

# Neuroconductor: An R Platform for Medical Imaging Analysis

John Muschelli

[http://johnmuschelli.com/ICSA\\_2019.html](http://johnmuschelli.com/ICSA_2019.html)

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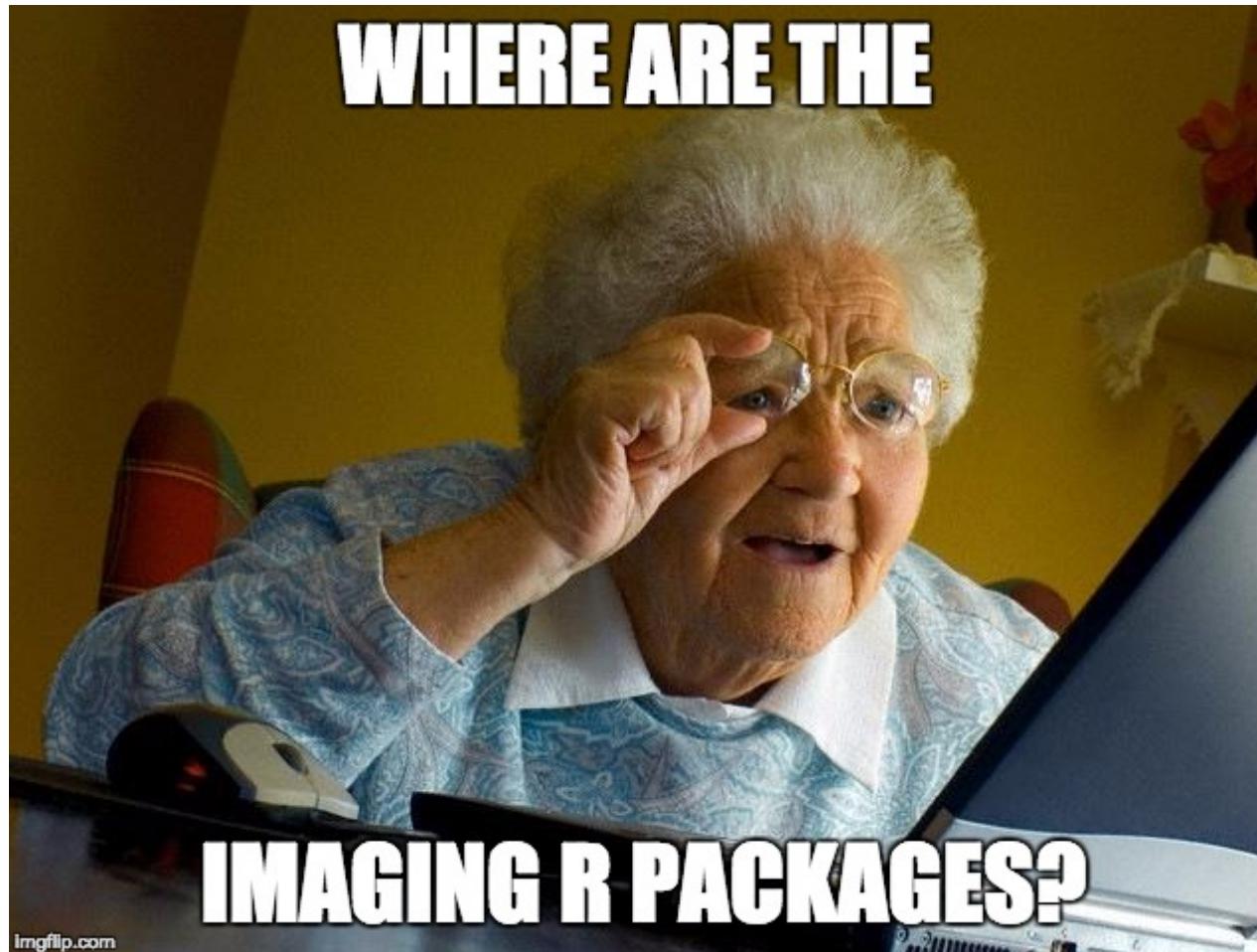
R is a language and environment  
for statistical computing  
and graphics.

<https://cran.r-project.org/>

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R is much more than that now,  
but...

# What did R have for medical imaging?



<https://imgflip.com/memegenerator/Grandma-Finds-The-Internet>

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## CRAN Task View: Medical Image Analysis

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**Contact:** bwhitcher at gmail.com

**Version:** 2016-12-30

**URL:** <https://CRAN.R-project.org/view=MedicalImaging>

## Data Input/Output

### DICOM

The industry standard format, for data coming off a clinical imaging device, is [DICOM](#) (Digital Imaging and Communications in Medicine). The DICOM "standard" is very broad and very complicated. Roughly speaking each DICOM-compliant file is a collection of fields organized into two four-byte sequences (group,element) that are represented as hexadecimal numbers and form a *tag*. The (group,element) combination announces what type of information is coming next. There is no fixed number of bytes for a DICOM header. The final (group,element) tag should be the "data" tag (7FE0,0010), such that all subsequent information is related to the image(s).

- The packages [oro.dicom](#), [divest](#), [fmri](#) and [tractor.base](#) (part of the [tractor](#) project) provide R functions that read DICOM files and facilitate their conversion to ANALYZE or NIfTI format.

### ANALYZE and NIfTI

Although the industry standard for medical imaging data is DICOM, another format has come to be heavily used in the image analysis community. The [ANALYZE](#) format was originally developed in conjunction with an image processing system (of the same name) at the Mayo Foundation. An Anlayze (7.5) format image is comprised of two files, the "hdr" and "img" files, that contain information about the acquisition and the acquisition itself, respectively. A more recent adaption of this format is known as [NIfTI-1](#) and is a product of the Data Format Working Group (DFWG) from the Neuroimaging Informatics Technology Initiative (NIfTI). The NIfTI-1 data format is almost identical to the ANALYZE format, but offers a few improvements: merging of the header and image information into one file (.nii), re-organization of the 348-byte fixed header into more relevant categories and the possibility of extending the header information.

