



6. XML

Thomas Lumley
Ken Rice

Universities of Washington and Auckland

Seattle, July 2012

Complex text data

XML is a format for constructing and describing data formats for plain text data.

- HTML (almost)
- SVG graphics format
- MS Word and Open Office files
- MAGE-ML for microarray data
- Web service communications
- KML for Google Earth

Components of XML

Tag A markup construct that begins with `<` and ends with `>`. Tags come in three flavors: start-tags, for example `<section>`, end-tags, for example `</section>`, and empty-element tags, for example `<line-break/>`.

Element A start-tag and matching end-tag and what is between them. The characters between the start- and end-tags, may contain markup, including other elements, which are called child elements. An example of an element is `<Greeting>Hello, world.</Greeting>` Empty-element tags also count as elements: `<line-break/>`.

Attribute A name and value stored within the start tag, eg in HTML `` the `href` is an attribute with value `link.html`.

Schemas

It is straightforward to parse any XML document into a tree of elements with no additional information. An XML schema or DTD defines a specific XML language by specifying which tags and attributes are valid, and what nesting is allowed.

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<kml xmlns="http://www.opengis.net/kml/2.2">
  <Placemark>
    <name>SISG </name>
    <description>Registration, coffee and snacks</description>
    <Point>
      <coordinates>-122.3093834881461,47.6496137385853,0</coordinates>
    </Point>
  </Placemark>
</kml>
```

Schemas

The KML schema is defined at <http://schemas.opengis.net/kml/2.0/ogckml22.xsd>.

- `kml` tag defines a KML document, `xmlns` defines a namespace, to avoid confusion between different definitions of tags such as `point`
- `placemark` tag defines a geographic location. There are many ways to do this, we have the simplest one
 - `name` tag for name of the place
 - `description` tag for longer description
 - `point` tag for location
 - * `coordinates` tag relative to WGS84 reference spheroid.

Making XML

Simple XML such as a single KML point can be created just by manipulating strings.

```
kml<-function(conn,lat,lon,name){
  ss<-gsub(" ","",paste("<coordinates>",lat,",",lon,
    ",400</coordinates>"))
  cat("<?xml version=\"1.0\" encoding=\"UTF-8\"?>
    <kml xmlns=\"http://earth.google.com/kml/2.1\">
    <Placemark>
    <name>",name,"</name>
    <Point>",
    ss,
    " </Point>
  </Placemark>
  </kml>\n",
  file=conn)
}
```

Making XML

For more complex XML, prefer software that understands the tree structure.

`XML` package provides routines for reading and writing XML

To create XML, use `xmlOutputBuffer` to start a document.

The returned value is an XML object with a list of functions to add tags, close tags, add a whole child subtree, and print out the current state of the document.

[This also shows how to implement a familiar style of object-oriented programming in R]

Making XML

```
con <- xmlOutputBuffer(nsURI="http://www.opengis.net/kml/2.2",
  nameSpace="")

con$addTag("kml",close=FALSE)
  con$addTag("Placemark",close=FALSE)
    con$addTag("name", "SIGS")
    con$addTag("description", "Registration, Coffee, Snacks")
    con$addTag("Point", close=FALSE)
      con$addTag("coordinates", "-122.3093834881461,47.6496137385853,0")
      con$closeTag() # Point
    con$closeTag() # Placemark
  con$closeTag() #kml

cat(con$value())
```


SVG

W3C Vector graphics format, allows animations, zooming, etc.
Only partial support in most browsers.

R has `svg()` graphics device; `RSVGDevice`, `RSVGToolTips` packages.

```
for(i in 1:length(or)) {
  setSVGShapeToolTip(title=gene[i],
    desc1=snp[i],
    desc2=if(abs(lor[i]/se[i])>qnorm(0.5/n,lower.tail=FALSE))
      qvals[i]
    else
      NULL)
  setSVGShapeURL(paste("http://pga.gs.washington.edu/data",
    tolower(gene[i]),sep="/"))
  points(prec[i],lor[i], cex=1, pch=19, col='grey')
  invisible(NULL)
}
```

Creates an SVG file showing SNP associations, with clickable links for annotation.

SVG file

File begins

```
<svg version="1.1" baseProfile="full" width="722.70" height="578.16"
viewBox="0,0,722.70,578.16" onload="Init(evt)" xmlns="http://www.w3.org/2000/svg"
xmlns:xlink="http://www.w3.org/1999/xlink"
xmlns:ev="http://www.w3.org/2001/xml-events">
  <title>R SVG Plot</title>
  <desc>R SVG Plot with tooltips! (mode=2)</desc>
```

specifying the type of XML format and where its specification can be found.

Each point looks like

