

AI Tools for R

Day 1 - Introduction to Data Analysis with R

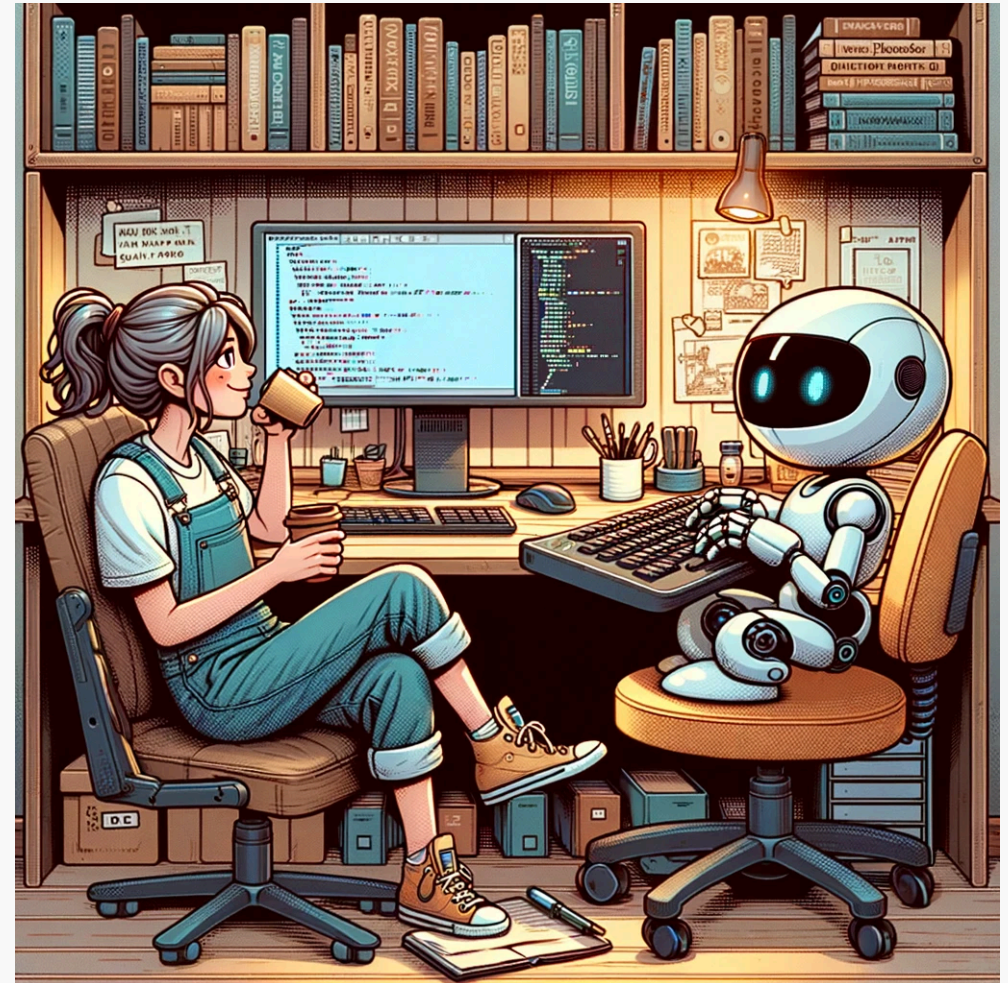
Selina Baldauf

Freie Universität Berlin - Theoretical Ecology

October 1, 2025

Motivation

- AI tools assist programmers with
 - Coding
 - Debugging
 - Learning
 - ...
- Higher productivity and efficiency
- More motivation
- But careful: You still need to understand what's going on!



Overview of tools

- Browser-based chat bots ([ChatGPT](#), [Bard](#), ...)
 - General-purpose
- Data-analysis tools ([Julius AI](#), [RTutor](#), ...)
 - Upload data and ask questions about it
 - Can also execute code
 - Chat with your data
- Integrated AI tools ([GitHub Copilot](#), [Codium AI](#), ...)
 - Integrated directly in programming environment
 - Real-time suggestions, chat, debugging, ...

Find the tools that best fit your workflow!

