

Introduction to the **tm** Package

Text Mining in R

Ingo Feinerer

February 20, 2011

Introduction

This vignette gives a short introduction to text mining in R utilizing the text mining framework provided by the **tm** package. We present methods for data import, corpus handling, preprocessing, meta data management, and creation of term-document matrices. Our focus is on the main aspects of getting started with text mining in R—an in-depth description of the text mining infrastructure offered by **tm** was published in the *Journal of Statistical Software* (Feinerer et al., 2008). An introductory article on text mining in R was published in *R News* (Feinerer, 2008).

Data Import

The main structure for managing documents in **tm** is a so-called **Corpus**, representing a collection of text documents. A corpus is an abstract concept, and there can exist several implementations in parallel. The default implementation is the so-called **VCorpus** (short for *Volatile Corpus*) which realizes a semantics as known from most R objects: corpora are R objects held fully in memory. We denote this as volatile since once the R object is destroyed, the whole corpus is gone. Such a volatile corpus can be created via the constructor `Corpus(x, readerControl)`. Another implementation is the **PCorpus** which implements a *Permanent Corpus* semantics, i.e., the documents are physically stored outside of R (e.g., in a database), corresponding R objects are basically only pointers to external structures, and changes to the underlying corpus are reflected to all R objects associated with it. Compared to the volatile corpus the corpus encapsulated by a permanent corpus object is not destroyed if the corresponding R object is released.

Within the corpus constructor, `x` must be a **Source** object which abstracts the input location. **tm** provides a set of predefined sources, e.g., `DirSource`, `VectorSource`, or `DataframeSource`, which handle a directory, a vector interpreting each component as document, data frame like structures (like CSV files), respectively. Except `DirSource`, which is designed solely for directories on a file system, and `VectorSource`, which only accepts (character) vectors, most other implemented sources can take connections as input (a character string is interpreted as file path). `getSources()` lists available sources, and users can create their own sources.

The second argument `readerControl` of the corpus constructor has to be a list with the named components `reader` and `language`. The first component `reader` constructs a text document from elements delivered by a source. The **tm** package ships with several readers (e.g., `readPlain()`, `readGmane()`, `readRCV1()`, `readReut21578XMLasPlain()`, `readPDF()`, `readDOC()`, ...). See `getReaders()` for an up-to-date list of available readers. Each source has a default reader which can be overridden. E.g., for `DirSource` the default just reads in the input files and interprets their content as text. Finally, the second component `language` sets the texts' language (preferably using ISO 639-2 codes).

In case of a permanent corpus, a third argument `dbControl` has to be a list with the named components `dbName` giving the filename holding the sourced out objects (i.e., the database), and `dbType` holding a valid database type as supported by package **filehash**. Activated database support reduces the memory demand, however, access gets slower since each operation is limited by the hard disk's read and write capabilities.

So e.g., plain text files in the directory `txt` containing Latin (`lat`) texts by the Roman poet *Ovid* can be read in with following code:

```
> txt <- system.file("texts", "txt", package = "tm")
> (ovid <- Corpus(DirSource(txt),
+               readerControl = list(language = "lat")))
```

A corpus with 5 text documents

For simple examples `VectorSource` is quite useful, as it can create a corpus from character vectors, e.g.:

```
> docs <- c("This is a text.", "This another one.")
> Corpus(VectorSource(docs))
```

A corpus with 2 text documents

Finally we create a corpus for some Reuters documents as example for later use:

```
> reut21578 <- system.file("texts", "crude", package = "tm")
> reuters <- Corpus(DirSource(reut21578),
+                  readerControl = list(reader = readReut21578XML))
```

Data Export

For the case you have created a corpus via manipulating other objects in R, thus do not have the texts already stored on a hard disk, and want to save the text documents to disk, you can simply use `writeCorpus()`

```
> writeCorpus(ovid)
```

which writes a plain text representation of a corpus to multiple files on disk corresponding to the individual documents in the corpus.

