Strings and regular expressions

Week 5

AEM 2850 / 5850 : R for Business Analytics Cornell Dyson Spring 2024

Acknowledgements: R4DS (2e)

Announcements

No lab due next Monday (February break)

Prelim 1 will be next Thursday, February 29 in class

- Will cover everything so far including this week's material
- We will provide more guidance Thursday and via canvas
- Please contact me and SDS **as soon as possible** if you are eligible for testing accommodations and are not yet registered

Questions before we get started?

Plan for today

Prologue: clarifying group operations

Working with strings in R

Regular expressions

Working with regular expressions in R

Prologue

Group operations

Lab-04 included the following question:

3. Calculate the average housing price for each of the cities that are in tidy_txhouse and in tidy_txpop over the period 2010 through 2012. Which city has the highest average housing price? Which city has the lowest average housing price?

This is a good example question to provide more detail on group_by() and ungroup(), which I mentioned in passing during week 2

Reminder: dplyr::group_by

summarize is particularly useful in combination with group_by:

```
semi_join(tidy_txhouse, tx_pop_city) |> # for cities in tidy_txhouse and tx_pop_city
filter(2010 <= year & year <= 2012) |> # for years 2010-2012
group_by(city) |> # for each city
summarize(mean_price = mean(price)) # compute the mean price
```

```
## # A tibble: 34 × 2
##
     city
                    mean_price
##
     <chr>
                         <dbl>
   1 Abilene
                       113614.
##
  2 Amarillo
                       128192.
   3 Arlington
##
                       128058.
   4 Austin
##
                       193811.
##
   5 Beaumont
                       128431.
  6 Brownsville
                   96569.
##
   7 Corpus Christi
                       137883.
   8 Dallas
                       161706.
   9 El Paso
                       135117.
## 10 Fort Worth
                       114217.
## # i 24 more rows
```

Groups are persistent (sort of)

```
semi_join(tidy_txhouse, tx_pop_city) |>
  filter(2010 <= year & year <= 2012) |>
  group_by(city) |>
  print(n = 5)
```

```
## # A tibble: 102 × 4
## # Groups: city [34]
##
  city year sales
                         price
    <chr> <dbl> <dbl>
                         <dbl>
## 1 Abilene
             2010 1590 112000
## 2 Abilene
              2011
                   1719 114492.
## 3 Abilene
              2012
                   2016 114350
## 4 Amarillo
              2010
                   2556 125117.
## 5 Amarillo
             2011
                   2705 126658.
## # i 97 more rows
```

```
semi_join(tidy_txhouse, tx_pop_city) |>
  filter(2010 <= year & year <= 2012) |>
  group_by(city) |>
  summarize(mean_price = mean(price)) |>
  print(n = 5)
```

No groups?!

Groups are persistent (sort of)

summarize() drops the last group
variable, so the output is not grouped
by city

By contrast mutate() does not unroll group variables unless you explicitly ask it to

```
semi_join(tidy_txhouse, tx_pop_city) |>
  filter(2010 <= year & year <= 2012) |>
  group_by(city) |>
  mutate(mean_price = mean(price))
```

```
## # A tibble: 102 × 5
## # Groups:
               city [34]
      city year sales
                              price mean_price
                <dbl> <dbl>
      <chr>
                              <dbl>
                                         <dbl>
    1 Abilene
                                       113614.
                 2010
                       1590 112000
##
    2 Abilene
                 2011
                       1719 114492.
                                       113614.
   3 Abilene
                 2012
                       2016 114350
                                       113614.
##
    4 Amarillo
                 2010
                       2556 125117.
                                       128192.
   5 Amarillo
                       2705 126658.
                                       128192.
##
                 2011
##
   6 Amarillo
                 2012
                       2933 132800
                                       128192.
   7 Arlington
                 2010
                       3883 129717.
                                       128058.
    8 Arlington
                 2011
                       3719 124267.
                                       128058.
    9 Arlington
                 2012
                       4248 130192.
                                       128058.
   10 Austin
                 2010 19872 189658.
                                       193811.
## # i 92 more rows
```

Groups affect filter operations!

```
semi_join(tidy_txhouse, tx_pop_city) |>
  filter(2010 <= year & year <= 2012) |>
  group_by(city) |>
  summarize(mean_price = mean(price)) |>
  filter(mean_price == max(mean_price))
```

