

Hands-On Data Science with R

Data Preparation

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We now begin with the task of preparing our data for building models using R. This chapter takes us through loading a dataset into R, observing the data, and transforming the data. The following chapter deals with building predictive models. R provides the foundation and we then introduce *rattle* (Williams, 2014) as a graphical interface built on this foundation, but as a tool to facilitate programming with data in R.

All of the steps for preparing data are worked through one page at a time and then collected together into a single sequence in the final pages of the chapter. The aim is to provide the code here as the starting point for any new data science project.

The required packages for this chapter include:

```
library(rattle)           # The weather dataset and normVarNames().
library(randomForest)     # Impute missing values using na.roughfix().
library(tidyr)            # Tidy the dataset.
library(ggplot2)          # Visualise data.
library(dplyr)            # Data preparation and pipes %>%.
library(lubridate)        # Handle dates.
library(FSelector)        # Feature selection.
```

As we work through this chapter, new R commands will be introduced. Be sure to review the command's documentation and understand what the command does. You can ask for help using the `?` command as in:

```
?read.csv
```

We can obtain documentation on a particular package using the `help=` option of `library()`:

```
library(help=rattle)
```

This chapter is intended to be hands on. To learn effectively, you are encouraged to have R running (e.g., RStudio) and to run all the commands as they appear here. Check that you get the same output, and you understand the output. Try some variations. Explore.

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1 Step 1: Load—Dataset

We use the **weather** dataset from **rattle** (Williams, 2014) to illustrate our data preparation. Often though we will be loading the dataset from a CSV file and so we illustrate that step first. We begin by noting the path to the CSV file we wish to load—in this case we load it from the Internet:

```
dspath <- "http://rattle.togaware.com/weather.csv"
```

If we are not connected to the Internet we can read the data directly from the **rattle** package itself. It's location is determined using the **system.file()** function, and knowing that it is located within the **csv** subdirectory of the **rattle** package:

```
dspath <- system.file("csv", "weather.csv", package="rattle")
```

Then it is a simple matter of reading the data into the memory of the computer, referring to it as the variable **weather**, ready for us to process it using R.

```
weather <- read.csv(dspath)
```

We should also note that the **rattle** package provides the **weather** dataset as an R dataset and also names it **weather** and so this is available simply by loading the package:

```
library(rattle) # weather, normVarNames().
```

We can load the dataset and refer to it as the variable **weather** with R using any of the above alternatives (or indeed, through any of the many mechanisms available for loading data into R).

Once it is loaded we might like to get a basic idea of what it looks like.

```
dim(weather)
## [1] 366 24

names(weather)
## [1] "Date" "Location" "MinTemp" "MaxTemp"
## [5] "Rainfall" "Evaporation" "Sunshine" "WindGustDir"
## [9] "WindGustSpeed" "WindDir9am" "WindDir3pm" "WindSpeed9am"
## [13] "WindSpeed3pm" "Humidity9am" "Humidity3pm" "Pressure9am"
....

str(weather)
## 'data.frame': 366 obs. of 24 variables:
## $ Date : Factor w/ 366 levels "2007-11-01","2007-11-02",...: 1 2 3...
## $ Location : Factor w/ 1 level "Canberra": 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 ...
## $ MinTemp : num 8 14 13.7 13.3 7.6 6.2 6.1 8.3 8.8 8.4 ...
....
```

2 Step 1: Load—Generic Variables

We will store the dataset as the generic variable *ds* (short for dataset). This will make the following steps somewhat generic and often we can just load a different dataset into *ds* and these steps can simply be re-run without change.

```
dsname <- "weather"
ds      <- get(dsname)
dim(ds)

## [1] 366  24

names(ds)

## [1] "Date"          "Location"      "MinTemp"       "MaxTemp"
## [5] "Rainfall"      "Evaporation"   "Sunshine"      "WindGustDir"
## [9] "WindGustSpeed" "WindDir9am"    "WindDir3pm"    "WindSpeed9am"
## [13] "WindSpeed3pm"  "Humidity9am"   "Humidity3pm"   "Pressure9am"
## [17] "Pressure3pm"   "Cloud9am"      "Cloud3pm"      "Temp9am"
## [21] "Temp3pm"       "RainToday"     "RISK_MM"       "RainTomorrow"
```

We are being a little tricky here in recording the dataset name as *dsname* and then using `get()` to load the data into the variable *ds*. We could simply assign the data to *ds* directly:

```
ds <- weather
```

However the use of the generic variables allows much of the following code to be run on different datasets with little, if any, change. Thus the following scripts can truly act as templates for the tasks carried out by the Data Scientist.

The use of generic variables in this way has its advantages, though a disadvantage is that we may be building several models and accidentally overwrite previously built models stored in a generic variable name (like *model* and even *ds*). The building of a model may take some time and so accidentally losing it is not such an attractive proposition. This requires some care.

