Installing R packages without admin rights on MS Windows

It is not unusual that you will not have admin rights in an IT controlled office environment. But then again the limitations set by the IT department can spark some creativity. And I have to admit that I enjoy this kind of troubleshooting.

The other day I ended up in front of a Windows PC with R installed, but a locked down "C:\Programme Files" folder. That meant R couldn't install any packages into the default directory "C:\Programme Files\R\R-X.Y.Z\library" (replace R-X.Y.Z with the version number of R installed).

Never-mind, there is an option for that, the `libs` argument in the `install.packages` function. However, I have to use the same argument also in the `library` statement then as well. Fair enough, yet it is more convenient to set the directory somewhere globally.

First of all I decided that I wanted to install my R packages into `C:\Users\MyNAME\R`, a folder to which I had read/write access (replace MyNAME, or the whole path with what works for you). The R command `.libPaths(c("C:\\Users\\MyNAME\\R", .libPaths()))` will make this directory the default directory for any additional packages I may want to install, and as it is put at the front of my search path, `library` will find them first as well.

The next step is to enable R to execute the above command at start up. For that I created the R file `C:\Users\MyNAME\R\Rconfigure_default.R` with the following content:

```R
# First step is to enable R to execute the above command at start up.
# For that I created the R file
# C:\Users\MyNAME\R\Rconfigure_default.R
# with the following content:
.libPaths(c("C:\\Users\\MyNAME\\R", .libPaths()))
```
##+Rconfigure_default.R

```r
library(utils)

##+Using Internet Explorer proxy settings is often helpful in an IT controlled environment
setInternet2(TRUE)

##+Pre-select my nearest CRAN mirror in London
options(repos="http://cran.ma.imperial.ac.uk/")

##+ Set default directory for user installed packages
.libPaths(c("C:\\Users\\MyNAME\\R", .libPaths(
```

Finally I added a new shortcut to Rgui.exe to my desktop with the target set to:

```
"C:\Program Files\\R\\R-2.X.Y\\bin\\i386\\Rgui.exe" R_PROFILE_USER="C:\Users\MyNAME\R\Rconfigure_default.r"
```

![Image](http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-G-11GvF3a-Q/T5g7dwfPwwI/AAAAAAAAAP4/VfXbQ0P0iIA/s1600/photo.PNG)

Job done. R will happily install any new packages locally and find them as well when I use library or require. For more information see also the R FAQs (http://cran.r-project.org/faqs.html).

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SA R is a language, as Luis Apiolaza pointed out in his recent post. This is ab...

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2014-11-19, 9:42 PM

8 Comments

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Christian Kaas • 9 months ago

Thanks Markus

I googled my way through a lot of failed attempts before finding this site. This was exactly what I needed. Thanks for putting this on your blog!

Danièle • a year ago

How would you proceed with R Studio?

I am newbie at R and have no administration rights which does not help!

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Thanks!

Markus Gesmann Mod ➔ Danielle · a year ago
Alternatively you can store the above code in the .Rprofile located in your working directory. RStudio will read this file on start up. Read the RStudio documentation for more details: http://www.rstudio.com/ide/doc/

Richard Todd · a year ago
Lloyd's IT giving you a hard time? Good guide this, insurance needs to wake up and embrace creativity.

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9 comments • 7 months ago
George Dontas — This is how I do it. When I dbl-click the.html file the chart is shown correctly. But when I runApp, (or ...

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1 comment • 16 days ago
annopori — Nice, thanks for sharing.I much prefer Maple's phase plots than Matlab/Octave. For freeware, I prefer ...

Sankey diagrams with googleVis
23 comments • 8 months ago
January Weiner — Just a minor thing -- I am the author of the riverplot package :-)

GrapheR: A GUI for base graphics in R
5 comments • 3 months ago
Markus Gesmann — Brilliant! I didn't know about the package.

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