

Applied spatial data analysis with R: status and prospects

Roger Bivand

19 February 2019

Introduction

- Spatial and spatio-temporal data are characterised by structures that distinguish them from typical tabular data
- The geometric structures also have spatial reference system information, and can adhere to standards, which may ease geometrical operations
- Satellite data and numerical model output data typically have regular grid structures, but these are often domain-specific
- Computationally intensive tasks include interpolation, upsampling, focal operations, change of support and handling vector data with very detailed boundaries, as well as modelling using Bayesian inference
- A further challenge to modelling using training sets with spatial data is how to split the observations in the presence of spatial dependence

Spatial and spatio-temporal data

Spatial data typically combine position data in 2D (or 3D), attribute data and metadata related to the position data. Much spatial data could be called map data or GIS data. We collect and handle much more position data since global navigation satellite system (GNSS) like GPS came on stream 20 years ago, earth observation satellites have been providing data for longer.

```
> library(osmdata)
## Data (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, ODbL 1.0. http://www.openstreetmap.org
> library(sf)
## Linking to GEOS 3.7.1, GDAL 2.4.0, PROJ 5.2.0
> bbox <- opq(bbox = 'bergen norway')
> byb0 <- osmdata_sf(add_osm_feature(bbox, key = 'railway',
+   value = 'light_rail'))$osm_lines
> tram <- osmdata_sf(add_osm_feature(bbox, key = 'railway',
+   value = 'tram'))$osm_lines
> byb1 <- tram[!is.na(tram$name),]
> o <- intersect(names(byb0), names(byb1))
> byb <- rbind(byb0[,o], byb1[,o])
> library(mapview)
> mapview(byb)
```

Spatial vector data is based on points, from which other geometries are constructed. The light rail tracks are 2D vector data. The points themselves are stored as double precision floating point numbers, typically without recorded measures of accuracy (GNSS provides a measure of accuracy). Here, lines are constructed from points.

```
> all(st_is(byb, "XY"))
## [1] TRUE
> str(st_coordinates(st_geometry(byb)[[1]]))
##  num [1:14, 1:3] 5.33 5.33 5.33 5.33 5.33 ...
##  - attr(*, "dimnames")=List of 2
##  ..$ : chr [1:14] "4870663682" "331531217" "331531216" "331531215" ...
##  ..$ : chr [1:3] "X" "Y" "L1"
```

Spatial raster data is observed using rectangular (often square) cells, within which attribute data are observed. We probably do not know where within the raster cell the observed value is correct; all we know is that at the chosen resolution, this is the value representing the whole cell area.

```
> library(elevatr)
> elevation <- get_elev_raster(as(byb, "Spatial"), z = 14)
## Merging DEMs
## Reprojecting DEM to original projection
## Note: Elevation units are in meters.
## Note: The coordinate reference system is:
## +proj=longlat +datum=WGS84 +no_defs +ellps=WGS84 +towgs84=0,0,0
> mapview(elevation, col=terrain.colors)
```

Spatio-temporal data should be the rule but is not. Stacking things up over time to get a balanced stack is hard, and GIS representations do not handle time well. The LandGIS ESA land cover series may also be downloaded (API coming), and displayed.

```
> library(rgdal)
## rgdal: version: 1.3-6, (SVN revision 773)
## Geospatial Data Abstraction Library extensions to R successfully loaded
##   Loaded GDAL runtime: GDAL 2.4.0, released 2018/12/14
##   Path to GDAL shared files: /usr/local/share/gdal
##   GDAL binary built with GEOS: TRUE
##   Loaded PROJ.4 runtime: Rel. 5.2.0, September 15th, 2018, [PJ_VERSION: 5203]
##   Path to PROJ.4 shared files: (autodetected)
##   Linking to sp version: 1.3-1
> fl <- "../ESACCI-LC-L4-LCCS-Map-300m-P1Y-1992_2015-v2.0.7.tif"
> LUC <- readGDAL(fl, offset=c(10400,66450), region.dim=c(400, 700),
+   output.dim=c(400, 700))
##           ../ESACCI-LC-L4-LCCS-Map-300m-P1Y-1992_2015-
v2.0.7.tif has GDAL driver GTiff
## and has 64800 rows and 129600 columns
> legs <- read.csv2("../ESACCI-LC-Legend.csv")
> mapview(LUC[, , c(1,13,24)])
```


Representing spatial vector data in R (sp)

The **sp** package was a child of its time, using S4 formal classes, and the best compromise we then had of positional representation (not arc-node, but hard to handle holes in polygons). If we coerce **byb** to the **sp** representation, we see the formal class structure. Input/output used OGR/GDAL vector drivers in the **rgdal** package, and topological operations used GEOS in the **rgeos** package.

```
> library(sp)
> str(slot(as(st_geometry(byb), "Spatial"), "lines")[[1]])
## Formal class 'Lines' [package "sp"] with 2 slots
##   ..@ Lines:List of 1
##   .. ..$ :Formal class 'Line' [package "sp"] with 1 slot
##   .. .. ..@ coords: num [1:14, 1:2] 5.33 5.33 5.33 5.33 5.33 ...
##   .. .. ..- attr(*, "dimnames")=List of 2
##   .. .. .. ..$ : chr [1:14] "4870663682" "331531217" "331531216" "331
##   .. .. .. ..$ : chr [1:2] "lon" "lat"
##   ..@ ID    : chr "ID1"
```