There are also R packages that support template type programming with data, but to keep things simple, we stay with a simple approach here.

3 Step 1: Convenience of Table Data Frame

Another tip in dealing with larger datasets is to make use of `tbl_df()` to add a couple of extra classes to the data frame. The simple aim here is to avoid the often made “mistake” of printing the whole data frame accidentally.

```
class(ds)
## [1] "data.frame"
ds <- tbl_df(ds)
class(ds)
## [1] "tbl_df"      "tbl"        "data.frame"
```

The default `print()` method reports the dimensions and then the first few rows and columns. Other than that, for all other intents and purposes `ds` remains a data frame.

```
ds
## Source: local data frame [366 x 24]
##
##      Date Location MinTemp MaxTemp Rainfall Evaporation Sunshine
## 1 2007-11-01 Canberra    8.0    24.3     0.0         3.4        6.3
## 2 2007-11-02 Canberra   14.0    26.9     3.6         4.4        9.7
## 3 2007-11-03 Canberra   13.7    23.4     3.6         5.8        3.3
## 4 2007-11-04 Canberra   13.3    15.5    39.8         7.2        9.1
## 5 2007-11-05 Canberra    7.6    16.1     2.8         5.6       10.6
## 6 2007-11-06 Canberra    6.2    16.9     0.0         5.8        8.2
## 7 2007-11-07 Canberra    6.1    18.2     0.2         4.2        8.4
## 8 2007-11-08 Canberra    8.3    17.0     0.0         5.6        4.6
## 9 2007-11-09 Canberra    8.8    19.5     0.0         4.0        4.1
## 10 2007-11-10 Canberra    8.4    22.8    16.2         5.4        7.7
## ..      ...      ...      ...      ...      ...      ...
## Variables not shown: WindGustDir (fctr), WindGustSpeed (int), WindDir9am
## (fctr), WindDir3pm (fctr), WindSpeed9am (int), WindSpeed3pm (int),
## Humidity9am (int), Humidity3pm (int), Pressure9am (dbl), Pressure3pm
## (dbl), Cloud9am (int), Cloud3pm (int), Temp9am (dbl), Temp3pm (dbl),
## RainToday (fctr), RISK_MM (dbl), RainTomorrow (fctr)
```

4 Step 2: Review—Observations

Once we have loaded the dataset, the next step is to understand the shape of the dataset. We review the data using `head()` and `tail()` to get our first feel for the observations contained in the dataset. We also have a look at some random observations from the dataset to provide further insight.

```
head(ds)

## Source: local data frame [6 x 24]
##
##      Date Location MinTemp MaxTemp Rainfall Evaporation Sunshine
## 1 2007-11-01 Canberra      8.0    24.3      0.0          3.4      6.3
## 2 2007-11-02 Canberra     14.0    26.9      3.6          4.4      9.7
## 3 2007-11-03 Canberra     13.7    23.4      3.6          5.8      3.3
## 4 2007-11-04 Canberra     13.3    15.5     39.8          7.2      9.1
## 5 2007-11-05 Canberra      7.6    16.1      2.8          5.6     10.6
## 6 2007-11-06 Canberra      6.2    16.9      0.0          5.8      8.2
## Variables not shown: WindGustDir (fctr), WindGustSpeed (int), WindDir9am
....
```

```
tail(ds)

## Source: local data frame [6 x 24]
##
##      Date Location MinTemp MaxTemp Rainfall Evaporation Sunshine
## 361 2008-10-26 Canberra      7.9    26.1        0          6.8      3.5
## 362 2008-10-27 Canberra      9.0    30.7        0          7.6     12.1
## 363 2008-10-28 Canberra      7.1    28.4        0         11.6     12.7
## 364 2008-10-29 Canberra     12.5    19.9        0          8.4      5.3
## 365 2008-10-30 Canberra     12.5    26.9        0          5.0      7.1
## 366 2008-10-31 Canberra     12.3    30.2        0          6.0     12.6
## Variables not shown: WindGustDir (fctr), WindGustSpeed (int), WindDir9am
....
```

```
ds[sample(nrow(ds), 6),]

## Source: local data frame [6 x 24]
##
##      Date Location MinTemp MaxTemp Rainfall Evaporation Sunshine
## 146 2008-03-25 Canberra     13.1    17.4      6.4          2.8      0.0
## 303 2008-08-29 Canberra     -0.2    16.2      0.0          3.4      5.9
## 322 2008-09-17 Canberra      0.7    14.1      0.0          5.6      9.0
## 343 2008-10-08 Canberra      0.5    17.9      0.0          5.8     11.5
## 11 2007-11-11 Canberra      9.1    25.2      0.0          4.2     11.9
## 39 2007-12-09 Canberra     15.0    29.4      0.0          6.6     11.1
## Variables not shown: WindGustDir (fctr), WindGustSpeed (int), WindDir9am
....
```

