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NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS REPORT

1278

CALCULATION OF CONTINUED FRACTIONS
BY USE OF AN IBM 604 MULTIPLIER

By

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS

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NBS PROJECT

NBS REPORT

3011-60-0002

1278

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FOREWORD

The introduction of high-speed automatic computing machines has made it feasible to consider empirical sampling as a general method in statistical research. One of the problems encountered is the transformation of variates distributed uniformly over (0,1) to variates having other distributions. Continued fraction expansions such as the one given in this report should make it possible to carry out the transformations in cases where power series converge too slowly or do not converge at all.

Mr. Teichroew prepared this report as a guest worker at the National Bureau of Standards during the summer of 1951.

His work was performed under Contract CST-525 between the National Bureau of Standards and the University of North Carolina.

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CALCULATION OF CONTINUED FRACTIONS BY USE OF AN IBM 604 MULTIPLIER

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ABSTRACT .

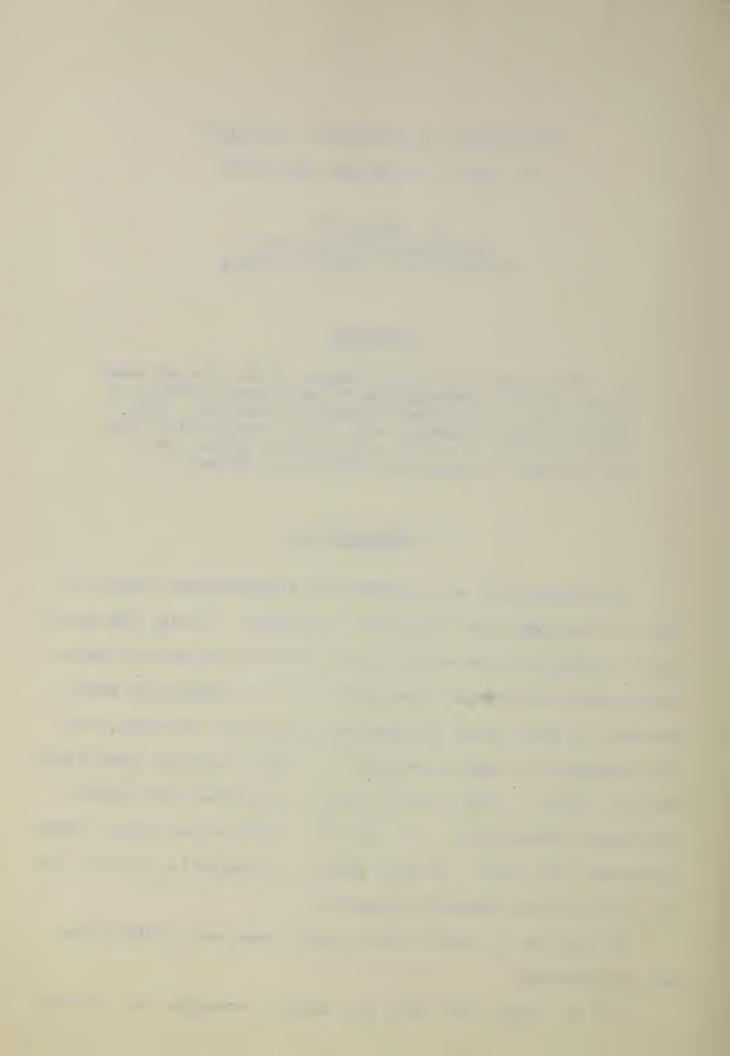
This paper gives an example of the use of continued fraction expansions in calculating values of functions by high-speed automatic machines. This method, applied here to the doubly-exponential distribution $F(x) = e^{-e^{-x}}$, should prove useful in a wide variety of empirical sampling problems.

I. INTRODUCTION

In mathematical and statistical calculations values of various functions are frequently required. If only low speed relay multipliers are available, the values can usually be obtained most efficiently from punch-card or punch-tape tables. However, if high speed electronic calculators are used, the time required to look up values in a table becomes prohibitive and the values of the function can be obtained more rapidly by direct calculations. It has been usual to use power series expansions for this. In this paper an example is given of the use of continued fraction expansions.

In the use of power series expansions two difficulties are encountered:

(a) the range for which the series converges is limited;



(b) the numbers entering into the calculations become very large or very small.

