

Reproducible Research

A brief overview of
Literate Programming via R and `knitr`
and
Version control via git

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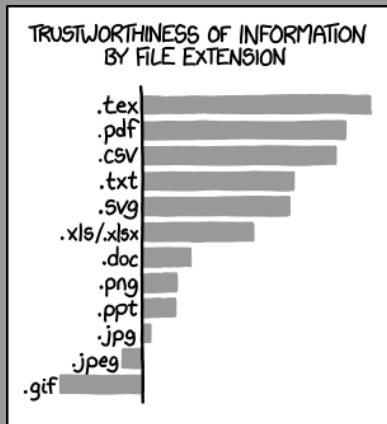
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29 January 2014

Presentation Outline

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- 3 Design
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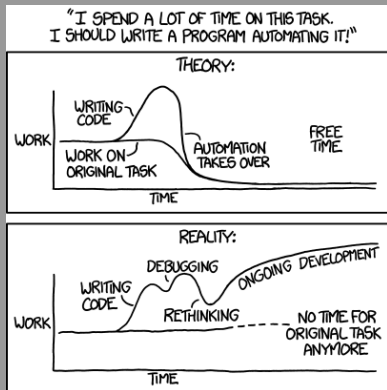
A little humor



Alt Text: I have never been lied to by data in a .txt file which has been hand-aligned.
The image itself is a .png

www.xkcd.com/1301

A little humor



Alt Text: ‘Automating’ comes from the roots ‘auto; meaning ‘self-’, and ‘mating’, meaning ‘screwing’.

www.xkcd.com/1319

Literate Programming

- Originally intended for software development
- Mix source code (for the computer) and documentation (for the humans) together
- Sweave built on this paradigm but with a different focus: reproducible data analysis and statistical reports.
- knitr, developed by Yihui Xie, expands on the concept of Sweave.
- ‘designed to give the user access to every part of the process of dealing with a literate programming document’
- package homepage <http://yihui.name/knitr/>

Dynamic Report Writing

- Pros:
 - Reproducible reports
 - Contextual commenting
 - knitr is flexible enough to allow for multiple analysis languages, and multiple markup languages.
- Cons:
 - Not all analysis languages are ideally suited for this paradigm.
 - Collaborations with others using WYSIWYG editors requires some additional work and breaks automation/reproducibility.
- Additional Tools: Version control, e.g., git or svn.
- Every project is different, use the tools that will work best.

Why knitr?

- Incorporate both the analysis code and the manuscript writing into one file.
- Contextually commented analysis code.
- Fully documented and reproducible reports.

Example: Code for the next two frames

```
\begin{frame}[fragile]

<<"cars", fig.width = 3.5, fig.height = 3.25, results = "asis">>=
fit <- lm(dist ~ speed, data = cars)
latex(cbind(coef(fit), confint(fit)),
      file = "", title = "", ctable = TRUE,
      caption = "Regression Estimates",
      digits = 3, colhead = c("Est", "LCL", "UCL"))

@

The expected stopping distance for a car during the 1920s
increased by a  $\text{\Sexpr{round(coef(fit)[2], 2)}}$  feet for every
additional mph increase in speed.

\end{frame}

\begin{frame}[fragile]

<<"cars_plot", fig.width = 3.5, fig.height = 2.75>>=
qplot(speed, dist, data = cars) + geom_smooth(method = "lm")

@

\end{frame}
```



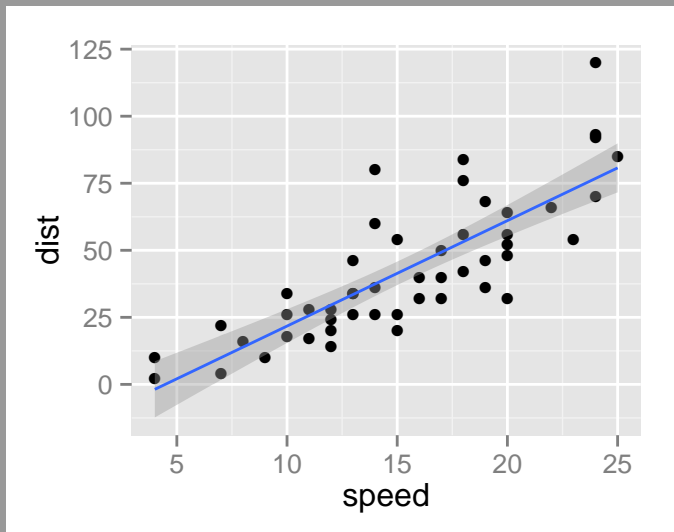
```
fit <- lm(dist ~ speed, data = cars)
latex(cbind(coef(fit), confint(fit)),
      file = "", title = "", ctable = TRUE,
      caption = "Regression Estimates",
      digits = 3, colhead = c("Est", "LCL", "UCL"))
```

Table: Regression Estimates

	Est	LCL	UCL
(Intercept)	-17.58	-31.2	-3.99
speed	3.93	3.1	4.77

The expected stopping distance for a car during the 1920s increased by a 3.93 feet for every additional mph increase in speed.

```
qplot(speed, dist, data = cars) + geom_smooth(method = "lm")
```



How does knitr work?

