

# POW 2016-20

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If  $n = 0$  there is nothing to prove, so assume  $n \geq 1$ . Before proving the statement, we will observe the following lemma.

**Lemma 1.** *Let  $V_1, V_2, \dots$  be countably many  $k$ -dimensional subspaces of  $\mathbb{R}^n$  for  $k < n$ . Then there is a vector  $\mathbf{x}$  such that  $\mathbf{x} \notin V_i$  for  $i \geq 1$ .*

*Proof.* We proceed by induction on  $n$ . If  $n = 1$ , then simply take  $\mathbf{x}$  as any nonzero vector. Now assume inductively for  $n - 1$ . Extend each subspace  $V_1, V_2, \dots$  with some vectors so that  $\dim V_i = n - 1$  for  $i \geq 1$ . Then  $V_i$  can be represented in the form of  $\mathbf{a}_i \cdot \mathbf{x} = 0$ , where  $\|\mathbf{a}_i\| = 1$ . Note that the collection is countable where the set of vectors with  $\|\mathbf{a}\| = 1$  is uncountable. Hence, we can take  $\mathbf{a}_0$  so that it does not appear in the collection of  $\mathbf{a}_i$ 's and  $\|\mathbf{a}_0\| = 1$ . Then the  $(n - 1)$ -dimensional subspace  $V_0$  represented by  $\mathbf{a}_0 \cdot \mathbf{x} = 0$  differs from any of the subspaces given. Hence, a subspace  $W_i = V_0 \cap V_i$  has dimension  $n - 2$  and is contained in  $V_0$ . Note that  $V_0$  becomes identical to  $\mathbb{R}^{n-1}$  by applying some rigid motions. Hence by the inductive hypothesis, there is a vector  $\mathbf{x} \in V_0$  such that  $\mathbf{x} \notin W_i$  for  $i \geq 1$ . Then  $\mathbf{x} \notin V_i$  for each  $i$ , completing the proof of the lemma.  $\square$

Now we prove the original statement. We will proceed by induction on  $k$ , but in reverse order. If  $k = n$  then just take the trivial subspace  $W = \{0\}$ . Now assume inductively for  $k + 1$ . Let  $\mathbf{x}$  be a vector produced by Lemma 1. Then the dimension of the subspace  $W_i$  spanned by  $V_i$  and  $\mathbf{x}$  is  $k + 1$ . Thus by the inductive hypothesis, there is an  $(n - 1 - k)$ -dimensional subspace  $W_0$  with  $\dim W_i \cap W_0 = 0$  for  $i \geq 1$ . Hence, the subspace  $W$  spanned by  $W_0$  and  $\mathbf{x}$  is  $(n - k)$ -dimensional and  $\dim W \cap V_i = 0$  as desired.