

Command Patterns, R Markdown, & Git/GitHub

Code ▾

Instructor: Soumya Mukherjee

Content credit: Dr. Matthew Beckman and Olivia Beck

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Thematic Statement

Chapter 3 Intro:

Almost everyone who writes computer commands starts by copying and modifying existing commands.

To do this, you need to be able to **read** command expressions.

Once you can read, you will know enough to identify the patterns you need for any given task and consider what needs to be modified to suit your particular purpose.

R Command Patterns: Command Chains

Hide

```
Princes <-  
  BabyNames %>%  
  filter(name == "Prince") %>%  
  group_by(year, sex) %>%  
  summarise(yearlyTotal = sum(count))
```

- Each link in the chain will be a data verb and its arguments.
 - The very first link is usually a data table.

- Put each link on its own line in general
- Links are connected by the pipe: %>%
- Often, but not always, you will save the output of the chain in a named object.
 - This is done with the *assignment operator*, <-
- Note that %>% is at the end of each line.
 - Except ... Princes <- is assignment
 - Except ... The last line has no %>% .

We'll be using the chain syntax for most things in STAT 184. You should know that anything written with chain syntax can be written without, and lots of things written without can be converted to chain syntax.

Parts of Speech in R

1. Data frames

- tidy data for one or more variables
- Data frames often appear at the start of a command chain.
- If assignment is used to save the result, the object created is usually a data frame.
- Convention: data table names should start with a CAPITAL LETTER, e.g., RegisteredVoters

2. Functions

- Functions are objects (i.e. *data verbs*) that transform an input into an output.
- Functions are **always** followed by parentheses, that is, an opening (and, eventually, a closing) .
- Each link in a command chain starts with a function.

3. Arguments

- Arguments describe the details of what a function is to do.
- They go **inside** a function's parentheses.
- Multiple arguments are **always** separated by commas.
- Many functions take *named arguments* which look like a name followed by an = sign, e.g.
- Technical note: the data frame passed by %>% is by default used as the first argument to the function that immediately follows.

Hide

```
data(package = "dcData")
```

4. Variables

- Variables are the components (columns) of tidy data tables.
- When they are used, they usually appear in function arguments, that is, between the function's parentheses.

- Variables will **never** be followed by (.
- Convention: variables should have names that start with a lower-case letter (*not* universally followed).

5. Constants

- Constants are single values, most commonly a number or a character string.
- Character strings will always be in quotation marks,
"like this."
- Numerals are the written form of numbers, for instance.
-42
1984
3.14159

Additional Remarks

6. Assignment

- stores the output of the command (chain) in a named object.
- Use the *assignment operator*, <- (it looks like an arrow pointing to the object)

7. Formulas

- common argument to many functions
- `regressionModel <- lm(Y ~ X, data = ProjectData)`
 - The `Y ~ X` part is a formula
 - What other parts do you see?
- mostly left to other statistics classes

Discussion Problem

Consider this command chain:

Hide

```
Princes <-  
  BabyNames %>%  
  filter(grepl("Prince", name)) %>%  
  group_by(year) %>%  
  summarise(total = sum(count))
```

Just from the syntax, you should be able to discern the role of each of these things:

- Princes
- BabyNames
- filter
- grepl
- "Prince"
- name
- group_by
- year
- summarise
- total
- sum
- count

Conventions (i.e. Style)

- It's important to note that these conventions are for the benefit of users & consumers of your code.
- **R will not “enforce” them for you** (but RStudio can help...more in a moment)
- Style will be graded on several assignments (using RStudio config)

Popular conventions:

- whitespace, comments, long lines
 - be generous with whitespace (R just ignores it, and it makes code MUCH easier for humans to read)
 - Use the # character to include comments within code chunks (again be generous; R ignores comments)
 - limit length of R commands to about 80 characters
- object assignment & naming
 - use <- for assignment (not “=“)
 - data tables should begin with a CAPITAL letter
 - variables should begin with a lowercase letter.
 - use descriptive but concise object names (harder than it sounds, but totally worth it)
 - camel-case or “_” syntax (i.e, variableName ; variable_name ; DataTableName)

Style Guides

There are several published style guides to help R programmers write beautiful code.