5 Step 2: Review—Structure

Next we use `str()` to report on the structure of the dataset. Once again we get an overview of what the data looks like, and also now, how it is stored.

```
str(ds)

## Classes 'tbl_df', 'tbl' and 'data.frame': 366 obs. of 24 variables:
## $ Date      : Factor w/ 366 levels "2007-11-01","2007-11-02",...: 1 2 3...
## $ Location   : Factor w/ 1 level "Canberra": 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 ...
## $ MinTemp    : num  8 14 13.7 13.3 7.6 6.2 6.1 8.3 8.8 8.4 ...
## $ MaxTemp    : num  24.3 26.9 23.4 15.5 16.1 16.9 18.2 17 19.5 22.8 ...
## $ Rainfall   : num  0 3.6 3.6 39.8 2.8 0 0.2 0 0 16.2 ...
## $ Evaporation : num  3.4 4.4 5.8 7.2 5.6 5.8 4.2 5.6 4 5.4 ...
## $ Sunshine   : num  6.3 9.7 3.3 9.1 10.6 8.2 8.4 4.6 4.1 7.7 ...
## $ WindGustDir : Factor w/ 16 levels "E","ENE","ESE",...: 8 2 8 8 11 10 10...
## $ WindGustSpeed: int  30 39 85 54 50 44 43 41 48 31 ...
## $ WindDir9am  : Factor w/ 16 levels "E","ENE","ESE",...: 13 1 4 15 11 10 ...
## $ WindDir3pm  : Factor w/ 16 levels "E","ENE","ESE",...: 8 14 6 14 3 1 3 ...
## $ WindSpeed9am : int  6 4 6 30 20 20 19 11 19 7 ...
## $ WindSpeed3pm : int  20 17 6 24 28 24 26 24 17 6 ...
## $ Humidity9am  : int  68 80 82 62 68 70 63 65 70 82 ...
## $ Humidity3pm  : int  29 36 69 56 49 57 47 57 48 32 ...
## $ Pressure9am  : num  1020 1012 1010 1006 1018 ...
## $ Pressure3pm  : num  1015 1008 1007 1007 1018 ...
## $ Cloud9am     : int  7 5 8 2 7 7 4 6 7 7 ...
## $ Cloud3pm     : int  7 3 7 7 7 5 6 7 7 1 ...
## $ Temp9am      : num  14.4 17.5 15.4 13.5 11.1 10.9 12.4 12.1 14.1 13.3 ...
## $ Temp3pm      : num  23.6 25.7 20.2 14.1 15.4 14.8 17.3 15.5 18.9 21.7 ...
## $ RainToday    : Factor w/ 2 levels "No","Yes": 1 2 2 2 2 1 1 1 1 2 ...
## $ RISK_MM      : num  3.6 3.6 39.8 2.8 0 0.2 0 0 16.2 0 ...
## $ RainTomorrow : Factor w/ 2 levels "No","Yes": 2 2 2 2 1 1 1 1 2 1 ...
```

