

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The core graphics system in R can be divided into two main packages. The first package is the `graphics` package. It is older and it provides the original GRZ graphics system from S, sometimes referred to as “traditional” graphics. It is relatively fast and many other R packages build on top of it. The newer package is the `grid` package. It is actually slower but it has more flexibility and additional features compared to the `graphics` package.

A graph that is drawn using `grid` can be edited in many more ways than a graph that has been drawn using the basic `graphics` package. However, there is a new package, called `gridGraphics`, which allows us to convert a plot that has been drawn by the `graphics` package to an equivalent plot drawn by `grid` graphics. This means that the additional flexibility and features of `grid` become available for any plot drawn using the `graphics` package.

1.2 The gridGraphics package

`gridGraphics` is like a 'translator' that translates a plot that has been drawn using the basic graphics package to a plot that has been drawn using the grid package. The `gridGraphic` package has a main function called `grid.echo()`, which takes a recorded plot as an argument (or `NULL` for the current plot of the current graphics device). The `grid.echo()` replicates the plot using grid so that the user may edit the plot in more ways than they can with the original plot drawn by basic graphics package. The following code provides a quick example. We generate 25 random numbers for `x` and `y`. First, we draw a scatter plot using the function `plot()` from the basic graphics package, then we redraw it using `grid.echo()` from the `gridGraphics` package with grid.

```
setwd(110)
x = runif(25)
y = runif(25)
plot(x,y, pch = 16)
grid.echo()
```

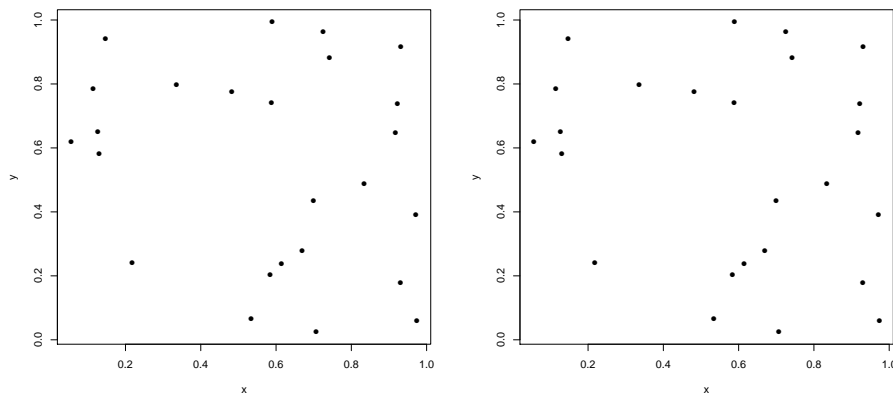


Figure 1: The left plot is drawn by using `plot()`; the Right plot is redrawn using `grid.echo()`. Overall, two plots are identical to each other

One example that shows the advantage of drawing the plot using grid rather than basic graphics is that there are objects, called grid grobs, which record a list of the details of each component of the plot that has been drawn. The list of grobs can be seen by calling the function `grid.ls()`.

```
graphics-background
graphics-plot-1-points-1
graphics-plot-1-bottom-axis-line-1
graphics-plot-1-bottom-axis-ticks-1
graphics-plot-1-bottom-axis-labels-1
```

```
graphics-plot-1-left-axis-line-1
graphics-plot-1-left-axis-ticks-1
graphics-plot-1-left-axis-labels-1
graphics-plot-1-box-1
graphics-plot-1-xlab-1
graphics-plot-1-ylab-1
```

As we see, the `grid.ls()` function returns a list of grid grobs for the previous plot that has been redrawn by `grid`. There is one element called "graphics-plot-1-bottom-axis-labels-1" which represents the labels of the bottom axis. In `grid`, there are several functions that can be used to manipulate this grob. For example, if the user wants to rotate the labels of the bottom axis by 30 degrees and changes the color from default to orange, then the following code performs these changes.

```
grid.edit("graphics-plot-1-bottom-axis-labels-1",
         rot=30, gp=gpar(col="orange"))
```