- Data Computing eBook by Kaplan & Beckman (see Appendix: R Programming Style Guide) (<https://dtkaplan.github.io/DataComputingEbook>)
- Tidyverse Style Guide by H. Wickham (<https://style.tidyverse.org/>)
- Google's R Style Guide (allegedly) (<http://web.stanford.edu/class/cs109I/unrestricted/resources/google-style.html>)

RStudio Help with Style (part 1)

RStudio has some basic support built in (required for STAT 184), but more comprehensive support is provided by the `lintr` package (recommended).

RStudio >> Tools >> Global Options >> Code >> Diagnostics >> check nearly all boxes (both “warn if variable...” settings can be optional)

Options



General



Code



Console



Appearance



Pane Layout



Packages



R Markdown



Sweave



Spelling



Git/SVN



Publishing



Terminal



Accessibility

Editing

Display

Saving

Completion

Diagnostics

R Diagnostics

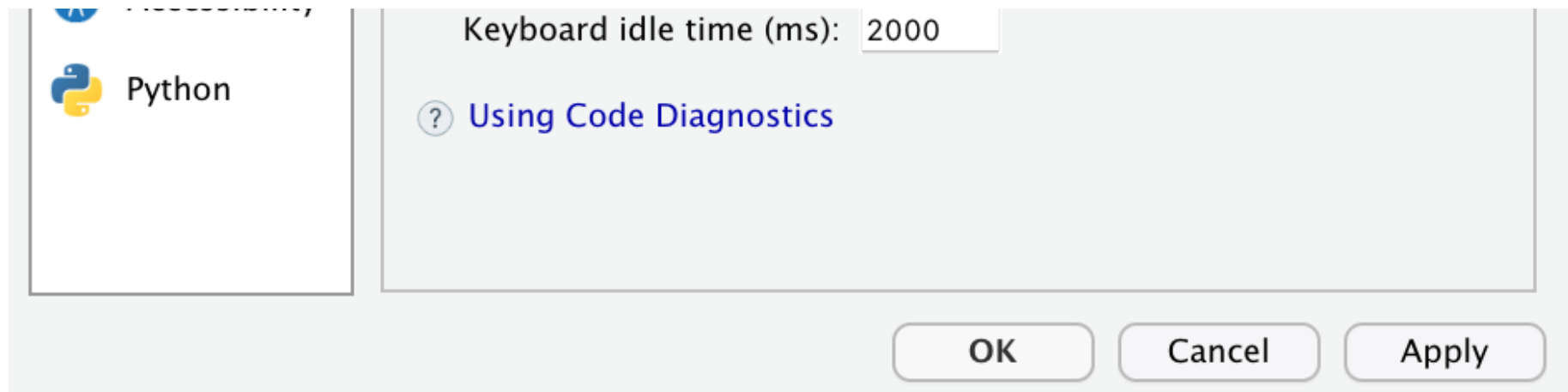
- ☒ Show diagnostics for R
- ☒ Enable diagnostics within R function calls
- ☒ Check arguments to R function calls
- ☒ Check usage of '<-' in function call
- ☐ Warn if variable used has no definition in scope
- ☐ Warn if variable is defined but not used
- ☒ Provide R style diagnostics (e.g. whitespace)
- ☒ Prompt to install missing R packages discovered in R source files

Other Languages

- ☒ Show diagnostics for C/C++
- ☒ Show diagnostics for JavaScript, HTML, and CSS

Show Diagnostics

- ☒ Show diagnostics whenever source files are saved
- ☒ Show diagnostics after keyboard is idle for a period of time



RStudio Help with Style (part 2)

Global Options >> Code >> Display >> (show line numbers; set margin = 80; rainbow parenthesis; others optional)

Options



General



Code



Console



Appearance



Pane Layout



Packages



R Markdown



Python



Sweave



Spelling



Git/SVN



Publishing

Editing

Display

Saving

Completion

Diagnostics

General

☒ Highlight selected word

☒ Highlight selected line

☒ Show line numbers

☐ Relative line numbers

☒ Show margin

Margin column

☐ Show whitespace characters

Indentation guides:

☒ Blinking cursor


☐ Allow scroll past end of document


☒ Allow drag and drop of text

Fold Style:

Syntax

☐ Highlight R function calls

 Terminal

 Accessibility

☒ Enable preview of named and hexadecimal colors

☒ Use rainbow parentheses

OK

Cancel

Apply

RStudio Help with Style (part 3)

Once configured, when RStudio detects styling errors:

- a blue “information” dot appears in the margin
- hover your cursor on the “information” dot for a description of each error
- a wavy blue underline appears under the error (though hard to see)

```
199- ## RStudio Help with Style
200
201- ```${r}```
202- y<-sum (x=c(1, 2, 3))
203
```

expected whitespace around '<-' operator

unnecessary whitespace

expected whitespace around '=' operator

Bad style!

