

Derivation of the factor $c/4$

Rustem Bilyalov

October 14, 2010

2. Show that the proportionality constant in (1-4) is $4/c$. That is, show that the relation between spectral radiance $R_T(\nu)$ and energy density $\rho_T(\nu)$ is $R_T(\nu)d\nu = (c/4)\rho_T(\nu)d\nu$. The energy density $\rho_T(\nu)$ is expressed as

$$\rho_T(\nu)d\nu = \frac{8\pi\nu^2}{c^3} \frac{h\nu}{e^{h\nu/kT} - 1} d\nu.$$

Let $x = \frac{h\nu}{kT}$ and $dx = \frac{h}{kT} d\nu$. Substitution yields

$$\rho_T(\nu)d\nu = \frac{8\pi k^4 T^4}{h^3 c^3} \frac{x^3}{e^x - 1} dx.$$

Since $\int_0^\infty \frac{x^3}{e^x - 1} dx = \frac{\pi^4}{15}$,

$$\rho_T(\nu)d\nu = \frac{8\pi k^4 T^4}{h^3 c^3} \frac{\pi^4}{15}.$$

Stefan's law states that

$$R_T = \sigma T^4, \sigma \equiv \frac{2\pi^5 k^4}{15c^2 h^3}.$$

It follows that

$$\rho_T(\nu)d\nu = \frac{8\pi k^4 T^4}{h^3 c^3} \frac{\pi^4}{15} = \frac{4}{c} \frac{2\pi^5 k^4}{15c^2 h^3} T^4 = \frac{4}{c} \sigma T^4 = \frac{4}{c} R_T(\nu)d\nu$$

or

$$R_T(\nu)d\nu = \frac{c}{4} \rho_T(\nu)d\nu.$$