

brainhack

Report from 2015 OHBM Hackathon (HI)

Nipype interfaces in CBRAIN

Project URL: <http://cbrain.mcgill.ca>

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1 Introduction

We aim at the large-scale, automatic sharing of software tools between neuroimaging processing platforms. During the HBM 2015 Hackathon, we worked on the export of software tools from the Nipype workflow engine [1] to the CBRAIN web platform for distributed computing [2]. Our solution allows to export Nipype interfaces to the “Boutiques” description format importable by CBRAIN and pointing to a Docker image containing the implementation of the interface. The interface and its implementation can be automatically exported from Nipype to CBRAIN (see Fig. 1) and to other platforms supporting Boutiques (e.g. Virtual Imaging Platform [3] and the Pegasus workflow engine [4]).

2 Approach

We developed a tool to export Nipype interfaces to the Boutiques tool description format (step 1. on Fig 1.). `nipype2boutiques` relies on `nipype.cmd`, a tool to run Nipype Interfaces as Linux command lines. `nipype2boutiques` parses the inputs and outputs of a Nipype interface and extracts their name, type, description and position on the `nipype.cmd` command line. `nipype2boutiques` then generates a Boutiques descriptor pointing to a Docker image where the Nipype interface is available. Once a Nipype interface is exported using `nipype2boutiques`, it can be imported to CBRAIN.

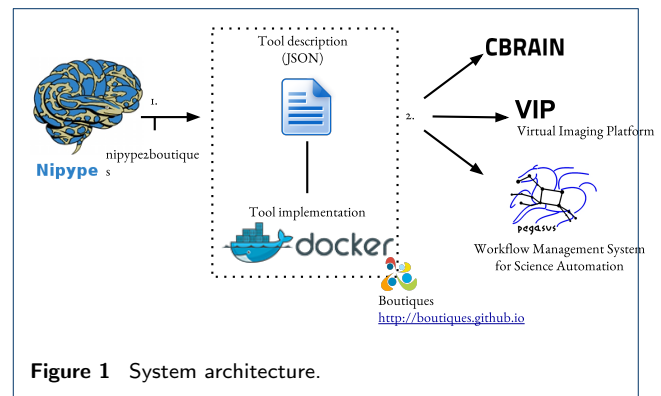


Figure 1 System architecture.

3 Results

We tested `nipype2boutiques` on a few Nipype interfaces from the FSL Nipype module. We exported 64 FSL tools automatically from Nipype to CBRAIN, and made them available at <https://github.com/glatard/boutiques-nipype-fsl>. Limitations remain on the type of Nipype interface that can be exported by `nipype2boutiques`: in particular, `InputMultiPath` are currently not supported, and output files have to be written in the execution directory of the Nipype Interface.

4 Conclusions

We prototyped a software tool to export Nipype Interfaces as Boutiques descriptors which can be imported by CBRAIN and other platforms. Although the solution is still limited to simple interfaces, we believe that it has the potential to enable fully-automatic tool sharing between Nipype and CBRAIN.

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Availability of Supporting Data

More information about this project can be found at: <http://cbrain.mcgill.ca>. Further data and files supporting this project are hosted in the *GigaScience* repository REFXXX.

Competing interests

None

Author's contributions

TG wrote the software and the report; SD contributed to the concept elaboration at the OHBM event, RA, NB, PR and MER provided support on the CBRAIN framework, RB implemented Boutiques in CBRAIN, NKM provided background information on fMRI packages, ACE spearheaded the project.

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