Markdown / R Markdown

- Human-readable syntax by design

- The same `.Rmd` can be “rendered” in any of several formats (HTML, PDF, and more)
- Can produce both slides, documents, webpage, etc as output.
- **Regardless** of intended output, Rmd documents generally require two parts
 - “yaml” header at the top (designated by `---` before/after) includes some document controls
 - title
 - author
 - date
 - output
 - [and more...]
 - body of the document is made of various combinations of components such as:
 - Markdown syntax (like hashtag headers)
 - Narrative text... regular sentences and paragraphs
 - Lists (bullets or numbers)
 - R Code “chunks”
 - URLs
 - Images
 - Tables
 - and more...

Using R Notebooks for STAT 184:

- All assignments in STAT 184 should be submitted as **R Notebook**, unless instructed otherwise
- Example header for Rmd file to produce an R Notebook
 - **Important** to notice `output: html_notebook`
 - That can get changed on accident, and students get confused

```
---
title: "Assignment Title"
author: "Your Name Here"
date: "Due Date Here"
output: html_notebook
---
```

- RStudio >> File >> New File >> R Notebook
 - For all intents & purposes it just makes a fancy HTML document
 - RStudio automatically adds the extension “.nb.html” to let you know

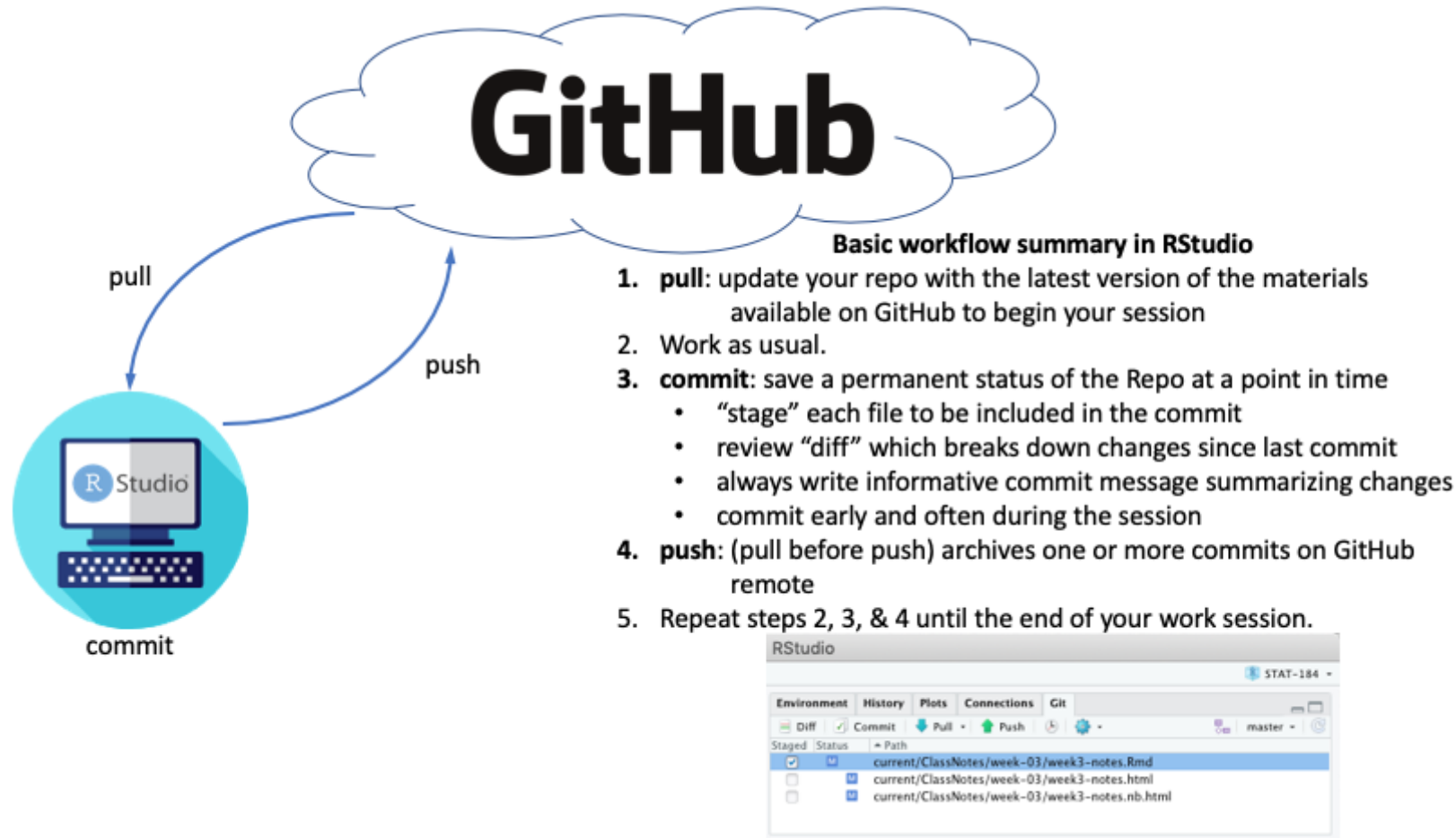
- Resulting document embeds a “Code” button in top right that allows readers to download Rmd
- You must run all R code in your Rmd document before it can appear in the HTML R Notebook
- Generally, you will upload your **HTML** file to Canvas... R Notebook will embed your `.Rmd` automatically
- If your R Notebook won’t work for some reason, you can usually submit the `.Rmd` file for a penalty