The latter difficulty is usually surmounted by a floating decimal point; and the first, by multiplying the argument by a suitably chosen constant and later making the necessary adjustment. In both cases extensive programming and a detailed knowledge of numbers which will arise in the calculation are required. On the other hand, the advantages of power series expansions are that programming for an iterative method of calculation is fairly simple and that only a few numbers have to be stored.

Such general statements cannot be made about continued fraction expansions. However, for some the following statements hold: the expansion converges for a large range of values of the argument; the numbers entering into the calculations remain reasonably close to unity; and the successive approximations can be calculated by an iterative method. However, more storage space is required than is needed for power series.

II. THEORY

A continued fraction expansion of a function f(x) takes the form

$$f(x) = b_0 + a_1 b_1 + a_2 b_2 + a_3 b_3 + ...$$

where the ai and bi may be functions of x. For convenience the expansion is often written in the form



$$f(x) = b_0 + a_1 \quad a_2 \quad a_3$$

$$b_1 + b_2 + b_3 + \dots$$

The nth approximant to f(x) is given by

$$f_n(x) = b_0 + a_1 + a_2 + a_n$$

It is shown in [1] that this approximent may be calculated as follows:

$$f_n(x) = b_0 + l_1 + l_1 l_2 + \dots + (l_1 l_2 \dots l_n)$$

where

$$1 + l_n^2 = \frac{1}{1 + r_n(1 + l_{n-1}^2)}$$

$$r_n = \frac{a_n}{b_{n-1}b_n}$$

with initial values

$$P_1 = \frac{a_1}{b_1}$$

$$1 + \rho_2 = \frac{1}{1 + r_2}$$
 .

III. METHOD OF CALCULATION

The value of the function can therefore be obtained by calculating successive approximations until the product \(\big|_1 \sum_2 \cdots \cdots \big|_n \) is equal to zero to as many digits as required. This can be done by carrying out the steps in the calculation given in Column 1 of Table I. Column 2 gives the values required from storage; and Column 3, the initial values required.



TABLE I

	(1) Calculation	Requir	(2) red from Storage	Initial Values
1.	r _n = b _{n-1} ,b _n	a _n ,	b _{n-1} , b _n , x	1
2.	$1 + f_n = \frac{1}{1 + r_n(1 + f_n)}$	n-1)	1 + Pn=1	1
3.	$(P_1 \cdots P_{n-1})/P_n$		$P_1 \dots P_{n-1}$	al/v:
4.	$f_n = f_{n-1} + f_1 f_2 \cdots$	Pn		b ₀ + a ₁ /b ₁

In general an extensive memory will be required if many a_i and b_i are needed, i.e. if many iterations will be required before l_1 ... l_n becomes zero. However, if a_n and b_n are functions of n and x only, and this function can be calculated in an iterative method, machines with relatively small memories can be used. In the following section an example is given in which the $60l_i$, with only thirty-two memory positions, was used.

