Introduction to the R Language

Loop Functions

Roger D. Peng, Associate Professor of Biostatistics
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Looping on the Command Line

Writing for, while loops is useful when programming but not particularly easy when working interactively on the command line. There are some functions which implement looping to make life easier.

- `lapply`: Loop over a list and evaluate a function on each element
- `sapply`: Same as `lapply` but try to simplify the result
- `apply`: Apply a function over the margins of an array
- `tapply`: Apply a function over subsets of a vector
- `mapply`: Multivariate version of `lapply`

An auxiliary function `split` is also useful, particularly in conjunction with `lapply`.

lapply

`lapply` takes three arguments: (1) a list `X`; (2) a function (or the name of a function) `FUN`; (3) other arguments via its ... argument. If `X` is not a list, it will be coerced to a list using `as.list`.

```
lapply
```

```
## function (X, FUN, ...)
## {
##     FUN <- match.fun(FUN)
##     if (!is.vector(X) || is.object(X))
##         X <- as.list(X)
##     .Internal(lapply(X, FUN))
## }
## <bytecode: 0x7ff7a1951c00>
## <environment: namespace:base>
```

The actual looping is done internally in C code.

lapply

`lapply` always returns a list, regardless of the class of the input.

```
x <- list(a = 1:5, b = rnorm(10))
lapply(x, mean)
```

```
## $a
## [1] 3
##
## $b
## [1] 0.4671
```

lapply

```
x <- list(a = 1:4, b = rnorm(10), c = rnorm(20, 1), d = rnorm(100, 5))
lapply(x, mean)
```

```
## $a
## [1] 2.5
##
## $b
## [1] 0.5261
##
## $c
## [1] 1.421
##
## $d
## [1] 4.927
```

lapply

```
> x <- 1:4
> lapply(x, runif)
[[1]]
[1] 0.2675082

[[2]]
[1] 0.2186453 0.5167968

[[3]]
[1] 0.2689506 0.1811683 0.5185761

[[4]]
[1] 0.5627829 0.1291569 0.2563676 0.7179353
```

lapply

```
> x <- 1:4
> lapply(x, runif, min = 0, max = 10)
[[1]]
[1] 3.302142

[[2]]
[1] 6.848960 7.195282

[[3]]
[1] 3.5031416 0.8465707 9.7421014

[[4]]
[1] 1.195114 3.594027 2.930794 2.766946
```

lapply

`lapply` and friends make heavy use of *anonymous* functions.

```
> x <- list(a = matrix(1:4, 2, 2), b = matrix(1:6, 3, 2))
> x
$a
     [,1] [,2]
[1,]    1    3
[2,]    2    4

$b
     [,1] [,2]
[1,]    1    4
[2,]    2    5
[3,]    3    6
```

lapply

An anonymous function for extracting the first column of each matrix.

```
> lapply(x, function(elt) elt[,1])
$a
[1] 1 2

$b
[1] 1 2 3
```

sapply

`sapply` will try to simplify the result of `lapply` if possible.

- If the result is a list where every element is length 1, then a vector is returned
- If the result is a list where every element is a vector of the same length (> 1), a matrix is returned.
- If it can't figure things out, a list is returned

sapply

```
> x <- list(a = 1:4, b = rnorm(10), c = rnorm(20, 1), d = rnorm(100, 5))
> lapply(x, mean)
$a
[1] 2.5

$b
[1] 0.06082667

$c
[1] 1.467083

$d
[1] 5.074749
```

sapply

```
> sapply(x, mean)
         a          b          c          d
2.50000000 0.06082667 1.46708277 5.07474950

> mean(x)
[1] NA
Warning message:
In mean.default(x) : argument is not numeric or logical: returning NA
```

Introduction to the R Language

Loop Functions - apply

Roger Peng, Associate Professor
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

apply

`apply` is used to a evaluate a function (often an anonymous one) over the margins of an array.

