


News

The Newsletter of the R Project

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Editorial

by Friedrich Leisch

While our colleagues in the southern hemisphere are looking forward to the last weeks of the academic year and a well deserved summer break, teaching started again in the northern half of our world, and again we had a new bug-fix release of R ready to pass to students at the beginning of the semester.

Coffee break talks at this summer's conference season showed the growing popularity of R at universities very nicely to me: You start talking to people you never met before and one of the first questions is usually about each other's research interests. Until last year I always had to explain what R is after responding "Hacking R", because nine out of ten people at a statistics conference had never heard about it.

This year things were different. I participated in a conference on Mixture Models in Hamburg, Germany. The crowd there were mostly statisticians, using computers heavily for their work, but most of them are not interested in statistical computing *per se* as a research area. Nevertheless, every other one at least knew what R is, many use it actively or at least their students do so, several talks mentioned R

as the computational platform used for the examples (and in several others design and layout of graphics looked *very* familiar to me).

This issue of *R News* has both articles introducing R packages and articles dealing with more computational aspects: The former include articles on econometrics, spatial data, machine learning, and robust statistics; the latter articles on Mac OS X, parallel and object-oriented programming, dynamic access to compiled code, and graphical user interfaces. The programmer's niche column is guest-edited by Thomas Lumley and deals with the advantages and disadvantages of macros.

The next issue of *R News* scheduled for the end of 2001 will have an emphasis on applying R in medical statistics. In the future we would like to see one or two issues per year to have a main focus, where 3 or 4 articles deal with related topics. Suggestions for focus topics are welcome, especially if accompanied by prospective articles. Please contact the editors for details.

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