X_{1}$ and $X$. In the above construction, it depends on how the values of $X$ are indexed by the class $X_{1}=x_{1}$.

Remark 4: This construction can be visualized on the stochastic tensor of $\left(X, X_{1}, X_{2}\right)$ described in Fig. 1. The algorithm proposed in [3] has again quadratic complexity in the total number of values of $X_{1}$ and $X$.


Fig. 1: Construction of the complementary information $X_{2}$ allowing to pass from $X_{1}$ to $X$. The stochastic tensor of ( $X, X_{1}, X_{2}$ ) representing $\mathbb{P}_{X, X_{1}, X_{2}}$ has nonzero entries marked in red. The distribution $\mathbb{P}_{X, X_{2}}$ of $\left(X, X_{2}\right)$ is obtained by marginalizing the tensor on the $X_{1}$ axis.

Remark 5: There is a striking resemblance between the complementary information problem and the "functional representation lemma" which has been used recently in network coding (see Appendix B pp. 626-627 of [4]). Indeed, Theorem 2 can be rewritten as

$$
\begin{equation*}
\forall X_{1} \leq X, \quad \exists X_{2} \perp X_{1} \quad \text { s.t. } \quad X=X_{1} \vee X_{2} \tag{5}
\end{equation*}
$$

while the "functional representation lemma" [4] writes

$$
\begin{equation*}
\forall X_{1}, X, \quad \exists X_{2} \Perp X_{1} \quad \text { s.t. } \quad X \leq X_{1} \vee X_{2} \tag{6}
\end{equation*}
$$

One of these two statements cannot be deduced from the other in general, because as we have seen above, $X_{1} \Perp X_{2} \Longrightarrow$ $X_{1} \perp X_{2}$ on one hand, and the second statement has a weaker hypothesis and conclusion on the other hand.

## III. Conditions for Perfect Reconstruction

We base our derivation on the consideration of two entropic distances compatible with the partial order $X \leq Y$.

## A. Shannon and Rajski distances

It is well-known [1] that the conditional entropy $H(X \mid Y)$ vanishes only when $X$ is a deterministic function of $Y$ :

$$
\begin{equation*}
X \leq Y \Longleftrightarrow H(X \mid Y)=0 \tag{7}
\end{equation*}
$$

Since $X=Y \Longleftrightarrow(X \leq Y$ and $X \geq Y)$, it suffices that $H(X \mid Y)+H(Y \mid X)=0$ in order for $X$ and $Y$ to be equivalent: $X=Y$. Shannon [11] noted that the distance

$$
\begin{equation*}
D(X, Y)=H(X \mid Y)+H(Y \mid X) \tag{8}
\end{equation*}
$$

satisfies a triangular inequality, and, therefore, defines a metric (this is a classical exercise, see e.g., [2]).

Interestingly, Rajski [7] noted that when $X$ and $Y$ are nondeterministic, by normalizing $D(X, Y)$ by the joint entropy $H(X, Y)>0$, we obtain another distance metric taking values in $[0,1]$ :

$$
\begin{equation*}
d(X, Y)=\frac{D(X, Y)}{H(X, Y)} \tag{9}
\end{equation*}
$$

with the convention $d(0,0)=0$. A simple proof of the triangular inequality is given in [6].

Definition 7: We say that $X, Y, Z$ (in this order) are aligned for Shannon's distance $D$ if the triangular inequality is met with equality $D(X, Y)+D(Y, Z)=D(X, Z)$, and similarly for the Rajski distance $d$.
From the derivation of the triangular inequalities for $D$ and $d$, the following characterizations are easily established (see [3] for a detailed proof):

Lemma 1: $X, Y$ and $Z$ are aligned w.r.t. $D$ if and only if $X-Y-Z$ is a Markov chain and $Y \leq X \vee Z$.
$X, Y$ and $Z$ are aligned w.r.t. $d$ if and only if they satisfy the stronger condition that either $X=Y, Y=Z$, or $Y=X \vee Z$.

## B. A Geometric Interpretation

Recall that we aim at perfectly reconstructing $X$ from a finite number of components $X_{1}, X_{2}, \ldots, X_{n}$, which are defined as deterministic functions of $X$. For convenience in notations, let $\langle X\rangle$ be the set of all possible deterministic functions of $X$. It is easily seen that $\langle X\rangle$ is itself a sublattice of the LoI, the lattice generated by $X$.

Intuitively, the elements in some sequence $X_{1}, X_{1} \vee X_{2}$, $\ldots, X_{1} \vee X_{2} \vee \ldots \vee X_{n}$ are getting closer and closer to $X$ (with respect to $D$ or $d$ ). Perfect reconstruction holds precisely when the final distance to $X$ is zero. The following lemmas quantify how these distances to $X$ can decrease.

