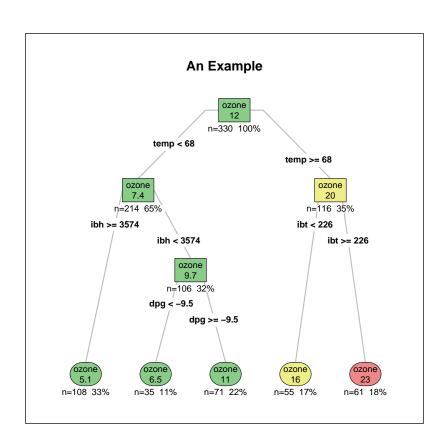
# Plotting rpart trees with prp

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#### 1 Introduction

The prp function plots rpart trees. It automatically scales and adjusts the displayed tree for best fit. It combines and extends the plot.rpart and text.rpart functions in the rpart package. Figure 1 below shows some examples. The function is in the rpart.plot R package.

Note that rpart.plot is merely a front end to prp, with the most useful arguments of prp.

Section 2 of this document (the Overview) is the most important. The remaining sections may be skipped or read in any order.

I assume you have already looked at An Introduction to Recursive Partitioning Using the RPART Routines by Therneau and Atkinson:

Short version 2000 http://mayoresearch.mayo.edu/mayo/research/biostat/upload/rpartmini.pdf Long version 1997 http://mayoresearch.mayo.edu/mayo/research/biostat/upload/61.pdf

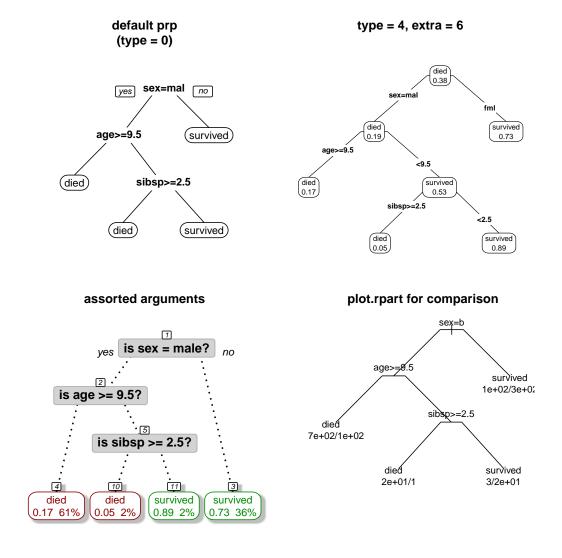


Figure 1: Some prp examples, with a plot.rpart graph for comparison. The data is the Titanic data with survival as the response (sibsp is the number of siblings or spouses aboard).

#### 2 Overview

This section is an overview of the important arguments to prp. For most users these arguments should suffice and the many other arguments can be ignored.

Use type to determine the basic plotting style, as shown in Figure 2 below.

Use extra to add more details to the node labels, as shown in Figures 3 and 4 overleaf. Use under=TRUE to put those details under the boxes.

Use digits, varlen, and faclen to display more significant digits and more characters in names. In particular, use the special values varlen=0 and faclen=0 to display full variable and factor names.

Use border.col and split.border.col to add or remove boxes around the labels.

You may also want to look at fallen.leaves (put the leaves at the bottom), branch (control the angle of the branch lines), and uniform (vertically space the nodes uniformly or proportionally to the fit).

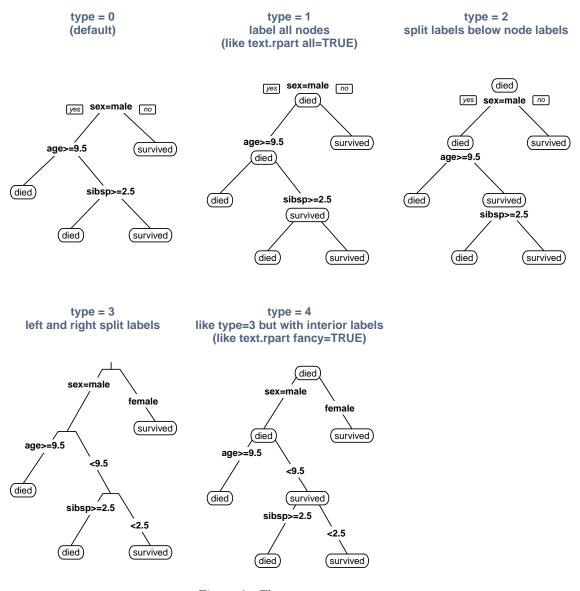


Figure 2: The type argument.