Looks good!

```
semi_join(tidy_txhouse, tx_pop_city) |>
  filter(2010 <= year & year <= 2012) |>
  group_by(city) |>
  mutate(mean_price = mean(price)) |>
  filter(mean_price == max(mean_price)) |>
  head(5)
```

```
## # A tibble: 5 × 5
## # Groups:
              city [2]
    city year sales
                           price mean_price
    <chr>
             <dbl> <dbl>
                           <dbl>
                                     <dbl>
## 1 Abilene
                                   113614.
              2010 1590 112000
## 2 Abilene
                    1719 114492.
                                   113614.
              2011
## 3 Abilene
                    2016 114350
                                   113614.
              2012
## 4 Amarillo
              2010
                    2556 125117.
                                   128192.
## 5 Amarillo
              2011
                    2705 126658.
                                    128192.
```

What went wrong?

Groups affect filter operations!

One way to get around this is to use ungroup() or group_by() with no arguments

Now we get Austin and only Austin

But we still get multiple rows, when we only need/want one

```
semi_join(tidy_txhouse, tx_pop_city) |>
  filter(2010 <= year & year <= 2012) |>
  group_by(city) |>
  mutate(mean_price = mean(price)) |>
  ungroup() |>
  filter(mean_price == max(mean_price)) |>
  head(5)
```

```
## # A tibble: 3 × 5
## city year sales price mean_price
## <chr> <dbl> <dbl> <dbl> <dbl> <dbl> 
## 1 Austin 2010 19872 189658. 193811.
## 2 Austin 2011 21208 190033. 193811.
## 3 Austin 2012 25521 201742. 193811.
```

Working with strings in R

Strings are nothing new

flights |>

```
select(carrier, tailnum, origin, dest)
                                                         select(citv)
## # A tibble: 336,776 × 4
     carrier tailnum origin dest
##
                                                            citv
##
     <chr>
              <chr>
                      <chr> <chr>
                                                            <chr>
                                                          1 Abbott
##
   1 UA
              N14228
                      EWR
                             IAH
##
   2 UA
             N24211
                     LGA
                             IAH
                             MIA
                                                          3 Abilene
##
   3 AA
             N619AA
                     JFK
                                                      ##
   4 B6
                             BON
                                                          4 Ackerly
##
             N804JB
                     JFK
                                                          5 Addison
##
   5 DL
             N668DN
                      LGA
                             ATL
                                                      ##
##
   6 UA
             N39463
                      EWR
                             ORD
                                                      ##
                                                          6 Adrian
##
   7 B6
              N516JB
                      EWR
                             FLL
##
   8 EV
              N829AS
                             IAD
                                                          8 Alamo
                     LGA
                                                      ##
##
   9 B6
              N593JB
                      JFK
                             MCO
## 10 AA
              N3ALAA LGA
                             ORD
                                                      ## 10 Alba
                                                      ## # i 1,207 more rows
## # i 336,766 more rows
```

```
tx_pop_city |>
## # A tibble: 1,217 × 1
    2 Abernathy
   7 Agua Dulce
   9 Alamo Heights
```

Strings in R

Strings are also referred to as "characters" (abbreviated chr)

Strings can be stored in many ways:

- Vectors
- Data frame columns
- Elements in a list

So far we have used them as we would any other data

But now we'll learn to filter on, modify, or analyze "functions" of strings

The stringr package

stringr is loaded as part of the core tidyverse

All stringr functions have intuitive names that start with str_

We will cover a bunch of handy functions this week:

```
    str_length
    str_to_upper and str_to_lower
    str_c and str_glue
    str_detect
    str_count
    str_replace
```