Tip: The people at Posit publish RStudio “Cheat Sheets” can help you get off and running with these tools. Here’s a link to several of them (<https://posit.co/resources/cheatsheets/>), including R Markdown, RStudio, and other topics we’ll hit in this course.

Git / GitHub

- See Chapter 9 in Data Computing eBook (link) (<https://dtkaplan.github.io/DataComputingEbook/chap-version-control.html#chap:version-control>)
- “GitHub is a code hosting platform for version control and collaboration. It lets you and others work together on projects from anywhere.”
- **Repositories (“Repos”)** are used to organize each project
 - These can contain documents, images, folders, code, data, ... basically everything you need for your project
 - “Larger” files (> 100 MB) need some special handling
 - We’ll link each **GitHub Repository** to an **RStudio Project** (in a normal directory folder on your computer)
 - Pro Tip: Don’t put repositories *inside* other repositories
- Most of your workflow is unchanged!
 - As far as your computer is concerned, the repository works just like any other directory (i.e. folder)
 - You edit files, save changes, etc

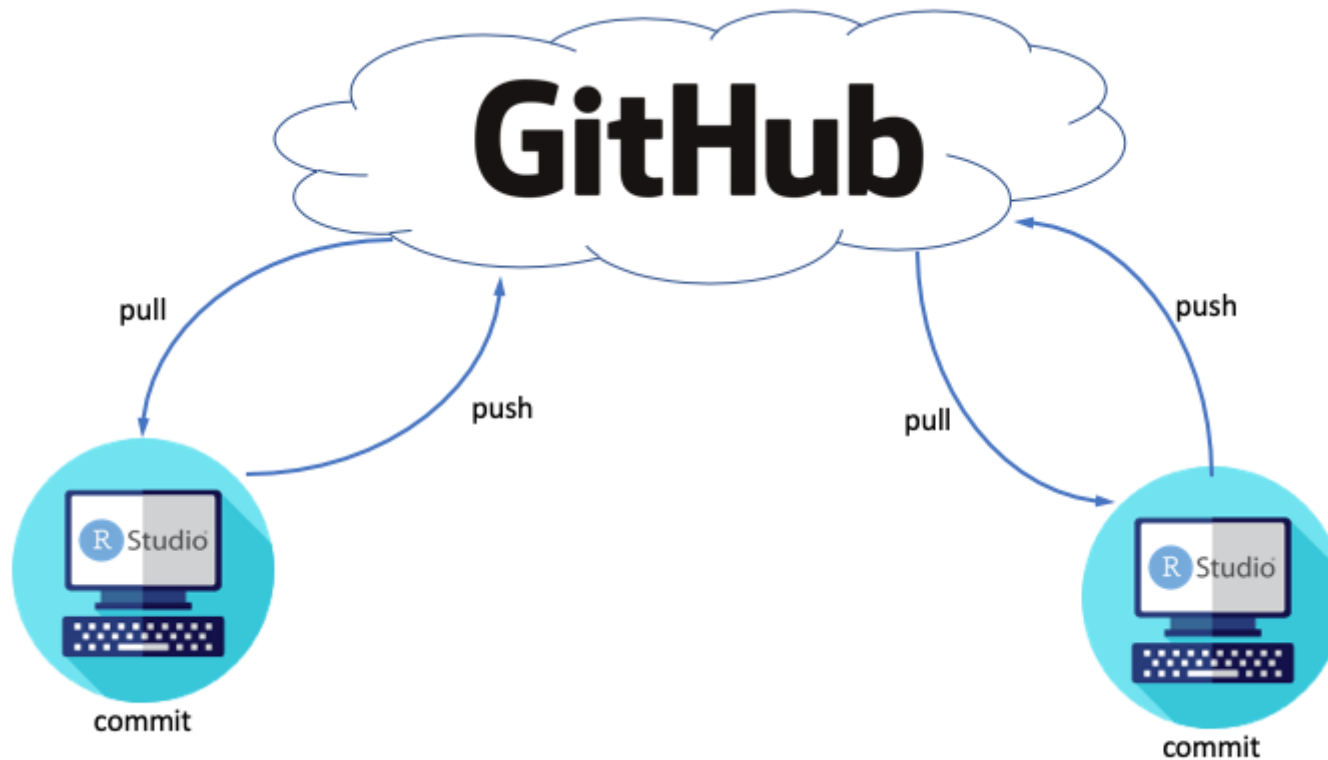
Git / GitHub



Example of a minimal workflow using Git/GitHub with RStudio

- **commit** changes
 - ideally, each commit should encompass *one meaningful modification*
 - creates a permanent snapshot of the repository
 - you can revisit these snapshots at any time...
- **push/pull** to remote
 - GitHub stores the state of your repository in the cloud
 - When you *push*, you update the remote version
 - Anyone with access to your GitHub repository can *pull* the remote version and work with it
 - This might be you, using a different computer (like the RStudio Server)

- It might be a collaborator like your STAT 184 paired programming teammate
