

Message to the Korean Open Statistics with GNU R Conference

I am both pleased and honoured to be invited to address the first Korean R users' conference. R has shown remarkable growth since Ross Ihaka and Robert Gentleman first conceived of R around 1990. One of the reasons for R's continued dynamism (for which, by the way, I can take no credit personally) is the effort by the R Core Team to support the internationalization of R. It is therefore particularly gratifying to see the emergence of robust R users groups around the world, and particularly outside of Europe, North America, and English-speaking Oceania.

As one index of the continued rapid development of R, I've attached a graph showing the number of R packages on the R package archive CRAN over the last ten years; this graph is an updated version of a figure in a paper that I published in the R Journal in 2009 on the social organization and trajectory of the R Project for Statistical Computing. As is clear from the graph, the number of packages on CRAN continues to increase nearly at an exponential rate.

I've been asked to say something as well about the continued development of my Rcmdr ("R Commander") package, which initially was designed to provide a simple, platform-independent, basic-statistics graphical user interface for R. Although the R Commander has grown substantially beyond its initial purpose, to incorporate for example linear, generalized linear, and other commonly applied regression models, it still provides access only to a small subset of what's available in R. That subset, however, is expanded via R Commander plug-in packages, of which there are now nearly 30 available on CRAN. Although I do not foresee a radical redesign of the R Commander interface, which is implemented through the standard R tcltk package, I do make regular efforts to improve the interface. For example, the most recent version of the R Commander incorporates a mechanism for dialog boxes to "remember" their state, and I'm gradually rewriting the R Commander dialogs so that they use this mechanism. I'm pleased that the R Commander, which employs the standard internationalization facilities in R, has been translated into a number of other languages, most recently into Korean. That said, I believe that sophisticated users are generally better served by the command-line interface to R than by a graphical user interface such as the R Commander.

R, and other open-source projects, are testimony to what people can achieve when they cooperate. I wish your conference success, and hope that it is the first in a series of Korean R users' conferences. I also look forward to the increased participation of R users from around the world at the annual useR! conferences.

Greetings and best wishes from Canada.

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