
Subject: R for Astronomers

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Mon, 02 Mar 2009 19:54:13 GMT

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Folks,

I not *really* advocating we all give up IDL for R,
but there are some things R does better than IDL. And,
I readily admit, there are a *ton* of things IDL does
better than R.

But R does show up in the strangest places these
days. Here is a site that came to my attention this
morning that has tips for astronomers.

<http://www.sr.bham.ac.uk/~ajrs/r-project.html>

It might be worth having a look.

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.

Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming (www.dfanning.com)

Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

Subject: Re: R for Astronomers

Posted by [fburton](#) on Tue, 03 Mar 2009 18:37:44 GMT

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In article <MPG.2415e7556ee46cff9897b6@news.giganews.com>,
David Fanning <news@dfanning.com> wrote:

> But R does show up in the strangest places these

> days. Here is a site that came to my attention this

> morning that has tips for astronomers.

>

>

> <http://www.sr.bham.ac.uk/~ajrs/r-project.html>

>

> It might be worth having a look.

Hmm, the graphics are nice!

<http://addictedtor.free.fr/graphiques/>

Francis

Subject: Re: R for Astronomers
Posted by [matsu770610](#) on Wed, 04 Mar 2009 07:20:26 GMT
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In the field of statistical modelling, R performs much better than IDL

Subject: Re: R for Astronomers
Posted by [Mike\[2\]](#) on Wed, 04 Mar 2009 14:26:57 GMT
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On Mar 3, 1:37 pm, fbur...@nyx.net (Francis Burton) wrote:

> Hmm, the graphics are nice!

I originally picked up R several years ago as a tool for making high quality graphics. IMHO, R beats IDL hands down for ease and quality of plots. And for statistics, well, that's what it is for. I've never even considered using IDL for mixed-effect modeling. But I still use IDL for many, many things. Computer languages are not quite like marriage - I think it is acceptable to be in serious relationships with more than one at a time. Of course juggling multiple relationships is fraught with danger - witness my continual print, x in R and print(x) in IDL...

Mike

Subject: Re: R for Astronomers
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 05 Mar 2009 14:19:07 GMT
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Mike writes:

> I originally picked up R several years ago as a tool for making high
> quality graphics. IMHO, R beats IDL hands down for ease and quality
> of plots. And for statistics, well, that's what it is for. I've
> never even considered using IDL for mixed-effect modeling. But I
> still use IDL for many, many things. Computer languages are not quite
> like marriage - I think it is acceptable to be in serious
> relationships with more than one at a time. Of course juggling
> multiple relationships is fraught with danger - witness my continual
> print, x in R and print(x) in IDL...

Here is a poem I ran across this morning that sums the matter up nicely:

<http://poems.com/poem.php?date=14309>

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.

Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.

Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>

Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

Subject: Re: R for Astronomers

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 05 Mar 2009 17:10:00 GMT

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David Fanning writes:

- > Here is a poem I ran across this morning that sums
- > the matter up nicely:
- >
- > <http://poems.com/poem.php?date=14309>

Other news about R this morning: R is not immune
from the "sky is falling" problem either:

<http://tinyurl.com/ap7hdq>

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.

Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming (www.dfanning.com)

Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

Subject: Re: R for Astronomers

Posted by [Mike\[2\]](#) on Thu, 05 Mar 2009 19:09:40 GMT

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On Mar 5, 12:10 pm, David Fanning <n...@dfanning.com> wrote:

- > Other news about R this morning: R is not immune
- > from the "sky is falling" problem either:
- >
- > <http://tinyurl.com/ap7hdq>

No which of my loves I chose, I will always shoot myself in the other foot eventually. :-)

Subject: Re: R for Astronomers
Posted by [ben.bighair](#) on Fri, 06 Mar 2009 15:22:37 GMT
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On Mar 5, 2:09 pm, Mike <Michael.Mill...@gmail.com> wrote:
> On Mar 5, 12:10 pm, David Fanning <n...@dfanning.com> wrote:
>
>> Other news about R this morning: R is not immune
>> from the "sky is falling" problem either:
>> <http://tinyurl.com/ap7hdq>
>
> No which of my loves I chose, I will always shoot myself in the other
> foot eventually. :-)

Hi,

Some folks might initially shy away from R based upon its pass-by-value behavior as it comes out of the box. For big blobs of data that can be a real pain. It would be a mistake, however, to think that R can't pass by reference. I won't pretend to understand how it works, but some of the clever R authors have developed techniques to employ pass-by-reference in R. One example is the pretty-easy-to-use R.oo (<http://www1.maths.lth.se/help/R/R.oo/>), but there are other examples in R.

> But I
> still use IDL for many, many things. Computer languages are not quite
> like marriage - I think it is acceptable to be in serious
> relationships with more than one at a time. Of course juggling
> multiple relationships is fraught with danger - witness my continual
> print, x in R and print(x) in IDL...

Man, you can say that again! Another is IDL>source("my_program.pro") and R>.compile "my_program.r" Argh!

Cheers,
Ben

Subject: Re: R for Astronomers
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Fri, 06 Mar 2009 16:58:44 GMT
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ben.bighair writes:

```
> Man, you can say that again! Another is IDL>source("my_program.pro")  
> and R>.compile "my_program.r"  Argh!
```

Here is my R experienced summed up in a nutshell this morning:

<http://flowingdata.com/2009/03/06/because-its-friday-correlation/>

Cheers,

David

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.

Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.

Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>

Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")
