How to use portable versions of R and RStudio
a supplement to "A (very) short introduction to R"

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1 Introduction

If you don't have the right to install software on a computer (for instance a university computer), you can run R and RStudio from a USB stick or external hard drive.

2 Putting R and RStudio on a USB stick

If you have access to a computer on which R and RStudio are already installed:

- Find a USB stick that has at least 550 MB of empty storage space.

- Put the USB stick in a computer on which R and RStudio are already installed.

- Browse (in for instance Windows Explorer) to the Program Files directory on the computer.

- Make a folder called `R_programs` on your USB stick (this is not really necessary, but keeps your USB stick organized).

- Copy the files `RStudio` and `R-3.2.1`[1] to the `R_programs` folder your USB stick.

If someone else zipped the `R_programs`-folder with `RStudio` and `R-3.2.1` from his/her computer for you:

- Find a USB stick that has least 350 MB of storage space left.

- Copy the file `R_programs.zip` (or separate files `R-3.2.1.zip` and `RStudio.zip`) to your USB stick.

- Unzip the file on your USB stick. This will create the folder `R_programs` with sub-folders `RStudio` and `R-3.2.1`.

[1] At the moment of writing, 3.2.1 was the latest version.

3 Running R and RStudio from the USB stick

- Open Windows Explorer and browse to the USB stick.

- Open the file `RStudio.exe`. This file is located in the `bin`-folder in the `RStudio`-folder (for example `E:\R_programs\RStudio\bin`).

- When you open it for the first time, it will ask for the location of R itself. Browse to the folder `R-3.2.1` (for example `E:\R_programs\R-3.2.1`). Figure 1 shows what these windows look like.

Your USB stick may have different names on different computers (e.g. `E`, `F` or `G`). This means that you may have to change the location of the R files again later. You can always change the location of R in RStudio:

- Go to `Tools` and click `Options`.

- In the first line it shows the location of R (`R version`). Click the change-button behind it.

- Click `Choose a specific version of R`.

- Click the right option from the list or click `Browse` and go to the right folder (for example `E:\R_programs\R-3.2.1`).

4 Installing packages

When you want to install a package, make sure they are installed in the right place. In RStudio:

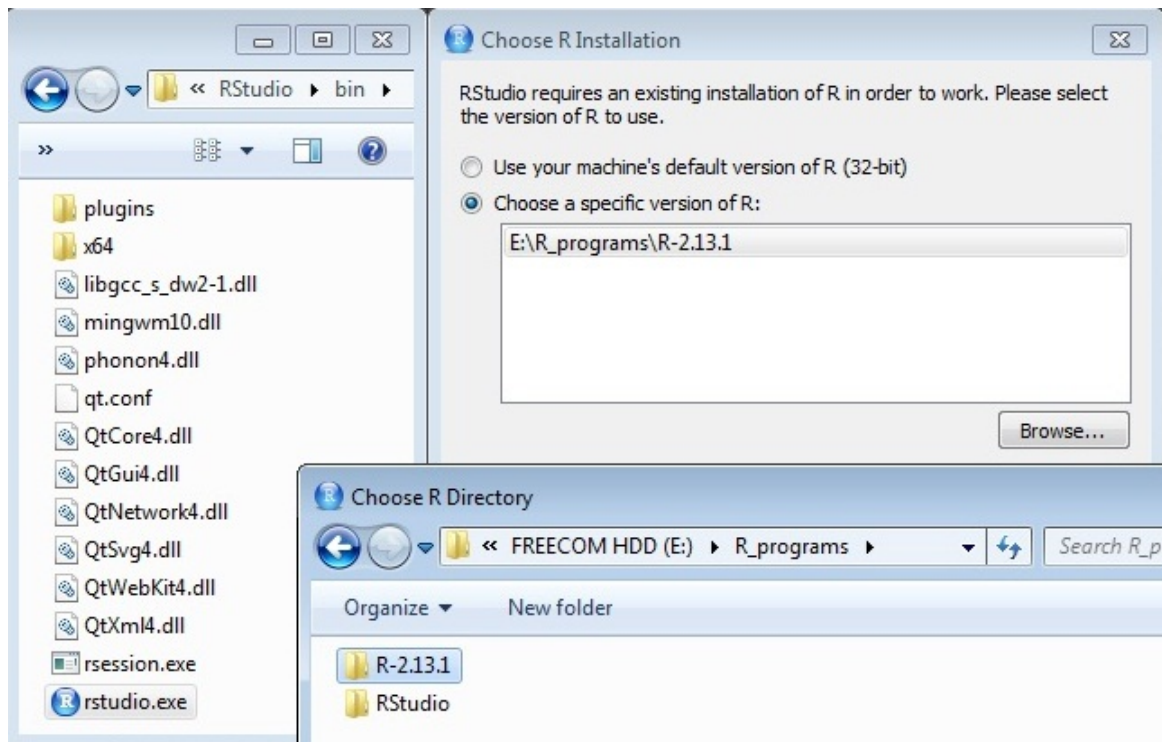- Go to the packages window.

- Click `Install packages`.

Figure 1: Setting the right directory to run R.

- Type the name of the package you want to install.

- Under `Install to library`, select the right location (see Figure 2).

- R will then put the package in the `library`-folder in the `R-3.2.1` -folder. While installing the package, R will say something like   `The downloaded packages are in C:\Users\braue001\AppData\Local\Temp\ RtmpJGDtIR\downloaded_packages`. You can ignore this message. R didn't really install the packages there, but it did save the .zip files it created temporarily.
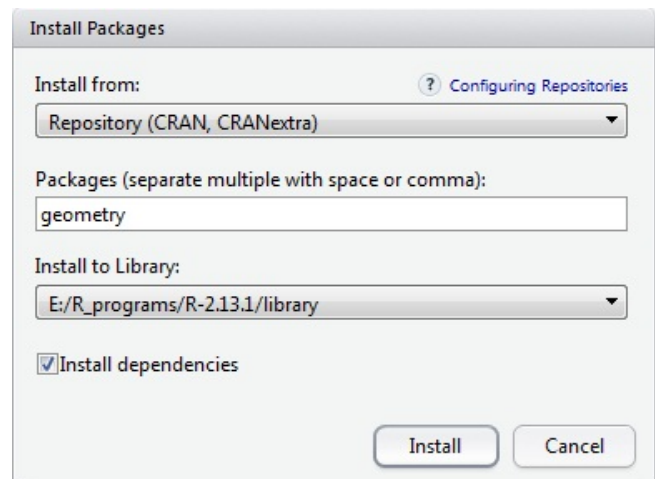

Figure 2: Setting the directory to install packages.