- It is most often used to apply a function to the rows or columns of a matrix
- It can be used with general arrays, e.g. taking the average of an array of matrices
- It is not really faster than writing a loop, but it works in one line!

apply

```
> str(apply)
function (X, MARGIN, FUN, ...)
```

- `X` is an array
- `MARGIN` is an integer vector indicating which margins should be “retained”.
- `FUN` is a function to be applied
- ... is for other arguments to be passed to `FUN`

apply

```
> x <- matrix(rnorm(200), 20, 10)
> apply(x, 2, mean)
 [1]  0.04868268  0.35743615 -0.09104379
 [4] -0.05381370 -0.16552070 -0.18192493
 [7]  0.10285727  0.36519270  0.14898850
[10]  0.26767260

> apply(x, 1, sum)
 [1] -1.94843314  2.60601195  1.51772391
 [4] -2.80386816  3.73728682 -1.69371360
 [7]  0.02359932  3.91874808 -2.39902859
[10]  0.48685925 -1.77576824 -3.34016277
[13]  4.04101009  0.46515429  1.83687755
[16]  4.36744690  2.21993789  2.60983764
[19] -1.48607630  3.58709251
```

col/row sums and means

For sums and means of matrix dimensions, we have some shortcuts.

- `rowSums = apply(x, 1, sum)`
- `rowMeans = apply(x, 1, mean)`
- `colSums = apply(x, 2, sum)`
- `colMeans = apply(x, 2, mean)`

The shortcut functions are *much* faster, but you won't notice unless you're using a large matrix.

Other Ways to Apply

Quantiles of the rows of a matrix.

```
> x <- matrix(rnorm(200), 20, 10)
> apply(x, 1, quantile, probs = c(0.25, 0.75))
          [,1]        [,2]       [,3]        [,4]
25% -0.3304284 -0.99812467 -0.9186279 -0.49711686
75%  0.9258157  0.07065724  0.3050407 -0.06585436
           [,5]       [,6]      [,7]       [,8]
25% -0.05999553 -0.6588380 -0.653250 0.01749997
75%  0.52928743  0.3727449  1.255089 0.72318419
          [,9]      [,10]      [,11]      [,12]
25% -1.2467955 -0.8378429 -1.0488430 -0.7054902
75%  0.3352377  0.7297176  0.3113434  0.4581150
         [,13]      [,14]      [,15]      [,16]
25% -0.1895108 -0.5729407 -0.5968578 -0.9517069
75%  0.5326299  0.5064267  0.4933852  0.8868922
         [,17]      [,18]      [,19]     [,20]
```

apply

Average matrix in an array

```
> a <- array(rnorm(2 * 2 * 10), c(2, 2, 10))
> apply(a, c(1, 2), mean)
           [,1]        [,2]
[1,] -0.2353245 -0.03980211
[2,] -0.3339748  0.04364908

> rowMeans(a, dims = 2)
           [,1]        [,2]
[1,] -0.2353245 -0.03980211
[2,] -0.3339748  0.04364908
```

Introduction to the R Language

Loop Functions - mapply

Roger Peng, Associate Professor
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

mapply

`mapply` is a multivariate apply of sorts which applies a function in parallel over a set of arguments.

```
> str(mapply)
function (FUN, ..., MoreArgs = NULL, SIMPLIFY = TRUE,
          USE.NAMES = TRUE)
```

- `FUN` is a function to apply
- ... contains arguments to apply over
- `MoreArgs` is a list of other arguments to `FUN`.
- `SIMPLIFY` indicates whether the result should be simplified

mapply

The following is tedious to type

```
list(rep(1, 4), rep(2, 3), rep(3, 2), rep(4, 1))
```

Instead we can do

```
> mapply(rep, 1:4, 4:1)
[[1]]
[1] 1 1 1 1

[[2]]
[1] 2 2 2

[[3]]
[1] 3 3

[[4]]
[1] 4
```

Vectorizing a Function

```
> noise <- function(n, mean, sd) {
+ rnorm(n, mean, sd)
+ }
> noise(5, 1, 2)
[1]  2.4831198  2.4790100  0.4855190 -1.2117759
[5] -0.2743532

> noise(1:5, 1:5, 2)
[1] -4.2128648 -0.3989266  4.2507057  1.1572738
[5]  3.7413584
```

Instant Vectorization

```
> mapply(noise, 1:5, 1:5, 2)
[[1]]
[1] 1.037658

[[2]]
[1] 0.7113482 2.7555797

[[3]]
[1] 2.769527 1.643568 4.597882

[[4]]
[1] 4.476741 5.658653 3.962813 1.204284

[[5]]
[1] 4.797123 6.314616 4.969892 6.530432 6.723254
```

Instant Vectorization

Which is the same as

```
list(noise(1, 1, 2), noise(2, 2, 2),
     noise(3, 3, 2), noise(4, 4, 2),
     noise(5, 5, 2))
```

split

`split` takes a vector or other objects and splits it into groups determined by a factor or list of factors.

```
> str(split)
function (x, f, drop = FALSE, ...)
```

