

Lecture 21: Strings and regular expressions

Recap: regular expressions

A *regular expression* is a pattern used to find matches in text.

Example: suppose I want to extract just the lecture number from the following file name. How would I do that?

```
1 "teaching/sta279-f23/slides/lecture_22.qmd"
```

Recap: regular expressions

A *regular expression* is a pattern used to find matches in text.

Example: suppose I want to extract just the lecture number from the following file name. How would I do that?

```
1 str_extract("teaching/sta279-f23/slides/lecture_22.qmd", "\\d+")
```

```
[1] "279"
```

```
1 str_extract("teaching/sta279-f23/slides/lecture_22.qmd", "_\\d+")
```

```
[1] "_22"
```

```
1 str_extract("teaching/sta279-f23/slides/lecture_22.qmd",  
2               "(?<=_)\\d+")
```

```
[1] "22"
```

Recap: regular expressions

Last time, we learned the following regular expression tools:

- `\d` matches any digit (in R, have to type `\\d` because we write the regex in a string)
- `.` matches any character (except `\n`)
- `+` means “at least once”
- `(?<=)` and `(?=)` are positive lookbehinds and lookaheads
- `|` is alternation (one pattern or another)

Recap: tools for working with strings

So far, we have learned the following:

- `str_extract` extracts the first match

```
1 str_extract("teaching/sta279-f23/slides/lecture_22.qmd", "\\d+")  
[1] "279"
```

- `str_extract_all` extracts all matches

```
1 str_extract_all("teaching/sta279-f23/slides/lecture_22.qmd", "\\d+")  
[[1]]  
[1] "279" "23"  "22"
```

Goal for today: learn more string and regex tools!

Some helpful string functions

Example: Suppose I have the following file names:

```
1 file_names <- c("research/project1/code.R",  
2                 "research/project1/data.csv",  
3                 "teaching/sta279/lecture1.qmd",  
4                 "teaching/sta279/example_data.csv")
```

I want to identify the files in the `research` folder. What pattern would I want to match?

Some helpful string functions

Example: Suppose I have the following file names:

```
1 file_names <- c("research/project1/code.R",  
2                 "research/project1/data.csv",  
3                 "teaching/sta279/lecture1.qmd",  
4                 "teaching/sta279/example_data.csv")
```

I want to identify the files in the `research` folder. What pattern would I want to match?

```
1 str_detect(file_names, "research")
```

```
[1]  TRUE  TRUE FALSE FALSE
```

Some helpful string functions

Example: Suppose I have the following file names:

```
1 file_names <- c("research/project1/code.R",  
2                 "research/project1/data.csv",  
3                 "teaching/sta279/lecture1.qmd",  
4                 "teaching/sta279/example_data.csv")
```

I want to identify the files in the `research` folder. What pattern would I want to match?

```
1 str_subset(file_names, "research")
```

```
[1] "research/project1/code.R"  "research/project1/data.csv"
```


Some helpful string functions

Example: Suppose I have the following file names:

```
1 file_names <- c("research/project1/code.R",  
2                 "research/project1/data.csv",  
3                 "teaching/sta279/lecture1.qmd",  
4                 "teaching/sta279/example_data.csv")
```

I want to identify the files in the `research` folder. What pattern would I want to match?

```
1 str_view(file_names, "research")
```

```
[1] | <research>/project1/code.R  
[2] | <research>/project1/data.csv
```

Some helpful string functions

Example: Suppose I have the following file names:

```
1 file_names <- c("research/project1/code.R",  
2                 "research/project1/data.csv",  
3                 "teaching/sta279/lecture1.qmd",  
4                 "teaching/sta279/example_data.csv")
```

How would I select only the csv files?

Some helpful string functions

Example: Suppose I have the following file names:

```
1 file_names <- c("research/project1/code.R",  
2                 "research/project1/data.csv",  
3                 "teaching/sta279/lecture1.qmd",  
4                 "teaching/sta279/example_data.csv")
```

How would I select only the csv files?

```
1 str_subset(file_names, "csv")
```

```
[1] "research/project1/data.csv"  
"teaching/sta279/example_data.csv"
```

Some helpful string functions

Example: Suppose I have the following file names:

```
1 file_names <- c("research/project1/code.R",  
2                 "research/project1/data.csv",  
3                 "research/project2/sim_output.csv",  
4                 "teaching/sta279/lecture1.qmd",  
5                 "teaching/sta279/example_data.csv")
```

How would I select only the csv files in the research directory?

