

Nextflow fundamentals training

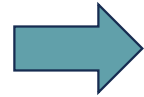
Albert Palleja Caro
on behalf of
Data Science Platform
27th November 2024

Outline of the theoretical part

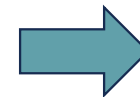
- What is Nextflow?
- Behind nextflow
- Why do we need a Community effort?
- Nextflow - Basic concepts
- Nextflow's core features
- A Nextflow script
- Installing Nextflow and running the first scripts
- Nextflow and Azure batch
- nf-metagenomics pipeline
- Resources

Context

Big Data



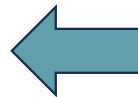
Experiments and
analyses on large
datasets



Portable
Reproducible



Great support for all that!



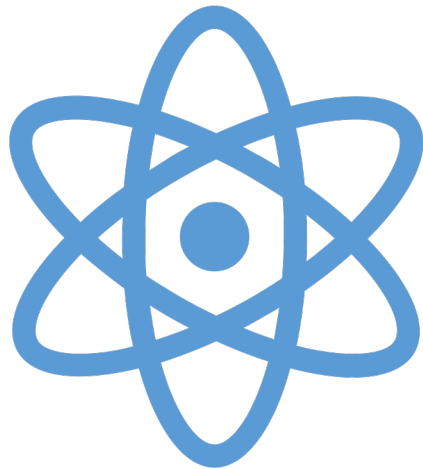
Workflows: using computers to collect, store and analyze and disseminate data information

- Handle small and large files (e.g. genomics)
- Many programming languages and different softwares
- Complex interactions and dependencies between the softwares
- Parallelize jobs
- Distribute computing



- Nextflow is a **software** - Workflow orchestrator engine
- Nextflow is a Domain-specific **language** (DSL) built on top of Groovy
- It allows writing data-intensive computational workflows
- It accommodates many languages, software environments, and computing environments
- It is oriented to bioinformatics analyses
- There is an active community developing and maintaining 113 different bioinformatics analyses (on date: 27th November 2024)

Behind Nextflow



Open Science

Make science more
open!

Behind Nextflow



Open source

What this software is
doing?

(parameters, versions,
functions
reused/inherited)

Behind Nextflow



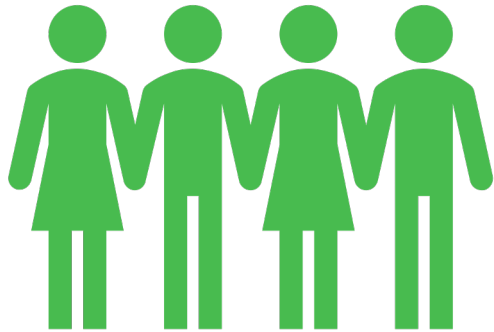
Open Data

Which data are we
handling?

How was measure,
which technology, units,
etc...

