# Using the SRAdb Package to Query the Sequence Read Archive

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#### 1 Introduction

High throughput sequencing technologies have very rapidly become standard tools in biology. The data that these machines generate are large, extremely rich. As such, the Sequence Read Archives (SRA) have been set up at NCBI in the United States, EMBL in Europe, and DDBJ in Japan to capture these data in public repositories in much the same spirit as MIAME-compliant microarray databases like NCBI GEO and EBI ArrayExpress.

Accessing data in SRA requires finding it first. This R package provides a convenient and powerful framework to do just that. In addition, SRAdb features functionality to determine availability of sequence files and to download files of interest.

SRA currently store aligned reads or other processed data that relies on alignment to a reference genome. Please refer to the SRA handbook (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK47537/) for details. NCBI GEO also often contain aligned reads for sequencing experiments and the SRAdb package can help to provide links to these data as well. In combination with the GEOmetadb and GEOquery packages, these data are also, then, accessible.

# 2 Getting Started

Since SRA is a continuously growing repository, the SRAdb SQLite file is updated regularly. The first step, then, is to get the SRAdb SQLite file from the online location. The download and uncompress steps are done automatically with a single command, getSRAdbFile.

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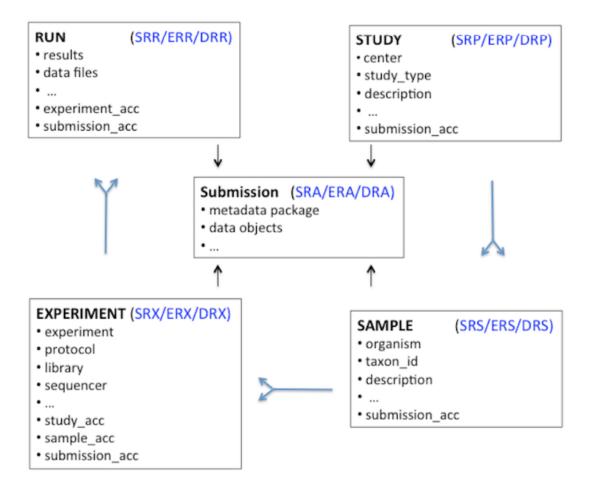


Figure 1: A graphical representation (sometimes called an *Entity-Relationship Diagram*) of the relationships between the main tables in the SRAdb package.

```
> library(SRAdb)
> sqlfile <- file.path(system.file('extdata', package='SRAdb'), 'SRAmetadb_demo.sqlite</pre>
```

Note: the above "SRAmetadb\_demo.sqlite" is a down-sized demo SRAmetadb sqlite database. The actual SRAmetadb sqlite database can be downloaded using function: get-SRAdbFile. Warning: the actual SRAmetadb sqlite database is pretty large (> 35GB as of May, 2018) after uncompression. So, downloading and uncompressing of the actual SRAmetadb sqlite could take quite a few minutes depending on your network bandwidth. Direct links for downloading the SRAmetadb sqlite database: https://s3.amazonaws.com/starbuck1/sradb/SRAmhttps://gbnci-abcc.ncifcrf.gov/backup/SRAmetadb.sqlite.gz . If interested, it can be timed using the following commands:

```
> timeStart <- proc.time()
> sqlfile <- getSRAdbFile()
> proc.time() - timeStart
```

Since this SQLite file is of key importance in SRAdb, it is perhaps of some interest to know some details about the file itself.