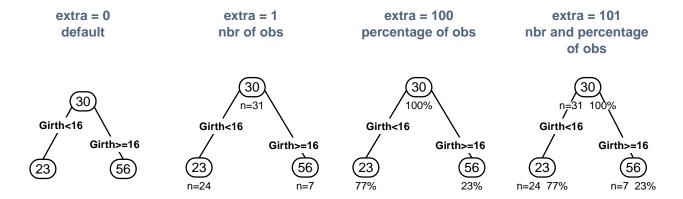


Figure 3: The extra argument with an anova model. Percentages are included by adding 100 to extra.

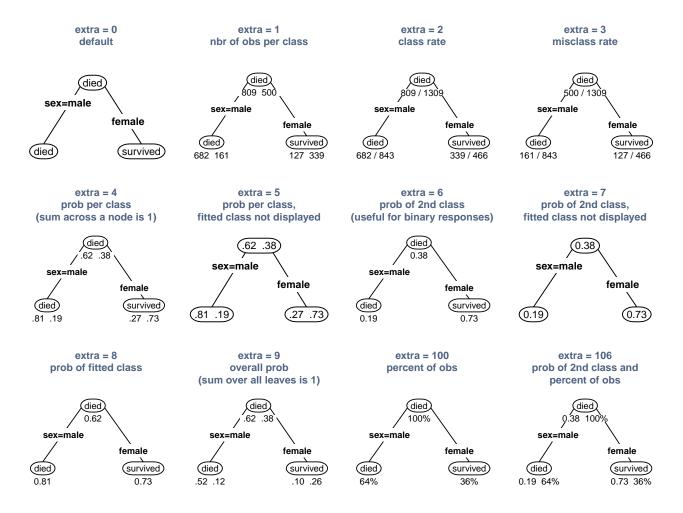


Figure 4: The extra argument with a class model. This figure also illustrates under=TRUE which puts the extra data under the box.

The character size will be adjusted automatically unless cex is explicitly set. Use tweak to adjust the automatically calculated size, something like tweak=0.8 or tweak=1.2.

It helps to remember that the display has four constituents: the *node labels*, the *split labels*, the *branch lines*, and the optional *node numbers*. Each of these constituents has a complete set of col etc. arguments. Thus we have, for example, col (the color of the node label text), split.col (the split text), branch.col (the branch lines), and nn.col (the optional node numbers).

Standard graphics parameters such as col can be passed in as ... arguments. So where the help page refers to the col argument, what is meant is the col argument passed in as a ... argument, and if it is not passed in, the value of par("col"). Such parameters typically affect only the node labels, not the split labels or other constituents of the display.

#### 3 FAQ

#### 3.1 The text is too small with the default arguments. Can I make it bigger?

Use the tweak argument to make the text larger, e.g. tweak=1.2. This may cause overlapping labels. However, there is a little elbow room because of the whitespace between the labels

Alternatively, you can reduce the whitespace around the text, allowing prp to (automatically) use a larger type size. Do this by reducing the gap between boxes and the box space around the text (try gap=0 and/or space=0).

#### 3.2 The graph is too cluttered. Can I reduce the clutter?

Use the tweak argument to make the text smaller, e.g. tweak=.8.

Or use an explicit value for cex, experimenting until the displayed graph looks right.

Also consider using compress=FALSE and ycompress=FALSE, so prp does not shift nodes around to make space. Figure 19 on page 22 illustrates the effect of compress and ycompress.

#### 3.3 I always use the same arguments to prp. Can I reduce the amount of typing?

There is a standard R recipe for this kind of thing. Create a wrapper function with the defaults you want:

```
p <- function(x, type=4, extra=100, under=TRUE, leaf.round=0, ...)
{
    prp(x=x, type=type, extra=extra, under=under, leaf.round=leaf.round, ...)
}</pre>
```

Calling p(tree) will draw the tree using your defaults, which can be overridden when necessary. You can pass any additional arguments to prp via your function's ... argument.

The next step is to put the above code into your .Rprofile file so the function is always available. Locating that file is the hardest part of the exercise. Under Windows 7, you can use

C:\Users\username\Documents\.Rprofile.

Enter ?. Rprofile at the R prompt for the gnarly details.

