


News

The Newsletter of the R Project

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Editorial

by *Friedrich Leisch*

Welcome to a new issue of R News, focussing on graphics and user interfaces. Paul Murrell's **grid** graphics system offers a modern infrastructure for R graphics. As of R-1.8.0 it is part of the base distribution but, until now, grid graphics functions could not be mixed with traditional (base) plotting functions. In this newsletter Paul describes his **gridBase** package which allows mixing of grid and base graphics. Marc Schwartz, known as frequent poster of answers on the mailing list *r-help*, has been invited to contribute to the R Help Desk. He presents "An Introduction to Using R's Base Graphics".

The Bioconductor column was written by Colin Smith and shows a web-based interface for microarray analysis. Angelo Mineo describes **normalp**, a new package for the general error distribution. In the second part of my mini-series on Sweave I demonstrate how users can interact with package vignettes and how package authors can add such documents to their packages.

To close the circle, a version of Paul's article is a vignette in package **gridBase**, so if you want to play with the code examples, the easiest way is to use R's

vignette tools. We hope to see vignettes used more frequently in the future, as they are a simple, effective way of delivering code examples to users.

R 1.8.0 was released more than two weeks ago. The list of new features is long; see "Changes in R" for detailed release information. I will draw attention to a "minor" but rather emotional point that has sparked heated discussions on the mailing lists in the past. Release 1.8.0 marks the end of the use of the underscore as an assignment operator in the R dialect of the S language. That is, `x_1` is now a syntax error.

A new column in R News lists the new members of the R Foundation for Statistical Computing. R has become a mature and valuable tool and we would like to ensure its continued development and the development of future innovations in software for statistical and computational research. We hope to attract sufficient funding to make these goals realities. Listing members in our newsletter is one (small) way of thanking them for their support.

Friedrich Leisch
Technische Universität Wien, Austria
Friedrich.Leisch@R-project.org

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