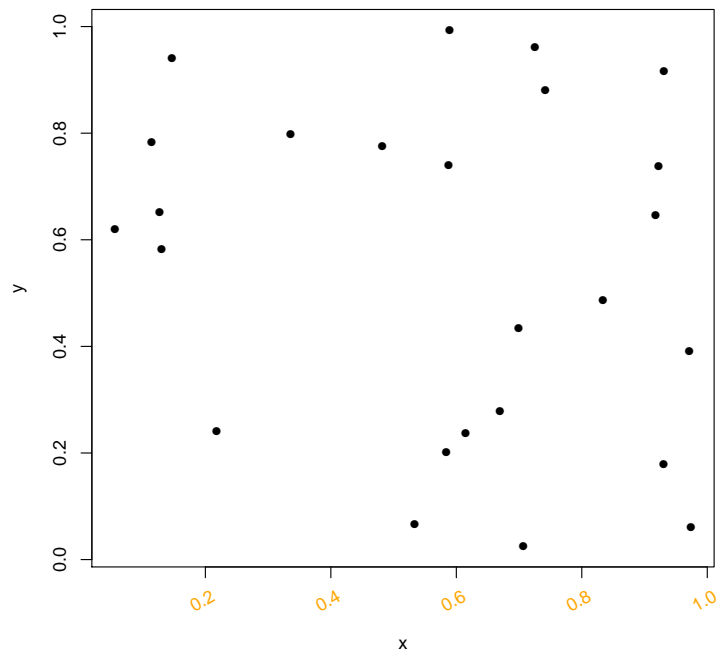


Figure 2: The angle and the color of the bottom axis of the previous plot have been changed by 30 degrees and orange

1.3 The problem

The `grid.echo()` function can replicate most plots that are drawn by the graphics package. However, there are a few functions in the graphics package that `grid.echo()` cannot replicate. One such function is `persp()` which draws 3-dimensional surfaces, the other one is the `filled.contour()`. If we can draw a plot with `persp()` or `filled.countour()`, the result from calling `grid.echo()` is a (mostly) blank screen.

```
x <- y <- seq(-4*pi, 4*pi, len = 27)
r <- sqrt(outer(x^2, y^2, "+"))
filled.contour(cos(r^2)*exp(-r/(2*pi))), frame.plot = FALSE, plot.axes = {})
```

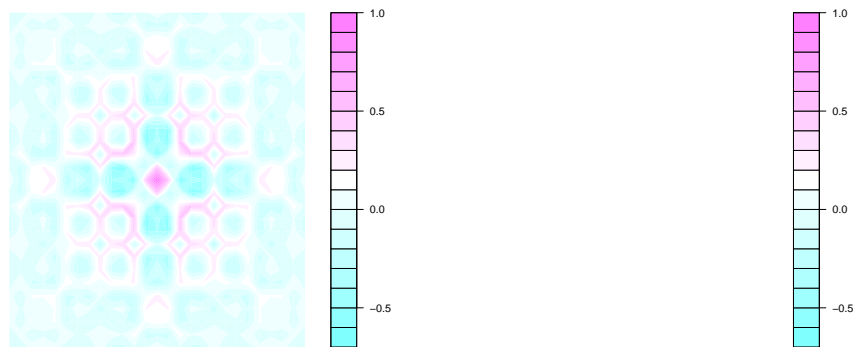


Figure 3: The left plot been drawn by using `filled.contour` and the right plot been redrawn by calling `grid.echo()`. There is a "blank" page on the right plot because the `grid.echo` cannot emulate `filled.contour()`

1.4 Aim of this project

The functions `persp()` and `filled.contour()` are written in C. However, it is very hard to debug and track the C code. One possible solution will be:

1. read and understand the C code, then do the direct translation from C code to R code.
2. ...