#### > file.info(sqlfile)

```
size
/tmp/RtmpOOJdcL/Rinst4ff34fad4b10/SRAdb/extdata/SRAmetadb_demo.sqlite 4534272
                                                                       isdir
/tmp/Rtmp00JdcL/Rinst4ff34fad4b10/SRAdb/extdata/SRAmetadb_demo.sqlite FALSE
                                                                       mode
/tmp/Rtmp00JdcL/Rinst4ff34fad4b10/SRAdb/extdata/SRAmetadb_demo.sqlite
                                                                       755
                                                                                     mtim
/tmp/Rtmp00JdcL/Rinst4ff34fad4b10/SRAdb/extdata/SRAmetadb_demo.sqlite 2018-10-30 19:12:4
/tmp/Rtmp00JdcL/Rinst4ff34fad4b10/SRAdb/extdata/SRAmetadb_demo.sqlite 2018-10-30 19:12:5
                                                                                     atim
/tmp/Rtmp00JdcL/Rinst4ff34fad4b10/SRAdb/extdata/SRAmetadb_demo.sqlite 2018-10-30 19:12:4
                                                                        uid
/tmp/RtmpOOJdcL/Rinst4ff34fad4b10/SRAdb/extdata/SRAmetadb_demo.sqlite 1004
/tmp/Rtmp00JdcL/Rinst4ff34fad4b10/SRAdb/extdata/SRAmetadb_demo.sqlite 1004
                                                                           uname
/tmp/Rtmp00JdcL/Rinst4ff34fad4b10/SRAdb/extdata/SRAmetadb_demo.sqlite biocbuild
```

grname

Then, create a connection for later queries. The standard DBI functionality as implemented in RSQLite function dbConnect makes the connection to the database. The dbDisconnect function disconnects the connection.

/tmp/Rtmp00JdcL/Rinst4ff34fad4b10/SRAdb/extdata/SRAmetadb\_demo.sqlite biocbuild

```
> sra_con <- dbConnect(SQLite(),sqlfile)
```

For further details, at this time see help('SRAdb-package').

### 3 Using the SRAdb package

#### 3.1 Interacting with the database

The functionality covered in this section is covered in much more detail in the DBI and RSQLite package documentation. We cover enough here only to be useful. The dbListTables function lists all the tables in the SQLite database handled by the connection object sra\_con created in the previous section. A simplified illustration of the relationship between the SRA main data types is shown in the Figure 1.

There is also the dbListFields function that can list database fields associated with a table.

#### > dbListFields(sra\_con, "study")

```
[1] "study_ID"
                             "study_alias"
                             "study_title"
[3] "study_accession"
                             "study_abstract"
[5] "study_type"
[7] "broker_name"
                             "center_name"
[9] "center_project_name"
                             "study_description"
[11] "related_studies"
                             "primary_study"
[13] "sra_link"
                             "study_url_link"
                             "study_entrez_link"
[15] "xref_link"
[17] "ddbj_link"
                             "ena_link"
[19] "study_attribute"
                             "submission_accession"
[21] "sradb_updated"
```

Sometimes it is useful to get the actual SQL schema associated with a table. Here, we get the table schema for the *study* table:

#### > dbGetQuery(sra\_con, 'PRAGMA TABLE\_INFO(study)')

```
cid
                         name type notnull
     0
1
                    study_ID REAL
                                          0
2
     1
                 study_alias TEXT
                                          0
     2
3
             study_accession TEXT
                                          0
4
     3
                 study_title TEXT
                                          0
5
     4
                  study_type TEXT
                                          0
6
     5
              study_abstract TEXT
                                          0
7
                                          0
                 broker_name TEXT
     7
8
                 center_name TEXT
                                          0
9
     8
        center_project_name TEXT
                                          0
10
     9
          study_description TEXT
                                          0
11
    10
             related_studies TEXT
                                          0
12
                                          0
    11
               primary_study TEXT
13
    12
                                          0
                    sra_link TEXT
14
   13
                                          0
              study_url_link TEXT
15
    14
                                          0
                   xref_link TEXT
16
    15
           study_entrez_link TEXT
                                          0
17
    16
                   ddbj_link TEXT
                                          0
    17
18
                    ena_link TEXT
                                          0
19
    18
             study_attribute TEXT
                                          0
20
                                          0
    19 submission_accession TEXT
21
                                          0
               sradb_updated TEXT
   dflt_value pk
                0
1
           NA
2
           NA
                0
3
           NA
                0
4
           NA
                0
5
           NA
                0
6
           NA
                0
7
                0
           NA
8
           NA
                0
9
           NA
                0
10
                0
           NA
11
           NA
                0
12
           NA
                0
13
                0
           NA
14
                0
           NA
15
           NA
                0
16
                0
           NA
                0
17
           NA
           NA
                0
18
```

```
19 NA 0
20 NA 0
21 NA 0
```