6 Step 2: Review—Summary

We use `summary()` to preview the distributions.

```
summary(ds)

##           Date           Location      MinTemp      MaxTemp
## 2007-11-01: 1   Canberra:366   Min.    :-5.30   Min.    : 7.6
## 2007-11-02: 1                               1st Qu.: 2.30   1st Qu.:15.0
## 2007-11-03: 1                               Median : 7.45   Median :19.6
## 2007-11-04: 1                               Mean    : 7.27   Mean    :20.6
## 2007-11-05: 1                               3rd Qu.:12.50   3rd Qu.:25.5
## 2007-11-06: 1                               Max.    :20.90   Max.    :35.8
## (Other)      :360
##      Rainfall      Evaporation      Sunshine      WindGustDir
## Min.    : 0.00   Min.    : 0.20   Min.    : 0.00   NW      : 73
## 1st Qu.: 0.00   1st Qu.: 2.20   1st Qu.: 5.95   NNW     : 44
## Median : 0.00   Median : 4.20   Median : 8.60   E       : 37
## Mean    : 1.43   Mean    : 4.52   Mean    : 7.91   WNW     : 35
## 3rd Qu.: 0.20   3rd Qu.: 6.40   3rd Qu.:10.50   ENE     : 30
## Max.    :39.80   Max.    :13.80   Max.    :13.60   (Other):144
##                               NA's      :3      NA's      : 3
## WindGustSpeed  WindDir9am  WindDir3pm  WindSpeed9am  WindSpeed3pm
## Min.    :13.0   SE      : 47   NW      : 61   Min.    : 0.00   Min.    : 0
## 1st Qu.:31.0   SSE     : 40   WNW     : 61   1st Qu.: 6.00   1st Qu.:11
## Median :39.0   NNW     : 36   NNW     : 47   Median : 7.00   Median :17
## Mean    :39.8   N       : 31   N       : 30   Mean    : 9.65   Mean    :18
## 3rd Qu.:46.0   NW      : 30   ESE     : 27   3rd Qu.:13.00   3rd Qu.:24
## Max.    :98.0   (Other):151   (Other):139   Max.    :41.00   Max.    :52
## NA's      :2   NA's      : 31   NA's      : 1   NA's      :7
## Humidity9am  Humidity3pm  Pressure9am  Pressure3pm  Cloud9am
## Min.    :36   Min.    :13.0   Min.    : 996   Min.    : 997   Min.    :0.00
## 1st Qu.:64   1st Qu.:32.2   1st Qu.:1015   1st Qu.:1013   1st Qu.:1.00
## Median :72   Median :43.0   Median :1020   Median :1017   Median :3.50
## Mean    :72   Mean    :44.5   Mean    :1020   Mean    :1017   Mean    :3.89
## 3rd Qu.:81   3rd Qu.:55.0   3rd Qu.:1024   3rd Qu.:1022   3rd Qu.:7.00
## Max.    :99   Max.    :96.0   Max.    :1036   Max.    :1033   Max.    :8.00
##
##      Cloud3pm      Temp9am      Temp3pm      RainToday      RISK_MM
## Min.    :0.00   Min.    : 0.10   Min.    : 5.1   No :300   Min.    : 0.00
## 1st Qu.:1.00   1st Qu.: 7.62   1st Qu.:14.2   Yes: 66   1st Qu.: 0.00
## Median :4.00   Median :12.55   Median :18.6                     Median : 0.00
## Mean    :4.03   Mean    :12.36   Mean    :19.2                     Mean    : 1.43
## 3rd Qu.:7.00   3rd Qu.:17.00   3rd Qu.:24.0                     3rd Qu.: 0.20
## Max.    :8.00   Max.    :24.70   Max.    :34.5                     Max.    :39.80
##
## RainTomorrow
## No :300
## Yes: 66
....
```

7 Step 2: Review—Meta Data Cleansing

We demonstrate some meta-data changes here.

Normalise Variable Names Sometimes it is convenient to map all variable names to lowercase. R is case sensitive, so doing this does change the variable names. This can be useful when different upper/lower case conventions are intermixed in names like `IncM_tax_PyB1` and remembering how to capitalise when interactively exploring the data with 1,000 such variables is an annoyance. We often see such variable names arising when we import data from databases which are often case insensitive.

Here we use `normVarNames()` from `rattle`, which attempts to do a reasonable job of converting variables from a dataset into a standard form.

```
names(ds)

## [1] "Date"          "Location"      "MinTemp"      "MaxTemp"
## [5] "Rainfall"      "Evaporation"   "Sunshine"     "WindGustDir"
## [9] "WindGustSpeed" "WindDir9am"    "WindDir3pm"   "WindSpeed9am"
## [13] "WindSpeed3pm"  "Humidity9am"   "Humidity3pm"  "Pressure9am"
....

names(ds) <- normVarNames(names(ds))
names(ds)

## [1] "date"          "location"      "min_temp"
## [4] "max_temp"      "rainfall"      "evaporation"
## [7] "sunshine"      "wind_gust_dir" "wind_gust_speed"
## [10] "wind_dir_9am"  "wind_dir_3pm"  "wind_speed_9am"
....
```


8 Step 2: Review—Data Formats

We may want to correct the format of some of the variables in our dataset. We might first check the data type of each variable.

```
sapply(ds, class)
##          date          location      min_temp      max_temp
##    "factor"      "factor"    "numeric"    "numeric"
##    rainfall    evaporation    sunshine    wind_gust_dir
##    "numeric"    "numeric"    "numeric"    "factor"
##
## ..
```

We note that the `date` variable is a factor rather than a date. Thus we may like to convert it into a date using `lubridate` (Grolemund and Wickham, 2013):

```
library(lubridate)      # ymd()

head(ds$date)
## [1] 2007-11-01 2007-11-02 2007-11-03 2007-11-04 2007-11-05 2007-11-06
## 366 Levels: 2007-11-01 2007-11-02 2007-11-03 2007-11-04 ... 2008-10-31

ds$date <- ymd(as.character(ds$date))
head(ds$date)
## [1] "2007-11-01 UTC" "2007-11-02 UTC" "2007-11-03 UTC" "2007-11-04 UTC"
## [5] "2007-11-05 UTC" "2007-11-06 UTC"
```

```
sapply(ds, class)
## $date
## [1] "POSIXct" "POSIXt"
##
## $location
##
## ..
```