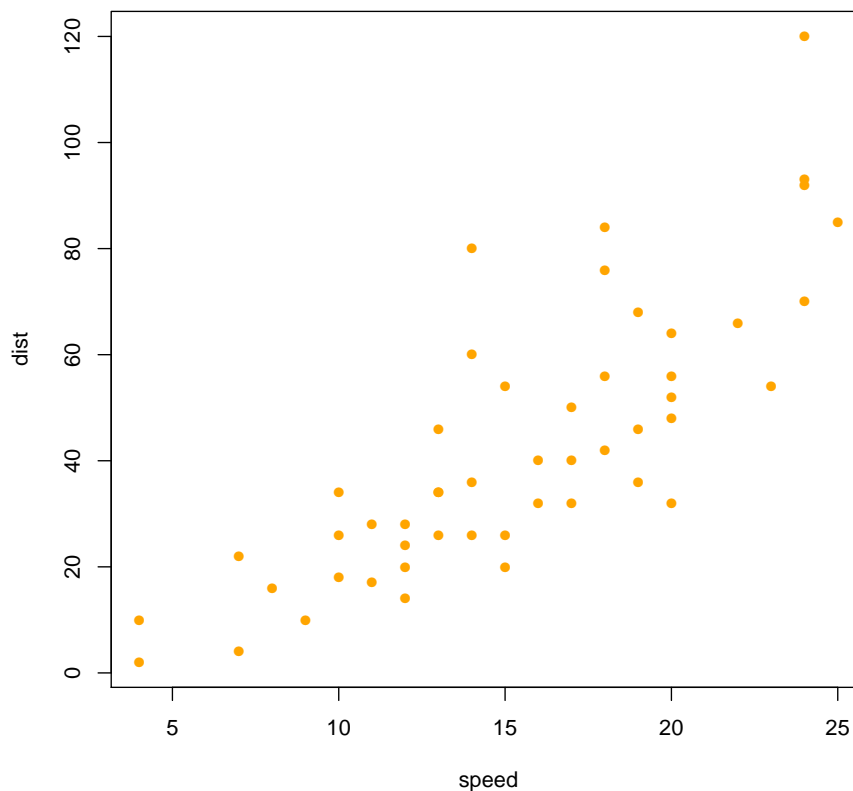
NOTE to Jason: explain how `gridGraphics` works first: graphics display list; `gridGraphics` implements an R version of each low-level C function on the display list (e.g., for `C_plot_xy` there is an R function called `C_plot_xy` in the `gridGraphics` package). THEN maybe write about 3D to 2D transformations, but only maybe.

2 The graphics engine display list

The information for every plot drawn by R can be recorded. For example, In the simple `plot()` function, it is possible to obtain the parameters for x and y, even the label of the x-axis and y-axis. This information is called the graphics engine display list. In this paper, we use this graphics engine display list to replicate the `persp()` plot and `textttfilled.contour()` plot using grid.

The `recordPlot()` function can be used to access the graphics engine display list, the `recordPlot()` function been used. This function saves the plot in an R object.

```
plot(cars$speed, cars$dist, col = 'orange',  
     pch = 16, xlab = 'speed', ylab = 'dist')
```



```
reco = recordPlot()  
## Displays the inputs  
reco[[1]][[4]][[2]][[2]]  
  
## $x  
## [1] 4 4 7 7 8 9 10 10 10 11 11 12 12 12 12 13 13 13 13 14 14 14 14
```

```
## [24] 15 15 15 16 16 17 17 17 18 18 18 18 19 19 19 20 20 20 20 20 22 23 24
## [47] 24 24 24 25
##
## $y
## [1] 2 10 4 22 16 10 18 26 34 17 28 14 20 24 28 26 34
## [18] 34 46 26 36 60 80 20 26 54 32 40 32 40 50 42 56 76
## [35] 84 36 46 68 32 48 52 56 64 66 54 70 92 93 120 85
##
## $xlab
## [1] "cars$speed"
##
## $ylab
## [1] "cars$dist"
```

This example shows that: suppose we have a data set called **cars**, which contain two columns, the speed of the cars and the distance of travel. We have a plot which plotted the speed against to the distance of travel. The **recordPlot()** will save this plot as an R object. As result, we can access the information of this plot. The last line of the code will access the x-coordinate and the y-coordinate, or the x-label and the y-label.

There are many way for solving this problem, one possible solution will be translate the C code to R code such that they are as simliar as possible. The reason for doing this direct translation include:

1. It is hard to debug and track the C code.
2. It is very simple to debug the R code. If the R code is almost identical to the C code, then we can debug the R code to ensure that the R code can also provide the same result.

2.1 standalone

The functions that provides the **persp()** are huge, hence this section will only described some key step for building the functions.