```
<a href="http://pga.gs.washington.edu/data/f10">
  <circle cx="333.66" cy="365.76" r="2.34" stroke-width="1px" stroke="#BEBEBE"
          fill="#BEBEBE" stroke-opacity="1.000000" fill-opacity="1.000000">
    <title>F10</title>
    <desc1>rs3211744</desc1>
  </circle>
</a>
```

Reading XML

XML package has two approaches to reading XML

- whole file into memory at once ('DOM')
- analyse and discard each node as it is read. ('event')

```
library(XML)
funnelplot <- xmlTreeParse("svgplot1.svg", useInternal=TRUE)
```

The `funnelplot` variable now holds the whole XML (SVG) document in a tree structure.

Manipulating XML

Read the x coordinate of each point (the `cx` attribute of the `<circle>` elements, nested in the `<a>` elements, nested in the `<svg>` element)

```
xpathApply(funnelplot, "/s:svg/s:a/s:circle",xmlGetAttr, "cx",  
           namespaces=c(s="http://www.w3.org/2000/svg"))
```

`xpathApply` finds nodes in the tree satisfying the path `<svg>
<a href> <circle>` and then applies `xmlGetAttr()` to each one, with the argument `cx`, to extract the x-axis coordinate. This returns a list of 171 numbers.

The `s:` prefix refers to the namespace, where the format is defined. The `namespaces` argument lets us abbreviate the full namespace `http://www.w3.org/2000/svg` by `s`.

Manipulating XML

Find the points corresponding to the gene **TFPI**:

```
xpathApply(funnelplot, "/s:svg/s:a/s:circle[s:title='TFPI']",  
           namespaces=c(s="http://www.w3.org/2000/svg"))
```

`xpathApply` finds nodes in the tree satisfying the path `<svg>
<a href> <circle>` and the condition `title='TFPI'`. Since we do not specify a function to apply to each node, a list of nodes is returned.

Example: CRANberries

CRANberries is an RSS feed that describes new and updated packages on CRAN.

These XML commands can be used to read the file, and count the number of new packages in the past week or so;

```
cr <- readLines("http://dirk.eddelbuettel.com/cranberries/index.rss",
               encoding="ISO-8859-1")
cr <- iconv(cr, to="UTF-8")
crt <- xmlTreeParse(cr, useInternal=TRUE)
titles <- xpathApply(crt, "/rss/channel/item/title")
titlelist <- sapply(titles, xmlToList)
titlelist

length(grep("New package", titlelist)) # how many new ones?
```

biomaRt

Bioconductor's `biomaRt` package sends queries to the Ensembl database server (www.ensembl.org).

Ensembl stores genome annotation data for about 50 species, including cross-species information.

A `biomaRt` function like:

```
> getLDS(attributes = c("hgnc_symbol", "chromosome_name",  
  "start_position"),  
  filters = "hgnc_symbol", values = "NOX1",  
  mart = human,  
  attributesL = c("chromosome_name", "start_position"),  
  martL = mouse)
```

translates to

biomaRt

```
<?xml version='1.0' encoding='UTF-8'?>
<!DOCTYPE Query>
<Query virtualSchemaName = 'default' uniqueRows = '1'
        count = '0' datasetConfigVersion = '0.6'
        requestid= "biomaRt">
  <Dataset name = 'hsapiens_gene_ensembl'>
    <Attribute name = 'hgnc_symbol' />
    <Attribute name = 'chromosome_name' />
    <Attribute name = 'start_position' />
    <Filter name = 'hgnc_symbol' value = 'NOX1' />
  </Dataset>
  <Dataset name = 'mmusculus_gene_ensembl' >
    <Attribute name = 'chromosome_name' />
    <Attribute name = 'start_position' />
  </Dataset>
</Query>
```


biomaRt

The `biomaRt` package constructs the XML by pasting character strings rather than with the `XML` package.

It uses the `RCurl` package to post the XML request to the webserver and collect the response, which is a table of strings.

Modifying XML

More sophisticated XML interaction in the `SVGAnnotation` package, from <http://www.omegahat.org/SVGAnnotation/>, which reads in and modifies SVG graphs produced by the `svg()` graphics device.

Examples:

- add tooltips
- link points across panels of a graph
- use radio buttons to show/hide elements of a graph

Not very portable yet: the Javascript/SVG combination only works on a few browsers.

Uses `newXMLNode()` to add elements anywhere in an XML document.