- One input file with
 - an analysis language (R, Python, awk, SAS, ...) and
 - an output markup language (L^AT_EX, html, Markdown, ...)
- **knitr** determines the appropriate set of patterns (regular expression to extract analysis language and options from the input file)
- The input file is knitted..., analysis language is evaluated and the appropriate output markup results are placed into a .tex, .html, .md, ..., file.
- Final document (the .tex, .html, .md, ...) is ready for release or post processing as needed.

Customizing the behavior of knitr

For Rnw files:

```
<<"chunk_label", echo = FALSE, results = "asis">>=  
@
```

- Chunk options must be a single line; no line breaks.
- Options must be valid R expressions.
- Chunk options can be specified for each individual chunk.
- Global options are set via `opts_chunk$set()`

Chunk Options

Full details for all the chunk options see
<http://yihui.name/knitr/options>

- Code Evaluation
- Text Results
- Code Decoration
- Cache
- Plots
- Animation
- Chunk References
- Child Documents
- Language Engines
- Extracting source code

Input/Analysis Language

- R is the ‘default’ language for analysis
- Other options are available, including SAS. The chunk option ‘engine’ allows for different languages to be used.

engine: (‘R’; character) the language name of the code chunk; currently other possible values are ‘python’ and ‘awk’/‘gawk’; the object `knit_engines` in this package can be used to set up engines for other languages¹

- Pick the right language for the job. R is great, but every now and then SAS would be preferable.

¹<http://yihui.name/knitr/options>

Markup Language

html

- Pros:
 - easy to send to others,
 - comments in html,
 - great for tutorials or anything that will be published on line.
- Cons:
 - Clunky (in my opinion),
 - not apt for large data analysis reports.
- html code can be placed natively in markdown, ergo, markdown has supplanted html.

Language Options

Markup Language

Markdown

- Pros:
 - Easy to learn
 - Simple and versatile
 - Growing user community
 - Via pandoc, easy to convert to many other file formats such as \LaTeX , html, or .docx.
- Cons:
 - no native comments.
 - ‘too minimal’
 - pandoc may require additional scripting to format output as needed for .docx or other file types.

Markup Language

L^AT_EX

- Pros:
 - Intended use: technical report writing and typesetting.
 - Comments.
 - Many tools exist for formatting R output well in L^AT_EX files.
 - Cross referencing, citations.
 - pdf_latex produces a file that is almost platform independent.
- Cons:
 - Not so good when working with others using Microsoft Office.
 - R is small, Tex Live, MacTeX, and proTeXt are not.
 - Steepest learning curve

Language Options

Markup Language

My Preferences

- \LaTeX is my preferred markup language for data analysis reports and presentations (via beamer).
- Markdown is my preferred markup language for developing a web page. Easier to work in than html and more flexible.

$$.Rmd \xrightarrow{\text{knitr}} .md \xrightarrow{\text{pandoc}} \begin{cases} .html & \text{okay} \\ .doc(x) & \text{might require VB scripting} \\ .pdf & \text{Use } \text{\LaTeX} \end{cases}$$

Collaborations

That's great, but ...

- L^AT_EX pdfs are not always easy to transfer to MS Word
- Local html pages are easy to break.
- Misconceptions about viewing local files versus remote files in a web browser.
- .doc(x) are ‘accidentally’ editable. So much for reproducible research.
- What about Google docs?
- What about track changes in Office?

Suggested Development Environments

- I prefer the Vim editor and with the vim-r-plugin.
 - Vim Editor: www.vim.org/index.php
 - vim-r-plugin:
www.vim.org/scripts/script.php?script_id=2628
 - Completely customizable.
- If you are not a Vim or Emacs user, then RStudio is the premier R IDE for you.
 - Download and info: www.rstudio.com
 - Built in tools for version control, projects, knitting...
- RStudio is the better R development environment.
- Vim is a better text editor.
- A pseudo WYSIWYG editor for \LaTeX which will work well with `kntir` is LyX.

Reproducible examples

These slides, and the following examples, can be downloaded/cloned, from

<https://github.com/dewittpe/knitrexamples>

- A simple data analysis report using R, and three different markup languages, \LaTeX , html, and Markdown.
- An example of using SAS within knitr.
- An example of a more complex and extensive data analysis report.

Version Control with git

- Distributed version control: everything is local and can be synced with a remote server.
- Simple to use.
 - Built in GUI with RStudio
 - Only need five commands to be able to use git.
 - 1 git status
 - 2 git log
 - 3 git add
 - 4 git pull
 - 5 git push
 - Other very helpful commands: tag, fetch, merge, mergetool, and branch

Do you need a server?

- The repositories are local, so servers are not needed.
- Servers to host a central repository are helpful for collaborations.
- Read/Write permissions can be set for different users.
- There are options to put a git enterprise on a server behind our firewall, but it's expensive.
- github.com has free public repos, pay for private repos
- bitbucket.org has free public and private repos.

More on git

- Visit <http://git-scm.com/book> for documentation on git.
- Fully introducing git would take more time than is available right now.