

Conference Report: useR! 2015

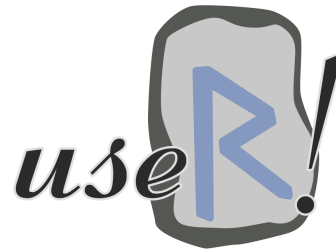
by Torben Toedebriink

The 11th international R user conference, useR! 2015, took place in Aalborg, Denmark, 1–3 July 2015. The Department of Mathematical Sciences, Aalborg University, hosted the conference, which took place in Aalborg Congress and Culture Centre.

We had originally hoped for 300–400 participants and some support from sponsors. The meeting attracted a total of 660 participants from 42 countries with an almost uniform split on academia and industry. Furthermore, the industry's generous support made it possible to provide free meals, drinks and a well-suited venue for the conference.

Our social events included welcome reception at the waterfront in the House of Music, a poster session with free bar and food, and a trip to Denmark's second largest forest (Rold Forest) where we held the conference dinner. During the conference dinner competitive games took place such as long sawing, axe hurling and archery.

We received more than 250 abstracts of which some 220 were accepted either as posters, lightning talks or oral presentations. The final programme consisted of six invited talks, 126 oral presentations, 14 lightning talks and 77 posters were presented at the conference.



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> sessionInfo()
[1] "June 30 - July 3, 2015"
[2] "Aalborg, Denmark"
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Pre-conference tutorials

Inspired by the initiative of useR! 2014 in Los Angeles we decided to provide the tutorials free of charge to useR! participants. This reduced the book-keeping load and allowed people to attend tutorials without considering the additional cost per tutorial. Based on the submitted tutorial proposal, the programme committee elected tutorials below:

- Applied Spatial Data Analysis with R (*Virgilio Gómez Rubio*)
- Bayesian Networks and Graphical Models with R (*Søren Højsgaard and Therese Gra-versen*)
- Data Manipulation with **dplyr** (*Hadley Wickham*)
- Efficient Statistical Consulting using R Workflow for Data Analysis Projects (*Peter Baker*)
- Handling Missing Values with a Special Focus on the Use of Principal Components Methods (*François Husson*)
- RHadoop (*Andrie de Vries and Simon Field*)
- Rocker: Using R on Docker (*Dirk Eddelbuettel*)
- Statistical Analysis of Network Data (*Gabor Csardi*)
- Analysis and Visualization of Large Complex Data with Tessera (*Ryan Hafen and Stephen Elston*)
- Applied Machine Learning and Efficient Model Selection with **mlr** (*Bernd Bischl and Michel Lang*)
- Bioconductor for High-Throughput Sequence Analysis (*Martin Morgan*)
- Getting to Know **grid** Graphics (*Paul Murrell*)
- Introduction to Bayesian Data Analysis with R (*Rasmus Bååth*)
- **spatstat**: An R Package for Analysing Spatial Point Patterns (*Adrian Baddeley and Ege Rubak*)
- Testing R Code (*Richard J. Cotton*)
- Using Pandoc's Markdown with R (*Gergely Daróczi*)

More than 80% of the conference participants registered at Tutorial Tuesday and most of these participated in one or two tutorials making the "open source" offer of free participation a success.

Invited talks

With the aim of getting the “use” of useR! in focus we invited speakers with varying backgrounds to give the six plenary talks of useR! 2015. Most of the presented topics were also discussed in the submitted sessions.

- *Thomas Lumley*: How Flexible Computing Expands What an Individual Can Do
- *Adrian Baddeley*: How R Has Changed Spatial Statistics
- *Steffen Lauritzen*: Linear Estimating Equations for Gaussian Graphical Models with Symmetry
- *Di Cook*: A Survey of Two Decades of Efforts to Build Interactive Graphics Capacity in R
- *Romain François*: My R Adventures
- *Susan Holmes*: Multitype Data Integration: Challenges from the Human Microbiome

Contributed sessions

After the selection of submitted abstracts we attempted to group the contributed talks in sessions of similar talks. The overall headings of the five parallel sessions were:

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|-------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| • Ecology | • Computational | • Commercial offerings |
| • Networks | performance | • Interactive graphics |
| • Reproducibility | • Business | • Teaching |
| • Interfacing | • Spatial | • Statistical methodology |
| • Case study | • Databases | • Machine learning |
| • Clustering | • Medicine | • Visualisation |
| • Data management | • Regression | |

These themes were also represented in the poster session and in the six kaleidoscope sessions. In addition to posters and presentations, there were 14 Lightning Talks, a 5-minute presentation on any R-related topic aimed particularly at those new to R. Participants seemed to appreciate this fast-paced introduction to a wide range of topics.

Organisers

The selection of abstracts for presentations would not have been possible without the thorough review process of the programme committee. We are grateful to the programme committee of useR! 2015: Peter Dalgaard, Dirk Eddelbuettel, Poul Svante Eriksen, Julie Josse, Martin Maechler, Katharine Mullen, Helle Sørensen, Heather Turner, Hadley Wickham, Achim Zeileis, and Søren Højsgaard (chair).

The local “green shirt” heroes making the useR! 2015 in Aalborg possible consisted of several students and local statisticians: Mikkel Meyer Andersen, Anders Ellern Bilgrau, Claus Dethlefsen, Mateusz ‘Matt’ Dziubinski, Poul Svante Eriksen, Søren Højsgaard, Rikke Nørmark Mortensen, Maria Rodrigo-Domingo, Ege Rubak, and Torben Tvedebrink (chair).

Further information

The useR! 2015 website, www.R-project.org/useR-2015 provides a record of the conference. Where authors have made them available, slides are accessible via the online conference schedule (Oral Sessions).

A blog post summarising the planning and execution of useR! 2015 can be found at the [Revolution Analytics’ blog](#).

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