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A data symbol sequence detector (18-30) for choosing data symbol sequences likely to be represented by corresponding sequences of samples (15-17) received by the detector (18-30) with these sample sequences formed by sampling data signals (15) obtained from magnetically stored data (10) through a data retrieval channel which asymmetrically affects the magnitude values for a selected set of samples (19-20) in the sequence, and a magnitude difference determiner is used for obtaining representations of differences between values of the samples in the sequence and the corresponding estimated expected values. These differences representations can be limited in algebraic form.