Inspecting Corpora

Custom `print()` and `summary()` methods are available, which hide the raw amount of information (consider a corpus could consist of several thousand documents, like a database). `summary()` gives more details on meta data than `print()`, whereas the full content of text documents is displayed with `inspect()`.

```
> inspect(ovid[1:2])
```

A corpus with 2 text documents

The metadata consists of 2 tag-value pairs and a data frame

Available tags are:

```
create_date creator
```

Available variables in the data frame are:

```
MetaID
```

```
$ovid_1.txt
```

```
Si quis in hoc artem populo non novit amandi,
  hoc legat et lecto carmine doctus amet.
arte citae veloque rates remoque moventur,
arte leves currus: arte regendus amor.
```

```
curribus Automedon lentisque erat aptus habenis,
  Tiphys in Haemonia puppe magister erat:
me Venus artificem tenero praefecit Amori;
  Tiphys et Automedon dicar Amoris ego.
ille quidem feros est et qui mihi saepe repugnet:
```

```
sed puer est, aetas mollis et apta regi.
Phillyrides puerum cithara perfecit Achillem,
  atque animos placida contudit arte feros.
qui totiens socios, totiens exterruit hostes,
  creditur annosum pertimuisse senem.
```

```
$ovid_2.txt
```

```
quas Hector sensurus erat, poscente magistro
  verberibus iussas praebuit ille manus.
Aeacidae Chiron, ego sum praeceptor Amoris:
  saevus uterque puer, natus uterque dea.
sed tamen et tauri cervix oneratur aratro,
```

```
frenaque magnanimi dente teruntur equi;
et mihi cedit Amor, quamvis mea vulneret arcu
pectora, iactatas excutiatque faces.
quo me fixit Amor, quo me violentius ussit,
hoc melior facti vulneris ultor ero:
```

```
non ego, Phoebe, datas a te mihi mentiar artes,
nec nos aenariae voce monemur avis,
nec mihi sunt visae Clio Clisque sorores
servanti pecudes vallibus, Ascra, tuis:
usus opus movet hoc: vati parete perito;
```

Individual documents can be accessed via `[[`, either via the position in the corpus, or via their name.

```
> identical(ovid[[2]], ovid[["ovid_2.txt"]])
```

```
[1] TRUE
```

Transformations

Once we have a corpus we typically want to modify the documents in it, e.g., stemming, stopword removal, et cetera. In **tm**, all this functionality is subsumed into the concept of a *transformation*. Transformations are done via the `tm_map()` function which applies (maps) a function to all elements of the corpus. Basically, all transformations work on single text documents and `tm_map()` just applies them to all documents in a corpus.

Converting to Plain Text Documents

The corpus `reuters` contains documents in XML format. We have no further use for the XML interna and just want to work with the text content. This can be done by converting the documents to plain text documents. It is done by the generic `as.PlainTextDocument()`.

```
> reuters <- tm_map(reuters, as.PlainTextDocument)
```

Note that alternatively we could have read in the files with the `readReut21578XMLasPlain` reader which already returns a plain text document in the first place.

Eliminating Extra Whitespace

Extra whitespace is eliminated by:

```
> reuters <- tm_map(reuters, stripWhitespace)
```

Convert to Lower Case

Conversion to lower case by:

```
> reuters <- tm_map(reuters, tolower)
```

As you see you can use arbitrary text processing functions as transformations as long the function returns a text document. Most text manipulation functions from base R just modify a character vector in place, and as such, keep class information intact. This is especially true for `tolower` as used here, but also e.g. for `gsub` which comes quite handy for a broad range of text manipulation tasks.

Remove Stopwords

Removal of stopwords by:

```
> reuters <- tm_map(reuters, removeWords, stopwords("english"))
```

Stemming

Stemming is done by:

```
> tm_map(reuters, stemDocument)
```

A corpus with 20 text documents

Filters

Often it is of special interest to filter out documents satisfying given properties. For this purpose the function `tm_filter` is designed. It is possible to write custom filter functions, but for most cases `sFilter` does its job: it integrates a minimal query language to filter meta data. Statements in this query language are statements as used for subsetting data frames. E.g., the following statement filters out those documents having an ID equal to 237 and the string "INDONESIA SEEN AT CROSSROADS OVER ECONOMIC CHANGE" as their heading (both are meta data attributes of the text document).

```
> query <- "id == '237' & heading == 'INDONESIA SEEN AT CROSSROADS OVER ECONOMIC CHANGE'"
> tm_filter(reuters, FUN = sFilter, query)
```

