

# Basic Graphics in R

CCCB course on R and Bioconductor, Dec 2011,

Aedin Culhane (My email is: [aedin@jimmy.harvard.edu](mailto:aedin@jimmy.harvard.edu))

To start let's look at the basic plots that can be produced in R using the `demo()` function

```
> demo(graphics)
```

On startup, R initiates a graphics device driver which opens a special graphics window for the display of interactive graphics. If a new graphics window needs to be opened either `win.graph()` or `windows()` command can be issued.

Once the device driver is running, R plotting commands can be used to produce a variety of graphical displays and to create entirely new kinds of display.

Plotting commands divided into three basic groups

1. **High-level** plotting functions create a new plot on the graphics device, possibly with axes, labels, titles and so on.
2. **Low-level** plotting functions add more information to an existing plot, such as extra points, lines and labels.
3. **Interactive** graphics functions allow you to interactively add information to, or extract information from the plots

In addition, R maintains a list of graphical parameters which can be manipulated to customize your plots.

# I High-level plotting functions

High-level plotting functions are designed to generate a complete plot of the data passed as arguments to the function. Where appropriate, axes, labels and titles are automatically generated (unless you request otherwise). High-level plotting commands always start a new plot, erasing the current plot if necessary.

## I.1 The R function `plot()`

The `plot()` function is one of the most frequently used plotting functions in R.

IMPORTANT: This is a generic function, that is the type of *plot* produced is dependent on the *class* of the first argument.

- Plot of Vector(s)
  1. One vector `x` (plots the vector against the index vector)

```
> x <- 1:10
> plot(x)
```
  2. Scatterplot of two vectors `x` and `y`

```
> set.seed(13)
> x <- -30:30
> y <- 3 * x + 2 + rnorm(length(x), sd = 20)
> plot(x, y)
```
- Plot of *data.frame* elements If the first argument to `plot()` is a *data.frame*, this can be as simply as `plot(x,y)` providing 2 columns (variables in the *data.frame*).

Lets look at the data in the *data.frame* `airquality` which measured the 6 air quality in New York, on a daily basis between May to September 1973. In total there are 154 observation (days).

```
> airquality[1:2, ]
```

	Ozone	Solar.R	Wind	Temp	Month	Day
1	41	190	7.4	67	5	1
2	36	118	8.0	72	5	2

```
> plot(airquality)
```

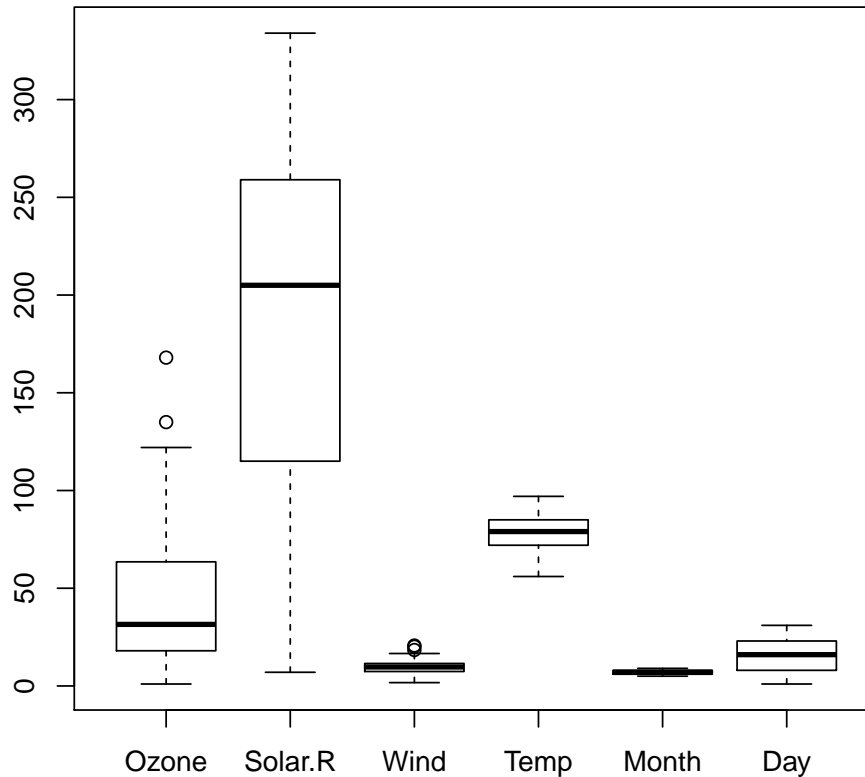
Multiple plots in the same window, attach/detach

```
> par(mfrow = c(2, 1))
> plot(airquality$Ozone, airquality$Temp, main = "airquality$Ozone,airquality$Temp")
> attach(airquality)
> plot(Ozone, Temp, main = "plot(Ozone, Temp)")
> detach(airquality)
```

## I.2 Other high-level graphics functions

- `boxplot(x)` a boxplot show the distribution of a vector. It is very useful to example the distribution of different variables.