#### 3.4 Please explain the warning Unrecognized rpart object

This warning is issued if your rpart object is not one of those recognized by prp, but prp is nevertheless attempting to plot the tree. The extra argument will have reduced functionality.

Details: The prp function uses the method field of the given rpart object to determine how to print the node labels and how prp's extra argument should be interpreted. It recognizes the following values for method: "anova", "class", "poisson", "exp", and "mrt". If method is not one of those values, prp looks at the object's frame to deduce if it can treat the object as an "anova" or "class" rpart model. If so, prp's extra argument will work as described on prp's help page. If not, prp calls the the "user" function for the object. (See the rpart documentation. In theory, package writers can write their own user functions, but I know of no published package that actually does this.)

If you are writing a package for a new kind of rpart tree, please contact me. Extending prp is usually straightforward — see for example mvpart.labs.R in the source code. To allow prp to handle your trees

specially, (i) your object's class should be c("yourclass", "rpart") not plain "rpart", or (ii) your object's method should be a unique string (not "anova", "class", "poisson", "exp", or "user").

### 3.5 How do I reproduce the graph on the cover page of this document?

The code for the graphs in this document can be found in the file user-manual-figs.R included in the source release of rpart.plot.

### 4 Compatibility with plot.rpart and text.rpart

Here's how to get prp to behave like plot.rpart.

- Instead of all=TRUE, use type=1 (type supersedes all and fancy, and provides more options).
- Instead of fancy=TRUE, use type=4.
- Instead of use.n=TRUE, use extra=1 (extra supersedes use.n and provides more options).
- The post.rpart function may be approximated with:

```
postscript(file="tree.ps", horizontal=TRUE)
prp(tree, type=4, extra=1, clip.right.labs=FALSE, leaf.round=0)
dev.off()
```

- Instead of pretty=0, use faclen=0 (faclen supersedes pretty).
- Instead of fwidth and fheight, use round and leaf.round to change the roundness of the node boxes, and space and yspace to change the box space around the label. But those arguments are not really equivalent. For square leaf-boxes use leaf.round=0.
- Instead of margin, use Margin (the name was changed to prevent partial matching with mar).
- plot.rparts's default value for uniform is FALSE; prp's is TRUE (because with uniform=FALSE and extra>0 the plot often requires too small a text size).
- plot.rparts's default value for branch is 1; prp's is 0.2 (because after applying compress and ycompress that arguably looks better).
- xpd=TRUE is often necessary with plot.rpart but is no longer needed with prp.

Ideally prp's arguments should be totally compatible with plot.rpart. I hope you will agree that the above discrepancies are in some sense necessary, given the approach taken by prp.

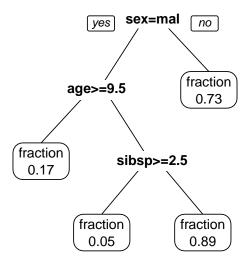


Figure 5: Adding a constant prefix "fraction" to the node labels using prefix="fraction".

### 5 Customizing the node labels

In this section we look at ways of customizing the data displayed at each node.

To start off, consider using the extra argument to display additional information. See Figures 3 and 4 and the prp help page for details.

To simply display a constant string at each leaf use the prefix argument (Figure 5):

```
data(ptitanic)
tree <- rpart(survived~., data=ptitanic, cp=.02)
prp(tree, extra=7, prefix="fraction\n")</pre>
```

We will use this model as a running example. In the data the response survived is a factor and thus by default rpart builds a class tree. The cp argument is used to keep the tree small for simplicity, and extra=7 is used to display the fitted probability of survival but not the fitted class.

An aside: By default rpart will treat a logical response as an integer and build an anova model, which is usually inappropriate for a binary response. So if your response is logical, first convert it to a factor so rpart builds a class model:

```
my.data$response <- factor(my.data$response, labels=c("No", "Yes"))</pre>
```

Or explicitly use method="class" when invoking rpart, although that may be easy to forget.

The prefix argument can be a vector, allowing us to display node-specific text in much the same way that node-specific colors are displayed in Section 6.

If we need something more flexible we can define a labeling function to generate the node text. The usual rpart way of doing that is to associate a function with the rpart object (functions\$text). However, prp does not call that function for the standard rpart methods. (This change was necessary for the extra argument.) So here we look at a different approach which is in fact often easier. We pass our labeling function to prp using the node.fun argument. The example below displays the deviance at each node (Figure 6):

```
node.fun1 <- function(x, labs, digits, varlen)
{
    paste("dev", x$frame$dev)
}
prp(tree, node.fun=node.fun1)</pre>
```

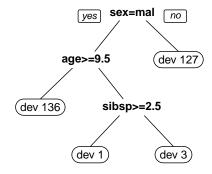


Figure 6: Printing text at the nodes with node.fun.