A corpus with 1 text document

There is also a full text search filter available (which is default when no explicit filter function `FUN` is specified) accepting regular expressions:

```
> tm_filter(reuters, pattern = "company")
```

A corpus with 5 text documents

Meta Data Management

Meta data is used to annotate text documents or whole corpora with additional information. The easiest way to accomplish this with `tm` is to use the `meta()` function. A text document has a few predefined attributes like `Author`, but can be extended with an arbitrary number of additional user-defined meta data tags. These additional meta data tags are individually attached to a single text document. From a corpus perspective these meta data attachments are locally stored together with each individual text document. Alternatively to `meta()` the function `DublinCore()` provides a full mapping between Simple Dublin Core meta data and `tm` meta data structures and can be similarly used to get and set meta data information for text documents, e.g.:

```
> DublinCore(crude[[1]], "Creator") <- "Ano Nymous"
> meta(crude[[1]])
```

Available meta data pairs are:

```
Author       : Ano Nymous
DateTimeStamp: 1987-02-26 17:00:56
Description   :
Heading      : DIAMOND SHAMROCK (DIA) CUTS CRUDE PRICES
ID           : 127
Language     : en
Origin       : Reuters-21578 XML
```

User-defined local meta data pairs are:

```
$TOPICS
[1] "YES"
```

```
$LEWISSPLIT
[1] "TRAIN"
```

```
$CGISPLIT
[1] "TRAINING-SET"
```

```
$OLDID
[1] "5670"
```

```
$Topics
[1] "crude"
```

```
$Places
[1] "usa"
```

```
$People
```

```
character(0)
```

```
$Orgs
```

```
character(0)
```

```
$Exchanges
```

```
character(0)
```

For corpora the story is a bit more difficult. Corpora in **tm** have two types of meta data: one is the meta data on the corpus level (**corpus**), the other is the meta data related to the individual documents (**indexed**) in form of a data frame. The latter is often done for performance reasons (hence the named **indexed** for indexing) or because the meta data has an own entity but still relates directly to individual text documents, e.g., a classification result; the classifications directly relate to the documents, but the set of classification levels forms an own entity. Both cases can be handled with `meta()`:

```
> meta(crude, tag = "test", type = "corpus") <- "test meta"
```

```
> meta(crude, type = "corpus")
```

```
$create_date
```

```
[1] "2010-06-17 07:32:26 GMT"
```

```
$creator
```

```
LOGNAME
```

```
"feinerer"
```

```
$test
```

```
[1] "test meta"
```

```
> meta(crude, "foo") <- letters[1:20]
```

```
> meta(crude)
```

```
MetaID foo
1      0  a
2      0  b
3      0  c
4      0  d
5      0  e
6      0  f
7      0  g
8      0  h
9      0  i
10     0  j
11     0  k
12     0  l
13     0  m
14     0  n
15     0  o
16     0  p
17     0  q
18     0  r
19     0  s
20     0  t
```

Standard Operators and Functions

Many standard operators and functions (`[`, `[<-`, `[[`, `[[<-`, `c()`, `lapply()`) are available for corpora with semantics similar to standard R routines. E.g., `c()` concatenates two (or more) corpora. Applied to several text documents it returns a corpus. The meta data is automatically updated, if corpora are concatenated (i.e., merged).

Creating Term-Document Matrices

A common approach in text mining is to create a term-document matrix from a corpus. In the **tm** package the classes `TermDocumentMatrix` and `DocumentTermMatrix` (depending on whether you want terms as rows and documents as columns, or vice versa) employ sparse matrices for corpora.

```
> dtm <- DocumentTermMatrix(reuters)
> inspect(dtm[1:5, 100:105])
```

A document-term matrix (5 documents, 6 terms)

```
Non-/sparse entries: 1/29
Sparsity           : 97%
Maximal term length: 10
Weighting          : term frequency (tf)
```

	Terms					
Docs	abdul-aziz	ability	able	abroad,	abu	accept
127	0	0	0	0	0	0
144	0	2	0	0	0	0
191	0	0	0	0	0	0
194	0	0	0	0	0	0
211	0	0	0	0	0	0

