

B from a wire of length 2a 2016

A wire of length 2a carries a current I along the +x axis. Find the magnetic field along the +z symmetry axis.

The law of Biot-Savart says:

$$\vec{B} = \frac{\mu_0 I}{4\pi} \int \frac{d\vec{L} \times \vec{r}_{ip}}{r_{ip}^3}$$

$$d\vec{L}_i = dx \hat{x}; \vec{r}_i = x \hat{x}; \vec{r}_p = z_p \hat{z}; \vec{r}_{ip} = -x \hat{x} + z_p \hat{z}; d\vec{L} \times \vec{r}_{ip} = \begin{vmatrix} \hat{x} & \hat{y} & \hat{z} \\ dx & 0 & 0 \\ -x & 0 & z_p \end{vmatrix} = -dx z_p \hat{y}$$

$$\vec{B} = -\hat{y} \frac{\mu_0 I}{4\pi} z_p \int_{x=-a}^{x=a} \frac{dx}{[x^2 + z_p^2]^{3/2}}$$

From the alpha site:

$$\int_{x=-a}^{x=a} \frac{1}{(x^2 + z^2)^{3/2}} dx = \frac{2a}{z^2 \sqrt{a^2 + z^2}}$$

$$\vec{B} = -\hat{y} \frac{\mu_0 I}{4\pi} \frac{2a}{z_p \sqrt{a^2 + z_p^2}}$$

Let's see if this reproduces the result from Ampere's law for an infinite wire:

$$\vec{B} = -\hat{y} \frac{\mu_0 I}{4\pi} \frac{2a}{z_p \sqrt{a^2 + z_p^2}} = -\hat{y} \frac{\mu_0 I}{4\pi} \frac{2}{z_p \sqrt{1 + \left(\frac{z_p}{a}\right)^2}} \approx -\hat{y} \frac{\mu_0 I}{2\pi z_p}$$

From Ampere's law, at a distance of z_p from an infinite wire, we have: $B = \frac{\mu_0 I}{2\pi z_p}$.

The direction is also correctly predicted and agrees with the right hand rule.