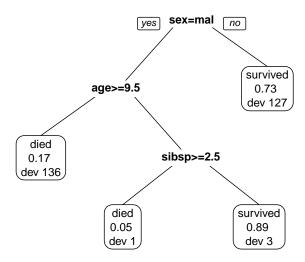


Figure 7: Adding extra text to the node labels with node.fun.

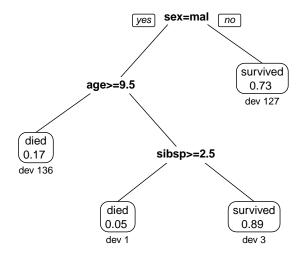


Figure 8: Same as Figure 7, but with double newlines  $\n \n$  in the labels to move text below the boxes.

or, more concisely:

prp(tree, node.fun=function(x, labs, digits, varlen) paste("dev", x\$frame\$dev))

The labeling function should return a vector of label strings, with labels corresponding to rows in x\$frame. The function must have all the arguments shown in the examples, even if it does not use them. Apart

from labs, these arguments are copies of those passed to prp. The labs argument is a vector of the labels generated by prp in the usual manner. This argument is useful if we want to include those labels but add text of our own. As an example, we modify the function above to include the text prp usually prints at the node (Figure 7):

```
node.fun2 <- function(x, labs, digits, varlen)
{
    paste(labs, "\ndev", x$frame$dev)
}
prp(tree, extra=6, node.fun=node.fun2)</pre>
```

Text after a double newline in the labels is drawn below the box. So to put the deviances below the box, change  $\n to \n\$  (Figure 8):

```
node.fun3 <- function(x, labs, digits, varlen)
{
    paste(labs, "\n\ndev", x$frame$dev)
}
prp(tree, extra=6, node.fun=node.fun3)</pre>
```

In a similar manner, we can also generate custom *split* labels by setting the <code>split.fun</code> argument to a function. However, it is easier to use <code>split.prefix</code> and related arguments, when those suffice for the needs at hand. The bottom left plot of Figure 1 is an example. We can generate labels of the form "is pclass 2nd or 3rd?" using <code>split.prefix="is", split.suffix="?", eq="", facsep=" or "."</code>

We used a class model in the above examples, but the same approach can of course be used with other rpart methods.

#### 6 Examples using the color arguments

Arguments like col and lty are recycled and can be vectors, indexed on the row number in the tree's frame. Thus the call prp(tree, split.col = c("red", "blue")) would allocate red to the node in first row of frame, blue to the second row, red to the third row, and so on. But that is not very useful, because splits and leaves appear in "random" order in frame, as can be seen in the example below. Note the node numbers along the left margin (we could plot those node numbers with nn=TRUE and their row indices with ni=TRUE):

#### > tree\$frame

	var	n	wt	dev	yval	complexity	ncompete	${\tt nsurrogate}$	yval2.1	yval2.2	yval2.3	yval2.4	yval2.5
1	sex	1309	1309	500	1	0.424	4	1	1.000	809.000	500.000	0.618	0.382
2	age	843	843	161	1	0.021	3	1	1.000	682.000	161.000	0.809	0.191
4	<leaf></leaf>	796	796	136	1	0.000	0	0	1.000	660.000	136.000	0.829	0.171
5	sibsp	47	47	22	2	0.021	3	2	2.000	22.000	25.000	0.468	0.532
10	<leaf></leaf>	20	20	1	1	0.020	0	0	1.000	19.000	1.000	0.950	0.050
11	<leaf></leaf>	27	27	3	2	0.020	0	0	2.000	3.000	24.000	0.111	0.889
3	<leaf></leaf>	466	466	127	2	0.015	0	0	2.000	127.000	339.000	0.273	0.727

Here's something more useful (Figure 9). We use the fitted value at a node (the yval field in frame) to determine the color of the node:

```
data(ptitanic)
tree <- rpart(survived~., data=ptitanic, cp=.02)
prp(tree, extra=6,
    box.col=c("pink", "palegreen3")[tree$frame$yval])</pre>
```

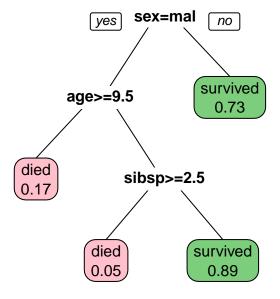


Figure 9: Using the fitted value and the box.col argument to determine the color of the boxes.