Operations on Term-Document Matrices

Besides the fact that on this matrix a huge amount of R functions (like clustering, classifications, etc.) can be applied, this package brings some shortcuts. Imagine we want to find those terms that occur at least five times, then we can use the `findFreqTerms()` function:

```
> findFreqTerms(dtm, 5)

 [1] "15.8"           "accord"         "agency"         "ali"
 [5] "analysts"      "arab"           "arabia"         "barrel."
 [9] "barrels"       "bpd"            "commitment"     "crude"
[13] "daily"         "dlrs"           "economic"       "emergency"
[17] "energy"        "exchange"       "exports"        "feb"
[21] "futures"       "government"     "gulf"           "help"
[25] "hold"          "international" "january"        "kuwait"
[29] "march"         "market"         "meeting"        "minister"
[33] "mln"           "month"          "nazer"          "nymex"
[37] "official"      "oil"            "opec"           "output"
[41] "pct"           "petroleum"      "plans"          "posted"
[45] "price"         "prices"         "prices."        "production"
[49] "quoted"        "recent"         "report"         "reserve"
[53] "reserves"      "reuter"         "saudi"          "sheikh"
[57] "sources"       "study"          "traders"        "united"
[61] "west"          "world"
```

Or we want to find associations (i.e., terms which correlate) with at least 0.8 correlation for the term `opec`, then we use `findAssocs()`:

```
> findAssocs(dtm, "opec", 0.8)

opec prices.  15.8
1.00  0.81  0.80
```

The function also accepts a matrix as first argument (which does not inherit from a term-document matrix). This matrix is then interpreted as a correlation matrix and directly used. With this approach different correlation measures can be employed.

Term-document matrices tend to get very big already for normal sized data sets. Therefore we provide a method to remove *sparse* terms, i.e., terms occurring only in very few documents. Normally, this reduces the matrix dramatically without losing significant relations inherent to the matrix:

```
> inspect(removeSparseTerms(dtm, 0.4))

A document-term matrix (20 documents, 3 terms)

Non-/sparse entries: 55/5
Sparsity           : 8%
Maximal term length: 6
Weighting          : term frequency (tf)
```

	Terms		
Docs	march	oil	reuter
127	0	3	1
144	0	4	1
191	0	2	1
194	0	1	1
211	0	2	1
236	2	6	1
237	1	2	1
242	1	3	1
246	1	2	1
248	1	8	1
273	1	5	1
349	1	4	1
352	1	4	1
353	1	4	1
368	1	3	1
489	1	5	1
502	1	5	1
543	1	3	1
704	1	1	1
708	1	2	1

This function call removes those terms which have at least a 40 percentage of sparse (i.e., terms occurring 0 times in a document) elements.

Dictionary

A dictionary is a (multi-)set of strings. It is often used to represent relevant terms in text mining. We provide a class `Dictionary` implementing such a dictionary concept. It can be created via the `Dictionary()` constructor, e.g.,

```
> (d <- Dictionary(c("prices", "crude", "oil")))

[1] "prices" "crude" "oil"
attr(,"class")
[1] "Dictionary" "character"
```

and may be passed over to the `DocumentTermMatrix()` constructor. Then the created matrix is tabulated against the dictionary, i.e., only terms from the dictionary appear in the matrix. This allows to restrict the dimension of the matrix a priori and to focus on specific terms for distinct text mining contexts, e.g.,

```
> inspect(DocumentTermMatrix(reuters, list(dictionary = d)))

A document-term matrix (20 documents, 3 terms)

Non-/sparse entries: 41/19
Sparsity           : 32%
Maximal term length: 6
Weighting          : term frequency (tf)
```

	Terms		
Docs	crude	oil	prices

127	2	3	3
144	0	4	2
191	3	2	0
194	4	1	0
211	0	2	0
236	1	6	2
237	0	2	0
242	0	3	1
246	0	2	0
248	0	8	5
273	6	5	4
349	2	4	0
352	0	4	2
353	2	4	1
368	0	3	0
489	0	5	2
502	0	5	2
543	3	3	3
704	0	1	2
708	1	2	0

References

- I. Feinerer. An introduction to text mining in R. *R News*, 8(2):19–22, Oct. 2008. URL <http://CRAN.R-project.org/doc/Rnews/>.
- I. Feinerer, K. Hornik, and D. Meyer. Text mining infrastructure in R. *Journal of Statistical Software*, 25(5): 1–54, March 2008. ISSN 1548-7660. URL <http://www.jstatsoft.org/v25/i05>.