- The packages [RNifti](#), [AnalyzeFMRI](#), [fmri](#), [tractor.base](#) (part of the [tractor](#) project), [oro.nifti](#), and [neuroim](#) all provide functions that read/write ANALYZE and NIfTI files.

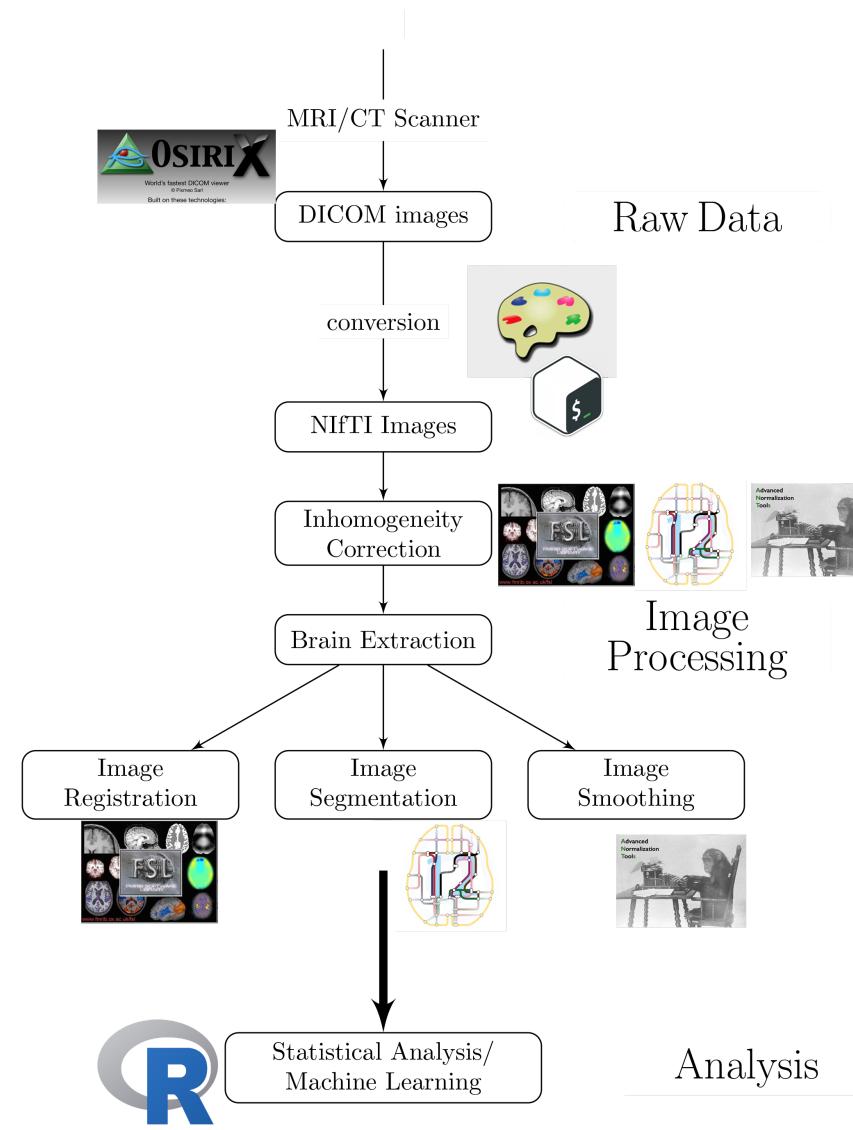
## Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

### Diffusion Tensor Imaging (DTI)

- The R package [dti](#) provides structural adaptive smoothing methods for the analysis of diffusion weighted data in the context of the DTI model. Due to its edge preserving properties these smoothing methods are capable of reducing noise without compromizing significant structures (e.g., fibre tracts). The package also provides functions for DTI data processing from input,

# Workflow for an Analysis

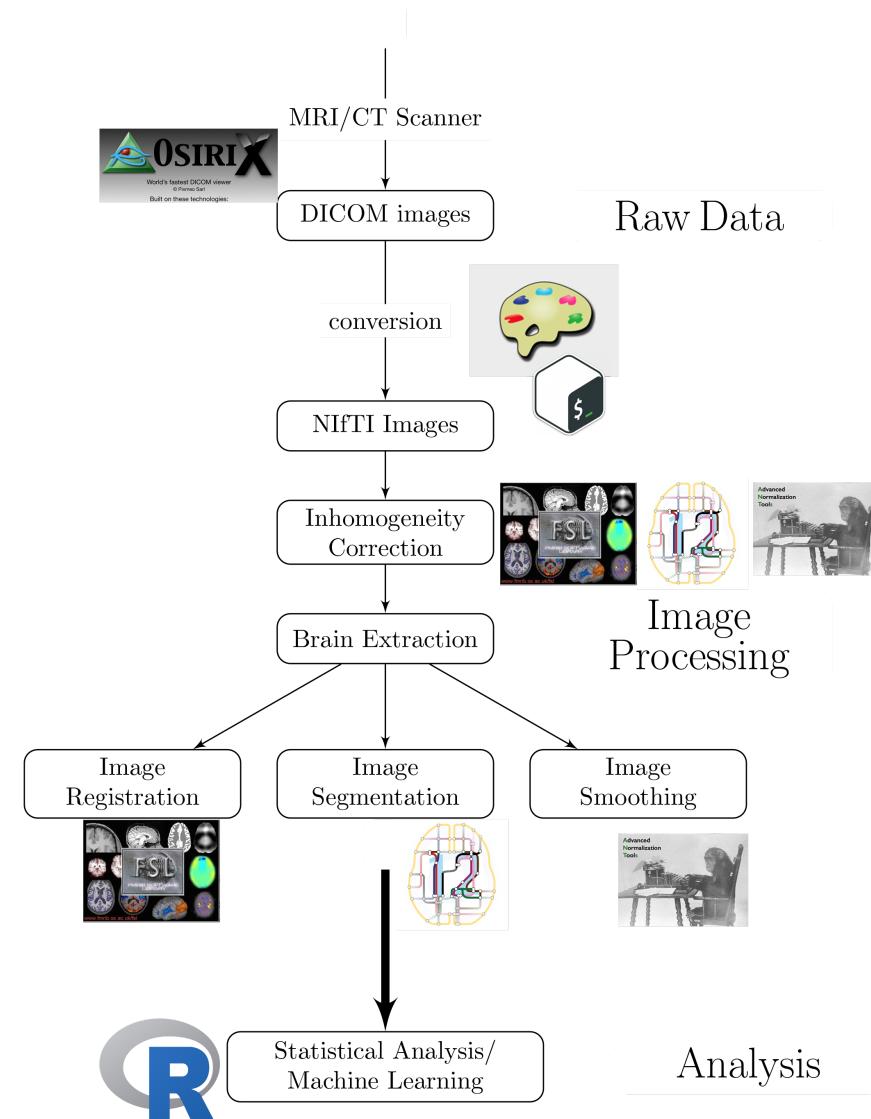
- bash 
- FSL 
- ANTs 
- MRIcroGL 
- OsiriX 
- SPM 12 