- `x` is a vector (or list) or data frame
- `f` is a factor (or coerced to one) or a list of factors
- `drop` indicates whether empty factors levels should be dropped

split

```
> x <- c(rnorm(10), runif(10), rnorm(10, 1))
> f <- gl(3, 10)
> split(x, f)
$‘1‘
 [1] -0.8493038 -0.5699717 -0.8385255 -0.8842019
 [5]  0.2849881  0.9383361 -1.0973089  2.6949703
 [9]  1.5976789 -0.1321970

$‘2‘
 [1] 0.09479023 0.79107293 0.45857419 0.74849293
 [5] 0.34936491 0.35842084 0.78541705 0.57732081
 [9] 0.46817559 0.53183823

$‘3‘
 [1] 0.6795651 0.9293171 1.0318103 0.4717443
 [5] 2.5887025 1.5975774 1.3246333 1.4372701
```

split

A common idiom is `split` followed by an `lapply`.

```
> lapply(split(x, f), mean)
$‘1‘
[1] 0.1144464

$‘2‘
[1] 0.5163468

$‘3‘
[1] 1.246368
```

Splitting a Data Frame

```
> library(datasets)
> head(airquality)
  Ozone Solar.R Wind Temp Month Day
1    41     190  7.4   67     5   1
2    36     118  8.0   72     5   2
3    12     149 12.6   74     5   3
4    18     313 11.5   62     5   4
5    NA      NA 14.3   56     5   5
6    28      NA 14.9   66     5   6
```

Splitting a Data Frame

```
> s <- split(airquality, airquality$Month)
> lapply(s, function(x) colMeans(x[, c("Ozone", "Solar.R", "Wind")]))
$`5`
   Ozone  Solar.R     Wind
      NA       NA 11.62258
$`6`
    Ozone   Solar.R      Wind
       NA 190.16667  10.26667
$`7`
     Ozone    Solar.R       Wind
        NA 216.483871   8.941935
```

Splitting a Data Frame

```
> sapply(s, function(x) colMeans(x[, c("Ozone", "Solar.R", "Wind")]))
               5         6          7        8        9
Ozone         NA        NA         NA       NA       NA
Solar.R       NA 190.16667 216.483871       NA 167.4333
Wind    11.62258  10.26667   8.941935 8.793548  10.1800

> sapply(s, function(x) colMeans(x[, c("Ozone", "Solar.R", "Wind")],
                                 na.rm = TRUE))
                5            6             7            8           9
Ozone      23.61538     29.44444     59.115385    59.961538   31.44828
Solar.R   181.29630    190.16667    216.483871   171.857143  167.43333
Wind       11.62258     10.26667      8.941935     8.793548   10.18000
```

Splitting on More than One Level

```
> x <- rnorm(10)
> f1 <- gl(2, 5)
> f2 <- gl(5, 2)
> f1
 [1] 1 1 1 1 1 2 2 2 2 2
Levels: 1 2
> f2
 [1] 1 1 2 2 3 3 4 4 5 5
Levels: 1 2 3 4 5
> interaction(f1, f2)
 [1] 1.1 1.1 1.2 1.2 1.3 2.3 2.4 2.4 2.5 2.5
10 Levels: 1.1 2.1 1.2 2.2 1.3 2.3 1.4 ... 2.5
```

Splitting on More than One Level

Interactions can create empty levels.

```
> str(split(x, list(f1, f2)))
List of 10
 $ 1.1: num [1:2] -0.378  0.445
 $ 2.1: num(0)
 $ 1.2: num [1:2] 1.4066 0.0166
 $ 2.2: num(0)
 $ 1.3: num -0.355
 $ 2.3: num 0.315
 $ 1.4: num(0)
 $ 2.4: num [1:2] -0.907  0.723
 $ 1.5: num(0)
 $ 2.5: num [1:2] 0.732 0.360
```

split

Empty levels can be dropped.

```
> str(split(x, list(f1, f2), drop = TRUE))
List of 6
 $ 1.1: num [1:2] -0.378  0.445
 $ 1.2: num [1:2] 1.4066 0.0166
 $ 1.3: num -0.355
 $ 2.3: num 0.315
 $ 2.4: num [1:2] -0.907  0.723
 $ 2.5: num [1:2] 0.732 0.360
```

Debugging

Roger D. Peng, Associate Professor of Biostatistics
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Something's Wrong!