Figure 10 is a similar example for a regression tree (based on code kindly supplied by Josh Browning):

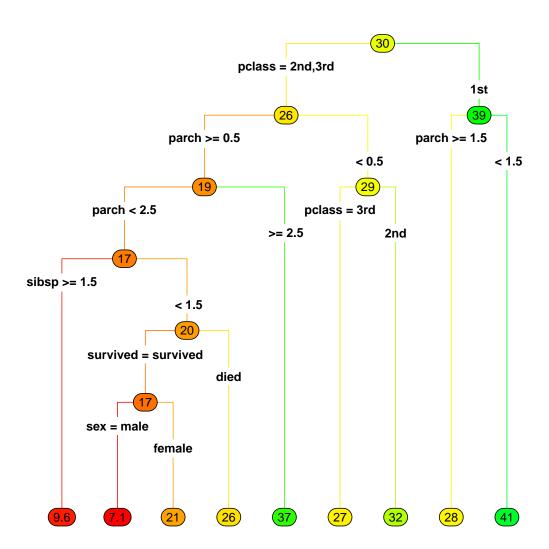
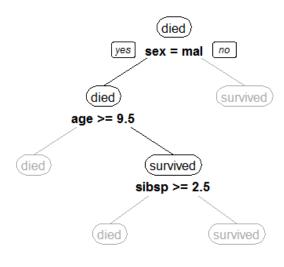


Figure 10: Using the fitted value to determine the color of regression nodes.



movie 4 complexity 0.021

Figure 11: Using the color arguments to indicate a nodes's complexity.

Nodes with a complexity greater than a certain value (0.021) are grayed out in this example.

The following code creates a series of images — a movie — which shows how the tree is pruned on node complexity:

```
complexities <- sort(unique(tree$frame$complexity)) # a vector of complexity values
for(complexity in complexities) {
    cols <- ifelse(tree$frame$complexity >= complexity, 1, "darkgray")
    prp(tree, col=cols, branch.col=cols, split.col=cols)
    Sys.sleep(1) # wait one second
}
```

Figure 11 shows one of the plots produced by above code. (Screen flashing while the code is running is caused by prp's dummy calls to plot, which are necessary to figure out the graph layout for the final plot. There seems to be no way to avoid the flashing when plotting to the screen.)

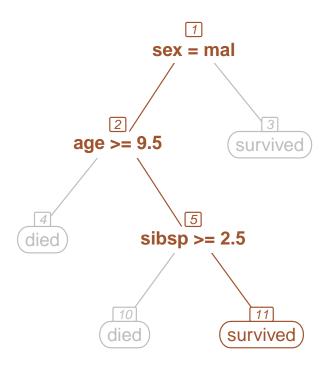


Figure 12: Node 11 and its ancestors are highlighted.

The following code highlights a node and all its ancestors (Figure 12):

Here are some code fragments demonstrating additional techniques for manipulating rpart models. It is worthwhile coming to grips with frame — look at print(tree\$frame) and print.default(tree). Sometimes we with work with node numbers and sometimes it is necessary to work with row numbers in frame:

nodes <- as.numeric(row.names(tree\$frame)) # node numbers in the order they appear in frame</pre>

```
node %/% 2
                                         # parent of node
c(node * 2, node * 2 + 1)
                                         # left and right child of node
inode <- match(node, nodes)</pre>
                                         # row index of node in frame
is.leaf <- tree$frame$var == "<leaf>"
                                         # logical vec, indexed on row in frame
nodes[is.leaf]
                                         # the leaf node numbers
is.left <- nodes \%% 2 == 0
                                         # logical vec, indexed on row in frame
ifelse(is.left, nodes+1, nodes-1)
                                         # siblings
get.children <- function(node)</pre>
                                         # node and all its children
    if(is.leaf[match(node, nodes)]) {
        node
    } else
        c(node,
          get.children(2 * node),
                                         # left child
          get.children(2 * node + 1))  # right child
```

### 7 Branch widths

It can be informative to have branch widths proportional to the number of observations. In the example on the right side of Figure 13, the small number of observations at the bottom split is immediately obvious. We can also estimate the relative number of males and females from the widths at the root split.