FAIR principles

Behind Nextflow



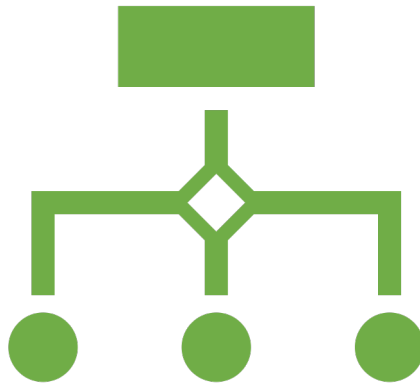
Open community

A community that their members interact to each other and collaborate

nf-core → pipelines

Slack chat community

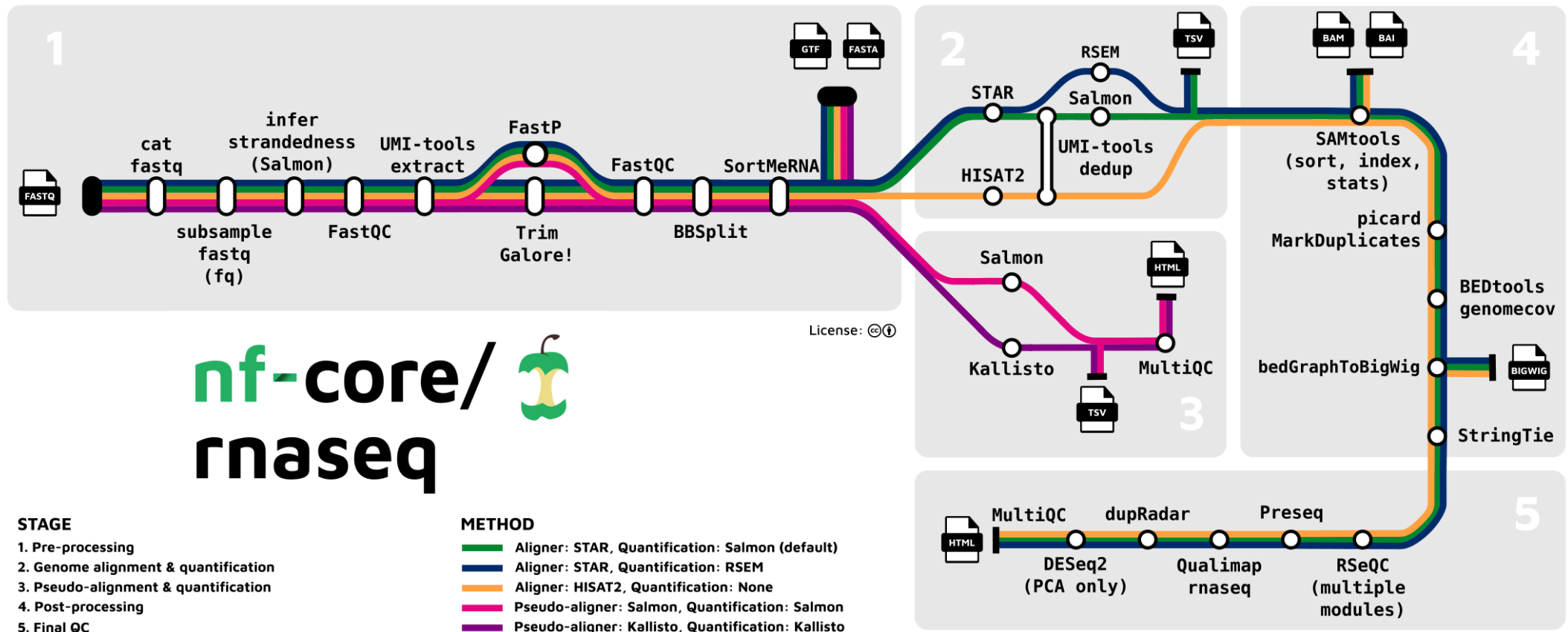
Behind Nextflow



Genomics workflows

First pipelines meant for that, large files per samples with many rows and columns, different formats (binary, tab separated, etc..) parallel processes, different software, languages (python, R, matlab, ...), takes decisions for the next processes

A nextflow pipeline in metro map



Why do we need a Community effort?

Reproducibility and even repeatability is challenging even if you are very careful keeping the same, params, versions, etc...!!!

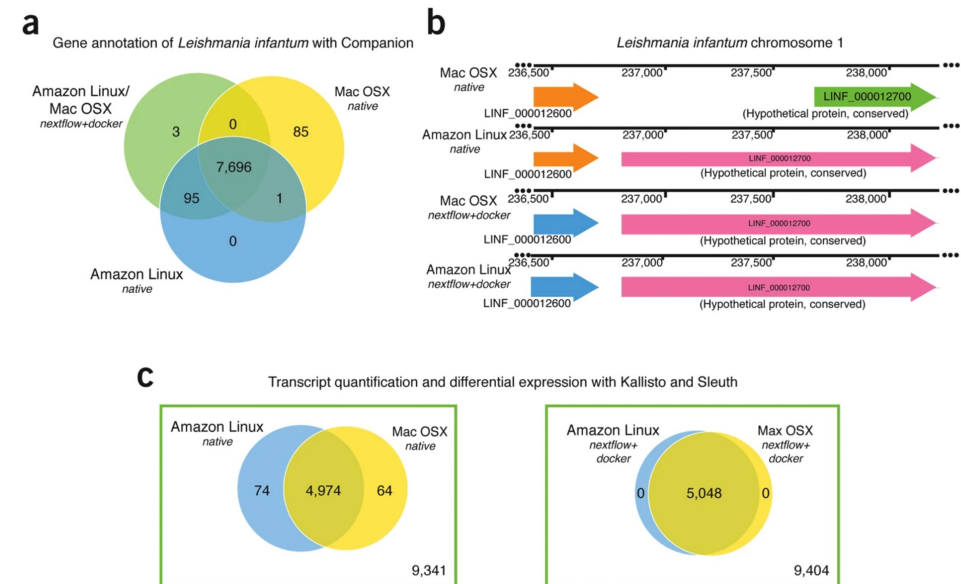
Nextflow enables reproducible computational workflows

