idea of the sampling distribution of a statistic, yet this did not receive nearly the attention I believe it deserves. The discussion of scatterplot smoothing (Section 3.4.7, "Trend lines") gave a minimal description of what smoothers are available in base R, such as smoothing splines, loess, and Friedman's supersmoother. I would be surprised if students in intro stat courses are not completely bewildered by such a minimal description. This will make it harder for some students to follow the text along on their own.

Some people might be interested in learning how to do basic data analysis using R. As these people are not among the intended audience, this book may not serve them as nicely as others, because the R-specific topics are scattered throughout the book in bits and pieces, each making its entrance as the statistical topic being covered requires it.

Now, some real nit-picking on more esoteRic things: The author seems to use "library" and "package" interchangeably, which could make some R users cringe. Also, on page 8, the virtue of using `<-` is touted, but the author still decides to use `=` for the book, without explanation. I also found the mention of the (evil?) `<<-` wholely unnecessary: The author said that it may be useful in programming R, yet personally I have not used it in the years I have been programming R. At the level the book is intended, I believe the students would be better served by its exclusion.

In summary, I like the structure of the book very much. However, the various problems mentioned above keep me from giving it a whole-hearted recommendation as a standalone text. It may serve well as a supplementary text for a more standard introductory Statistics textbook (*a la* Peter Dalgaard's "Introductory Statistics with R").

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DSC 2007

by Hadley Wickham

The fifth "Directions in Statistical Computing" conference was held in sunny Auckland, New Zealand, 8–10 February 2007. Despite the distant location, over 80 attendees from around the world made it to the conference, to enjoy the interesting talks, fabulous weather and the great food and drink of Auckland, including a fantastic ocean-side conference dinner.

The five key note speakers presented five quite different looks at the future of statistical computing:

- Ross Ihaka (re-)explored the use of LISP as a computational backend to R. He said, repeatedly, that this was just for fun, and will not be the next R (Q?)
- L. Fraser Jackson demonstrated the use of J (an open source grand child of APL) for statistics. A very concise and powerful language.
- Patrick Wessa gave an interesting talk about costs of the current scientific publishing framework and how we can do better.
- Olivia Lau discussed **zelig**, a modeling framework for R, which provides a common structure for modeling functions, making it easier for users and developers.
- Duncan Temple Lang talked how about a more composable object orientated R core (the code, not the people) would make it easier to experiment and explore new ideas, and continue to keep R relevant for the future.

A complete programme and abstracts are available on the conference website, `http://www.stat.auckland.ac.nz/dsc-2007/`. Conference papers will be published in a special issue of *Computational Statistics*.

A big round of thanks goes to the organizing committee, Paul Murrell, Ross Ihaka, David Scott and Thomas Yee, for such a great conference, as well as to Sharon Walker and Suryashobha Herle for feeding the hungry attendees.

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