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MAA American Mathematics Competitions



Curriculum Burst 127: 99-digit Products

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The product of the two 99-digit numbers 303,030,303,...,030,303 and 505,050,505,...,050,505 has

thousands digit A and units digit B . What is the sum of A and B?

QUICK STATS:

MAA AMC GRADE LEVEL

This question is appropriate for the middle-school grade levels.

MATHEMATICAL TOPICS

Pre-Algebra.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

Connected to 8.EE.3 Use numbers expressed in the form of a single digit times an integer power of 10 to estimate

very large or very small quantities, and to express how many times as much one is than the

other.

MATHEMATICAL PRACTICE STANDARDS

Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them. MP1

MP2 Reason abstractly and quantitatively. MP7 Look for and make use of structure.

PROBLEM SOLVING STRATEGY

ESSAY 9: **AVOID HARD WORK!**

SOURCE: This is guestion #18 from the 2007 MAA AMC 8 Competition.





THE PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS:

The best, and most appropriate, first step is always ...

STEP 1: Read the question, have an emotional reaction to it, take a deep breath, and then reread the question.

This question looks impossible! There is now way I am going to write out all 99 digits of $303,030,303,\ldots,030,303$ and all 99 digits of $505,050,505,\ldots,050,505$ and then do the long multiplication. There has got to be an easier way!

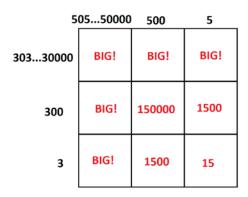
Well, the question says something about the thousands digit and the units digits. It doesn't seem to care about any of the other digits. So maybe I should think of the number $303,030,303,\ldots,030,303$ as:

$$303,030,303,...,030,000+0303$$

where I can really see the thousands digit (which is zero) and the units digit (which is three). Let me do the same for the other number too:

$$505,050,505,...,050,000+0505$$
.

Now I have to multiply these out. Let me draw out a rectangle for the product:



Everything labeled BIG! In this table is a multiple of $10,000\,$ or more and has all final four digits $0\,$. So the product we seek is:

Some multiple of ten thousand
$$+150000 + 1500 + 1500 + 15$$

This is:

Some multiple of ten thousand +3015

The thousands digit is 3 and the units digit is 5.

Ummm. What was the question again?

The product of the two 99-digit numbers $303,030,303,\ldots,030,303$ and $505,050,505,\ldots,050,505$ has thousands digit A and units digit B. What is the sum of A and B?

Oh! So
$$A + B = 3 + 5 = 8$$
. We're done!

Extension 1: What is the ten-thousands digit in this product?

Extension 2:

Consider the product of the two numbers 303,030,303,030,303 and 505,050,505,050,505, and the product of the two numbers 303,030,303,030,303,030,303 and 505,050,505,050,505,050,505.

These two products certainly agree on their final four digits. What is the first digit from the right at which the two products disagree?

Curriculum Inspirations is brought to you by the <u>Mathematical Association of America</u> and the <u>MAA American Mathematics Competitions</u>.



MAA acknowledges with gratitude the generous contributions of the following donors to the Curriculum Inspirations Project:

The TBL and Akamai Foundations for providing continuing support

The Mary P. Dolciani Halloran Foundation for providing seed funding by supporting the Dolciani Visiting Mathematician Program during fall 2012

MathWorks for its support at the Winner's Circle Level