The table "col\_desc" contains information of filed name, type, descritption and default values:

```
> colDesc <- colDescriptions(sra_con=sra_con)[1:5,]</pre>
> colDesc[, 1:4]
  col_desc_ID table_name
                                   field_name
1
             1 submission
                                            ID
2
             2 submission
                                     accession
3
             3 submission
                                         alias
4
             4 submission submission_comment
5
             5 submission
                                         files
     type
1
      int
2 varchar
3 varchar
4
     text
5
     text
```

### 3.2 Writing SQL queries and getting results

Select 3 records from the *study* table and show the first 5 columns:

Get the SRA study accessions and titles from SRA study that study\_type contains "Transcriptome". The "%" sign is used in combination with the "like" operator to do a "wildcard" search for the term "Transcriptome" with any number of characters after it.

```
study_accession

DRP002494

DRP002820

DRP002612

study_title

Allium fistulosum transcriptome sequencing

Transcriptome sequence of planarian Dugesia japonica

Bursaphelenchus xylophilus transcriptome
```

Of course, we can combine programming and data access. A simple sapply example shows how to query each of the tables for number of records.

```
> getTableCounts <- function(tableName,conn) {</pre>
    sql <- sprintf("select count(*) from %s",tableName)</pre>
    return(dbGetQuery(conn,sql)[1,1])
+ }
> do.call(rbind, sapply(sra_tables[c(2,4,5,11,12)],
          getTableCounts, sra_con, simplify=FALSE))
                 [,1]
experiment
                  712
metaInfo
                    2
                  756
run
                  186
sra_ft_segments
study
                   31
```

Get some high-level statistics could be to helpful to get overall idea about what data are available in the SRA database. List all study types and number of studies contained for each of the type:

```
> rs <- dbGetQuery(sra_con, paste( "SELECT study_type AS StudyType,
          count( * ) AS Number FROM `study` GROUP BY study_type order
          by Number DESC ", sep=""))
> rs
                StudyType Number
1
                    Other
                               15
2
  Transcriptome Analysis
                               11
                                2
                     <NA>
4 Whole Genome Sequencing
                                2
5
             Metagenomics
                                1
```

List all Instrument Models and number of experiments for each of the Instrument Models:

```
> rs <- dbGetQuery(sra_con, paste( "SELECT instrument_model AS
           'Instrument Model', count( * ) AS Experiments FROM `experiment`
          GROUP BY instrument_model order by Experiments DESC", sep=""))
> rs
              Instrument Model Experiments
                           <NA>
                                        430
1
2
           Illumina HiSeq 2000
                                        197
3
   Illumina Genome Analyzer II
                                         29
                   NextSeq 500
4
                                         11
5
           Illumina HiSeq 1500
                                         10
           Illumina HiSeq 2500
6
                                         10
7
      Illumina Genome Analyzer
                                          8
           454 GS FLX Titanium
8
                                          6
9
                    454 GS FLX
                                          4
10
                   454 GS FLX+
                                          3
11
                Illumina MiSeq
                                          3
12
                   unspecified
                                           1
```

List all types of library strategies and number of runs for each of them:

```
> rs <- dbGetQuery(sra_con, paste( "SELECT library_strategy AS
           'Library Strategy', count( * ) AS Runs FROM `experiment`
          GROUP BY library_strategy order by Runs DESC", sep=""))
> rs
  Library Strategy Runs
              < NA >
                     430
1
2
           RNA-Seq
                     215
3
             OTHER
                      32
4
               WGS
                      17
5
               WXS
                      11
6
           RIP-Seq
                       4
7
           FL-cDNA
                       2
8
               EST
                       1
```

### 3.3 Conversion of SRA entity types

Large-scale consumers of SRA data might want to convert SRA entity type from one to others, e.g. finding all experiment accessions (SRX, ERX or DRX) and run accessions (SRR, ERR or DRR) associated with "SRP001007" and "SRP000931". Function sraConvert does the conversion with a very fast mapping between entity types.