See vignette("stringr") for more

We'll use data from The Office

The schrute package contains transcripts of all episodes of The Office (US)

```
library(schrute)
theoffice # this data frame is an object from the schrute package
```

```
## # A tibble: 55,130 × 12
##
      index season episode episode_name director
                                                      writer
                                                                        character text
      <int> <int>
##
                      <int> <chr>
                                          <chr>
                                                      <chr>
                                                                         <chr>
                                                                                   <chr>
                          1 Pilot
                                          Ken Kwapis Ricky Gervais; S... Michael
                                                                                   All ...
##
## 2
                          1 Pilot
                                          Ken Kwapis Ricky Gervais; S... Jim
                                                                                   0h, ...
## 3
                          1 Pilot
                                           Ken Kwapis Ricky Gervais; S... Michael
                                                                                   So y...
## 4
                          1 Pilot
                                           Ken Kwapis Ricky Gervais; S... Jim
                                                                                   Actu...
                                                                                   All ...
## 5
                          1 Pilot
                                           Ken Kwapis Ricky Gervais; S... Michael
## 6
                          1 Pilot
                                           Ken Kwapis Ricky Gervais; S... Michael
                                                                                   Yes....
                          1 Pilot
                                                                                   I've...
## 7
                                          Ken Kwapis Ricky Gervais; S... Michael
                          1 Pilot
                                           Ken Kwapis Ricky Gervais; S... Pam
                                                                                   Well...
## 8
                                                                                   If y...
##
                          1 Pilot
                                           Ken Kwapis Ricky Gervais; S... Michael
## 10
                          1 Pilot
                                           Ken Kwapis Ricky Gervais; S... Pam
                                                                                   What?
         10
## #
       55,120 more rows
## # i 4 more variables: text_w_direction <chr>, imdb_rating <dbl>,
       total votes <int>, air date <chr>
## #
```

1) str_length()

5 Jan

str_length tells you the number of characters in a string

```
str_length("supercalifragilisticexpialidocious")
## [1] 34
theoffice |>
  distinct(character) |>
  slice_head(n = 5) |>
  mutate(name_length = str_length(character))
## # A tibble: 5 × 2
## character name_length
   <chr>
                    <int>
## 1 Michael
## 2 Jim
## 3 Pam
## 4 Dwight
```

2) str_to_lower() and str_to_upper()

str_to_lower converts to lower case

```
str_to_lower("I went to Cornell, you ever heard of it?")

## [1] "i went to cornell, you ever heard of it?"

str_to_upper converts to upper case

str_to_upper("I went to Cornell, you ever heard of it?")

## [1] "I WENT TO CORNELL, YOU EVER HEARD OF IT?"
```

These functions are locale dependent (e.g., "en_GB" vs "en_US")

Similar functionality for str_to_title() and str_to_sentence()

3) str_c()

We have seen c() combine arguments into a vector or list

Similarly, str_c() combines arguments into a character vector:

```
str_c("a", "b", "c", "1", "2", "3")
```

[1] "abc123"

Here, it combined six letters and numbers into a single string

But we can also use it within data frames to combine strings at scale

3) str_c()

Here's an example of multiple columns in a data frame being combined into one:

```
theoffice |> slice_head(n = 1) |>
  select(character, text)
## # A tibble: 1 × 2
##
    character text
   <chr>
          <chr>
## 1 Michael All right Jim. Your quarterlies look very good. How are things at t...
theoffice |> slice_head(n = 1) |>
    transmute(line = str_c(character, " said: ", text)) # mutate and keep only `line`
## # A tibble: 1 × 1
##
    line
    <chr>
##
## 1 Michael said: All right Jim. Your quarterlies look very good. How are things ...
```

3) str_c()

str_c() will automatically recycle fixed arguments like " said: " that are shorter
than character and text:

```
theoffice |> slice_head(n = 3) |>
    transmute(line = str_c(character, " said: ", text))

## # A tibble: 3 × 1

## line

## <chr>
## 1 Michael said: All right Jim. Your quarterlies look very good. How are things ...
## 2 Jim said: Oh, I told you. I couldn't close it. So...
## 3 Michael said: So you've come to the master for guidance? Is this what you're ...
```

str_c() and str_glue() work well with mutate() and transmute() because
their output is the same length as their inputs

3) str_glue()

str_glue() provides similar functionality, but different syntax:

```
theoffice |> slice_head(n = 3) |>
    transmute(line = str_glue("{character} said: {text}")) # note the different syntax

## # A tibble: 3 × 1

## line
## <glue>
## 1 Michael said: All right Jim. Your quarterlies look very good. How are things ...
## 2 Jim said: Oh, I told you. I couldn't close it. So...
## 3 Michael said: So you've come to the master for guidance? Is this what you're ...
```

Items inside {} are evaluated as if they are outside the quotes

This can be handy when combining many fixed and variable strings

Regular expressions

Regular expressions

What are regular expressions?