9 Step 2: Review—Variable Roles

We are now in a position to identify the roles played by the variables within the dataset. From our observations so far we note that the first variable (*Date*) is not relevant, as is, to the modelling (we could turn it into a seasonal variable which might be useful). Also we remove the second variable (*Location*) as in the data here it is a constant. We also identify the risk variable, if it is provided—it is a measure of the amount of risk or the importance of an observation with respect to the target variable. The risk is an output variable, and thus should not be used as an input to the modelling.

```
(vars <- names(ds))

## [1] "date"           "location"       "min_temp"
## [4] "max_temp"       "rainfall"       "evaporation"
## [7] "sunshine"       "wind_gust_dir"  "wind_gust_speed"
## [10] "wind_dir_9am"   "wind_dir_3pm"   "wind_speed_9am"
## [13] "wind_speed_3pm" "humidity_9am"    "humidity_3pm"
## [16] "pressure_9am"   "pressure_3pm"   "cloud_9am"
## [19] "cloud_3pm"      "temp_9am"       "temp_3pm"
## [22] "rain_today"     "risk_mm"        "rain_tomorrow"

target <- "rain_tomorrow"
risk    <- "risk_mm"
id      <- c("date", "location")
```

10 Step 3: Clean—Ignore IDs, Outputs, Missing

We will want to ignore some variables that are irrelevant or inappropriate for modelling.

IDs and Outputs We start with the identifiers and the risk variable (which is an output variable). These should play no role in the modelling. Always watch out for including output variables as inputs to the modelling. This is one trap I regularly see from beginners.

```
ignore <- union(id, if (exists("risk")) risk)
```

We might also identify any variable that has a unique value for every observation. These are sometimes identifiers as well and if so are candidates for ignoring.

```
(ids <- which(sapply(ds, function(x) length(unique(x))) == nrow(ds)))  
## date  
## 1  
ignore <- union(ignore, names(ids))
```

All Missing We then remove any variables where all of the values are missing. There are none like this in the weather dataset, but in general across 1,000 variables, there may be some. We first count the number of missing values for each variable, and then list the names of those variables with only missing values.

```
mvc <- sapply(ds[vars], function(x) sum(is.na(x)))  
mvn <- names(which(mvc == nrow(ds)))  
ignore <- union(ignore, mvn)
```

Many Missing Perhaps we also want to ignore variables with more than 70% of the values missing.

```
mvn <- names(which(mvc >= 0.7*nrow(ds)))  
ignore <- union(ignore, mvn)
```

11 Step 3: Clean—Ignore MultiLevel, Constants

Too Many Levels We might also want to ignore variables with too many levels. Another approach is to group the levels into a smaller number of levels, but here we simply ignore them

```
factors <- which(sapply(ds[vars], is.factor))
lvls    <- sapply(factors, function(x) length(levels(ds[[x]])))
(many   <- names(which(lvls > 20)))
## character(0)
ignore  <- union(ignore, many)
```

Constants Ignore variables with constant values.

```
(constants <- names(which(sapply(ds[vars], function(x) all(x == x[1L])))))
## [1] "location"
ignore     <- union(ignore, constants)
```

12 Step 3: Clean—Identify Correlated Variables

```
mc <- cor(ds[which(sapply(ds, is.numeric))], use="complete.obs")
mc[upper.tri(mc, diag=TRUE)] <- NA
mc <-
  mc %>%
  abs() %>%
  data.frame() %>%
  mutate(var1=row.names(mc)) %>%
  gather(var2, cor, -var1) %>%
  na.omit()
mc <- mc[order(-abs(mc$cor)),]
mc
```

##	var1	var2	cor
## 33	temp_3pm	max_temp	0.989105
## 182	pressure_3pm	pressure_9am	0.966604
## 15	temp_9am	min_temp	0.915644
....			

Here we can identify pairs where we want to keep one but not the other, because they are highly correlated. We will select them manually since it is a judgement call. Normally we might limit the removals to those correlations that are 0.95 or more.

```
ignore <- union(ignore, c("temp_3pm", "pressure_9am", "temp_9am"))
```

13 Step 3: Clean—Remove the Variables

Once we have identified the variables to ignore, we remove them from our list of variables to use.

```
length(vars)
## [1] 24
vars <- setdiff(vars, ignore)
length(vars)
## [1] 18
```

DRAFT

14 Step 3: Clean—Feature Selection

The `FSelector` ([Romanski, 2013](#)) package provides functions to identify subsets of variables that might be more effective for modelling.

```
library(FSelector)      # information.gain()

form <- formula(paste(target, "~ ."))
cfs(form, ds[vars])

## [1] "min_temp"      "sunshine"      "wind_gust_speed" "humidity_3pm"
## [5] "pressure_3pm"  "cloud_3pm"

information.gain(form, ds[vars])

##               attr_importance
## min_temp              0.051061
## max_temp              0.000000
## rainfall              0.000000
## evaporation           0.000000
## sunshine              0.096850
## wind_gust_dir         0.053632
## wind_gust_speed       0.053296
## wind_dir_9am          0.044089
## wind_dir_3pm          0.023594
## wind_speed_9am        -0.001593
## wind_speed_3pm        0.000000
## humidity_9am          0.041237
## humidity_3pm          0.089299
## pressure_3pm          0.099239
## cloud_9am             0.047813
## cloud_3pm             0.099447
## rain_today            0.018198
```

