

A puzzler about an array of numbers

Form a triangle of numbers, with 1 at the apex, 1's down both sides, and each number in the middle being the sum of the two numbers above it (above left and above right):

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      1
     1 1
    1 2 1
   1 3 3 1
  1 4 6 4 1
 1 5 10 10 5 1
1 6 15 20 15 6 1
```

What do these numbers have to do with what we are talking about today?

ANSWER: This is *Pascal's triangle*, and it encodes all the combination numbers. Counting the apex of the triangle as Row 0, and counting along each row starting from 0, the k th number in the n th row is $\binom{n}{k}$. For example, the “20” in the middle of the bottom row above is $\binom{6}{3}$. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pascal's_triangle