A concise, powerful way for describing patterns within strings

Regular expressions are a generic tool, not something specific to R

Let's use the names of some characters from The Office as examples:

```
names <- theoffice |> distinct(character) |> slice_head(n = 10) |> pull(character)
names

## [1] "Michael" "Jim" "Pam" "Dwight" "Jan"
## [6] "Michel" "Todd Packer" "Phyllis" "Stanley" "Oscar"
```

Pattern basics

The simplest patterns consist of literal characters

```
## [1] "Michael" "Jim" "Pam"
## [4] "Dwight" "Jan" "Michel"
## [7] "Todd Packer" "Phyllis" "Stanley"
## [10] "Oscar"
```

What do you think this will return?

```
str_view(names, pattern = "J")
```

str_view() is a handy utility to see
how patterns match

```
## [2] | <J>im
## [5] | <J>an
```

Literal pattern matches are casesensitive by default

Meta-characters

Punctuation characters like ., +, *, [,], and ? are **meta-characters** with special meanings

The most common one is ., which will match any character

What do you think these statements will return?

```
str_view(names, pattern = "J.m")

## [2] | <Jim>
## [5] | <Jan>
```

Meta-characters

What do you think these statements will return?

```
str_view(names, pattern = "J...")

## [2] | <Jim>
## [5] | <Jan>
```

Quantifiers

Quantifiers control how many times a pattern can match:

- ? makes a pattern optional -- it matches 0 or 1 times
- + lets a pattern repeat -- it matches at least once
- * lets a pattern be optional or repeat

What do you think this statement will return?

```
str_view(names, "M.*l") # match strings with M, then any number of any characters, then l
## [1] | <Michael>
## [6] | <Michel>
```

Character classes

[] lets you match a set of characters

```
str_view(names, "[aeiou]") # vowels
```

```
\lceil 1 \rceil
           M<i>ch<a><e>1
##
    [2]
##
           J<i>m
##
    [3]
           P<a>m
##
    [4]
           Dw<i>ght
##
    [5]
           J<a>n
    [6]
           M<i>ch<e>l
##
           T<o>dd P<a>ck<e>r
##
    [7]
           Phyll<i>s
    [8]
##
    [9]
           St<a>nl<e>y
##
## [10]
           0sc<a>r
```

inverts character class matches

```
str_view(names, "[^aeiou]") # NOT vowels
```

```
<M>i<c><h>ae<1>
    \lceil 1 \rceil
##
##
    Γ2]
           <J>i<m>
    [3]
           <P>a<m>
##
##
    [4]
           <D><w>i<g><h><t>
    [5]
           <J>a<n>
##
    [6]
           <M>i<c><h>e<l>
##
##
    [7]
           <T>o<d><d>< ><P>a<c><k>e<r>
           <P><h><y><l><l>i<s>
    [8]
##
    [9]
           <$><t>a<n><l>e<y>
##
   [10]
           <0><s><c>a<r>
##
```

Alternation

Last one! Hang in there!

Alternation, |, allows you to search for one or more alternative patterns

This should seem familiar...

What do you think these statements will return?

```
str_view(names, "J.m|P.m")

## [2] | <Jim>
## [9] | <Stanley>
## [10] | <Oscar>
```

More patterns

See Chapter 15 of R4DS (2e) for more on:

- escaping: matching meta-characters as if they were literal strings
- anchors: match the start or end of a strong
- character classes (continued)
- quantifiers (continued)
- operator precedence: parentheses, etc.
- grouping: back references, etc.