[Paolo Di Tommaso](#), [Maria Chatzou](#), [Evan W Floden](#), [Pablo Prieto Barja](#), [Emilio Palumbo](#) & [Cedric](#)

[Notredame](#) ✉

[Nature Biotechnology](#) 35, 316–319 (2017) | [Cite this article](#)





Platform	Mac OSX	Amazon Linux	Debian Linux	Mac OSX	Amazon Linux
Execution	Native	Native	Native	NF+Docker	NF+Docker
number of chromosomes	36	36	36	36	36
overall length (bp)	32,032,223	32,032,223	32,032,223	32,032,223	32,032,223
number of genes	7,771	7,781	7,783	7,783	7,783
gene density	236.32	236.64	236.64	236.64	236.64
number of coding genes	7570	7,580	7,580	7,580	7,580
average coding length (bp)	1,762	1,764	1,764	1,764	1,764
number of genes with multiple CDS	111	113	113	113	113
number of genes with known function	4,142	4,147	4,147	4,147	4,147
number of t-RNAs	88	88	90	90	90



- Different results with different environments
- different gene annotations working in different environments. This does not happen working in containers

Why do we need a Community effort?

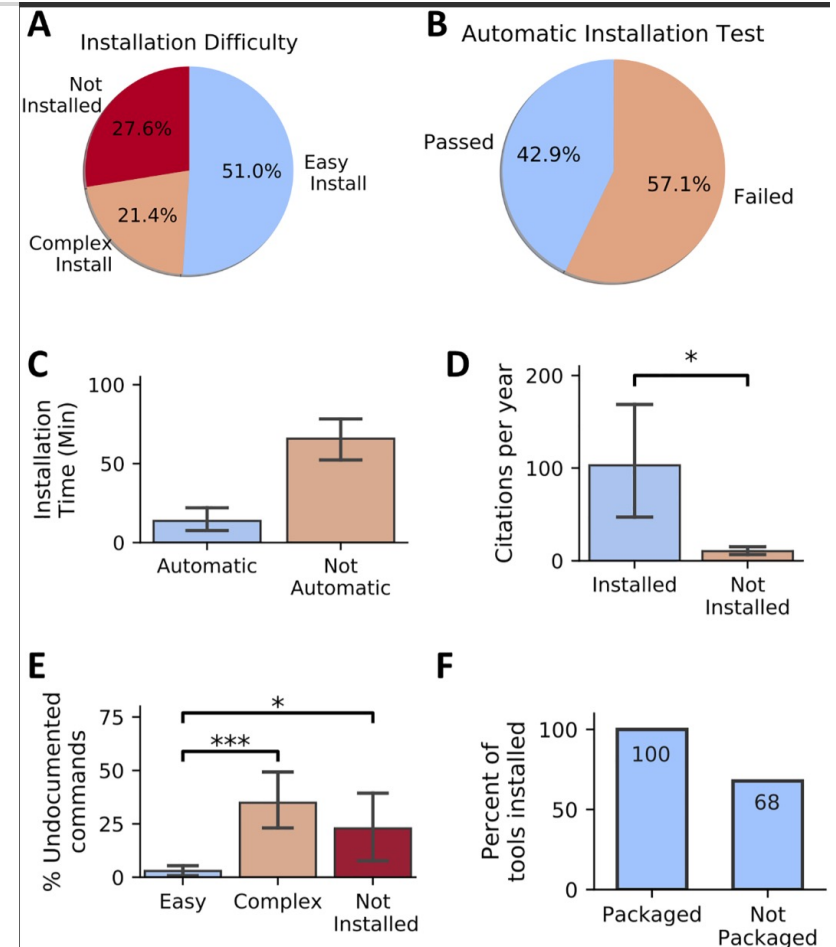
Challenges and recommendations to improve the installability and archival stability of omics computational tools