Covert "SRP001007" and "SRP000931" to other possible types in the SRAmetadb\_demo.sqlite:

```
> conversion <- sraConvert( c('SRP001007', 'SRP000931'), sra_con = sra_con )</pre>
> conversion[1:3,]
      study submission
                         sample experiment
1 SRP000931 SRA009053 SRS003458 SRX006127
2 SRP000931 SRA009053 SRS003455 SRX006124
3 SRP000931 SRA009053 SRS003462 SRX006133
        run
1 SRR018261
2 SRR018258
3 SRR018267
   Check what SRA types and how many entities for each type:
> apply(conversion, 2, unique)
$study
[1] "SRP000931" "SRP001007"
$submission
[1] "SRA009053" "SRA009276"
$sample
 [1] "SRS003458" "SRS003455" "SRS003462"
 [4] "SRS003460" "SRS003457" "SRS003459"
 [7] "SRS003463" "SRS003453" "SRS003456"
[10] "SRS003461" "SRS003464" "SRS003454"
[13] "SRS004650"
$experiment
 [1] "SRX006127" "SRX006124" "SRX006133"
 [4] "SRX006131" "SRX006126" "SRX006128"
 [7] "SRX006134" "SRX006129" "SRX006125"
[10] "SRX006132" "SRX006122" "SRX006135"
[13] "SRX006123" "SRX006130" "SRX007396"
$run
 [1] "SRR018261" "SRR018258" "SRR018267"
 [4] "SRR018265" "SRR018260" "SRR018262"
 [7] "SRR018268" "SRR018263" "SRR018259"
[10] "SRR018266" "SRR018256" "SRR018269"
[13] "SRR018257" "SRR018264" "SRR020740"
[16] "SRR020739"
```

#### 3.4 Full text search

Searching by regular table and field specific SQL commands can be very powerful and if you are familiar with SQL language and the table structure. If not, SQLite has a very handy module called Full text search (fts3), which allow users to do Google like search with terms and operators. The function getSRA does Full text search against all fields in a fts3 table with terms constructed with the Standard Query Syntax and Enhanced Query Syntax. Please see http://www.sqlite.org/fts3.html for detail.

Find all run and study combined records in which any given fields has "breast" and "cancer" words, including "breast" and "cancer" are not next to each other:

```
> rs <- getSRA( search_terms = "breast cancer",</pre>
          out_types = c('run', 'study'), sra_con )
> dim(rs)
[1] 487 23
> rs <- getSRA( search_terms = "breast cancer",</pre>
          out_types = c("submission", "study", "sample",
           "experiment", "run"), sra_con )
> # get counts for some information interested
> apply( rs[, c('run', 'sample', 'study_type', 'platform',
           'instrument_model')], 2, function(x)
          {length(unique(x))} )
             run
                            sample
                               104
             487
      study_type
                          platform
instrument_model
>
```

If you only want SRA records containing exact phrase of "breast cancer", in which "breast" and "cancer" do not have other characters between other than a space:

```
> rs <- getSRA (search_terms ='"breast cancer"',
+          out_types=c('run','study'), sra_con)
> dim(rs)
[1] 487 23
```

Find all sample records containing words of either "MCF7" or "MCF-7":

#### 3.5 Download SRA data files

281 Jan 19 2012

130940 Jan 19 2012 844 Jan 19 2012

1

List ftp addresses of the fastq files associated with "SRX000122":

```
> rs = listSRAfile( c("SRX000122"), sra_con, fileType = 'sra' )
```

The above function does not check file availability, size and date of the sra data files on the server, but the function getSRAinfo does this, which is good to know if you are preparing to download them:

Next you might want to download sra data files from the ftp site. The getSRAfile function will download all available sra data files associated with "SRR000648" and "SRR000657" from the NCBI SRA ftp site to the current directory:

```
> getSRAfile( c("SRR000648", "SRR000657"), sra_con, fileType = 'sra' )
```

Then downloaded sra data files can be easily converted into fastq files using fastq-dump in SRA Toolkit (http://trace.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Traces/sra/sra.cgi?view=software):

```
> system ("fastq-dump SRR000648.sra")
```

Or directly download fastq files from EBI using ftp protocol:

```
> getFASTQinfo( c("SRR000648","SRR000657"), sra_con, srcType = 'ftp' )
> getSRAfile( c("SRR000648","SRR000657"), sra_con, fileType = 'fastq' )
```

#### 3.6 Download SRA data files using fasp protocol

Curretly both NCBI and EBI supports fasp protocol for downloading SRA data files, which has several advantages over ftp protocol, including high-speed transfering large files over long distance. Please check EBI or NCBI web site or Aspera (http://www.asperasoft.com/) for details. SRAdb has indeluded two wraper functions for using ascp command line program (fasp protocol) to download SRA data files frm either the NCBI or EBI, which is included in in Aspera Connect software. But, due to complexity of installation of the software and options within it, the functions developed here ask users to supply main ascp comands.