IV. EXAMPLE

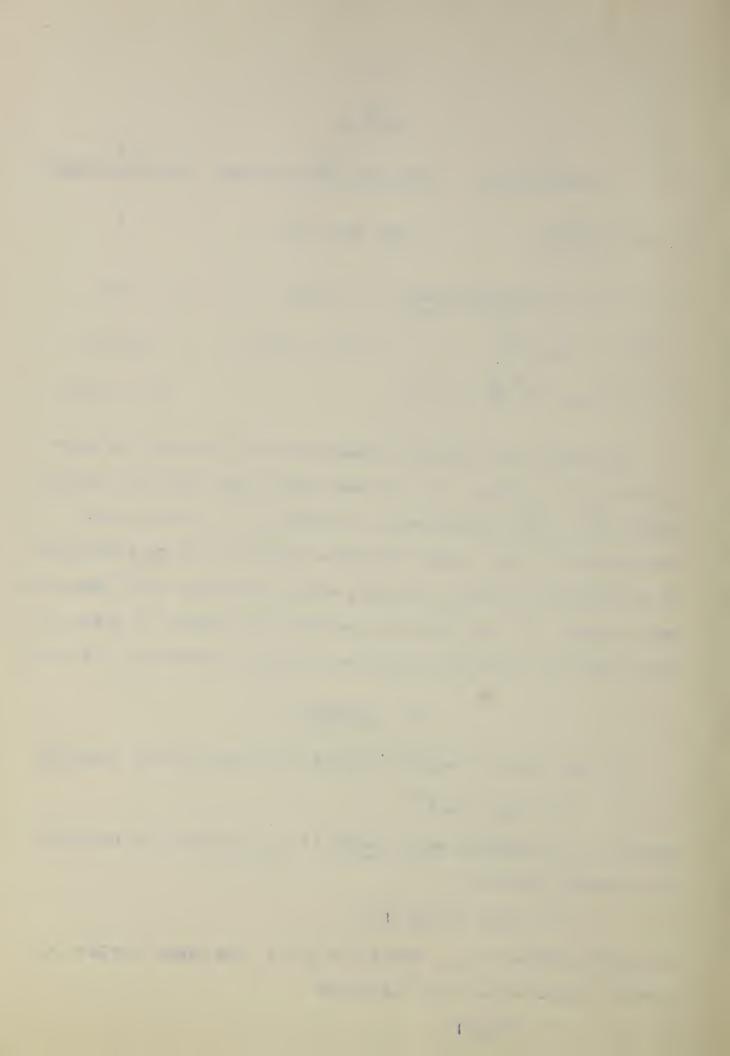
In the study of extreme values the distribution function

appears. In sampling experiments it is necessary to calculate the inverse function

$$x = -\log_{\theta} [-\log_{\theta}(+y)]$$

for given values of y. Since $0 \le y \le 1$, the power series expansion could be used to calculate

$$z = -\log_{\theta}(+y)$$
 .



Since z can take any value between zero and infinity, the power series is not sufficient to calculate, efficiently,

$$x = -\log_e z$$
 .

However, the continued fraction expansion

 $\log_{e} z = \frac{(z-1)}{1} + \frac{(z-1)}{2} + \frac{(z-1)}{3} + \frac{4(z-1)}{4} + \frac{4(z-1)}{5} + \dots$ converges for all 0 < z. Furthermore, the a_n and b_n are such that

$$r = \frac{\left|\frac{n}{2}\right|^2(z-1)}{n(n-1)}$$

where $|\frac{n}{2}|$ denotes the greatest integer in $\frac{n}{2}$.

The storage assignment in the 604 was as follows:

Storage	Factor	Decimal
FS-1	n,	XXX.
FS-2	z=1	XXX.XX
FS=3 FS=4 MQ	Temporary	
Counter		
GS=1 = GS=3	f _{n-1}	XXXX,XX
GS ⇒2	al # /nel	XXXX.X
GS⇔4	/1 ··· /n	XXXX。X

In this case z was less than 10. Even with this restriction the calculations can be carried out to only four decimal places because of the lack of storage positions. Therefore one can not expect the results to be accurate to four decimals.

Table II gives the intermediate calculations for z = 10. The only value punched on the card is the final one, i.e. 2.3024 .

The expansion for logex and numerous others are given in [2] and [3].

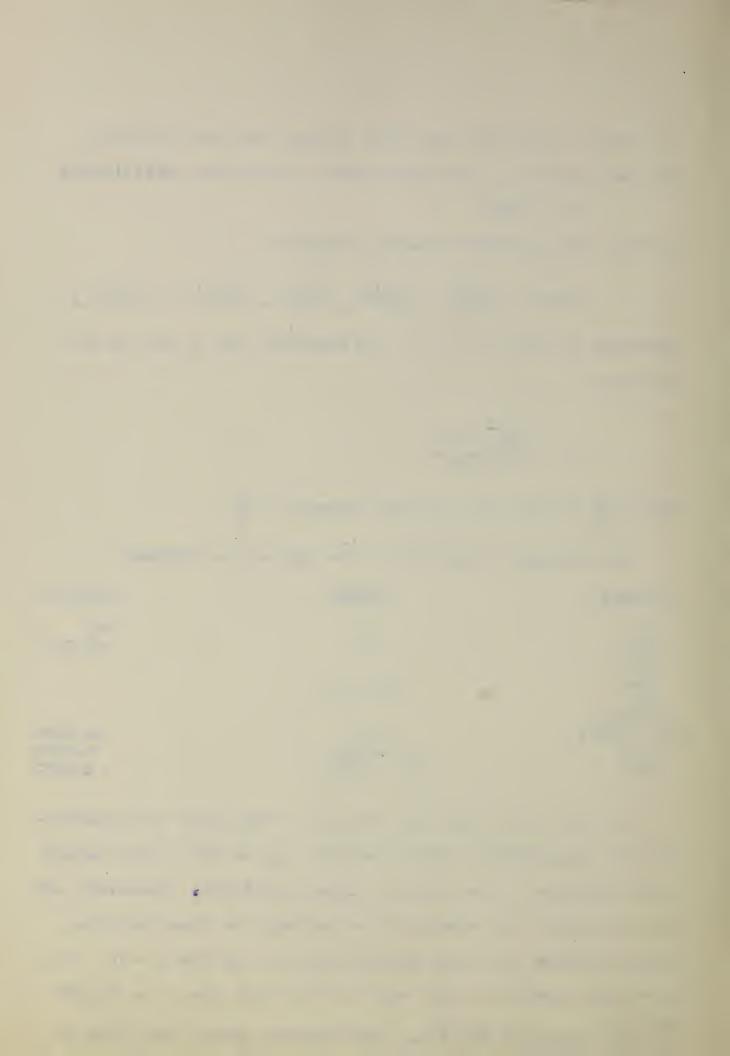


Table III gives some results for the range $1 \le z \le 10$. The accuracy decreases as $z \to \infty$ because $1 + \ell_n \to 0$ and there are fewer than 4 significant figures. In order to get greater accuracy a larger memory would be needed.

This work was done on a 604 with 60 program steps. Each iteration was obtained by impulsing the program repeat, suppression of the program repeat being based on a balance test of GS-4. The machine completed approximately 1100 cards per hour.

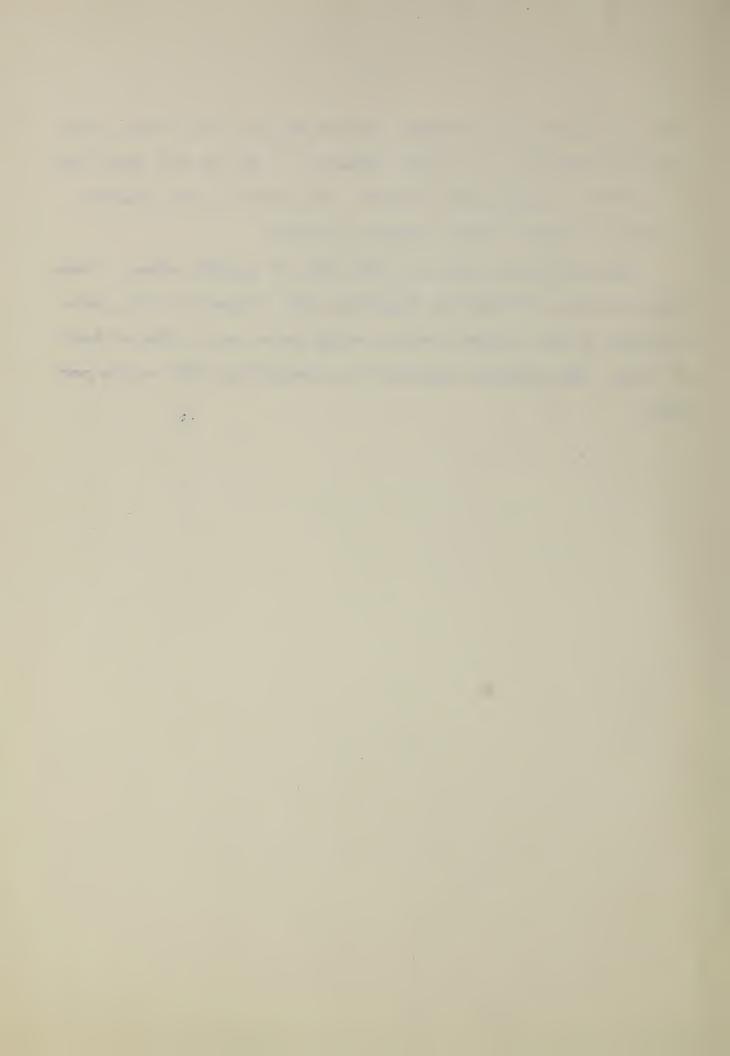


TABLE II

CALCULATION OF logo10

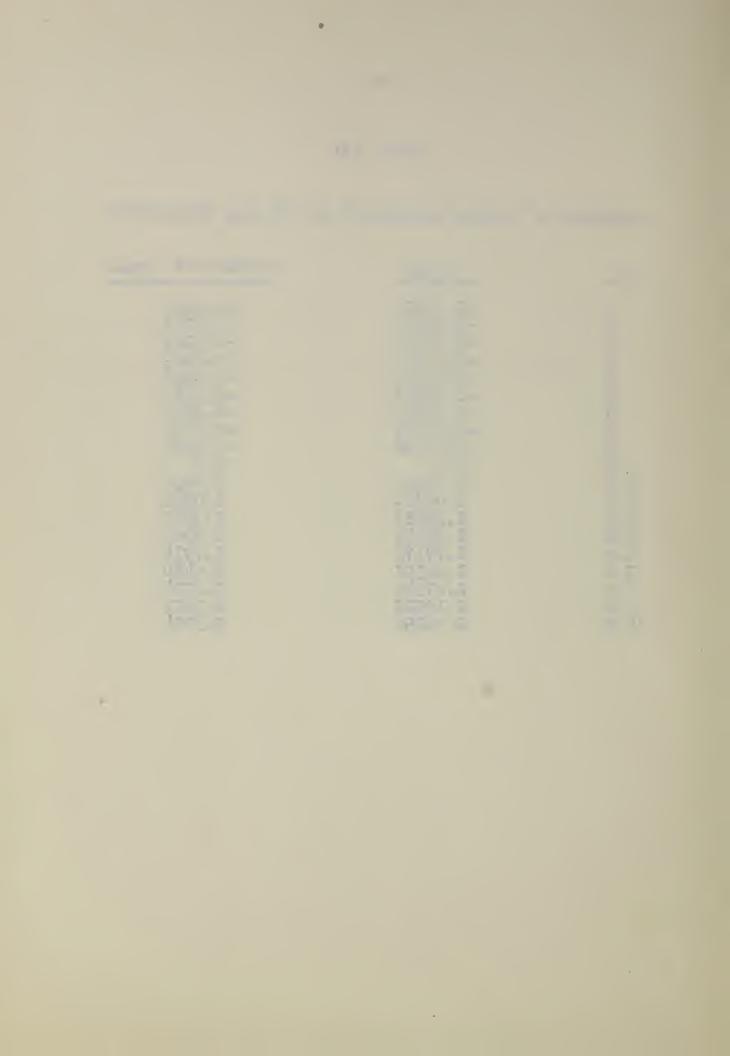
The second	rn	1. + Fn	Pn	P1/2···/n	f'n
1234567890	9.0000 4.5000 1.5000 3.0000 1.8000 2.7000 1.9285 2.5714 2.0000 2,5000		-0.8182 -0.8182 -0.2143 -0.7021 -0.3490 -0.6374 -0.4115 -0.6021 -0.4431 -0.5820	9.0000 -7.3638 1.5781 -1.1080 0.3867 -0.2465 0.1014 -0.0611 0.0271 -0.0158	1n 9.0000 1.6362 3.2143 2.1063 2.4930 2.2465 2.3479 2.2868 2.3139 2.2981
11 12 13 14 15 16 17	2.9000 2.0455 2.4545 2.0769 2.4231 2.1000 2.4000 2.1176	0.5391 0.4304 0.5280 0.4387 0.5205 0.4446 0.5134	-0.4609 -0.5696 -0.4720 -0.5613 -0.4795 -0.5554 -0.4866	0.0073 -0.0042 0.0020 -0.0011 0.0005 -0.0003 0.0001	2.3054 2.3012 2.3032 2.3021 2.3026 2.3023 2.3024



TABLE III

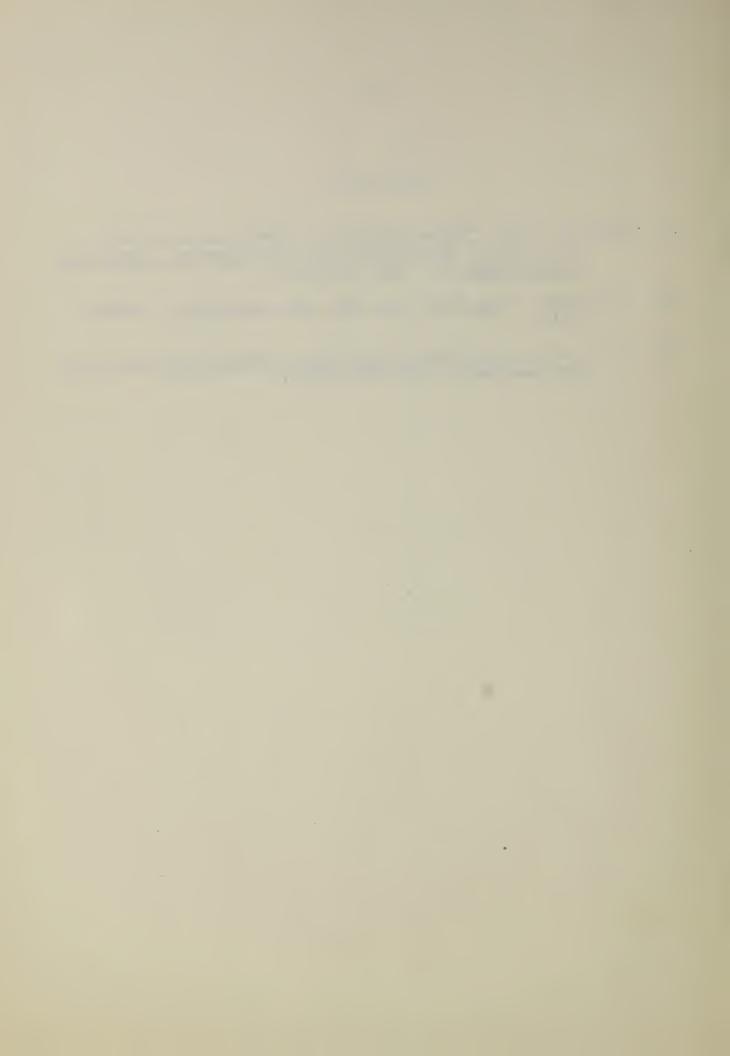
ACCURACY OF VALUES CALCULATED BY THE 604 MULTIPLIER

X	loger	calculated logex
.1 .2 .3 .4 .5 .6	-2.30259 -1.60944 -1.20397 -0.91629 -0.69315 -0.51083	-2.3024 -1.6091 -1.2045 -0.9164 -0.6931 -0.5110
.7 .8 .9 1.0 2.0 3.0 4.0	-0.35667 -0.22314 -0.10536 0.0 0.69315 1.09861 1.38629	-0.3567 -0.2231 -0.1054 0.0 0.6932 1.0985 1.3863
5.0 6.0 7.0 8.0 9.0	1.60944 1.79176 1.94591 2.07944 2.19722 2.30258	1.6095 1.7914 1.9460 2.0794 2.1971 2.3024



REFERENCES

- [1] Ralph E. Lane, "Interpolation by Means of Continued Fractions," Proceedings of the Fraternal Actuarial Association, No. 12 (1944-46).
- [2] O. Perron, Die Lehre von der Kettenbruchen, Leipzig, 1913.
- [3] H. S. Wall, The Analytic Theory of Continued Fractions, Van Nostrand, New York, 1948.



THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS

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The National Bureau of Standards is the principal agency of the Federal Government for fundamental and applied research in physics, mathematics, chemistry, and engineering. Its activities range from the determination of physical constants and properties of materials, the development and maintenance of the national standards of measurement in the physical sciences, and the development of methods and instruments of measurement, to the development of special devices for the military and civilian agencies of the Government. The work includes basic and applied research, development, engineering, instrumentation, testing, evaluation, calibration services, and various scientific and technical advisory services. A major portion of the NBS work is performed for other government agencies, particularly the Department of Defense and the Atomic Energy Commission. The functions of the National Bureau of Standards are set forth in the Act of Congress, March 3, 1901, as amended by Congress in Public Law 619, 1950. The scope of activities is suggested in the listing of divisions and sections on the inside of the front cover.

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