# Workflow for an Analysis

Multiple pieces of software used

- all different syntax



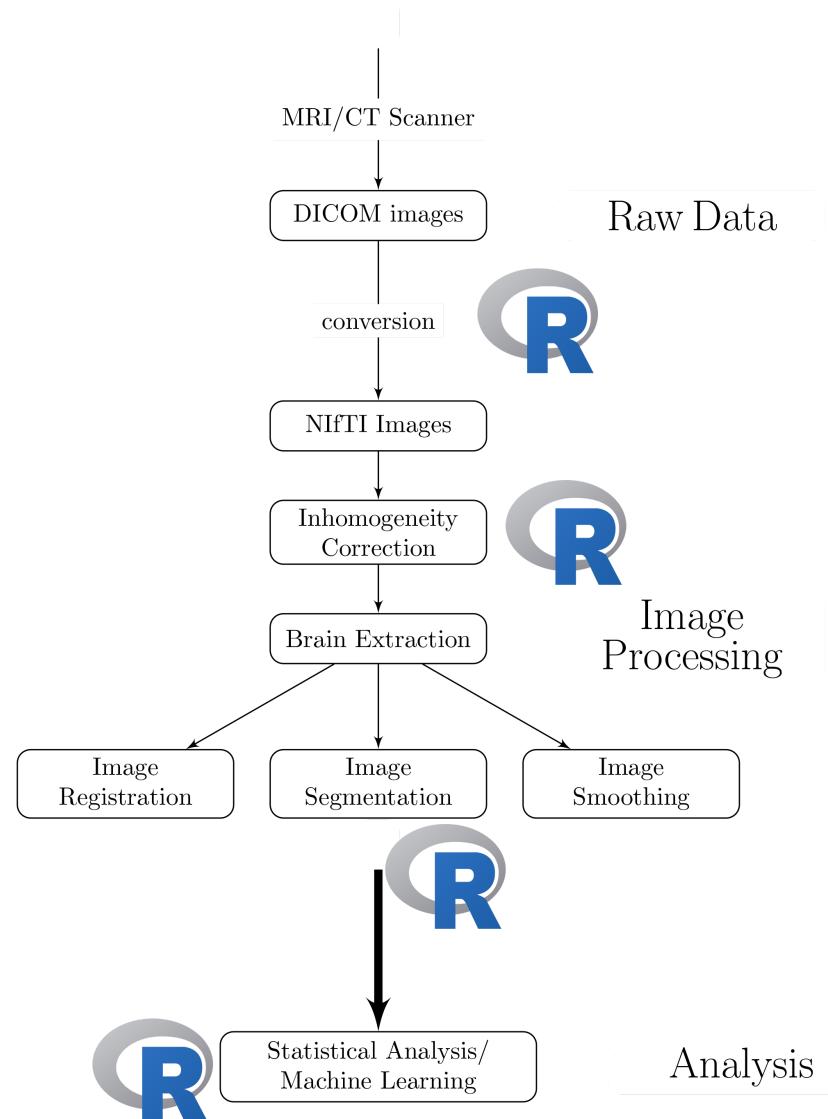
# Our Goal:

## Lower the bar to entry

- all “one” code (R)
  - pipeline tool
  - also “native” R code

## Complete pipeline

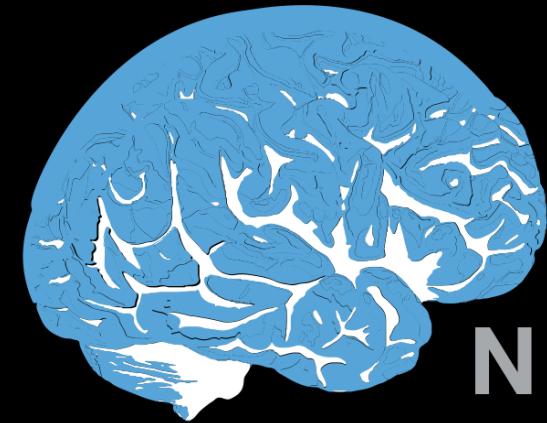
- preprocessing and analysis



# Envy: Bioconductor



- centralized bioinformatics packages (> 1300)
- large community/developer team
- published tutorials and workflows
- additional requirements to CRAN (e.g. packages need vignettes)



NEUROCONDUCTOR

An R Platform for  
Medical Imaging Analysis

# What is Neuroconductor?

1. A centralized repository of packages (N = 97)
2. A community of developers (N = 26) and users
3. A website [https://neuroconductor.org/.](https://neuroconductor.org/)
  - with tutorials and help
4. A team helping developers and users (John, Adi Gherman, Ciprian Crainiceanu, Brian Caffo)

# Benefits of Neuroconductor

Allow imaging to use all R has to offer:

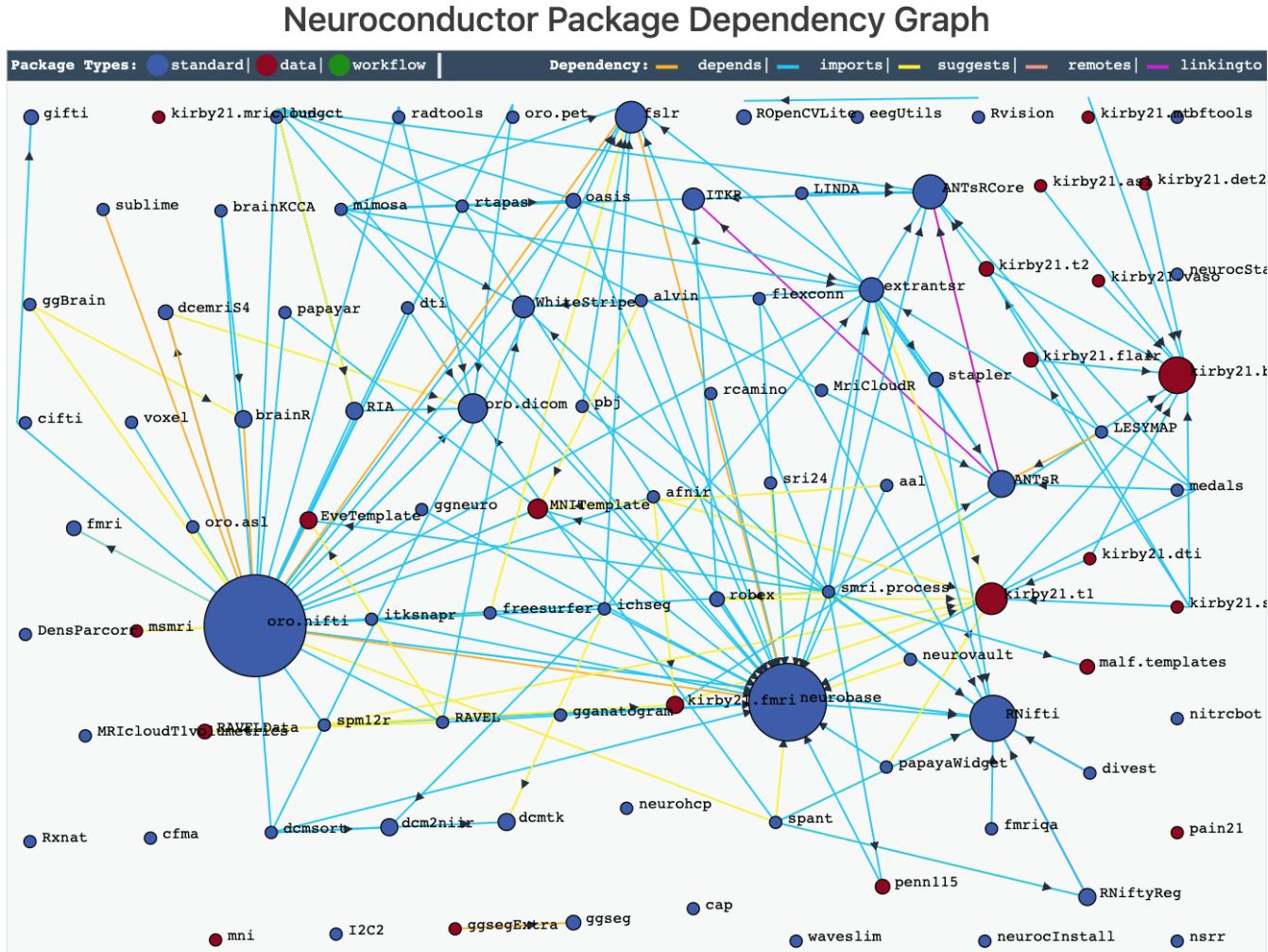
- Statistics and Machine Learning (tensorflow)
- Versioning and testing (GitHub)
- Reproducible reports and analyses
- Shiny (web applications)
- Genomics/Imaging analysis in one platform
  - Bioconductor

# Goal: Centralize the packages (currently 97)

## List Packages

				<a href="#">View Dependency Graph</a>	<a href="#">View Pending Packages</a>		
Show 50 ↑ entries				Search: <input type="text"/>			
Package Name	Version	Package Title	Maintainer(s)	GitHub URL	Last updated		
ANTsR	0.4.0	ANTs in R: quantification tools for biomedical images	Brian B. Avants	<a href="#">stnava/ANTsR</a>	2017-03-18		
ANTsRCore	0.0.0	ANTsRCore: core software infrastructure for ANTsR	Brian B. Avants	<a href="#">stnava/ANTsRCore.git</a>	2017-03-18		
brainR	1.4.2.1	Helper Functions to Misc3d and rgl Packages for Brain Imaging	John Muschelli	<a href="#">muschellij2/brainR</a>	2017-05-26		
cifti	0.4.2	Toolbox for Connectivity Informatics Technology Initiative ('CIFTI') Files	John Muschelli	<a href="#">muschellij2/cifti</a>	2017-05-26		
dcemriS4	0.57.1.2	A Package for Image Analysis of DCE-MRI (S4 Implementation)	Brandon, Whitcher	<a href="#">bjw34032/dcemriS4</a>	2017-05-26		
dcm2niir	0.5	Conversion of 'DICOM' to 'NIfTI' Imaging Files Through R	John Muschelli	<a href="#">muschellij2/dcm2niir</a>	2017-02-24		
divest	0.3.0.1	Get Images Out of DICOM Format Quickly	Jon Clayden	<a href="#">jonclayden/divest</a>	2017-05-25		
EveTemplate	0.99.14.2	JHU-MNI-ss (Eve) template	Jean-Philippe Fortin	<a href="#">Jfortin1/EveTemplate</a>	2017-05-26		
extrantsr	2.17.2.3	Extra Functions to Build on the ANTsR Package	John Muschelli	<a href="#">muschellij2/extrantsr.git</a>	2017-05-26		
freesurfer	1.6.6	Wrapper Functions for 'Freesurfer'	John Muschelli	<a href="#">muschellij2/freesurfer</a>	2017-05-26		
fslr	2.12.6	Wrapper Functions for FSL ('FMRIB' Software Library) from Functional MRI of the Brain ('FMRIB')	John Muschelli	<a href="#">muschellij2/fslr</a>	2017-05-26		
gifti	0.7	Reads in Neuroimaging 'GIFTI' Files with Geometry Information	John Muschelli	<a href="#">muschellij2/gifti</a>	2016-11-09		
ITKR	0.0.1	ITK in R	Brian B. Avants	<a href="#">stnava/ITKR</a>	2017-02-24		
itksnapr	2.1.6	Package of ITK-SNAP	John Muschelli	<a href="#">muschellij2/itksnapr</a>	2017-05-26		
kirby21.asl	1.5.1	Example ASL Data from the Multi-Modal MRI Reproducibility Resource	John Muschelli	<a href="#">muschellij2/kirby21.asl</a>	2017-05-03		