Serghei Mangul  , Thiago Mosqueiro , Richard J. Abdill, Dat Duong, Keith Mitchell, Varuni Sarwal, Brian Hill, Jaqueline Brito, Russell Jared Littman, Benjamin Statz , Angela Ka-Mei Lam, Gargi Dayama, Laura Grieneisen, [...], Ran Blekman [view all]

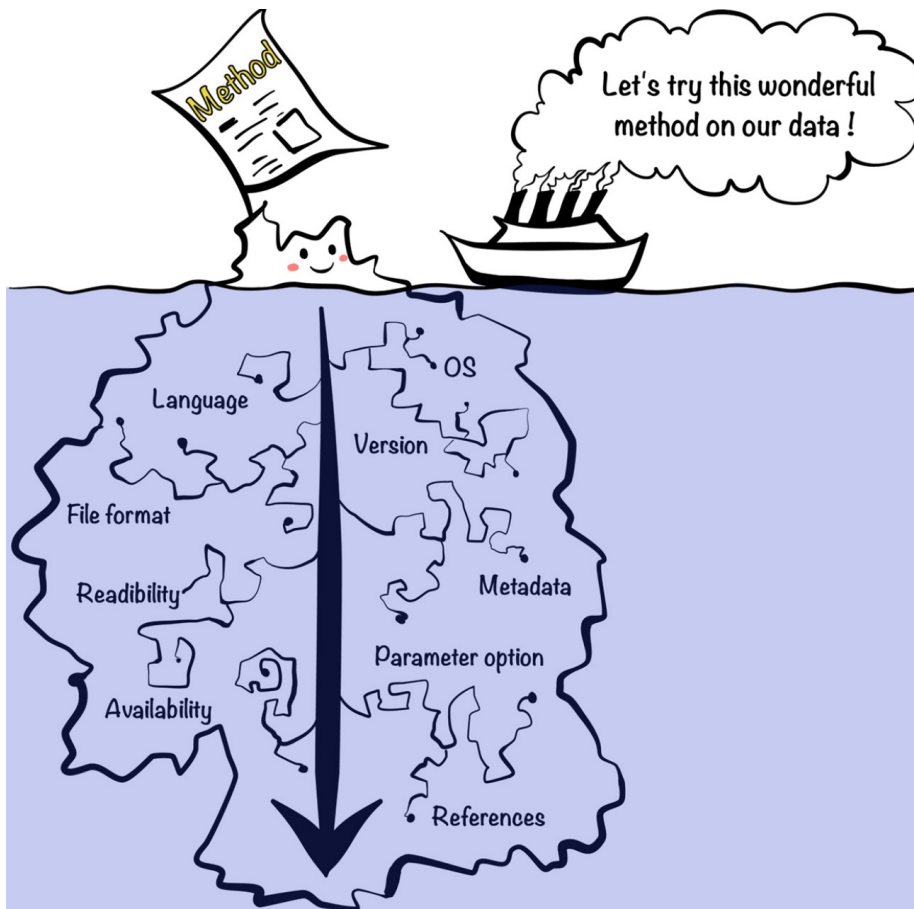
Version 2

Published: June 20, 2019 • <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.3000333>

- 28% of all omics software resources are currently not accessible through URLs published
- Among the tools found, 49% were difficult to install or could not be installed at all!



Why do we need a Community effort?