We first need the following analog of Apollonius's theorem in geometry:

Lemma 2: For any $Y, Z \in\langle X\rangle$,

$$
\begin{equation*}
D(X, Y \vee Z)=\frac{D(X, Y)+D(X, Z)-D(Y, Z)}{2} \tag{10}
\end{equation*}
$$

This can also be written as

$$
\begin{equation*}
D(X, Y)+D(X, Z)=D(Y, Z)+2 D(X, Y \vee Z) \tag{11}
\end{equation*}
$$

This is illustrated in Fig. 2.
Proof: Since $Y, Z \in\langle X\rangle$, we simply have $D(X, Y)=$ $H(X)-H(Y), D(X, Z)=H(X)-H(Z)$ and $D(X, Y \vee$


Fig. 2: Graphical representation of Apollonius's theorem (Lemma 2).

$$
\begin{aligned}
& Z)=H(X)-H(Y, Z) . \text { Hence } D(X, Y)+D(X, Z)- \\
& 2 D(X, Y \vee Z)=2 H(Y, Z)-H(Y)-H(Z)=H(Z \mid Y)+ \\
& H(Y \mid Z)=D(Y, Z)
\end{aligned}
$$

From Lemma 2 we derive the following
Lemma 3: For any $Y, Z \in\langle X\rangle$,

$$
\begin{equation*}
d(X, Y)+d(X, Z) \leq d(X, Y \vee Z)+1 \tag{12}
\end{equation*}
$$

with equality if and only if $Y$ and $Z$ are independent.
Proof: Observe that $D(Y, Z)+D(X, Y \vee Z)=$ $H(Y \mid Z)+H(Z \mid Y)+H(X \mid Y \vee Z) \leq H(Y)+H(Z \mid Y)+$ $H(X \mid Y, Z)=H(Y, Z)+H(X \mid Y, Z)=H(X, Y, Z)=$ $H(X)$ since $Y, Z \in\langle X\rangle$, with equality iff $Y$ and $Z$ are independent. Now by Lemma 2, $D(X, Y)+D(X, Z)=$ $D(Y, Z)+2 D(X, Y \vee Z) \leq D(X, Y \vee Z)+H(X)$. Dividing by $H(X)=H(X, Y)=H(X, Z)=H(X, Y, Z)$ yields the announced inequality.

## C. A Necessary Condition for Perfect Reconstruction

Theorem 3 (Necessary Condition for Perfect Reconstruction): Let $X$ be a random variable and let $X_{1}, X_{2}, \ldots, X_{n} \in$ $\langle X\rangle$. If perfect reconstruction is possible: $X=X_{1} \vee X_{2} \vee$ $\cdots \vee X_{n}$, then

$$
\begin{equation*}
\sum_{i=1}^{n} d\left(X, X_{i}\right) \leq n-1 \tag{13}
\end{equation*}
$$

with equality iff $X_{1}, X_{2}, \ldots, X_{n}$ are independent.
The first occurence of such a problem (for $n=2$ ) is given in Exercise 6 of the French textbook [8].

Proof: By repeated use of Lemma 3, each joining operation of two components in the sum-e.g., passing from $d\left(X, X_{i}\right)+d\left(X, X_{j}\right)$ to $d\left(X, X_{i} \vee X_{j}\right)$-decreases this sum by at most 1 . Thus,

$$
\begin{align*}
\sum_{i=1}^{n} d\left(X, X_{i}\right) & \leq \sum_{i=1}^{n-2} d\left(X, X_{i}\right)+d\left(X, X_{n-1} \vee X_{n}\right)+1 \\
& \leq \sum_{i=1}^{n-3} d\left(X, X_{i}\right)+d\left(X, X_{n-2} \vee X_{n-1} \vee X_{n}\right)+2 \\
& \vdots  \tag{14}\\
& \leq d\left(X, X_{1} \vee X_{2} \vee \cdots \vee X_{n}\right)+n-1=n-1
\end{align*}
$$

Equality holds iff all the above $n-1$ inequalities are equalities. By the equality condition of Lemma 3, this means by induction that $X_{1}$ is independent from $X_{2} \vee \cdots \vee X_{n}$, where $X_{2}$ is independent from $X_{3} \vee \cdots \vee X_{n}$, and so on until $X_{n-1}$ is independent from $X_{n}$. Overall this is equivalent to saying that all components $X_{1}, X_{2}, \ldots, X_{n}$ are mutually independent.