Download fastq files from EBI ftp siteusing fasp protocol:

```
> ## List fasp addresses for associated fastq files:
> listSRAfile ( c("SRX000122"), sra_con, fileType = 'fastq', srcType='fasp')
> ## get fasp addresses for associated fastq files:
> getFASTQinfo( c("SRX000122"), sra_con, srcType = 'fasp' )
> ## download fastq files using fasp protocol:
> # the following ascpCMD needs to be constructed according custom
> # system configuration
> # common ascp installation in a Linux system:
> ascpCMD <- 'ascp -QT -1 300m -i
+ /usr/local/aspera/connect/etc/asperaweb_id_dsa.putty'
> ## common ascpCMD for a Mac OS X system:
> # ascpCMD <- "'/Applications/Aspera Connect.app/Contents/
> # Resources/ascp' -QT -1 300m -i '/Applications/
> # Aspera Connect.app/Contents/Resources/asperaweb_id_dsa.putty'"
>
> getSRAfile( c("SRX000122"), sra_con, fileType = 'fastq',
          srcType = 'fasp', ascpCMD = ascpCMD )
```

Download sra files from NCBI using fasp protocol:

```
> ## List fasp addresses of sra files associated with "SRX000122"
> listSRAfile( c("SRX000122"), sra_con, fileType = 'sra', srcType='fasp')
> ## download sra files using fasp protocol
> getSRAfile( c("SRX000122"), sra_con, fileType = 'sra',
+ srcType = 'fasp', ascpCMD = ascpCMD )
```

The downloading messege will show significant faster downloading speed than the ftp protocol:

'SRR000658.sra 100Completed: 159492K bytes transferred in 5 seconds (249247K bits/sec), in 1 file. ... '

## 4 Interactive views of sequence data

Working with sequence data is often best done interactively in a genome browser, a task not easily done from R itself. We have found the Integrative Genomics Viewer (IGV) a high-performance visualization tool for interactive exploration of large, integrated datasets, increasing usefully for visualizing sequence alignments. In SRAdb, functions startIGV, load2IGV and load2newIGV provide convenient functionality for R to interact with IGV. Note that for some OS, these functions might not work or work well.

Launch IGV with 2 GB maximum usable memory support:

```
> startIGV("mm")
```

IGV offers a remort control port that allows R to communicate with IGV. The current command set is fairly limited, but it does allow for some IGV operations to be performed in the R console. To utilize this functionality, be sure that IGV is set to allow communication via the "enable port" option in IGV preferences. To load BAM files to IGV and then manipulate the window:

```
> exampleBams = file.path(system.file('extdata',package='SRAdb'),
+ dir(system.file('extdata',package='SRAdb'),pattern='bam$'))
> sock <- IGVsocket()
> IGVgenome(sock, 'hg18')
> IGVload(sock, exampleBams)
> IGVgoto(sock, 'chr1:1-1000')
> IGVsnapshot(sock)
```

# 5 Graphic view of SRA entities

Due to the nature of SRA data and its design, sometimes it is hard to get a whole picture of the relationship between a set of SRA entities. Functions of entityGraph and sraGraph in