Experimenting with reproducibility: a case study of robustness in bioinformatics

Yang-Min Kim , Jean-Baptiste Poline, Guillaume Dumas

GigaScience, Volume 7, Issue 7, July 2018, giy077,

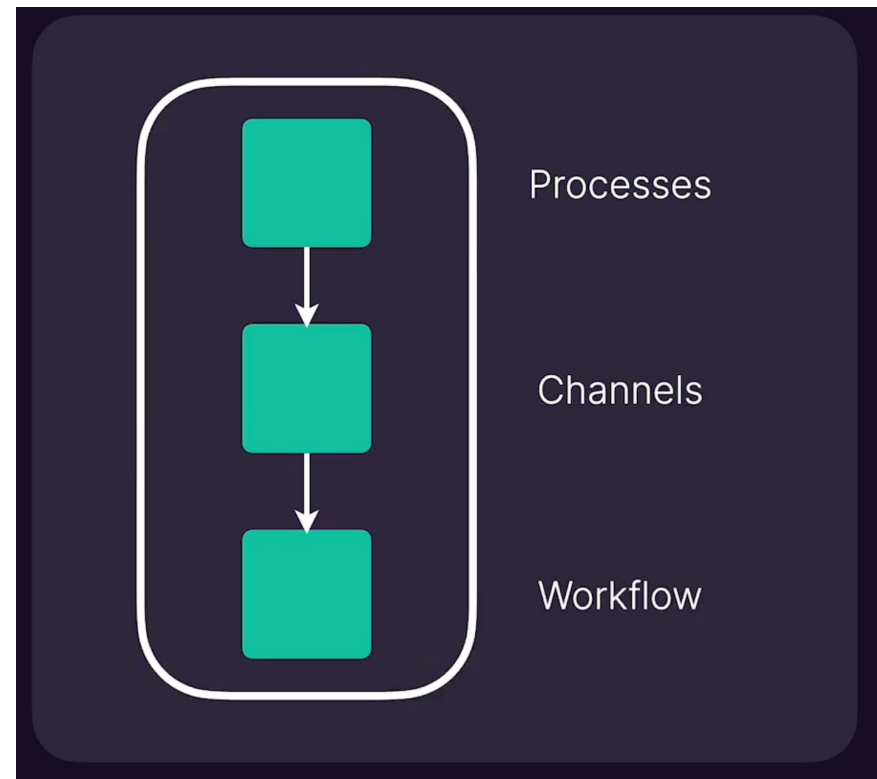
<https://doi.org/10.1093/gigascience/giy077>

- "First we tried to rerun the analysis with the code and the data provided by the authors. Second we reimplemented the whole method in a python package.."

If you could use a tool to download, organize and orchestrate all these software / params / versions, etc... and achieve repeatable and reproducible results wouldn't you use it?

Nextflow – Basic concepts

- Nextflow is a **software** - Workflow orchestrator engine
- Nextflow is a Domain-specific **language** (DSL) built on top of Groovy
- It allows writing data-intensive computational workflows



A Nextflow script

The .nf files are workflow scripts

```
main.nf
42  /*
43   * Quickly checking raw reads quality
44   */
45  process FASTQC {
46      container "quay.io/biocontainers/fastqc:0.12.1--hdfd78af_0"
47      tag "FASTQC on $sample_id"
48
49      input:
50      tuple val(sample_id), path(reads)
51
52      output:
53      path "fastqc_${sample_id}_logs"
54
55      script:
56      """
57      mkdir fastqc_${sample_id}_logs
58      fastqc -o fastqc_${sample_id}_logs -q ${reads}
59      """
60  }
61
62  workflow {
63      Channel
64      .fromFilePairs(params.reads, checkIfExists: true)
65      .set { read_pairs_ch }
66      fastqc_ch = FASTQC(read_pairs_ch)
67      fastqc_ch.view()
68  }
```

Directives

Code
block

Channel

Process

Workflow

The file nextflow.config is a configuration file that sets minimal environment properties