Some helpful string functions

Example: Suppose I have the following file names:

```
1 file_names <- c("research/project1/code.R",  
2                 "research/project1/data.csv",  
3                 "research/project2/sim_output.csv",  
4                 "teaching/sta279/lecture1.qmd",  
5                 "teaching/sta279/example_data.csv")
```

How would I select only the csv files in the research directory?

```
1 str_subset(file_names, "research.+csv")
```

```
[1] "research/project1/data.csv"  
"research/project2/sim_output.csv"
```

More regular expressions

```
1 strings <- c("apple", "banana", "raspberry",  
2             "blackberry", "grrreat", "random")
```

How would I select just raspberry and blackberry?

More regular expressions

```
1 strings <- c("apple", "banana", "raspberry",  
2             "blackberry", "grrreat", "random")
```

How would I select just raspberry and blackberry?

```
1 str_view(strings, "berry")
```

```
[3] | rasp<berry>  
[4] | black<berry>
```

More regular expressions

```
1 strings <- c("apple", "banana", "raspberry",  
2             "blackberry", "grrreat", "random")
```

How would I select “raspberry”, “blackberry”, “grrreat”, and “random”?

More regular expressions

```
1 strings <- c("apple", "banana", "raspberry",  
2             "blackberry", "grrreat", "random")
```

How would I select “raspberry”, “blackberry”, “grrreat”, and “random”?

```
1 str_view(strings, "r")
```

```
[3] | <r>aspbe<r><r>y  
[4] | blackbe<r><r>y  
[5] | g<r><r><r>eat  
[6] | <r>andom
```

More regular expressions

```
1 strings <- c("apple", "banana", "raspberry",  
2             "blackberry", "grrreat", "random")
```

How would I select just “raspberry”, “blackberry”, and “grrreat”?

More regular expressions

```
1 strings <- c("apple", "banana", "raspberry",  
2             "blackberry", "grrreat", "random")
```

How would I select just “raspberry”, “blackberry”, and “grrreat”?

```
1 str_view(strings, "rr+")
```

```
[3] | raspbe<rr>y  
[4] | blackbe<rr>y  
[5] | g<rrr>eat
```

```
1 str_view(strings, "r{2,}")
```

```
[3] | raspbe<rr>y  
[4] | blackbe<rr>y  
[5] | g<rrr>eat
```

More regular expressions

```
1 strings <- c("apple", "banana", "raspberry",  
2             "blackberry", "grrreat", "random")
```

How would I select just “grrreat”?

```
1 str_view(strings, "r{3}")
```

```
[5] | g<rrr>eat
```

More regular expressions

```
1 strings <- c("apple", "banana", "raspberry",  
2             "blackberry", "grrreat", "random")
```

How would I select “apple”, “raspberry”, or “blackberry”?

More regular expressions

```
1 strings <- c("apple", "banana", "raspberry",  
2             "blackberry", "grrreat", "random")
```

How would I select “apple”, “raspberry”, or “blackberry”?

```
1 str_view(strings, "(.)\\1{1}")
```

```
[1] | a<pp>le  
[3] | raspbe<rr>y  
[4] | blackbe<rr>y  
[5] | g<rr>reat
```

More regular expressions

```
1 strings <- c("papa", "banana", "memento",  
2             "blackberry", "grrreat", "random")
```

How would I select “papa”, “banana”, and “memento”?

More regular expressions

```
1 strings <- c("papa", "banana", "memento",  
2             "blackberry", "grrreat", "random")
```

How would I select “papa”, “banana”, and “memento”?

```
1 str_view(strings, "(..)\1{1}")
```

```
[1] | <papa>  
[2] | b<anan>a  
[3] | <meme>nto
```

```
1 str_view(strings, "(..)+")
```

```
[1] | <papa>  
[2] | <banana>  
[3] | <mement>o  
[4] | <blackberry>  
[5] | <grrrea>t  
[6] | <random>
```


More regular expressions

```
1 strings <- c("papa", "banana", "memento",  
2             "blackberry", "toboggan", "random")
```

How would I select “banana” and “blackberry”?