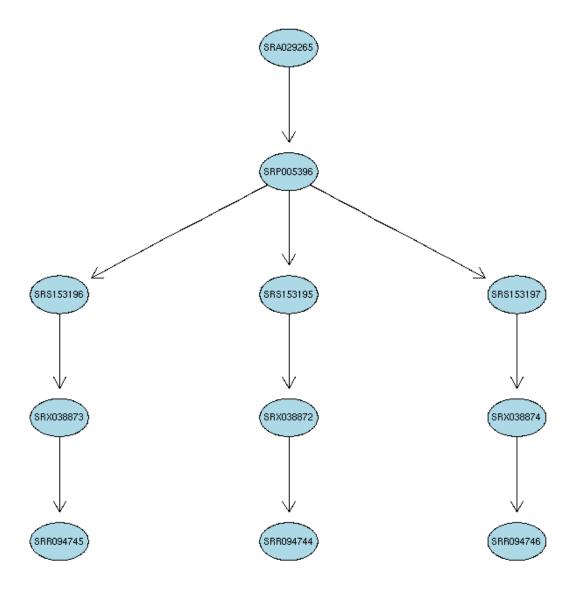


Figure 2: A graphical representation of the relationships between the SRA entities.

this package generate graphNEL objects with edgemode='directed' from input data.frame or directly from search terms, and then the plot function can easily draw a diagram.

Create a graphNEL object directly from full text search results of terms 'primary thyroid cell line'

Please see the Figure 2 for an example diagram.

It's considered good practise to explicitly disconnect from the database once we are done with it:

> dbDisconnect(sra\_con)

### 6 Example use case

This sesection will use the functionalities in the SRAdb package to explore data from the 1000 genomes project. Mainly,

1. Get some statistics of meta data and data files from the 1000 genomes project using the SRAdb 2. Download data files 3. Load bam files into the IGV from R 4. Create some snapshoots programmtically from R

```
> apply( rs, 2, function(x) {length(unique(x))} )
    After you decided what data from the 1000 Genomes, you would like to download data files from the SRA. But, it might be helpful to know file size before downloading them:
> runs <- tail(rs$run)
> fs <- getSRAinfo( runs, sra_con, sraType = "sra" )
    Now you can download the files through ftp protocol:</pre>
```

> getSRAfile( runs, sra\_con, fileType ='sra', srcType = "ftp" )

Or, you can download them through fasp protocol:

> ## get counts for each data types

```
> ascpCMD <- "'/Applications/Aspera Connect.app/Contents/Resources/ascp' -QT -1 300m -
> sra_files = getSRAfile( runs, sra_con, fileType ='sra', srcType = "fasp", ascpCMD =
```

Next you might want to convert the downloaded sra files into fastq files:

... to be compeleted.

### 7 sessionInfo

- R version 3.5.1 Patched (2018-07-12 r74967), x86\_64-pc-linux-gnu
- Locale: LC\_CTYPE=en\_US.UTF-8, LC\_NUMERIC=C, LC\_TIME=en\_US.UTF-8, LC\_COLLATE=C, LC\_MONETARY=en\_US.UTF-8, LC\_MESSAGES=en\_US.UTF-8, LC\_PAPER=en\_US.UTF-8, LC\_NAME=C, LC\_ADDRESS=C, LC\_TELEPHONE=C, LC\_MEASUREMENT=en\_US.UTF-8, LC\_IDENTIFICATION=C
- Running under: Ubuntu 16.04.5 LTS
- Matrix products: default
- BLAS: /home/biocbuild/bbs-3.8-bioc/R/lib/libRblas.so
- LAPACK: /home/biocbuild/bbs-3.8-bioc/R/lib/libRlapack.so
- Base packages: base, datasets, grDevices, graphics, methods, parallel, stats, utils
- Other packages: BiocGenerics 0.28.0, RCurl 1.95-4.11, RSQLite 2.1.1, SRAdb 1.44.0, bitops 1.0-6, graph 1.60.0

• Loaded via a namespace (and not attached): Biobase 2.42.0, DBI 1.0.0, GEOquery 2.50.0, R6 2.3.0, Rcpp 0.12.19, assertthat 0.2.0, bindr 0.1.1, bindrcpp 0.2.2, bit 1.1-14, bit64 0.9-7, blob 1.1.1, compiler 3.5.1, crayon 1.3.4, digest 0.6.18, dplyr 0.7.7, glue 1.3.0, hms 0.4.2, limma 3.38.0, magrittr 1.5, memoise 1.1.0, pillar 1.3.0, pkgconfig 2.0.2, purrr 0.2.5, readr 1.1.1, rlang 0.3.0.1, stats4 3.5.1, tibble 1.4.2, tidyr 0.8.2, tidyselect 0.2.5, tools 3.5.1, xml2 1.2.0