Working with regular expressions in R

str_detect can be used to match patterns and return a logical vector

```
first_4_characters <- theoffice |>
  distinct(character) |>
  slice_head(n = 4) |>
  pull(character)
first_4_characters

## [1] "Michael" "Jim" "Pam" "Dwight"
```

```
str_detect(first_4_characters, "Dwight")

## [1] FALSE FALSE TRUE

str_detect(first_4_characters, "a")

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

How could we fit this into our current workflow?

str_detect is a powerful way to filter a data frame

```
## # A tibble: 370 \times 4
##
      season episode character text
##
       <int>
               <int> <chr>
                                <chr>
##
                   2 Jim
                               This is my biggest sale of the year. They love me o...
                               Mr. Decker, we didn't lose your sale today, did we?...
## 2
                   2 Jim
##
                   3 Jim
                               That is a great offer. Thank you. I really think I ...
##
                   3 Jan
                               From sales?
## 5
                   4 Michael
                               Look, look, look. I talked to corporate, about prot...
                   5 Michael
                               All right, time, time out. Come on, sales, over her...
##
                   6 Jan
                               Alan and I have created an incentive program to inc...
##
                               We've created an incentive program to increase sale...
##
                   6 Jan
                   6 Jim
                                Plus you have so much more to talk to this girl abo...
## 9
## 10
                   6 Stanley
                                I thought that was the incentive prize for the top ...
    i 360 more rows
```

Literal pattern matches with str_detect are case-sensitive

```
## # A tibble: 28 × 4
     season episode character
##
                                        text
##
      <int>
               <int> <chr>
                                        <chr>
##
                 11 Michael
                                       No, no. Salesmen and profit centers.
## 2
             14 Michael
                                       Old fashioned raid. Sales on Accounting. Y...
##
  3
                 14 Michael and Dwight Ahhhh! Whoo hoo! Come on, come on...
                 14 Michael
                                        Oh, and I'm not? Why would you say that? B...
## 4
## 5
                 17 Jim
                                        Dwight was the top salesman of the year at...
##
                 17 Michael
                                        Speaker at the Sales Convention. Been ther...
                 17 Dwight
##
                                        Saleswoman has a v*g1n*.
## 8
                  17 Speaker
                                        Next, I'd like to introduce the Dunder Mif...
                  17 Dwight
                                        Salesman of Northeastern Pennsylvania, I a...
## 9
## 10
                   5 Angela
                                        Sales take a long time.
## # i 18 more rows
```

You could use multiple calls to str_detect, or use alternation:

```
## # A tibble: 392 × 4
     season episode character text
##
##
       <int>
              <int> <chr>
                               <chr>
## 1
                  2 Jim
                              This is my biggest sale of the year. They love me o...
## 2
                  2 Jim
                              Mr. Decker, we didn't lose your sale today, did we?...
## 3
                  3 Jim
                              That is a great offer. Thank you. I really think I ...
## 4
                  3 Jan
                              From sales?
## 5
                  4 Michael
                              Look, look, look. I talked to corporate, about prot...
   6
                  5 Michael
                              All right, time, time out. Come on, sales, over her...
##
                  6 Jan
                              Alan and I have created an incentive program to inc...
##
##
                  6 Jan
                              We've created an incentive program to increase sale...
                  6 Jim
                               Plus you have so much more to talk to this girl abo...
## 9
                               I thought that was the incentive prize for the top ...
## 10
                  6 Stanley
    i 382 more rows
```

You could consolidate this: regex parentheses are like in math

```
## # A tibble: 392 × 4
     season episode character text
##
##
      <int>
               <int> <chr>
                               <chr>
## 1
                   2 Jim
                              This is my biggest sale of the year. They love me o...
## 2
                  2 Jim
                              Mr. Decker, we didn't lose your sale today, did we?...
## 3
                  3 Jim
                               That is a great offer. Thank you. I really think I ...
## 4
                  3 Jan
                              From sales?
## 5
                  4 Michael
                              Look, look, look. I talked to corporate, about prot...
                  5 Michael
##
                              All right, time, time out. Come on, sales, over her...
                  6 Jan
                               Alan and I have created an incentive program to inc...
##
##
                  6 Jan
                              We've created an incentive program to increase sale...
                  6 Jim
                               Plus you have so much more to talk to this girl abo...
## 9
                               I thought that was the incentive prize for the top ...
## 10
                  6 Stanley
    i 382 more rows
```

Or use regex() to ignore all cases and control other pattern matching details