R Tutor

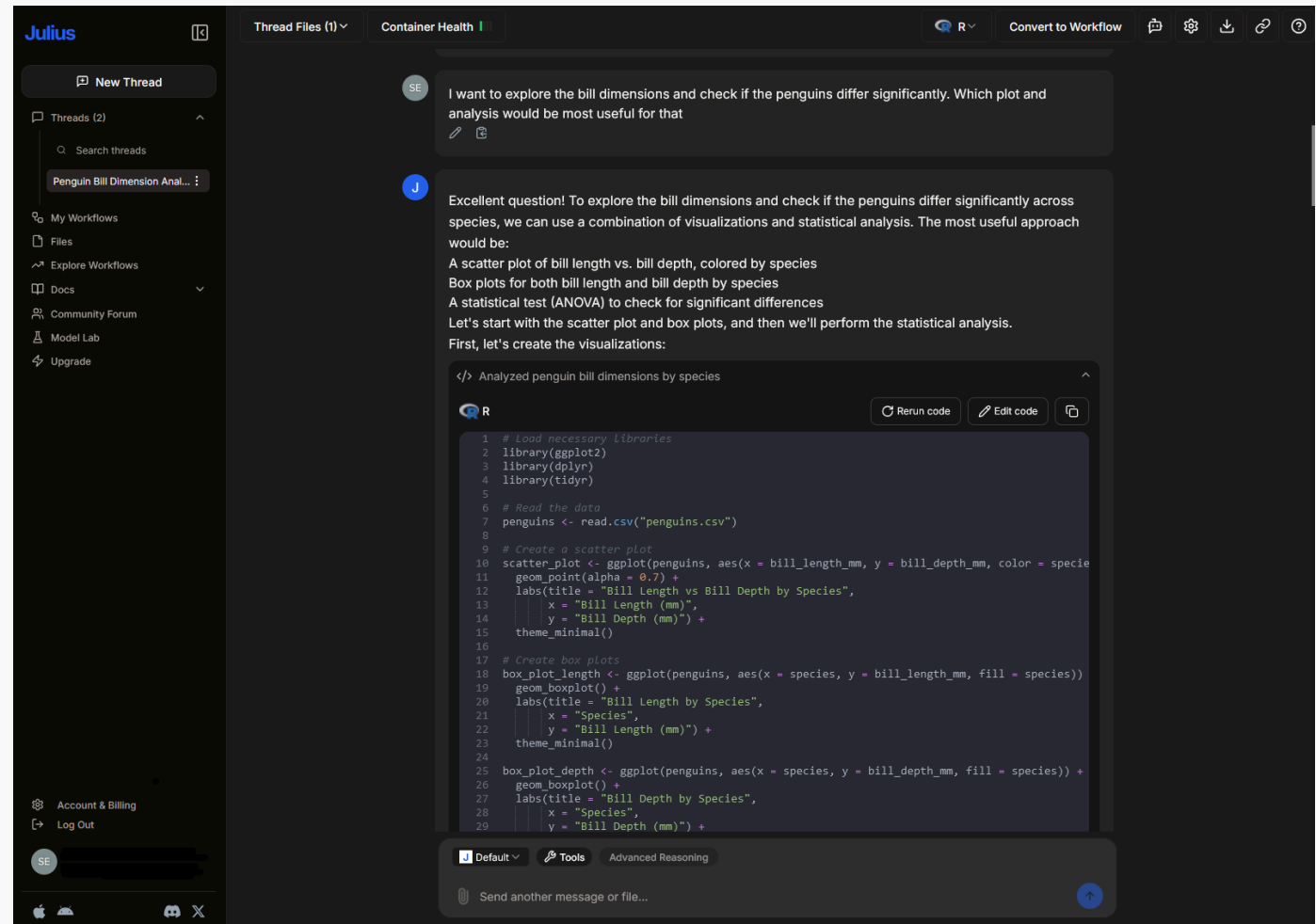
- <https://rtutor.ai/>
- Free browser tool
- Upload data and ask questions about it
- Use the demo data

