for numerical analysis). This volume of data poses significant challenges, but graphical, statistical, and interactive abilities and web-based integration make R a strong candidate for making sense of, and making fundamental new contributions to, understanding and critically assessing this data.

The best Bioconductor packages are contributed by our users, based on their practical needs and sophisticated experience. We look forward to receiving your contribution over the next several months.

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Past Events: useR! 2007

Duncan Murdoch and Martin Maechler

The first North American useR! meeting took place over three hot days at Iowa State University in Ames this past August.

The program started with John Chambers talking about his philosophy of programming: our mission is to enable effective and rapid exploration of data, and the prime directive is to provide trustworthy software and "tell no lies". This was followed by a varied and interesting program of presentations and posters, many of which are now online at `http://useR2007.org`. A panel on the use of R in clinical trials may be noteworthy because of the related publishing by the R Foundation of a document (`http://www.r-project.org/certification.html`) on "Regulatory Compliance and Validation" issues. In particular "21 CFR part 11" compliance is very important in the pharmaceutical industry.

The meeting marked the tenth anniversary of the formation of the R Core group, and an enormous blue R birthday cake was baked for the occasion (Figure 1). Six of the current R Core members were present for the cutting, and Thomas Lumley gave a short after dinner speech at the banquet.

Figure 1: R Core turns ten.

There were two programming competitions. The first requested submissions in advance, to produce a package useful for large data sets. This was won by the team of Daniel Adler, Oleg Nenadić, Walter Zucchini and Christian Gläser from Göttingen. They wrote the **ff** package to use paged memory-mapping of binary files to handle very large datasets. Daniel, Oleg and Christian attended the meeting and presented their package.

The second competition was a series of short R programming tasks to be completed within a time limit at the conference. The tasks included relabelling, working with ragged longitudinal data, and writing functions on functions. There was a tie for first place between Elaine McVey and Olivia Lau.

Three kinds of T-shirts with variations on the "R" theme were available: the official conference T-shirt (also worn by the local staff) sold out within a day, so the two publishers' free T-shirts gained even more attraction.

Local arrangements for the meeting were handled by Di Cook, Heike Hofmann, Michael Lawrence, Hadley Wickham, Denise Riker, Beth Hagenman and Karen Koppenhaver at Iowa State; the Program Committee also included Doug Bates, Dave Henderson, Olivia Lau, and Luke Tierney. Thanks are due to all of them, and to the team of Iowa State students who made numerous trips to the Des Moines airport carrying meeting participants back and forth, and who kept the equipment and facilities running smoothly–useR! 2007 was an excellent meeting.

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