```
## # A tibble: 393 × 4
     season episode character text
##
##
       <int>
               <int> <chr>
                               <chr>
## 1
                   2 Jim
                               This is my biggest sale of the year. They love me o...
## 2
                  2 Jim
                               Mr. Decker, we didn't lose your sale today, did we?...
## 3
                  3 Jim
                               That is a great offer. Thank you. I really think I ...
                  3 Jan
                              From sales?
## 4
## 5
                  4 Michael
                               Look, look, look. I talked to corporate, about prot...
                  5 Michael
##
                               All right, time, time out. Come on, sales, over her...
                               Alan and I have created an incentive program to inc...
##
                  6 Jan
##
                  6 Jan
                               We've created an incentive program to increase sale...
                  6 Jim
                               Plus you have so much more to talk to this girl abo...
## 9
## 10
                  6 Stanley
                               I thought that was the incentive prize for the top ...
## # i 383 more rows
```

When I say ignore all cases, I mean IGNORE ALL CASES!

str_detect can be combined with familiar functions to summarize data

```
theoffice |>
  filter(str_detect(text, regex("Sale", ignore_case = TRUE))) |>
  count(character, sort = TRUE)
```

```
## # A tibble: 46 × 2
##
  character
  <chr>
          <int>
## 1 Michael
               91
## 2 Dwight
           81
  3 Jim
          51
##
   4 Andy
         31
## 5 Pam
               26
## 6 Ryan
               10
  7 Clark
##
  8 Gabe
  9 David
## 10 Angela
## # i 36 more rows
```

str_detect can be combined with familiar functions to summarize data

```
theoffice |>
  filter(str_detect(text,
                    regex("that's what she said", ignore_case = TRUE))) |>
  count(character, sort = TRUE)
## # A tibble: 8 × 2
## character
## <chr> <int>
## 1 Michael
                 23
## 2 Dwight
## 3 Jim
## 4 Creed
## 5 David
## 6 Holly
## 7 Jan
## 8 Pam
```

str_detect with regular expressions can be very powerful

```
theoffice |> select(character, text) |>
  filter(str_detect(text, "assistant.*manager")) |>
  slice head(n = 10)
## # A tibble: 10 × 2
##
     character text
##
     <chr> <chr>
##
   1 Dwight
                I, but if there were, I'd be protected as assistant regional manag...
##
   2 Dwight
                And that's why you have an assistant regional manager.
   3 Michael
##
                No, I am the team manager. You can be assistant to the team manage...
##
   4 Dwight
                Hey, Pam, I'm assistant regional manager, and I can take care of h...
   5 Michael
                All right. Well then, you are now acting manager of Dunder Mifflin...
##
   6 Dwight
                Uh,... my first sale, my promotion to assistant regional manager, ...
##
   7 Jim
                Oh, that's because at first it was a made up position for Dwight, ...
##
##
   8 Charles
                So you're the assistant to the regional manager?
                Since Andy promoted me to assistant regional manager, I've been tr...
  9 Darrvl
                You now, Darryl, this is textbook assistant regional manager stuff...
## 10 Andy
```

5) str_count()

str_count() can be used to count the number of matches in a string

```
theoffice |>
  distinct(character) |>
  slice_head(n = 5) |>
  mutate(
    name = str_to_lower(character), # another way to avoid case sensitivity

    m_s = str_count(name, "m"),
    i_s = str_count(name, "i")
)
```

5) str_count() with regex

```
theoffice |>
  distinct(character) |>
  slice_head(n = 5) |>
  mutate(
    name = str_to_lower(character),
    vowels = str_count(name, "[aeiou]"), # count matches of ANY of these characters
    consonants = str_count(name, "[^aeiou]") # count matches of everything EXCEPT these characters
)
```

Reminder: [] lets you match a set of characters; ^ inverts character class matches

6) str_replace()

As the name suggests, str_replace() can be used to modify patterns in strings

```
names
                                           "Dwight"
   [1] "Michael"
                "Jim" "Pam"
                                                        "Jan"
##
##
   [6] "Michel"
                "Todd Packer" "Phyllis"
                                           "Stanley"
                                                        "Oscar"
str_replace(names, "Dw", "Duhw") # jim's office pronunciation guide
   [1] "Michael"
                                           "Duhwight"
                   "Jim" "Pam"
                                                        "Jan"
##
               "Todd Packer" "Phyllis"
                                           "Stanley"
##
   [6] "Michel"
                                                        "0scar"
```

6) str_replace()

```
str_replace() replaces the first match of a pattern
str_replace_all() replaces all matches of a pattern
These functions pair naturally with mutate() just like str_c(), str_glue(), and str_count()
```