The right side of the figure was generated with:

Note the branch.type argument. Other values of branch.type can be used to get widths proportional to the node's deviance, complexity, and so on. See the prp help page for details.

But be aware that the human eye is not good at estimating widths of branches at an angle. In Figure 14 the left branch has the same width as the right branch, although one could be forgiven for thinking otherwise. Width here should be measured horizontally, but the eye refuses to do that. The illusion is triggered by the different slopes in this extreme example (whereas in a plotted tree the left and right branches at a split usually have similar slopes and the illusion is irrelevant).

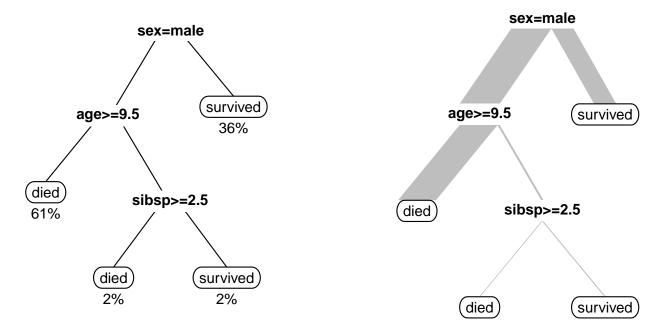


Figure 13: left The percentage of observations in a node.

right That information represented by the width of the branches.



Figure 14: Misleading branch widths. The two branches have the same width, measured horizontally.

### 8 Trimming a tree with the mouse

Set snip=TRUE to display a tree and interactively trim it with the mouse.

If you click on a split it will be marked as deleted. If you click on an already-deleted split it will be undeleted (if its parent is not deleted). Information on the node is printed as you click.

When you have finished trimming, click on the QUIT button or right click, and prp will return the trimmed tree (in the obj field). Example (Figure 15):

```
data(ptitanic)
tree <- rpart(survived~., data=ptitanic, cp=.012)
new.tree <- prp(tree, snip=TRUE)$obj # interactively trim the tree
prp(new.tree) # display the new tree</pre>
```

You might like to prefix the above code with par(mfrow=c(1,2)) to display the original and trimmed trees side by side.

Additionally, you can use the **snip.fun** argument to specify a function to be invoked after each mouse click. The following example prints the trimmed tree's performance after each click — using this technique you can manually select a desired performance-complexity trade-off.

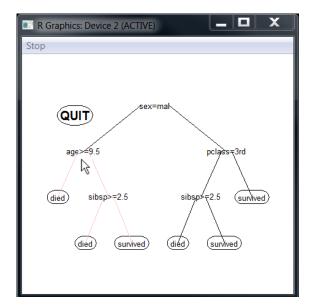


Figure 15: Interactively trimming a tree with snip=TRUE.

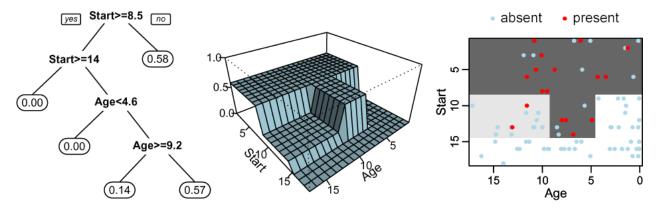


Figure 16: The same tree represented in three different ways. The middle and right graphs show the predicted probability as a function of the predictors. The right graph is an aerial view of the middle graph.

### 9 Using plotmo in conjunction with prp

Another useful graphical technique is to plot the model's response while changing the values of the predictors. Figure 16 illustrates this on the kyphosis data:

The above code uses plotmo to plot the regression surfaces.<sup>1</sup> The figure actually shows just a subset of the plots produced by the calls to plotmo, with some adjustments for printing.

The type="prob" argument is passed to predict.rpart, which returns a two column response, and the nresponse="present" argument selects the second column. In other words, we are plotting the predicted probability of kyphosis after surgery. We could instead plot the predicted class by using type="class".

Note how each "cliff" in the middle graph corresponds to a split in the tree. (The slight slope of the cliffs is an artifact of the persp plot — the cliffs should be vertical.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> plotmo is in the plotmo package. It was in the earth package prior to April 2011.

