

Authors

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Title

From PubMed to a DataFrame: tools & resources for easier neuroimaging text-mining.

Body

Intro

With thousands of publications each year, the neuroimaging literature is a rich but challenging resource. To exploit it fully, (semi-)automated approaches for indexing, aggregating and summarizing articles are necessary. Examples include large-scale meta-analyses (NeuroSynth, NeuroQuery), topic modelling, and more.

An important challenge to text-mining projects is the construction of an appropriate dataset. One must download many articles and extract the relevant text, metadata and possibly stereotactic coordinates. Due to this difficulty, most projects rely on NeuroSynth or NeuroQuery data. This drastically limits possibilities: the text itself is not available (only text-frequency features), missing articles cannot be added, etc.

Here we introduce interoperable tools that help collecting and labelling text:

- pubget downloads and processes articles from PubMed Central,
- labelbuddy is a simple text labelling application.

We want to help neuroimagers skip the tedious data collection and jump to performing high-level analyses (using familiar scientific software) on a rich and user-friendly dataset.

Methods

Figure 1 shows the main stages of a text-mining project. The high-level analysis (in green) is the main objective – for example, plotting the evolution of sample sizes through time. However, previous steps (obtaining text, labelling sample sizes) can take much longer.

pubget

pubget (<https://neuroquery.github.io/pubget/>) is a command-line tool for downloading and processing articles from PubMed Central. It builds upon the code used to create NeuroQuery. Given a search query or a list of PMCIDs, it provides the matching articles in their original XML format, in addition to CSV files

containing: (i) metadata such as authors or publication year, (ii) the full text, and (iii) the activation coordinates. `pubget` can extract term-frequency features, and run `NeuroQuery`'s or `NeuroSynth`'s analyses. It can prepare a `NiMARE` (nimare.readthedocs.io) dataset, making a wide range of meta-analysis methods easy to apply. It can be extended with plugins.

labelbuddy

Most tools for text labelling are Web-based and incur an important set-up overhead for small research projects. `labelbuddy` is a simple desktop application that operates on a regular file (a SQLite database). `pubget`'s output can directly be imported into `labelbuddy`. `labelbuddy` imports and exports its data to a simple JSON format, and offers a command-line interface, making it well-suited for projects organized around a Git repository. A repository containing over 1,800 annotations can be found at <https://neurodatascience.github.io/labelbuddy-annotations/>.

Results

As an illustration, we replicated and extended the investigation of sample sizes from Poldrack & al, "Scanning the horizon". We downloaded articles with `pubget`, designed a heuristic to extract participant counts and demographics, and validated it on 100 articles labelled with `labelbuddy`. As shown in Fig. 1.A, the median sample size continued to increase since 2015. We also show the distribution of participant's ages. The mode for healthy participants is between 20 and 30 years, suggesting that the declaimed practice of recruiting mostly students may be widely followed.

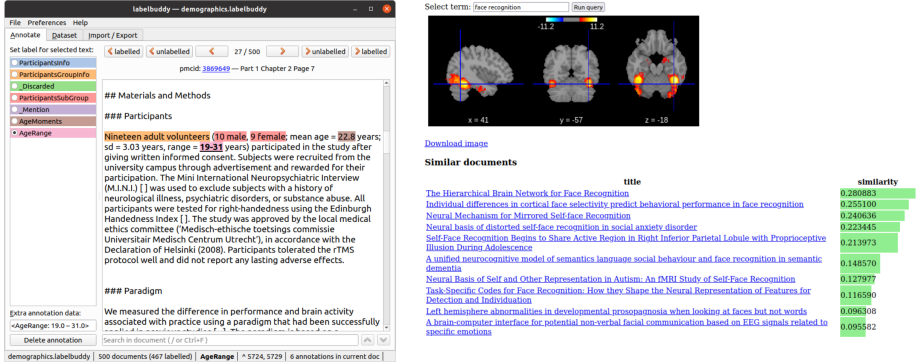
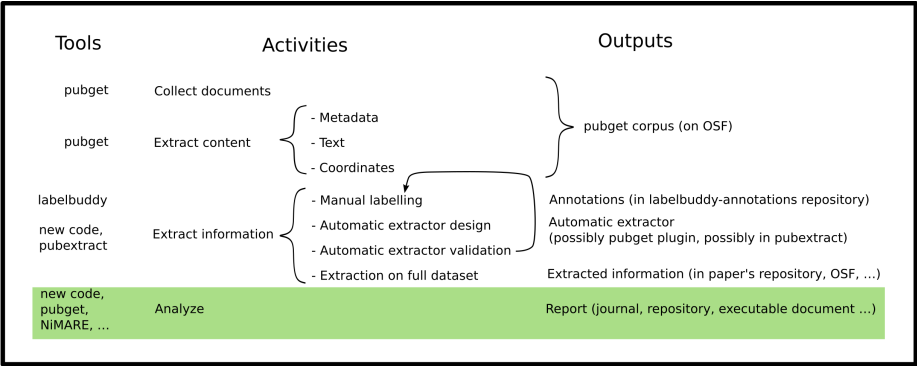
We also ran `pubget` for a query matching a larger number of articles (over 9,000). In Fig 1.B, we show meta-analytic maps obtained with `pubget`'s `-fit_neurosynth` option (top) and from `neurosynth.org` (bottom). Results are similar for frequent terms, but for rare terms, `pubget`'s use of the full text produces more powerful analyses.

