News

Editorial

by Friedrich Leisch

Welcome to the first issue of R News in 2003, which is also the first issue where I serve as Editor-in-Chief. This year has already seen a lot of exciting activities in the R project, one of them was the Distributed Statistical Computing Workshop that took place here in Vienna. DSC 2003 is also partly responsible for the rather late release of this newsletter, both members of the editorial board and authors of regular columns were also involved in conference organization.

R 1.7.0 was released on 2003-04-16, see "Changes in R" for detailed release information. Two major new features of this release are support for name spaces in packages and stronger support of S4-style classes and methods. While the **methods** package by John Chambers provides R with S4 classes for some time now, R 1.7.0 is the first version of R where the **methods** package is attached by default every time R is started. I know of several users who were rather anxious about the possible side effects of R going further in the direction of S4, but the transitions seems to have gone very well (and we were not flooded by bug reports). Two articles by Luke Tierney and Doug Bates discuss name spaces and converting packages to S4, respectively.

In another article Jun Yan and Tony Rossini explain how Microsoft Windows versions of R and R packages can be cross-compiled on Linux machines.

Changing my hat from R News editor to CRAN maintainer, I want to take this opportunity to announce Uwe Ligges as new maintainer of the windows packages on CRAN. Until now these have been built by Brian Ripley, who has spent a lot of time and effort on the task. Thanks a lot, Brian!

Also in this issue, Greg Warnes introduces the **genetics** package, Jürgen Groß discusses the computation of variance inflation factors, Thomas Lumley shows how to analyze survey data in R, and Carson, Murison and Mason use parallel computing on a Beowulf cluster to speed up gene-shaving.

We also have a new column with book reviews. 2002 has seen the publication of several books explicitly written for R (or R and S-Plus) users. We hope to make book reviews a regular column of this newsletter. If you know of a book that should be reviewed, please tell the publisher to send a free review copy to a member of the editorial board (who will forward it to a referee).

Last, but not least, we feature a recreational page in this newsletter. Barry Rowlingson has written a crossword on R, and even offers a prize for the correct solution. In summary: We hope you will enjoy reading R News 3/1.

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Contents of this issue: