

Finding $\int \ln(1+x^2) dx$ the “other” way...

It takes a bit longer, but we can make progress on this integral using the “obvious” substitution:

$u = 1 + x^2$, then $x^2 = u - 1$, $x = \sqrt{u-1}$, and $dx = \frac{du}{2\sqrt{u-1}}$, so

$$\int \ln(1+x^2) dx = \int \frac{\ln(u)}{2\sqrt{u-1}} du \Big|_{u=1+x^2}.$$

Is this progress? Well, this we can make progress on by parts:

$v = \ln(u)$, $dw = \frac{du}{2\sqrt{u-1}}$, then $dv = \frac{du}{u}$ and $w = \sqrt{u-1}$ (from the above computation!),

$$\text{so } \int \frac{\ln(u)}{2\sqrt{u-1}} du = \sqrt{u-1} \ln(u) - \int \frac{\sqrt{u-1}}{u} du$$

But now we can make progress on the resulting integral by substitution again!

For $\int \frac{\sqrt{u-1}}{u} du$:

$y = \sqrt{u-1}$, then $dy = \frac{du}{2\sqrt{u-1}}$ (we keep coming back to this computation!), and $y^2 = u - 1$, so $u = y^2 + 1$, and we get

$$\int \frac{\sqrt{u-1}}{u} du = \int \frac{2(\sqrt{u-1})^2}{u} \cdot \frac{du}{2\sqrt{u-1}} = \int \frac{2y^2}{y^2 + 1} dy \Big|_{y=\sqrt{u-1}}$$

$$\text{But! } \int \frac{2y^2}{y^2 + 1} dy = \int \frac{2[(y^2 + 1) - 1]}{y^2 + 1} dy = 2 \int 1 - \frac{1}{y^2 + 1} dy = 2[y - \arctan(y)] + C$$

So, putting it all together,

$$\begin{aligned} \int \ln(1+x^2) dx &= \int \frac{\ln(u)}{2\sqrt{u-1}} du \Big|_{u=1+x^2} \\ &= \sqrt{u-1} \ln(u) \Big|_{u=1+x^2} - \int \frac{\sqrt{u-1}}{u} du \Big|_{u=1+x^2} = \sqrt{x^2} \ln(1+x^2) - \int \frac{\sqrt{u-1}}{u} du \Big|_{u=1+x^2} \\ &= |x| \ln(1+x^2) - \int \frac{2y^2}{y^2 + 1} dy \Big|_{y=\sqrt{u-1}} \Big|_{u=1+x^2} = |x| \ln(1+x^2) - \int \frac{2y^2}{y^2 + 1} dy \Big|_{y=\sqrt{x^2}} \\ &= |x| \ln(1+x^2) - \int \frac{2y^2}{y^2 + 1} dy \Big|_{y=|x|} = |x| \ln(1+x^2) - 2[y - \arctan(y)] + C \Big|_{y=|x|} \\ &= |x| \ln(1+x^2) - 2|x| + 2 \arctan(|x|) + C \end{aligned}$$

In summary, we substitute $u = 1 + x^2$, then integrate by parts, then do the reverse substitution $y = \sqrt{u-1}$. The more direct approach (provided as a solution to the quiz) essentially combines all of these together, into a single integration by parts.