Conclusions

We facilitate downloading neuroimaging articles, annotating them and preparing them for analysis. This can help many projects, from a small quantitative section in a review or meta-science paper, to the development of new large-scale meta-analysis methods. The tools are still evolving and we hope that discussions at the OHBM 2023 meeting will help us tailor them to the needs of the neuroimaging community.

Figures

TODO: add captions



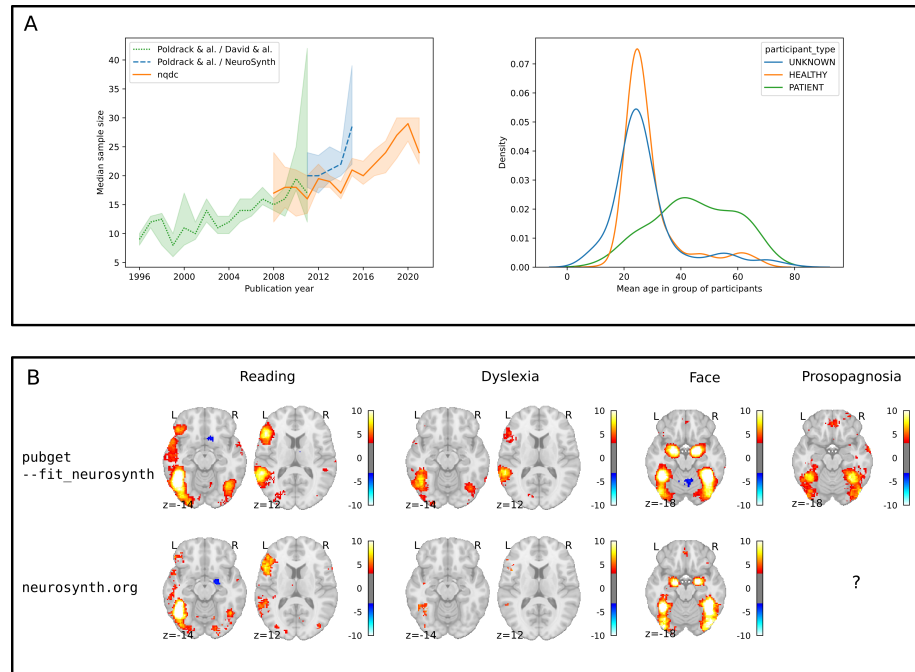
Top: overview of a text-mining project. The center column shows the main steps, from data collection to the final analysis. The left column shows tools useful for the corresponding step. "new code" is written for a particular project. pubextract will be a Python package in which we plan to collect information extraction modules for specific aspects such as the number of participants. The right column shows the useful outputs produced by the project, and in parentheses suggestions of where they can be stored online.

Bottom left: screenshot of labelbuddy annotating an article downloaded with pubget. Bottom right: screenshot of a small local web application displaying the results of a NeuroSynth-like meta-analysis, that is part of pubget's output when the "--fit_neurosynth" option is used.

Figure 1: Methods

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Top left: evolution of the median sample size through time. The green and blue curves represent data from Poldrack & al. The orange curve represents sample sizes automatically extracted from articles obtained with pubget and the query “fMRI[Abstract]”. We notice that the blue curve seems slightly higher. These data were obtained from the NeuroSynth dataset, and thus may be slightly biased because it only contains abstracts. Indeed, we noted that articles with larger sample sizes are more likely to report the sample size in their abstract.

Top right: distribution of (automatically extracted) participant ages by category in the articles downloaded with pubget. We note that the healthy populations display a peak around the typical age of university students.

Bottom: maps obtained with NeuroSynth’s independence test, as obtained with pubget and the --fit_neurosynth option (first row) and from neurosynth.org (second row). For frequent terms such as “reading”, results are similar, but for less frequent terms the increased statistical power afforded by the full-text becomes important. “Prosopagnosia” is absent from neurosynth.org’s vocabulary (too rare).

Figure 2: Results

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