# New release (December 2019)



# Using R as a Pipeline Tool: fslr

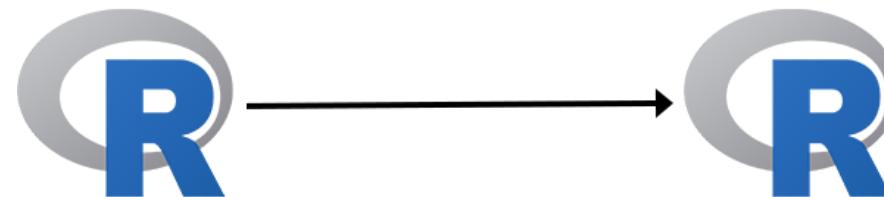


- `fslr` - call FSL from R (requires FSL)

**What `fslr` does**



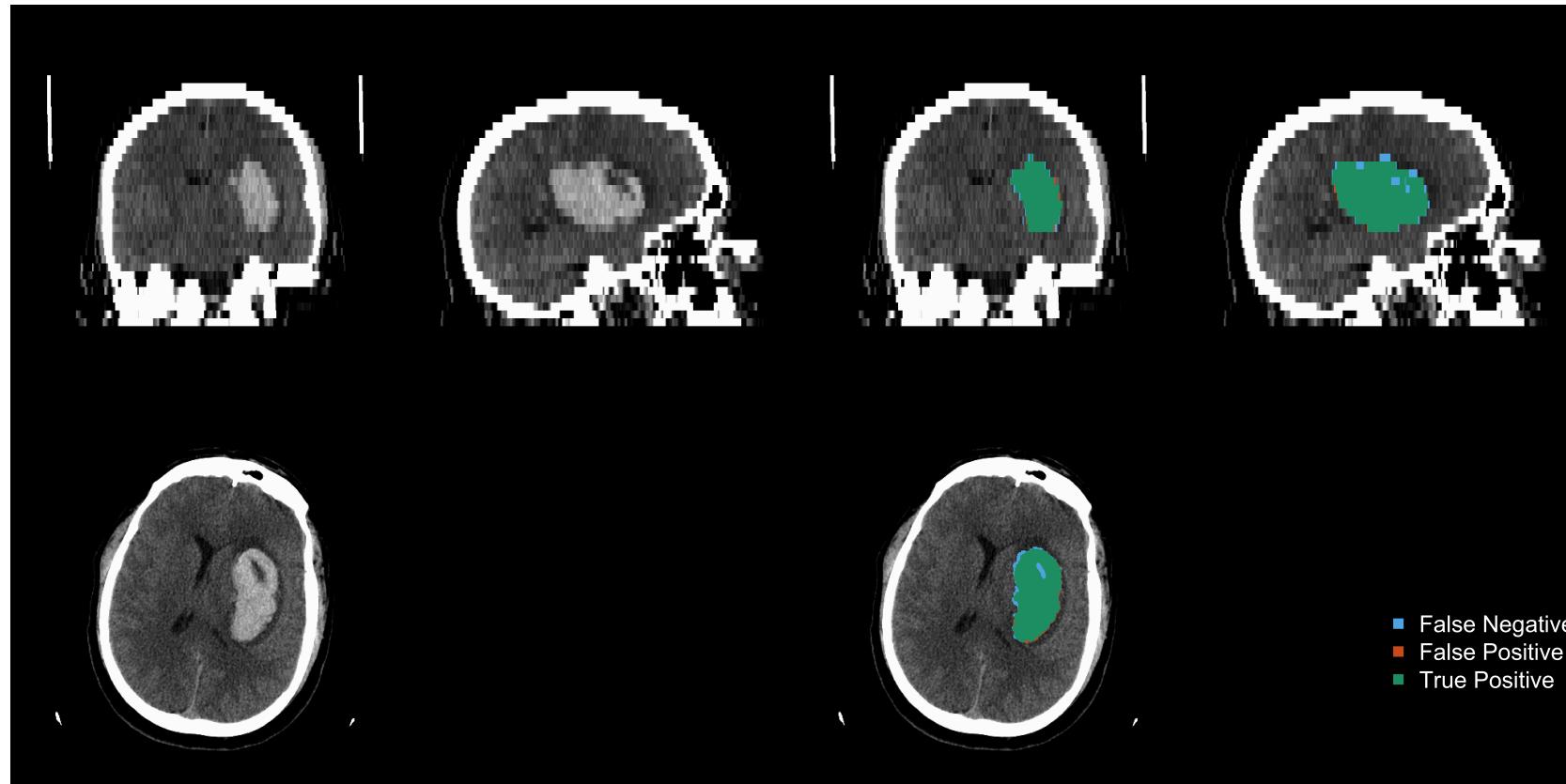
**A user sees:**



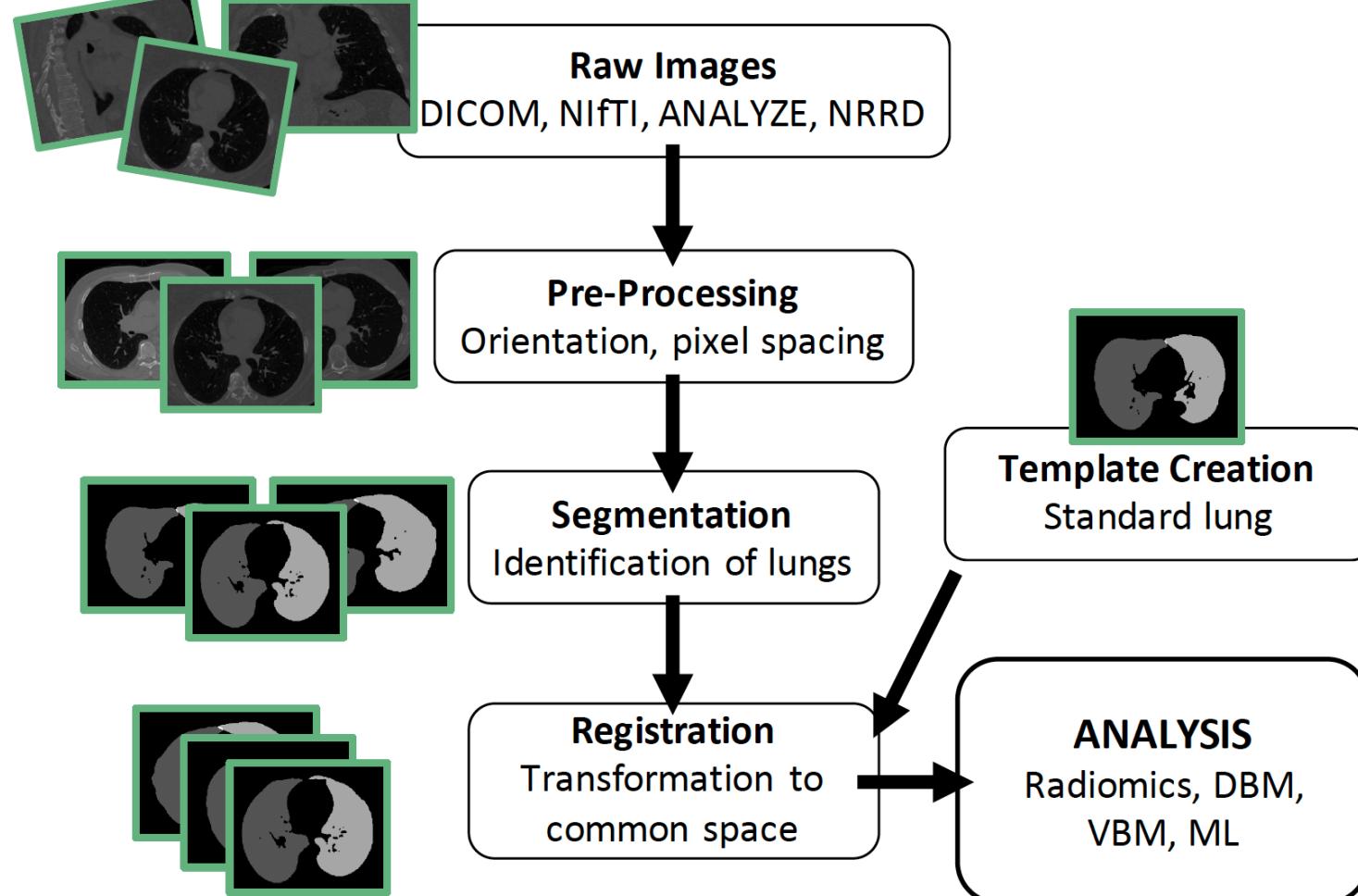
# ichseg: ICH Segmentation of CT images



```
ichseg::ich_segment(img = "/path/to/ct/scan")
```