In practice, Theorem 3 gives an impossibility condition for perfect reconstruction of the random variable $X$ from components $X_{1}, X_{2}, \ldots, X_{n}$. Indeed, if the latter are such that

$$
\begin{equation*}
\sum_{i=1}^{n} d\left(X, X_{i}\right)>n-1 \tag{15}
\end{equation*}
$$

then perfect reconstruction is impossible, however complex the reconstruction function $f$ might have been. In other words, $X<X_{1} \vee X_{2} \vee \cdots \vee X_{n}$, information was lost by processing.

That perfect reconstruction is impossible does not mean that it would never be possible to deduce one particular value of $X$ from some particular values of $X_{1}, X_{2}, \ldots, X_{n}$. It means that such a deduction is not possible in general, for every possible values taken by $X_{1}, X_{2}, \ldots, X_{n}$. In other words, there is at least one set of values $X_{1}=x_{1}, X_{2}=x_{2}, \ldots, X_{n}=x_{n}$ for which $X$ cannot be reconstructed unambiguously.

## D. A Sufficient Condition for Perfect Reconstruction

For independent components $X_{1}, X_{2}, \ldots, X_{n}$ (with no redundant information between them), the necessary condition of Theorem 3 becomes also a sufficient condition:

Theorem 4 (Sufficient Condition for Perfect Reconstruction): Let $X$ be a random variable and let $X_{1}, X_{2}, \ldots, X_{n} \in\langle X\rangle$ be independent. If inequality (13) holds, then it necessarily holds with equality:

$$
\begin{equation*}
\sum_{i=1}^{n} d\left(X, X_{i}\right)=n-1 \tag{16}
\end{equation*}
$$

and perfect reconstruction is possible: $X=X_{1} \vee X_{2} \vee \cdots \vee X_{n}$.
Proof: A closer look at the proof of Theorem 3 shows that we have established (without the perfect reconstruction assumption) the general inequality

$$
\begin{equation*}
\sum_{i=1}^{n} d\left(X, X_{i}\right) \leq d\left(X, X_{1} \vee X_{2} \vee \cdots \vee X_{n}\right)+n-1 \tag{17}
\end{equation*}
$$

which holds with equality iff $X_{1}, X_{2}, \ldots, X_{n}$ are independent. Therefore, by the independence assumption, (13) writes

$$
\begin{equation*}
\sum_{i=1}^{n} d\left(X, X_{i}\right)=d\left(X, X_{1} \vee X_{2} \vee \cdots \vee X_{n}\right)+n-1 \leq n-1 \tag{18}
\end{equation*}
$$

Since the distance is nonnegative, this necessarily implies that the inequality holds with equality and that $d\left(X, X_{1} \vee X_{2} \vee\right.$ $\left.\cdots \vee X_{n}\right)=0$, that is, $X=X_{1} \vee X_{2} \vee \cdots \vee X_{n}$.

As a simple example consider the following.
Example 1: Consider a nonzero complex-valued discrete random variable $X$ and define the modulus and argument

$$
\begin{equation*}
X_{1}=|X| \quad \text { and } \quad X_{2}=\arg (X) \tag{19}
\end{equation*}
$$

Assume that $X$ is "isotropic" in the sense that $X_{1}$ is independent of $X_{2}$ and $X_{2}$ is uniformly distributed over $M$
possible values. One easily computes $H\left(X_{2}\right)=\log M$, $H\left(X_{1}\right)=H(X)-\log M$, hence $d\left(X, X_{1}\right)+d\left(X, X_{2}\right)=1$ : Inequality (13) is satisfied with equality. Of course, in this trivial example, perfect reconstruction is possible since

$$
\begin{equation*}
X=|X| e^{\arg (X)}=X_{1} e^{X_{2}} \tag{20}
\end{equation*}
$$

More elaborate examples of applications of Theorems 3 and 4 have been shown in [3] for specific discrete problems such as linear transformations over a finite field, integer prime factorization, Chinese remainder theorem, and optimal comparison-based sorting algorithm.

## IV. Conclusion

This paper presented some considerations to provide a starting point for a "perfect reconstruction theory" that of course needs to be improved and further investigated along these lines.

In particular, it would be very valuable to illustrate the construction of the complementary information, and the necessary or sufficient conditions for perfect reconstruction by concrete examples in signal processing. This would certainly require the extension of the above geometric considerations to continuous random variables.

A closer look at Theorems 3 and 4 shows that they crucially depend on the standard information theoretic assertion that $H(X) \leq \sum H\left(X_{i}\right)$ with equality when $X_{i}$ are mutually independent. This, of course, does not require all the geometric machinery presented here, but would be easily generalizable to continuous random variables using differential entropy. The construction of a genuine distance applicable to discrete or continuous random variables in order to solve the perfect reconstruction problem is a topic for future investigation.

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