15 Step 3: Clean—Remove Missing Target

Sometimes there may be further operations to perform on the dataset prior to modelling. This can include dealing with missing values, converting variables to their correct type, etc. Here, we remove observations with a missing target.

```
dim(ds)
## [1] 366 24
sum(is.na(ds[target]))
## [1] 0
ds <- ds[!is.na(ds[target]),]
sum(is.na(ds[target]))
## [1] 0
dim(ds)
## [1] 366 24
```


16 Step 3: Clean—Deal with Missing Values

Missing values for the variables are an issue for some but not all model builders. For example, `randomForest()` has not been coded to handle missing values whilst `rpart()` has a particularly well developed approach to dealing with missing values.

We may want to impute missing values in the data (not always wise to do so). Here we do this using `na.roughfix()` from `randomForest` (Breiman *et al.*, 2012).

As previously, we will demonstrate the process here but then restore the original dataset as these operations are not required for our dataset here.

```
ods <- ds

dim(ds[vars])
## [1] 366 18
sum(is.na(ds[vars]))
## [1] 47
ds[vars] <- na.roughfix(ds[vars])
sum(is.na(ds[vars]))
## [1] 0
dim(ds[vars])
## [1] 366 18

ds <- ods
```

17 Step 3: Clean—Omitting Observations

We might want to simply remove observations that have missing values. Here `na.omit()` identifies the rows to omit based on the `vars` to be included for modelling. This list of rows to omit is stored as the `na.action` attribute of the returned object. We then remove these observations from the dataset.

We start again by keeping a copy of the original dataset to restore below. We also initialise a list of row indices that we will omit from the dataset.

```
ods <- ds
omit <- NULL

dim(ds[vars])
## [1] 366 18

sum(is.na(ds[vars]))
## [1] 47

mo <- attr(na.omit(ds[vars]), "na.action")
omit <- union(omit, mo)
if (length(omit)) ds <- ds[-omit,]
sum(is.na(ds[vars]))
## [1] 0

dim(ds[vars])
## [1] 328 18
```

Restore the dataset.

```
ds <- ods
```

18 Step 3: Clean—Normalise Factors

Some variables will have levels with spaces, and mixture of cases, etc. We may like to normalise the levels for each of the categoric variables. For very large datasets this can take some time and so we may want to be selective.

```
factors <- which(sapply(ds[vars], is.factor))  
for (f in factors) levels(ds[[f]]) <- normVarNames(levels(ds[[f]]))
```

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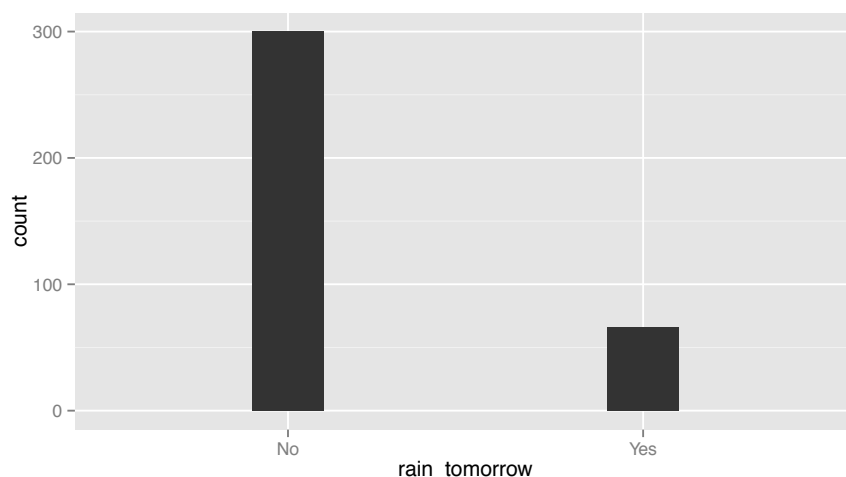
19 Step 3: Clean—Ensure Target is Categorical

For classification models we want to ensure the target is categorical. Often it is 0/1 and hence is loaded as numeric. We could tell our modeller of choice to explicitly do classification, or set the target using `as.factor()` in the formula, but it is generally cleaner to do this here, and this is a no-op if the target is already categorical.

```
ds[target] <- as.factor(ds[[target]])  
table(ds[target])  
  
##  
##   No Yes  
## 300  66
```

