Conference Review: The 6th Chinese R Conference

by Jing Leng and Jingjing Guan

The 6th Chinese R Conference (Beijing session) was held in the Sinology Pavilion of Renmin University of China (RUC), Beijing, from May 18th to 19th, 2013. The conference was organized by the "Capital of Statistics" (COS, http://cos.name), an online statistical community in China. It was sponsored and co-organized by the Center for Applied Statistics of RUC, the School of Statistics of RUC, and the Business Intelligence Research Center of Peking University.

Since the 1st Chinese R Conference in 2008, this conference has become a regular and popular event for Chinese R users, where they share cutting edge techniques and applications with R. This is a bi-annual conference with a Beijing session in the summer and a Shanghai session in the winter each year.

This year, more than 400 attendees from China and overseas attended the Beijing conference. In particular, for the first time had two foreign speakers at the Beijing conference[1]: John Maindonald (Australian National University) and Graham Williams (Australian Taxation Office). Yihui Xie, the founder of COS and the Chinese R Conference, also came back from the United States and presented at the conference.

The conference program included nineteen talks on a variety of topics, including visualizations in epidemiology, customer behaviors of e-commerce websites, and text mining of online social networks. It also provided two lightning talk sessions as opportunities for people from different industries to promote their business and hire R users. Discussions among the audience and speakers showed increasing impact and popularity of R language in both the industry and academia in China. Below is the list of talks:

Opening Chen Yu, the Vice Chair of the conference, provided a brief introduction of the 6th Chinese R Conference; Prof Xizhi Wu, the first person to introduce R to the School of Statistics of RUC, gave an inspiring talk encouraging the younger generation to work hard (he mentioned Prof Bin Yu as an outstanding example); Prof Yanyun Zhao, the Dean of the School of Statistics of RUC, delivered a welcome speech;

Software Development "Sharing my lessons in R package development" by Yihui Xie; "A cloud-based decision making system based on R" by Ben-Chang Shia and Sizhe Liu;

Data Mining "Data mining with Rattle and R" by Graham Williams; "Detection of online public opinions: text mining and visualization in R" by He Wang;

Visualization "**displayHTS**: an R package for displaying data and results from high-throughput screening experiments" by Xiaohua Zhang; "An introduction to **MSToolkit**, **Rweibo** and **html5vis**: analysis of H7N9 in R" by Jian Li and Yang Zhou;

Business Applications "Application of R in eBay big data analysis" by Zhong Li and Jiaming Pan; "Data scientists and engineering applications of R" by Guozhu Wen; "Applications of machine learning in online advertisements" by Baotong Zhuang; "Quality assessment and intelligent sorting of user-generated content" by Hao Wang; "Online behavior in the mobile applications: an attempt in R" by Tingrui Zhou;

Statistical Methodologies "Bayesian hierarchical models in R and WinBUGS" by Xinhai Li; "Data cloning: easy maximum likelihood estimation for complex models: an application to zero-inflated responses of Internet ads" by Jingjing Guan; "On the ultrahigh dimensional linear discriminant analysis problem with a diverging number of classes" by Hansheng Wang;

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[1]Thomas W. Yee, author of **VGAM**, was the first foreign speaker, and attended the Shanghai conference in 2011.

Kaleidoscope "Rethinking data analysis and data analysis tools" by John Maindonald; "Web scraping with R" by Nan Xiao; "An introduction to the Julia language" by Changyou Zhang.

In addition, a series of 5-minute talks for promotion purposes and R-related jobs were given by Merck China, 360buy, China Citic Bank, Careerfocus, Springer, SupStat, Alipay, Amazon, eBay, Baidu, and Douban, etc. Many companies have received a large number of job applications. After the lightning talks, the conference chair opened a clean R session, ran `sample(id,20)` and gave away 20 books in R and statistics (sponsored by publishers) to the lucky attendees.

Figure 1: Learning R without thinking it makes one confused; thinking R without learning it makes one shallow — Chenshun Lin, the chair of the lightning talk sessions, added R to a famous quote by Confucious and turned it to a hilarious pun.

The two-day event was a great success and we got many positive feedback messages from participants after the conference. We will further devote our future effort on:

- organizing more R meetings to meet the growing demand of R users in China;

- promoting statistics and data analysis in the industry;

- interacting with different fields, such as e-commerce, through more and advanced applications of R.

The conference summary and slides are freely available at http://cos.name/chinar/chinar-2013/ (in Chinese). We would like to thank the School of Statistics and the Center for Applied Statistics of RUC for their consistent support for the Chinese R Conference. We are also grateful to Prof Hansheng Wang for his encouragement and generous help. We appreciate the tremendous help of all student volunteers from RUC and COS. We look forward to the next R conference in China and warmly welcome more people to attend it. Inquiries and suggestions can be sent to chinar-committee@cos.name.

The conference committee consists of Tao Gao (Chair), Yu Chen (Vice Chair), Taiyun Wei, Sen Chen, Jianchong Su, Yanping Chen, Sizhe Liu, Yihui Xie, Manqi Xie, Zhanhang Xiao, Yishuo Deng, Yixuan Qiu, Yan Chen, Jing Leng.

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