

From IEEE 754 to decimal equivalent

In this example, given a number in the IEEE 754 format, we will see how we get the decimal equivalent

IEEE representation:

0000 0100 0000 0100 1001 0000 1001 0110

The IEEE 754 single precision representation includes

- (a) 1 sign bit (MSB)
- (b) 8 bits for the exponent. We use excess -127 here. That is, you ADD 127 to your exponent and store as a pure (unsigned) binary. When the number is re-created for use later, 127 will be subtracted from the exponent.
- (c) 23 bits for the mantissa (i.e., the fractional part)

This is to enable us to represent numbers in the format $(-1)^s \times c \times b^q$

Where 's' is the sign bit, 'c' is the significand and 'q' is the exponent

Returning to our example,

- (a) MSB is 0 -> sign bit => The number is positive
- (b) The next 8 bits are 00001000 -> exponent => $8 - 127 = -119$ (Note that $-119 + 127$ is +8)
- (c) The next 23 bits are 000 0100 1001 0000 1001 0110 -> mantissa

Final result is

$$(-1)^{(0)} * 1.(mantissa) * 2^{(exponent)}$$
$$1.00001001001000010010110 * 2^{(-119)}$$

Note every digit to the right of the point represents a negative power of 2

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Mantissa} &= 00001001001000010010110 = 2^{-5} + 2^{-8} + 2^{-11} + 2^{-16} + 2^{-19} + 2^{-21} + 2^{-22} \\ &= 0.0356624126434326171875 \end{aligned}$$

Final result is

$$(1 + 0.0356624126434326171875) * 2^{(-119)} = 1.5582916 * 10^{(-36)}$$

So the representation above is for the number **$1.5582916 * 10^{(-36)}$**