Indications that something's not right

- `message`: A generic notification/diagnostic message produced by the `message` function; execution of the function continues
- `warning`: An indication that something is wrong but not necessarily fatal; execution of the function continues; generated by the `warning` function
- `error`: An indication that a fatal problem has occurred; execution stops; produced by the `stop` function
- `condition`: A generic concept for indicating that something unexpected can occur; programmers can create their own conditions

Something's Wrong!

Warning

```
log(-1)
```

```
## Warning: NaNs produced
```

```
## [1] NaN
```

Something's Wrong

```
printmessage <- function(x) {
        if(x > 0)
                print("x is greater than zero")
        else
                print("x is less than or equal to zero")
        invisible(x)
}
```

Something's Wrong

```
printmessage <- function(x) {
    if (x > 0)
        print("x is greater than zero") else print("x is less than or equal to zero")
    invisible(x)
}
printmessage(1)
```

```
## [1] "x is greater than zero"
```

```
printmessage(NA)
```

```
## Error: missing value where TRUE/FALSE needed
```

Something's Wrong!

```
printmessage2 <- function(x) {
        if(is.na(x))
                print("x is a missing value!")
        else if(x > 0)
                print("x is greater than zero")
        else
                print("x is less than or equal to zero")
        invisible(x)
}
```

Something's Wrong!

```
printmessage2 <- function(x) {
    if (is.na(x))
        print("x is a missing value!") else if (x > 0)
        print("x is greater than zero") else print("x is less than or equal to zero")
    invisible(x)
}
x <- log(-1)
```

```
## Warning: NaNs produced
```

```
printmessage2(x)
```

```
## [1] "x is a missing value!"
```

Something's Wrong!

How do you know that something is wrong with your function?

- What was your input? How did you call the function?
- What were you expecting? Output, messages, other results?
- What did you get?
- How does what you get differ from what you were expecting?
- Were your expectations correct in the first place?
- Can you reproduce the problem (exactly)?

Debugging Tools in R

The primary tools for debugging functions in R are

- `traceback`: prints out the function call stack after an error occurs; does nothing if there's no error
- `debug`: flags a function for "debug" mode which allows you to step through execution of a function one line at a time
- `browser`: suspends the execution of a function wherever it is called and puts the function in debug mode
- `trace`: allows you to insert debugging code into a function a specific places
- `recover`: allows you to modify the error behavior so that you can browse the function call stack

These are interactive tools specifically designed to allow you to pick through a function. There's also the more blunt technique of inserting print/cat statements in the function.

traceback

```
> mean(x)
Error in mean(x) : object 'x' not found
> traceback()
1: mean(x)
>
```

traceback

```
> lm(y ~ x)
Error in eval(expr, envir, enclos) : object 'y' not found
> traceback()
7: eval(expr, envir, enclos)
6: eval(predvars, data, env)
5: model.frame.default(formula = y ~ x, drop.unused.levels = TRUE)
4: model.frame(formula = y ~ x, drop.unused.levels = TRUE)
3: eval(expr, envir, enclos)
2: eval(mf, parent.frame())
1: lm(y ~ x)
```

debug

```
> debug(lm)
> lm(y ~ x)
debugging in: lm(y ~ x)
debug: {
    ret.x <- x
    ret.y <- y
    cl <- match.call()
    ...
    if (!qr)
        z$qr <- NULL
    z
}
Browse[2]>
```

debug

```
Browse[2]> n
debug: ret.x <- x
Browse[2]> n
debug: ret.y <- y
Browse[2]> n
debug: cl <- match.call()
Browse[2]> n
debug: mf <- match.call(expand.dots = FALSE)
Browse[2]> n
debug: m <- match(c("formula", "data", "subset", "weights", "na.action",
    "offset"), names(mf), 0L)
```

recover

```
> options(error = recover)
> read.csv("nosuchfile")
Error in file(file, "rt") : cannot open the connection
In addition: Warning message:
In file(file, "rt") :
  cannot open file 'nosuchfile': No such file or directory

Enter a frame number, or 0 to exit

1: read.csv("nosuchfile")
2: read.table(file = file, header = header, sep = sep, quote = quote, dec =
3: file(file, "rt")

Selection:
```

Debugging

Summary

- There are three main indications of a problem/condition: `message`, `warning`, `error`
  - only an `error` is fatal
- When analyzing a function with a problem, make sure you can reproduce the problem, clearly state your expectations and how the output differs from your expectation
- Interactive debugging tools `traceback`, `debug`, `browser`, `trace`, and `recover` can be used to find problematic code in functions
- Debugging tools are not a substitute for thinking!