

Evaluate $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0} x \tan \frac{1}{x}$.

Created by. Mr. Francis Hung on 20110317

Last updated: 21 April 2011

Let $x_n = \frac{1}{2n\pi + \frac{\pi}{4}}$, then $x_n \rightarrow 0$ as $n \rightarrow \infty$

$$x_n \tan \frac{1}{x_n} = \frac{1}{2n\pi + \frac{\pi}{4}} \tan \left(2n\pi + \frac{\pi}{4} \right) = \frac{1}{2n\pi + \frac{\pi}{4}} \rightarrow 0 \text{ as } n \rightarrow \infty$$

Let $y_n = \frac{1}{2n\pi + \tan^{-1}(n)}$, then $y_n \rightarrow 0$ as $n \rightarrow \infty$

$$0 < \tan^{-1}(n) < \frac{\pi}{2} \Rightarrow \tan^{-1}(n) < n \Rightarrow 2n\pi + \tan^{-1}(n) < 2n\pi + n \Rightarrow \frac{1}{2n\pi + \tan^{-1}(n)} > \frac{1}{2n\pi + n}$$

$$y_n \tan \frac{1}{y_n} = \frac{1}{2n\pi + \tan^{-1}(n)} \cdot n > \frac{n}{2n\pi + n} = \frac{1}{2\pi + 1}$$

$$\therefore \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} y_n \tan \frac{1}{y_n} \geq \frac{1}{2\pi + 1}$$

By Heine's theorem, if $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0} x \tan \frac{1}{x}$ exists, then $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} x_n \tan \frac{1}{x_n} = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} y_n \tan \frac{1}{y_n}$

However, $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} x_n \tan \frac{1}{x_n} = 0$ and $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} y_n \tan \frac{1}{y_n} \geq \frac{1}{2\pi + 1}$

$\therefore \lim_{x \rightarrow 0} x \tan \frac{1}{x}$ does not exist.