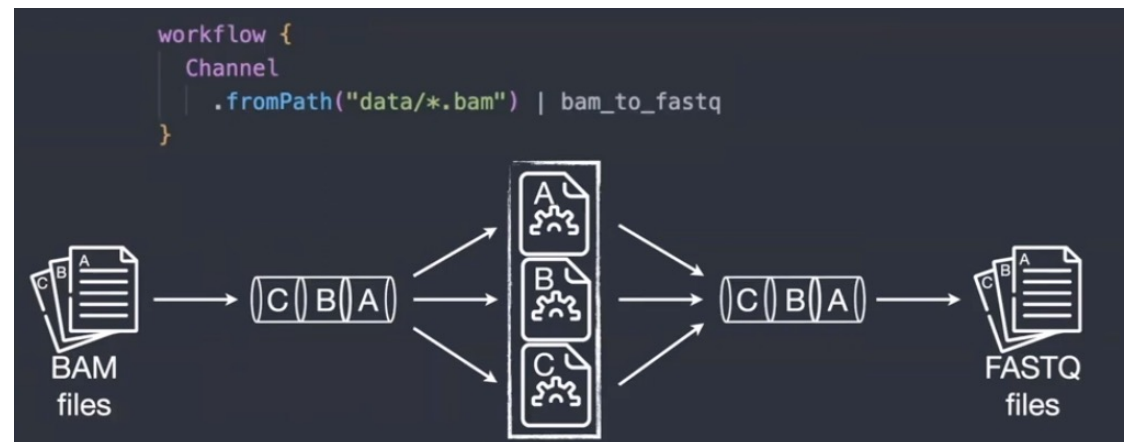
```
nextflow.config
1  | docker.enabled = true
```

How to run it:

```
(base) apca@NWFCB-L0989 dsp_nf-metagenomics % nextflow run main.nf -c nextflow.config
```

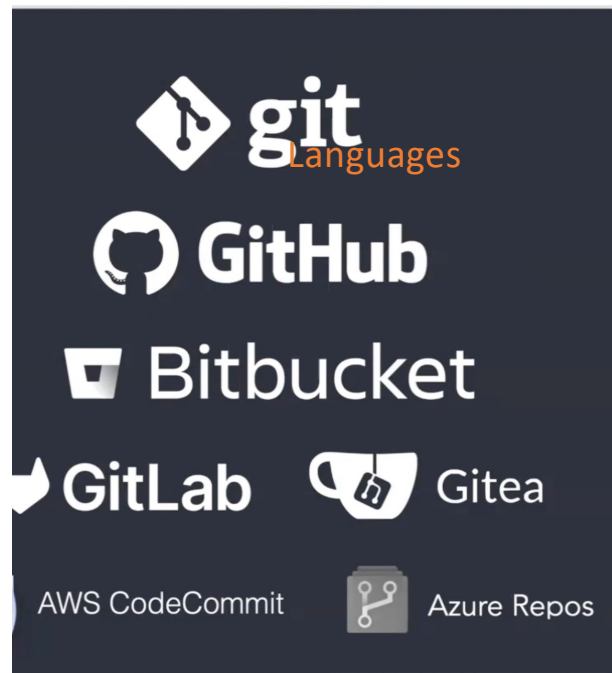
Nextflow – Interesting features

- Implicit **parallelism** (tasks in a process are run by default in parallel)
- **Reentrancy** (resume partial runs, do not need to rerun the entire pipeline of something went wrong, it starts from where it stopped)
- **Reusability** (use different modules, subworkflows, written and containerized by the Nextflow community)



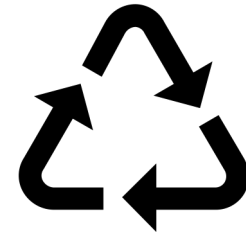
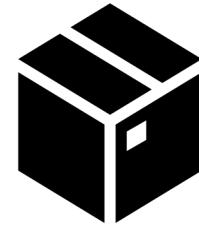
Languages, Software and computing environments

- Nextflow works with all main languages and version control providers
- Regarding software environments where to execute the code it works with most of the container solutions
- Same thing for computing environments



Nextflow's core features

- **Reproducible between runs**
 - integration with code management tools
 - all packages downloaded, organized in containers, and control over computing environment
- **Portable** between systems
 - write the code in your laptop and can run everywhere
 - works with most of computing environments
- **Scalable**
 - can be run for 10 on your laptop or thousands of samples in an HPC or the cloud
- **Integration** of existing tools, systems, and industry standards



nf-core

A community effort inside nextflow community to collect a curated set of analysis pipelines built using Nextflow

Cooperation – community development

Standards – Use common templates

Collaboration – No duplicate pipelines within nf-core

Helper tools

Compatibility

Components

113 different pipelines

Subworkflows

Modules – software wrappers > 1000

Linting – Conventions to test

Schema - Validations

Tooling