Here we visualise the distribution of the target variable using `ggplot2` (Wickham and Chang, 2014).

```
p <- ggplot(ds, aes_string(x=target))  
p <- p + geom_bar(width=0.2)  
print(p)
```



20 Step 4: Prepare—Variables

We are now ready to identify the variables that we will use to build the model. Previously we identified the variable roles. Now we identify those that we wish to model. We begin with the model input variables, identifying them as a vector of characters (the variable name) and a vector of integers (the variable index).

```
inputc <- setdiff(vars, target)
inputc
## [1] "min_temp"      "max_temp"      "rainfall"
## [4] "evaporation"   "sunshine"      "wind_gust_dir"
## [7] "wind_gust_speed" "wind_dir_9am"  "wind_dir_3pm"
## [10] "wind_speed_9am" "wind_speed_3pm" "humidity_9am"
....
```

The indices are determined from the names of the variables in the original dataset. Not the use of `USE.NAMES=` to turn off the inclusion of names of the elements of the resulting vector, only to keep things simpler.

```
inputi <- sapply(inputc, function(x) which(x == names(ds)), USE.NAMES=FALSE)
inputi
## [1] 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 17 18 19 22
```

For convenience we record the number of observations:

```
nobs <- nrow(ds)
nobs
## [1] 366
```

Here we simply report on the dimensions of various data subsets:

```
dim(ds)
## [1] 366 24
dim(ds[vars])
## [1] 366 18
dim(ds[inputc])
## [1] 366 17
dim(ds[inputi])
## [1] 366 17
```

21 Step 4: Prepare—Numeric and Categorical Variables

Sometimes we need to identify the numeric and categorical variables. Many cluster analysis algorithms only deal with numeric variables, for example. Here we identify them both by name and by index. Note that when using the index we have to assume the variables always remain in the same order within the dataset and all variables are present. Otherwise the indices will get out of sync.

```
numi      <- intersect(inputi, which(sapply(ds, is.numeric)))
numi
## [1]  3  4  5  6  7  9 12 13 14 15 17 18 19

numc      <- names(ds)[numi]
numc
## [1] "min_temp"      "max_temp"      "rainfall"
## [4] "evaporation"   "sunshine"      "wind_gust_speed"
## [7] "wind_speed_9am" "wind_speed_3pm" "humidity_9am"
## [10] "humidity_3pm"  "pressure_3pm"  "cloud_9am"
....

cati      <- intersect(inputi, which(sapply(ds, is.factor)))
cati
## [1]  8 10 11 22

catc      <- names(ds)[cati]
catc
## [1] "wind_gust_dir" "wind_dir_9am"  "wind_dir_3pm"  "rain_today"
```

22 Step 4: Prepare—Save Dataset

For large datasets we may want to save it to a binary RData file once we have it in the right shape. It will also save reading from CSV again—a CSV file with 2 million observations and 800 variables might take 30 minutes to read.csv(), 5 minutes to save(), and 30 seconds to load().

```
dsdate <- paste0("-", format(Sys.Date(), "%y%m%d"))
dsrdata <- paste0(dsname, dsdate, ".RData")
save(ds, dsname, dspath, dsdate, target, risk, id, ignore, vars,
      nob, omit, inputi, inputc, numi, numc, cati, catc, file=dsrdata)
```

We would only do the above steps once, and then each time we wish to use the dataset, we would load() it into R.

```
(load(dsrdata))

## [1] "ds"      "dsname" "dspath" "dsdate" "target" "risk"   "id"
## [8] "ignore" "vars"   "nob"    "omit"   "inputi" "inputc" "numi"
## [15] "numc"   "cati"   "catc"

dsname
## [1] "weather"

dspath
## [1] "/home/gjw/R/x86_64-pc-linux-gnu-library/3.1/rattle/csv/weather.csv"

dim(ds)
## [1] 366 24

id
## [1] "date"      "location"

target
## [1] "rain_tomorrow"

risk
## [1] "risk_mm"

ignore
## [1] "date"      "location"      "risk_mm"      "temp_3pm"
## [5] "pressure_9am" "temp_9am"

vars
## [1] "min_temp"      "max_temp"      "rainfall"
## [4] "evaporation"   "sunshine"      "wind_gust_dir"
## [7] "wind_gust_speed" "wind_dir_9am"  "wind_dir_3pm"
## [10] "wind_speed_9am" "wind_speed_3pm" "humidity_9am"
....
```

23 Review—Data Preparation—Load and Configure

Here in one sequence (across this and the following sections) is the code to perform all of the data preparation. Notice that we would not necessarily do all of these, such as lower casing the variable names, imputing missing values, omitting observations with missing values, etc, so pick and choose as is appropriate to your situation.