Representing spatial vector data in R (sf)

The recent **sf** package bundles GDAL and GEOS (**sp** just defined the classes and methods, leaving I/O and computational geometry to other packages). **sf** used **data.frame** objects with one (or more) geometry column for vector data. The representation follows ISO 19125 (*Simple Features*), and has WKT (text) and WKB (binary) representations (used by GDAL and GEOS internally). The drivers include PostGIS and other database constructions permitting selection, and WFS for server APIs (**rgdal** does too, but requires more from the user).

```
> strwrap(st_as_text(st_geometry(byb)[[1]]))
## [1] "LINESTRING (5.333375 60.30436, 5.333386"
## [2] "60.30439, 5.333512 60.30463, 5.333664"
## [3] "60.30487, 5.3342 60.30559, 5.334472"
## [4] "60.30589, 5.334727 60.30613, 5.334901"
## [5] "60.30628, 5.33523 60.30652, 5.335494"
## [6] "60.30667, 5.335813 60.30682, 5.336282"
## [7] "60.30701, 5.336615 60.3071, 5.336872"
## [8] "60.30716)"
```

Representing spatial raster data in R (sp and raster)

The **raster** package S4 representation builds on the **sp** representation, using a **GridTopology** S4 object to specify the grid, and a data frame to hold the data. **raster** defines **RasterLayer**, and combinations of layers as stacks (may be different storage classes) or bricks (same storage class - array). Adding time remains an issue; **raster** could avoid reading data into memory using **rgdal** mechanisms.

```
> elevation
## class      : RasterLayer
## dimensions  : 5663, 3595, 20358485  (nrow, ncol, ncell)
## resolution  : 4.29e-05, 2.12e-05  (x, y)
## extent     : 5.229278, 5.383503, 60.2723, 60.39236 (xmin, xmax, ymin, ymax)
## coord. ref. : +proj=longlat +datum=WGS84 +no_defs +ellps=WGS84 +towgs84=0
## data source : /tmp/RtmpwtIir2/raster/r_tmp_2019-02-
14_101342_24305_44739.grd
## names      : layer
## values     : -5.561122, 605.8524  (min, max)
> slot(LUC, "grid")
##              x              y
## cellcentre.offset 4.584722e+00 6.000139e+01
## cellsize         2.777778e-03 2.777778e-03
## cells.dim        7.000000e+02 4.000000e+02
```

Representing spatial raster data in R (sf and stars)

The new **stars** - Scalable, Spatiotemporal Tidy Arrays - package started looking at array structures and has built-in proxy data. Like **sf**, the development of **stars** has been supported by the R Consortium, and **stars** uses the infrastructure of **sf** to use GDAL for input/output and manipulation. In **sf**, the interface to the C++ GDAL library is based on **Rcpp**, which was not available when **rgdal** was written.

```
> library(stars)
## Loading required package: abind
> LUC_stars <- read_stars(fl, proxy=TRUE)
> LUC_stars
## stars_proxy object with 1 attribute in file:
## $`ESACCI-LC-L4-LCCS-Map-300m-P1Y-1992_2015-v2.0.7.tif`
## [1] "../ESACCI-LC-L4-LCCS-Map-300m-P1Y-1992_2015-v2.0.7.tif"
##
## dimension(s):
##      from      to offset      delta
## x         1 129600   -180  0.00277778
## y         1  64800    90 -0.00277778
## band      1     24    NA         NA
##
##                      refsys point values
## x      +proj=longlat +datum=WGS8... FALSE  NULL
## y      +proj=longlat +datum=WGS8... FALSE  NULL
## band                                NA    NA  NULL
##
## x      [x]
## y      [y]
## band
> LUC_stars1 <- st_as_stars(LUC_stars[byb,,,])
> image(LUC_stars1[, , , 24], )
> plot(st_geometry(byb), add=TRUE)
```

Spatial reference systems

Spatial reference systems define how the geoid is viewed (prime meridian, ellipsoid, datum), and, if projected to the plane, where we are (central longitude, latitude, offsets, etc.). They also define the units - **sf** incorporates smart units handling. Projection (no datum change) and transformation are possible using PROJ and its `proj_api.h` interface directly (`rgdal::spTransform()` and `lwgeom::st_transform_proj()`), or through GDAL (`sf::st_transform()`).

```
> st_crs(byb)
## Coordinate Reference System:
##   EPSG: 4326
##   proj4string: "+proj=longlat +datum=WGS84 +no_defs"
> byb_utm <- st_transform(byb, crs=32632)
> st_crs(byb_utm)
## Coordinate Reference System:
##   EPSG: 32632
##   proj4string: "+proj=utm +zone=32 +datum=WGS84 +units=m +no_defs"
```


Earth observation

Computationally intensive tasks

Spatial dependence and subsetting data

Conclusions