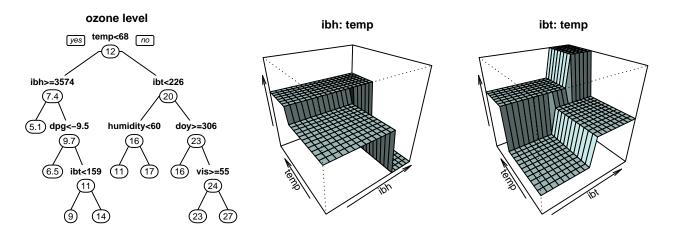


Figure 17: A tree built from the ozone data, and regression surfaces for the predictors at the upper splits.

Only two predictors were used in the kyphosis tree. More complex models with many predictors can be viewed in a piecemeal fashion by looking at the action of one or two predictors at a time. For example, Figure 17 shows a tree built from the ozone data:

The model predicts the ozone level, or air pollution, as a function of several variables: Also shown are regression surfaces for the variables in the upper splits. (Once again, the figure actually shows just a subset of the plots produced by the call to plotmo.)

The plotmo graphs are created by varying two variables while holding all others at their median values. Thus the graphs show only a *thin slice* of the data, but are nonetheless helpful. They are most informative when the variables being plotted do not have strong interactions with the other variables.

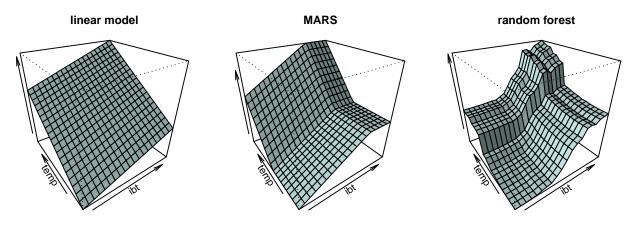


Figure 18: Surfaces for other models using the ozone data. Compare to the right graph of Figure 17.

It is interesting to compare the rpart tree to other models (Figure 18). The linear model gives a flat surface. MARS generates a surface by combining hinge functions (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multivariate\_adaptive\_regression\_splines). The random forest smooths out the surface by averaging lots of trees.

There are a large number of possible variable pairs (from the 9 predictors in the ozone data we can form  $9 \times 8/2 = 36$  pairs). The options to plotmo in the code below select just the pair in the graphs. See the plotmo help page for details. The code is:

```
a <- lm(03~., data=ozone1)
plotmo(a, degree1=0, all2=TRUE, degree2=24)  # left graph, linear model

library(earth) # earth is an implementation of MARS (MARS is a trademarked term)
a <- earth(03~., data=ozone1, degree=2)
plotmo(a, degree1=0, all2=TRUE, degree2=16)  # middle graph, MARS

library(randomForest)
a <- randomForest(03~., data=ozone1)
plotmo(a, degree1=0, all2=TRUE, degree2=24)  # right graph, random forest</pre>
```

### 10 The graph layout algorithm

For the curious, this section is an overview of the algorithm used by prp to lay out the graph. The current implementation is not perfect but suffices for most trees. The more-or-less standard approach for positioning labels, simulated annealing, is not used because an objective function cannot (easily) be calculated efficiently. A central issue is a chicken-and-egg problem: we need the cex to determine the best positions for the labels but we need the positions to determine the cex.

Initially, prp calculates the tentative positions of the nodes. If compress=TRUE (the default), it slides nodes horizontally into available space where possible. It uses the same code as plot.rpart to do all this, with a little extension for fallen.leaves. Figure 19 shows the same tree plotted with different settings of the compress and ycompress arguments (we will get to ycompress in a moment). In the middle plot see how age>=16 has been shifted left, for example.

If cex=NULL (meaning calculate a suitable cex automatically, the default), prp then calculates the cex needed to display the labels and their boxes with at least gap and ygap between the boxes. (Whether the boxes are invisible or not is immaterial to the graph layout algorithm.) This is accomplished with a binary search for the appropriate cex. A search is necessary because:

- (a) It is virtually impossible to calculate the required scale analytically taking into account the many parameters such as adj, yshift, and space. For example, sometimes a smaller cex causes *more* overlapping as boxes shift around with the scale change.
- (b) Font sizes are discrete, so the font size we get may not be the font size we asked for. This is especially a problem with a small cex where there is a large relative jump between the type size and the next smaller size.

Note that prp will only *decrease* the cex; it never increases the cex above 1 (but that can be changed with max.auto.cex).