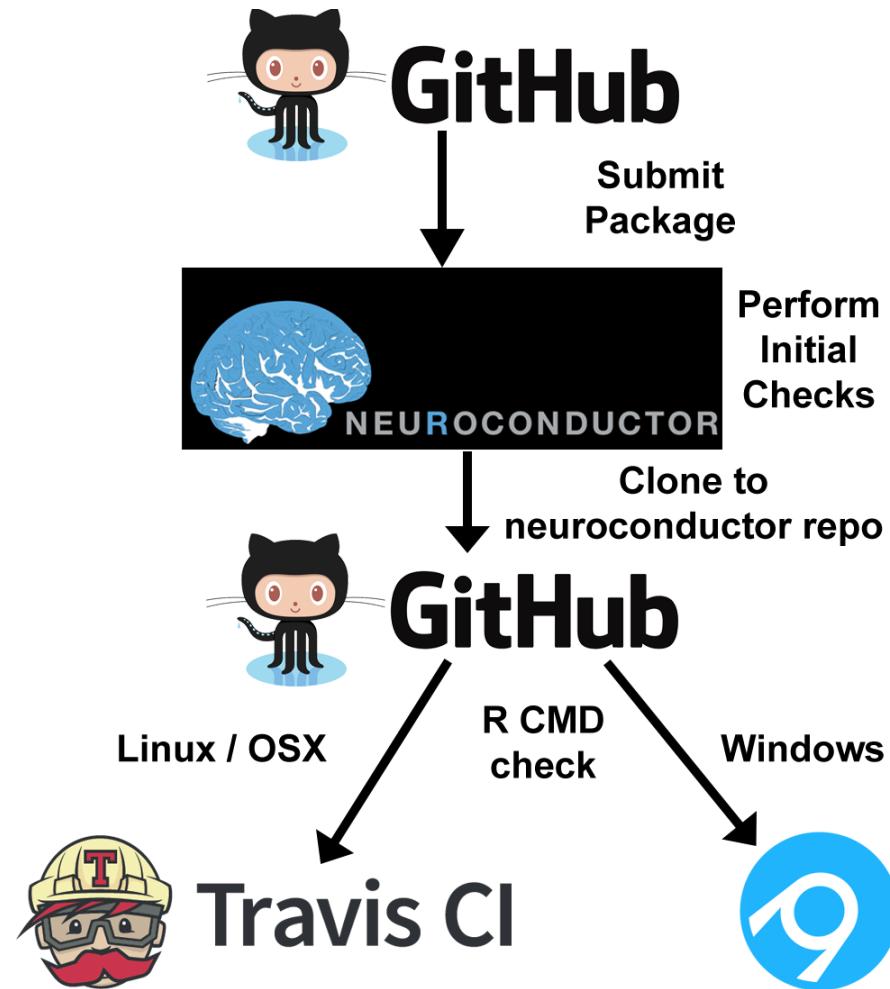
# lungct: Analysis of Lung CT Scans



# Development Pipeline:

Check the package for stability

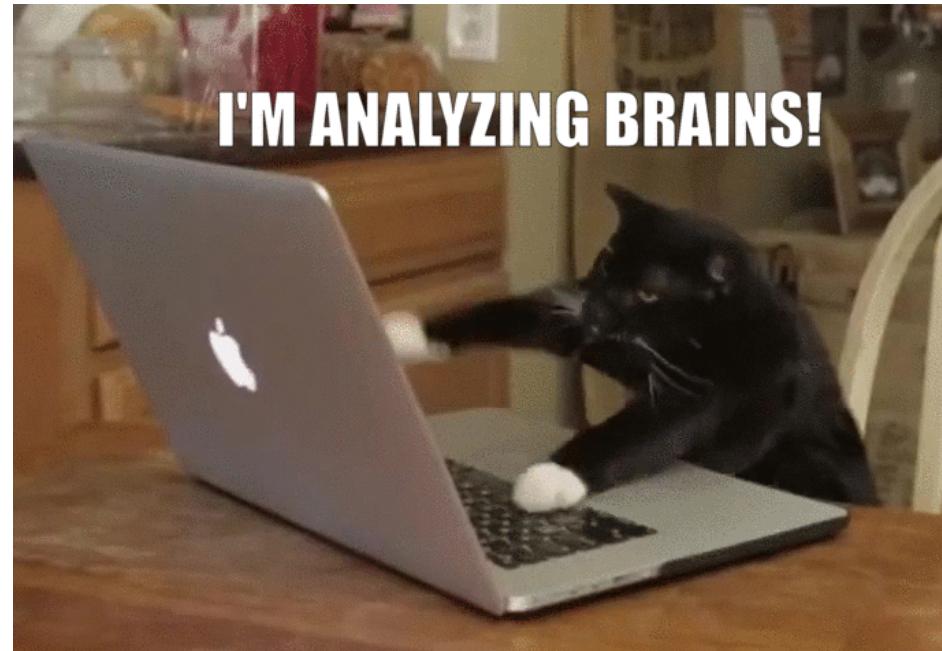
- check against other imaging software (e.g. FSL)



# Neuroconductor

## Goal:

Detailed **tutorials**  
on how to actually  
perform an  
analysis



From <http://i.imgur.com/0Y1xISa.gifv>.

<http://johnmuschelli.com/neuroc>

# Some (Unpopular) Opinions

1. No code = no method...yet “Available upon request” - not sufficient
2. We are not the leaders in imaging
3. Not everyone cares about our methods
4. Many engineers are better in imaging at a)  
distributing code and b) selling their method
5. Most Academics (& depts) don’t really support it well.

# Helping Developers

- GitHub allows the Neuroconductor team to help fix issues
- Pull Requests to developers
- Standardized checking of Packages (Travis configuration)
- Remove unnecessary hurdles for developers



Image from: <https://giphy.com/gifs/medblr-medschool-dr-dres-anatomy-uRb2p09vY8lEs>

# Questions?

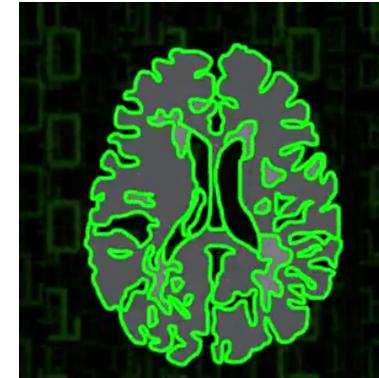


Email:

Funding: NIH 2R01NS060910 and U24HG010263

# Training we are providing

Coursera Course:  
Introduction to  
Neurohacking In R



[https://www.coursera.org/  
learn/neurohacking/](https://www.coursera.org/learn/neurohacking/)

[http://johnmuschelli.com/imaging\\_in\\_r/](http://johnmuschelli.com/imaging_in_r/)

# RNifti and RNiftyReg

- provides lightweight objects as C++ pointers (fast operations)
- Registration of Images
- Wrapped in Rcpp: Works on all platforms

# ANTsR

## Based on ANTs: Advanced Normalization Tools

- State-of-the-art image processing pipelines
- Built at UPenn under Brian Avants
  - Group has won challenges for imaging analysis
- Still actively maintained and developed
- Depends on the Insight ToolKit (ITK) medical image processing library

