Timings of common tasks using the **data.table** package in R

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(A later revision may be available on the homepage)

* WORK IN PROGRESS *

This document contains a series of tests, followed by a summary table of various timings and comparisons. Please go straight to the summary table first <here> in which each row has a link back to the test.

This document is reproducible. Simply run the .Rnw file yourself in your environment to confirm the results. Also see ?vignette, which says that edit(vignette("datatable-timings")) will extract the code from this document so you can easily work with it.

The .Rnw included in the package has N=10,000,000. This is a small number so that 'R CMD build' completes in a reasonable time (about 5 minutes). We don't want the nightly builds on R-Forge and CRAN to slow down just to run long timing comparisons. We have increased this to N=100,000,000 ourselves, and included the output on the datatable homepage (<link>).

Contents

1 Timing tests

1.1 Extraction

This is a repeat of the test in section 1 of the Introduction vignette. The syntax is explained there. This demonstrates the large difference in speed between vector scans and binary search. Therefore, please avoid using `==` in the `i` expression.

```
> n = ceiling(1e7/26^2)   # 10 million rows
> DF = data.frame(x=rep(LETTERS,each=26*n),
+                 y=rep(letters,each=n),
+                 v=rnorm(n*26^2),
+                 stringsAsFactors=FALSE)
> DT = data.table(DF,key="x,y")
> tables()

     NAME       NROW  MB COLS  KEY
[1,] DT   10,000,068 153 x,y,v x,y
Total: 153MB

> tt=system.time(ans1 <- DF[DF$x=="R" & DF$y=="h",]); tt
```

```
   user  system elapsed
  7.260   0.352   7.625
```

```
> head(ans1)
```

```
        x y          v
6642058 R h  0.6788531
6642059 R h  1.0604676
6642060 R h -0.5692045
6642061 R h -0.4092421
6642062 R h  0.8030425
6642063 R h -1.4643658
```

```
> dim(ans1)
```

```
[1] 14793     3
```

```
> ss=system.time(ans2 <- DT[J("R","h")]); ss
```

```
   user  system elapsed
  0.016   0.000   0.018
```

```
> head(ans2)
```

```
     x y          v
[1,] R h  0.6788531
[2,] R h  1.0604676
[3,] R h -0.5692045
[4,] R h -0.4092421
[5,] R h  0.8030425
[6,] R h -1.4643658
```

```
> dim(ans2)
```

```
[1] 14793     3
```

```
> identical(ans1$v,ans2$v)
```

```
[1] TRUE
```

1.2 Grouping

This is a repeat of the test in section 2 of the Introduction vignette. The syntax is explained there.

```
> ttt=system.time(ans1 <- tapply(DF$v,DF$x,sum)); ttt
```

```
   user  system elapsed
 21.309   1.280  22.633
```

```
> head(ans1)
```

```
         A          B          C          D          E          F
-107.99631   74.45817  185.79287 -284.84418 -222.11054  814.23305
```

```
> sss=system.time(ans2 <- DT[,sum(v),by=x]); sss
```

```
   user  system elapsed
  0.812   0.160   0.976
```

```
> head(ans2)
```

```
     x         V1
[1,] A -107.99631
[2,] B   74.45817
[3,] C  185.79287
[4,] D -284.84418
[5,] E -222.11054
[6,] F  814.23305
```

```
> identical(as.vector(ans1), ans2$V1)
```

```
[1] TRUE
```

1.3 Test 3

1.4 Test 4

1.5 Test 5

2 Summary table

```
> ans
```

```
         base data.table times faster
==      7.625      0.018          423
tapply 22.633      0.976           23
```

```
> toLatex(sessionInfo())
```

- R version 2.15.0 (2012-03-30), i686-pc-linux-gnu
- Locale: LC_CTYPE=en_GB.UTF-8, LC_NUMERIC=C, LC_TIME=en_GB.UTF-8, LC_COLLATE=en_GB.UTF-8, LC_MONETARY=en_GB.UTF-8, LC_MESSAGES=en_GB.UTF-8, LC_PAPER=C, LC_NAME=C, LC_ADDRESS=C, LC_TELEPHONE=C, LC_MEASUREMENT=en_GB.UTF-8, LC_IDENTIFICATION=C
- Base packages: base, datasets, graphics, grDevices, methods, stats, utils
- Loaded via a namespace (and not attached): tools~2.15.0