If the initial cex is less than 0.7 (actually ycompress.cex), prp then tries to make additional space as follows (assuming ycompress=TRUE, the default). If type=0, 1, or 2, it shifts alternate nodes vertically, looking for

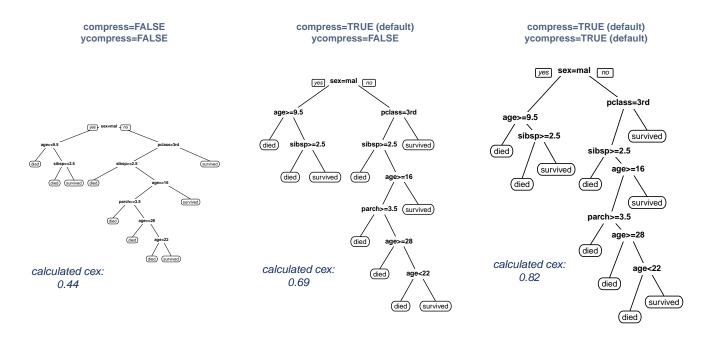
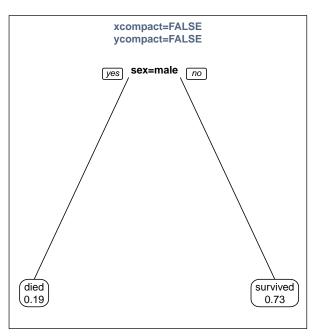


Figure 19: The compress and ycompress arguments



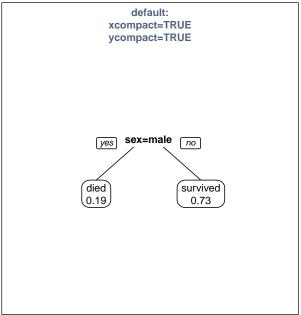


Figure 20: Small trees are compacted by default, as shown on the right.

the shift in shift.amounts that allows the biggest type size. If type=3 or 4 it tries alternating the leaves if fallen.leaves=TRUE.

The shift is retained only if makes possible a type size gain of at least 10% (actually accept.cex). The shifted tree is not as "tidy" as the original tree, but the larger text is usually worth the untidiness (but not always). Compare the middle and right plots in Figure 19.

Finally, for small trees where there is too much white space, prp compacts the tree horizontally and/or vertically by changing xlim and ylim (Figure 20). This can be disabled with the xcompact and ycompact arguments.

Arguably the most serious limitation of the current implementation is its inability to display results on test data (on the tree derived from the training data).

# Acknowledgments

I have leaned heavily on the code in plot.rpart and text.rpart. Those functions were written by Terry Therneau and Beth Atkinson, and were ported to R by Brian Ripley. The functions were descended from Linda Clark and Daryl Pregibon's S-Plus tree package. But please note that the prp code was written independently and I take responsibility for the excessive number of arguments, etc. I'd also like to thank Beth Atkinson for her feedback.

### A Appendix: mypart models

The extra argument of rpart.plot has a special meaning for mvpart models, as shown in the figure below. Remember also that as always you can print percentages by adding 100 to extra. The type and other arguments work in the usual way.

#### Example:

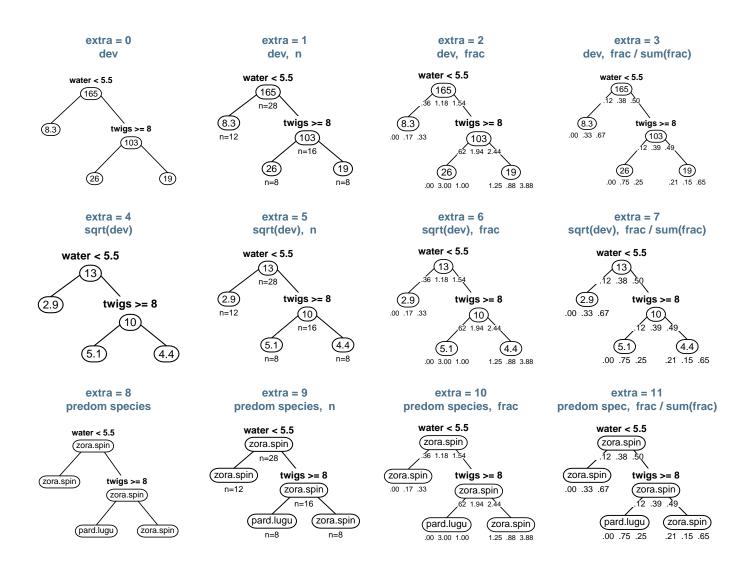


Figure 21: The extra argument with an mrt model.