Here we load the data and identify some key roles for some of the variables. We then also summarise the variables - our initial study of the shape and feel of the data.

```
# Required packages
library(rattle)           # The weather dataset and normVarNames().
library(randomForest)    # Impute missing values using na.roughfix().

# Identify the dataset.
dsname      <- "weather"
dspath      <- system.file("csv", "weather.csv", package="rattle")
weather     <- read.csv(dspath)
ds          <- get(dsname) %>% tbl_df()
names(ds)   <- normVarNames(names(ds)) # Optional lower case variable names.
vars        <- names(ds)
target      <- "rain_tomorrow"
risk        <- "risk_mm"
id          <- c("date", "location")

# Summarise
ds
dim(ds)
names(ds)
str(ds)
summary(ds)
```


24 Review—Data Preparation—Variables to Ignore

Here we identify variables that we probably do not want to play a part in the modelling.

```
# Ignore the IDs and the risk variable.
ignore      <- union(id, if (exists("risk")) risk)

# Ignore variables that look like identifiers.
ids         <- which(sapply(ds, function(x) length(unique(x))) == nrow(ds))
ignore      <- union(ignore, names(ids))

# Ignore variables which are completely missing.
mvc         <- sapply(ds[vars], function(x) sum(is.na(x))) # Missing value count.
mvn         <- names(ds)[(which(mvc == nrow(ds)))] # Missing var names.
ignore      <- union(ignore, mvn)

# Ignore variables that are mostly missing - e.g., 70% or more missing
mvn         <- names(ds)[(which(mvc >= 0.7*nrow(ds)))]
ignore      <- union(ignore, mvn)

# Ignore variables with many levels.
factors     <- which(sapply(ds[vars], is.factor))
lvls        <- sapply(factors, function(x) length(levels(ds[[x]])))
many        <- names(which(lvls > 20)) # Factors with too many levels.
ignore      <- union(ignore, many)

# Ignore constants.
constants   <- names(which(sapply(ds[vars], function(x) all(x == x[1L]))))
ignore      <- union(ignore, constants)

# Initialise the variables
vars        <- setdiff(vars, ignore)
```

25 Review—Data Preparation—Clean and Finalise

```
# Variable roles.
inputc <- setdiff(vars, target)
inputi <- sapply(inputc, function(x) which(x == names(ds)), USE.NAMES=FALSE)
numi <- intersect(inputi, which(sapply(ds, is.numeric)))
numc <- names(numi)
cati <- intersect(inputi, which(sapply(ds, is.factor)))
catc <- names(cati)

# Remove all observations with a missing target.
ds <- ds[!is.na(ds[target]),]

# Impute missing values, but do this wisely - understand why missing.
if (sum(is.na(ds[vars]))) ds[vars] <- na.roughfix(ds[vars])

# Omit observations with missing values.
omit <- NULL
mo <- attr(na.omit(ds[vars]), "na.action")
omit <- union(omit, mo)
if (length(omit)) ds <- ds[-omit,] # Remove omitted observations.

# Normalise factors.
factors <- which(sapply(ds[vars], is.factor))
for (f in factors) levels(ds[[f]]) <- normVarNames(levels(ds[[f]]))

# Ensure the target is categoric.
ds[target] <- as.factor(ds[[target]])

# Number of observations.
nobs <- nrow(ds)

# Save the dataset
dsdate <- paste0("_", format(Sys.Date(), "%y%m%d"))
dsrdata <- paste0(dsname, dsdate, ".RData")
save(ds, dsname, dspath, dsdate, target, risk, id, ignore, vars,
      nobs, omit, inputi, inputc, numi, numc, cati, catc, file=dsrdata)
```

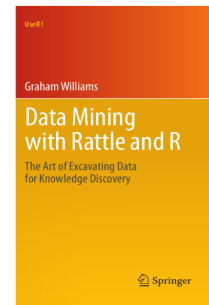
26 Further Reading and Acknowledgements

The [Rattle Book](#), published by Springer, provides a comprehensive introduction to data mining and analytics using Rattle and R. It is available from [Amazon](#). Other documentation on a broader selection of R topics of relevance to the data scientist is freely available from <http://datamining.togaware.com>, including the [Datamining Desktop Survival Guide](#).

This chapter is one of many chapters available from <http://HandsOnDataScience.com>. In particular follow the links on the website with a * which indicates the generally more developed chapters.

Other resources include:

- The [CRISP-DM](#) or Cross Industry Standard Process for Data Mining was an early influence upon which the process presented here is based.



27 References

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- Williams GJ (2011). *Data Mining with Rattle and R: The art of excavating data for knowledge discovery*. Use R! Springer, New York. URL http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1441998896/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=togaware-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=1441998896.
- Williams GJ (2014). *rattle: Graphical user interface for data mining in R*. R package version 3.1.4, URL <http://rattle.togaware.com/>.

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