

Conference Report: eRum 2018

by Gergely Daróczy

Conference Summary

The European R Users Meeting (eRum) is an international conference that aims at bringing together users of the R language living in Europe – in the years when the useR! conference is hosted outside of the continent.

The first eRum conference was held in 2016 in Poznan, Poland with around 250 attendees and 20 sessions spanning over 3 days, including more than 80 speakers. Around that time, we also held a smaller conference in Budapest: the first satRday event happened with 25 speakers and almost 200 attendees from 19 countries in 2016.

The eRum 2018 conference is heritage of these two successful conferences: originally planned for 400-500 attendees from all around Europe, we ended up having 450 registrations from 39 countries – mostly from Germany and Hungary (15%), Poland, Austria, Netherlands and United Kingdom (10%), many other European countries, and for example Argentina, South Africa and New Zealand as well.

Tutorials

The conference started on May 14, 2018 with 3-6 hours workshops in the morning and in the afternoon as well on 7 parallel tracks – including topics from machine learning, writing and improving R packages, data visualization, handling spatial data and text mining. This day was hosted at the Central European University.

Scientific Program

The great success of the conference was mainly due to the high quality lineup of speakers: Achim Zeileis, Martin Mächler, Nathalie Villa-Vialaneix, Stefano Maria Iacus and Roger Bivand were our keynote speakers; Arthur Charpentier, Barbara Borges Ribeiro, Colin Gillespie, Erin LeDell, Henrik Bengtsson, Jeroen Ooms, Mark van der Loo, Matthias Templ, Olga Mierzwa-Sulima, Przemyslaw Biecek and Szilard Pafka presented invited talks on the two main days of the conference on May 15-16, 2018 in the Akvarium Klub that is a cultural center located under a pool, in the center of Budapest.

The contributed presentations were picked from the more than 150 submissions that we have received for the Call for Papers, and the final conference program included 30 regular talks (18 mins), 24 lightning talks (5 mins), 8 Shiny demos and 22 posters.

The oral presentations were split into two parallel sessions (except for the keynotes), and all the talks were live-streamed and the video recordings are still available on the Hungarian RUG's YouTube channel along with the presented slides on the conference homepage.

Social Programs

The Welcome Reception offered networking opportunity for the more than 400 attendees with a light dinner, also combined with a poster session and a Shiny demo session in a concert room with a huge LED wall. The Conference Dinner was hosted on a boat cruise showing the riverside of the Danube both at daytime and on the way back at night as well, and some traditional Hungarian dishes were served with a nice selection of wines. The local R-Ladies chapter also hosted a meetup with almost 100 attendees featuring 6 talks and a networking opportunity with pizza and drinks to all interested parties.

Sponsors

As the conference ticket prices were kept as low as possible to make it affordable to all attendees (eg early-bird student tickets were priced at \$50 for 3 days including catering), we are grateful to all our Platinum (RStudio), Gold (Mango Solutions, Microsoft, Quantide), Silver (H2O.ai, Emarsys, Open Analytics, Budapest BI Forum) and Bronze (WLOG Solutions, Jumping Rivers, R Consosritum, Upshift R Kft, R-bloggers) sponsors for contributing almost 1/4 of the overall conference budget.

Organizers

The Program Committee included 15 members from the Hungarian R User Group, organizers of eRum 2016, R Forwards, R Ladies and other European R User Groups: Adolfo Alvarez (Poland), Ágnes Salánki (Hungary), Andrew Lowe (Hungary), Bence Arató (Hungary), Branko Kovač (Serbia), Eszter Windhager-Pokol (Hungary), Gergely Daróczy (Hungary), Heather Turner (UK), Kevin O'Brien (Ireland), Imre Kocsis (Hungary), László Gönczy (Hungary), Maciej Beresewicz (Poland), Mariachiara Fortuna (Italy), Przemyslaw Biecek (Poland) and Szilárd Pafka (USA). The local Organizing Committee was lead by Gergely Daróczy, and the legal and accounting background was provided by Upshift R Kft for this nonprofit conference.

Further Information

- Conference homepage: <http://2018.erum.io>
- Twitter account: <https://twitter.com/erum2018>
- Talk abstracts, video recordings and slides: <http://2018.erum.io/#talk-abstracts>
- YouTube playlist of all eRum 2018 talks: https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLUB10DoLa5SAo_XRnkQA5GtEORg9K7kMh

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