

Structuring an Online Book Club: R for Data Science by R-Ladies São Paulo

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Abstract

In 2024, the community R-Ladies São Paulo started an online book club, to discuss the chapters from the book "R for Data Science (2e)". Here we describe the structure and organization of the book club, the tools used to facilitate communication and task management, and the impact of the book club on the participants and the broader Brazilian R community.

Introduction

The book "[R for Data Science \(2e\)](#)" by Hadley Wickham, Mine Çetinkaya-Rundel, and Garrett Grolemund presents the state-of-the-art related to data science using R and the tidyverse. This book began to be [translated into Brazilian Portuguese](#) by the Latin American community in September 2023. This translation is an important step for making the content more accessible to the broader Brazilian R community for free. In February 2024, the R-Ladies São Paulo community initiated an online book club to discuss the chapters of the book, focusing on the ones that had already been translated.

Structure of the Book Club

The book is divided into sections (Whole Game, Visualize, Transform, Import, Program, Communicate), so the book club first focused on discussing the chapters from the section "Whole Game", which gives an overview of the most important topics from the tidyverse. Considering that the participants from the community have limited time availability, it was planned to discuss one chapter per month. For shorter chapters (such as the workflow chapters), we combined two chapters into a single meeting. For more extensive chapters (such as "Data Transformation"), we held multiple meetings to discuss the content in greater depth. The book club is organized by two co-organizers from R-Ladies São Paulo. Each meeting starts with a quick presentation about the book club and news related to the translation of the book. Then, we continue with a presentation about the chapter by a guest, followed by a Q&A session with the audience. It was important to invite different people to present about each chapter, as a way of integrating group members who had never presented before, along with those who had more experience.

Tools used for the book club

To successfully organize and manage the book club, we utilized a variety of tools that facilitated communication, task management, and participant engagement. Below is a

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summary of the key tools we used and how they contributed to the success of the book club.

- **GitHub:** GitHub was used for organizing the tasks. An [Issue Template](#) was created with a checklist for the tasks that needed to be done for each meeting. For each meeting, an Issue was created (using the issue template mentioned before) to discuss the organization of the meeting.
- **Google Docs:** To organize the materials from the book club in a way that participants could interact with, we created a [shared Google Docs file](#). This file was open for comments and contained important information about the book club, as well as links for each meeting. These links included the chapter of the book, information about the presenter, slides, scripts, videos, and other relevant materials.
- **Streamyard and YouTube:** Streamyard was used to host the live meetings. This tool allowed us to invite presenters, share screens, and broadcast the sessions live on YouTube to our audience. A free account was used. All the previous sessions are recorded on the YouTube channel. This made the content accessible to those who couldn't attend the live sessions and allowed for asynchronous participation.
- **Canva:** Canva was used to create visually appealing promotional materials, such as social media posts, meeting announcements, and presentation slides. This helped maintain a consistent and professional look for all our communications.
- **Meetup:** Meetup was used to schedule and announce the book club meetings. Since R-Ladies Global uses Meetup to gather data about events from R-Ladies around the world, it is important to schedule all the events on the platform.
- **Mailchimp:** Mailchimp was used to send newsletters and updates to the book club participants. This included reminders about upcoming meetings and important announcements related to the book club.
- **Social media:** Social media platforms, including LinkedIn, and Instagram, were used to promote the book club, share updates, and engage with the community. Regular posts helped keep the audience informed and encouraged new members to join.

Impact and Benefits of the Book Club

Between February and August 2024, the book club held 8 meetings related to the chapters in the "Whole Game" section of the book. All the video recordings are [available on YouTube](#). The materials from the book club add to the resources in Portuguese to learn more about R and data science with the tidyverse. Some participants from the book club also contributed to improving the translation of the book "R for Data Science (2e)" into Portuguese. This collaborative effort not only enhanced the quality of the translation but also empowered participants by involving them directly in the translation process. The book club has thus played a dual role: as a learning platform and as a community-driven project that enriches the available resources in Portuguese.