The screenshot shows the R Tutor web interface. The top navigation bar includes 'RTutor', 'Home', 'EDA', 'Report', and 'More'. The left sidebar contains three sections: '1. Select Dataset' with a dropdown menu showing 'mpg (examples)' and a 'Browse...' button; '2. Modify Data Fields' with a 'Data Types' button; and '3. Send Request' with a text area for asking questions and a 'Submit' button. The main content area displays the 'Selected Dataset' section, which includes a 'Quick start' button, the R Tutor logo, and a table of 234 rows and 11 columns. The table columns are: maker, model, dis, year, cylinder, transmission, drive, city, highway, fuel, and type. The table shows data for Audi A4 and Audi A4 Quattro. A search bar is located above the table. The bottom of the table has a pagination control showing 'Previous', '1', '2', '3', '4', '5', '...', '24', and 'Next'.

maker	model	dis	year	cylinder	transmission	drive	city	highway	fuel	type
audi	a4	1.8	1999	4	auto(l5)	f	18	29	p	compact
audi	a4	1.8	1999	4	manual(m5)	f	21	29	p	compact
audi	a4	2	2008	4	manual(m6)	f	20	31	p	compact
audi	a4	2	2008	4	auto(av)	f	21	30	p	compact
audi	a4	2.8	1999	6	auto(l5)	f	16	26	p	compact
audi	a4	2.8	1999	6	manual(m5)	f	18	26	p	compact
audi	a4	3.1	2008	6	auto(av)	f	18	27	p	compact
audi	a4 quattro	1.8	1999	4	manual(m5)	4	18	26	p	compact
audi	a4 quattro	1.8	1999	4	auto(l5)	4	16	25	p	compact
audi	a4 quattro	2	2008	4	manual(m6)	4	20	28	p	compact

Julius AI

- <https://julius.ai/>
- Try for free
- Basic plan ~20€ per months (-50% academic discount)
- Upload data and ask questions about it



Github Copilot

- <https://github.com/features/copilot>
- Model based on GPT-4 and OpenAI's Codex
 - Specifically trained on source code
- Basic idea: Integrate directly into R Studio (or other IDEs)
- Works best for well-represented languages (Python, JS, ...)

How to get GitHub Copilot

See [this website](#) for step-by-step guide and more information.

It's really easy, but you need:

- GitHub Account
- Active GH Copilot subscription (10\$ per month)
 - Get it for free as an academic with an educational account
- IDE that supports Copilot
 - Full support: Visual Studio (Code), Vim, Neovim, JetBrains IDEs (e.g. PyCharm)
 - Limited support: RStudio, ?

GH Copilot: Inline code suggestions

- Copilot tries to predict what you want to do next
- Suggestions are based on the context
 - Previous code
 - Comments
 - Variable and function names
 - ...

```
fibonacci.R > fibonacci
1  fibonacci <- function(n) {
2    if (n == 0) {
3      return(0)
4    } else if (n == 1) {
5      return(1)
6    } else {
7      return(fibonacci(n - 1) + fibonacci(n - 2))
8    }
9  }
```


Get better suggestions

- **Provide context**
 - Open other files
 - Add top level comments explaining the purpose of the script
 - Name variables and functions properly
 - Copy-paste sample code and delete it later
- **Be consistent**
 - “Garbage in, garbage out”
 - Have a nice and consistent coding style

Nice side effect of using Copilot: More good-practice coding

Chat with GH copilot in R Studio

- Available through the <https://ellmer.tidyverse.org/> package
- Chat with LLMs in the sidebar
- Needs an API and some setting up

Concerns to consider

- Privacy
 - Chose whether your prompts and suggestions will be used by Github (**Github -> Seetings -> Copilot -> Policies**)
 - Check privacy guidelines before you upload data
- Plagiarism
 - Block suggestions matching public code (**Github -> Seetings -> Copilot -> Policies**)
- Ethical concerns
 - For-profit tool trained on open-source
- Environmental concerns
 - Water and energy usage

Usage guidelines

- No definite guidelines, but see examples [listed here](#)
- **Responsibility**
 - You are responsible for your scientific output
 - Stay critical, double-check
- **Transparency**
 - Make clear for which tasks you used which AI
- **Know relevant guidelines**
 - Journals
 - Your university
- **Still understand what is happening!**