- It might be a professor or TA
- If the repo is made public, it might be a complete stranger!
- The collaborator can then commit changes and push them to the remote as well



Multiple collaborators using Git/GitHub with RStudio

Merge Conflicts

- Rare for single-user Repos unless you're contributing from multiple computers
- Git is good about merging changes from different collaborators as long as they stay out of each other's way
- a **merge conflict** occurs when collaborators make changes that are in direct conflict with one another (e.g., different versions of the same line(s) in the same document)
 - this is actually a very good thing because Git doesn't just overwrite changes of one user (that could be really bad)
 - Git instead lets a human decide which version of the work should ultimately be kept or removed in order to reconcile the apparent conflict

Git / GitHub

- Once configured, nearly all of the action can happen in RStudio (or RStudio Server)
- A “Git” tab will appear in RStudio
- Diff, Commit, Pull, Push are most common actions

GitHub & RStudio (for STAT 184 assignments!)

- assignments are often deployed to you as Git Repos (hosted on GitHub)
- See DataComputing eBook for screenshots to import them into RStudio
 - eBook appendix (link) (<https://dtkaplan.github.io/DataComputingEbook/appendix-github-rstudio-configuration.html#appendix-github-rstudio-configuration>)
 - For assignments, when I’ve given you a template Repo (i.e., a link deployed from Canvas)
 - You’ll start from section “18.23 In GitHub...” at Step 3 in the Data Computing eBook

Assignments before next lecture (July 7)

- DataComputing Ebook Chapter 1 Exercises (1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.5)
- Reading Quiz based on DataComputing Ebook Chapter 3 and 4