More regular expressions

```
1 strings <- c("papa", "banana", "memento",  
2             "blackberry", "toboggan", "random")
```

How would I select “banana” and “blackberry”?

```
1 str_view(strings, "^b")
```

```
[2] | <b>anana
```

```
[4] | <b>lackberry
```

More regular expressions

```
1 strings <- c("papa", "banana", "memento",  
2             "blackberry", "toboggan", "random")
```

How would I select “papa” and “banana”?

More regular expressions

```
1 strings <- c("papa", "banana", "memento",  
2             "blackberry", "toboggan", "random")
```

How would I select “papa” and “banana”?

```
1 str_view(strings, "a$")
```

```
[1] | pap<a>  
[2] | banan<a>
```

More regular expressions

```
1 "The mean  $\mu$  is defined by  $\mu = \frac{1}{n} \sum_i x_i$ "
```

How would I extract μ and $\mu = \frac{1}{n} \sum_i x_i$?

More regular expressions

```
1 "The mean  $\mu$  is defined by  $\mu = \frac{1}{n} \sum_i x_i$ "
```

How would I extract μ and $\mu = \frac{1}{n} \sum_i x_i$?

```
1 str_extract("The mean  $\mu$  is defined by  $\mu = \frac{1}{n} \sum_i x_i$ ",  
2 ".*+.*")
```

```
[1] " $\mu$  is defined by  $\mu = \frac{1}{n} \sum_i x_i$ "
```

More regular expressions

```
1 "The mean  $\mu$  is defined by  $\mu = \frac{1}{n} \sum_i x_i$ "
```

How would I extract μ and $\mu = \frac{1}{n} \sum_i x_i$?

```
1 str_extract_all("The mean  $\mu$  is defined by  $\mu = \frac{1}{n} \sum_i x_i$ "  
2                      "\\$[^\\$]+\\$")
```

```
[[1]]
```

```
[1] " $\mu$ "
```

```
 $\mu$ 
```

```
" $\mu = \frac{1}{n} \sum_i$ 
```

More regular expressions

```
1 "The current date (today) is November 3 [2007]."
```

How would I extract “(today)” and “[2007]”?

More regular expressions

```
1 "The current date (today) is November 3 [2007]."
```

How would I extract “(today)” and “[2007]”?

```
1 str_extract_all("The current date (today) is November 3 [2007].",  
2 "[\\(\\[\\^\\)\\]]+\\)\\]")
```

```
[[1]]
```

```
[1] "(today)" "[2007]"
```

What if I just want “today” and “2007”?

More regular expressions

```
1 "The current date (today) is November 3 [2007]."
```

```
1 str_extract_all("The current date (today) is November 3 [2007].",  
2                  "(?<=[\\(\\[\\^\\)]\\]\\](?=[\\)\\]])")
```

```
[[1]]
```

```
[1] "today" "2007"
```

More regular expressions

```
1 "The current date (today) is November 3 [2007]."
```

What if I only want the words?

```
1 str_extract_all("The current date (today) is November 3 [2007].",  
2                 "\\w+")
```

```
[[1]]
```

```
[1] "The"      "current"  "date"     "today"    "is"       "November"
```

```
"3"
```

```
[8] "2007"
```

More regular expressions

```
1 "The current date (today) is November 3 [2007]."
```

What if I only want the words?

```
1 str_replace_all("The current date (today) is November 3 [2007].",  
2                  "[^\\w\\s]", "")
```

```
[1] "The current date today is November 3 2007"
```

A list of some other useful tools

- `*` means “appears 0 or more times”
- `{m}` means “appears *m* times”
- `\b` is a word boundary (use `\\b` in R)
- `\w` is any alphanumeric character, or underscore (use `\\w` in R)
- `()` is a capture group
- `[]` is a set of characters
- `\s` denotes spaces (use `\\s` in R)
- `^` anchors at the beginning, `$` anchors at the end