# neurohcp: Human Connectome Project

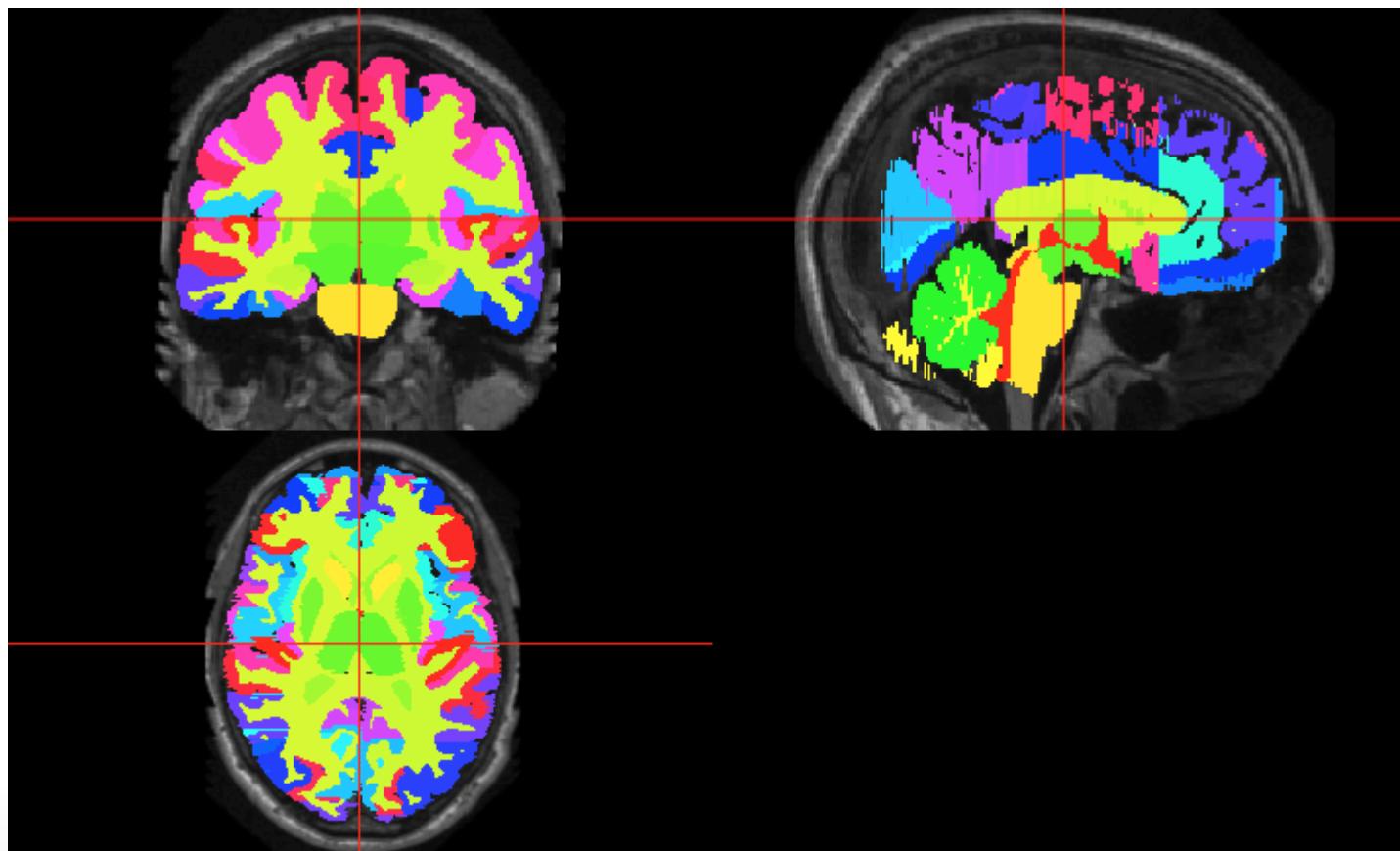
- Allows you to download data from [Human Connectome Project](#)
- The 1200 Subjects release: behavioral and 3T MR imaging data from 1206 healthy young adult participants. Standardized protocol.
- Tutorial:  
<http://johnmuschelli.com/neuroc/neurohcp>

# rcamino: Port of Camino Software

- Wraps [Camino Diffusion MRI Toolkit](#)
- Takes in b-values, b-vectors, and tensors
- Fits models for DTI data
- [\[http://johnmuschelli.com/neuroc/DTI\\\_analysis\\\_rcamino/index.html\]\(http://johnmuschelli.com/neuroc/DTI\_analysis\_rcamino/index.html\)](#)

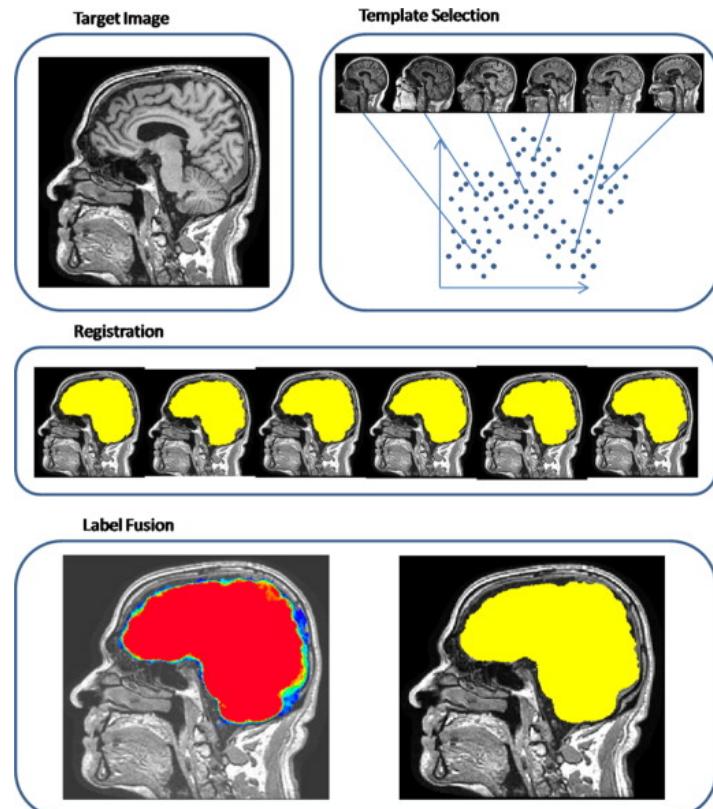
# malf.templates: Segmented T1-weighted Images

- Data from the MICCAI 2012 Challenge on Multi-atlas Labelling Data
- From OASIS project and the labeled data as provided by Neuromorphometrics, Inc. (<http://Neuromorphometrics.com/>)



# MALF: Skull Stripping Example

From (Doshi et al. 2013):



- Register templates to an subject T1
- Apply transformation to the label/mask, average over voxels
  - there are “smarter” (e.g. weighted) ways

Doshi, Jimit, Guray Erus,  
Yangming Ou, Bilwaj Gaonkar, and Christos