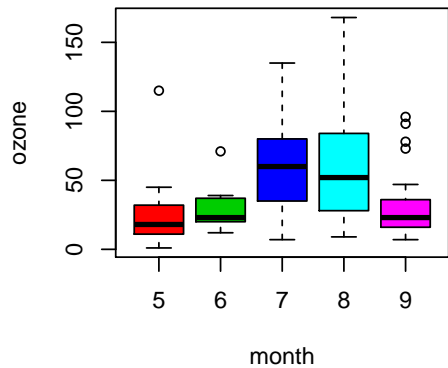
```
> boxplot(airquality)
```



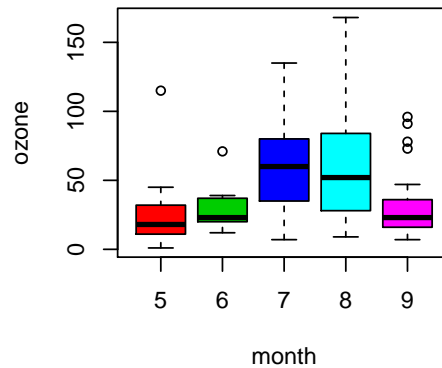
Note if you give plot a vector and factor `plot(factor, vector)` or `plot(vector factor)` it will produce a boxplot.

```
> par(mfrow = c(2, 2))
> boxplot(airquality$Ozone ~ airquality$Month, col = 2:6, xlab = "month",
+         ylab = "ozone", sub = "boxplot(airquality$Ozone~airquality$Month)")
> title("Equivalent plots")
> plot(factor(airquality$Month), airquality$Ozone, col = 2:6, xlab = "month",
+       ylab = "ozone", sub = "plot(factor(airquality$Month), airquality$Ozone)")
> plot(airquality$Ozone ~ factor(airquality$Month), col = 2:6,
+       sub = "plot(airquality$Ozone~factor(airquality$Month))")
```

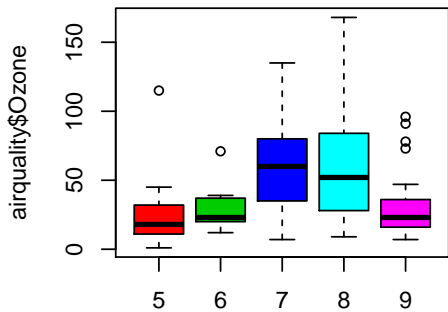
## Equivalent plots



`boxplot(airquality$Ozone~airquality$Month)`



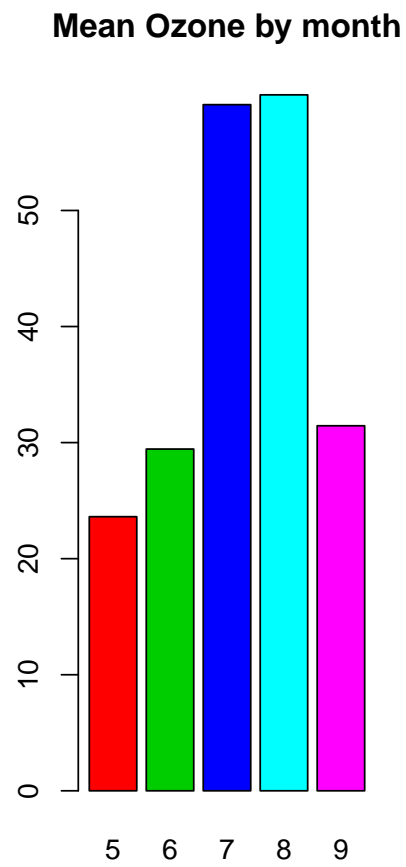
`plot(factor(airquality$Month), airquality$Ozone)`



`plot(airquality$Ozone~factor(airquality$Month))`

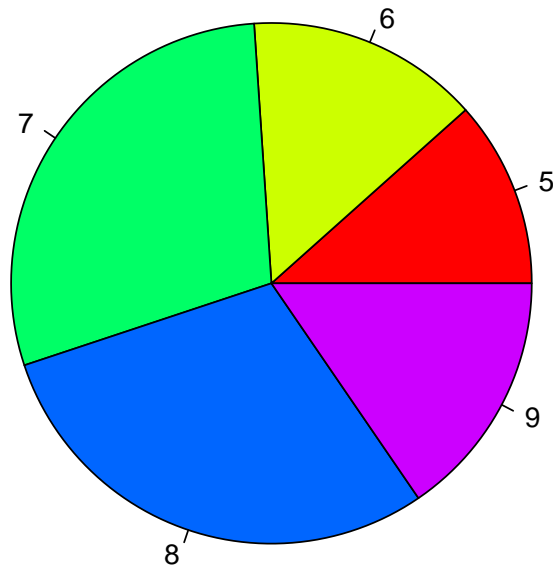
- barplot Plot a bar plot of the mean ozone quality by month. First use `tapply` to calculate the mean of ozone by month

```
> OzMonthMean <- tapply(airquality$Ozone, factor(airquality$Month),
+   mean, na.rm = TRUE)
> par(mfrow = c(1, 2))
> barplot(OzMonthMean, col = 2:6, main = "Mean Ozone by month")
```



- pie chart

```
> pie(OzMonthMean, col = rainbow(5))
```



- *hist(x)*- histogram of a numeric vector **x** with a few important optional arguments: **nclass=** for the number of classes, and *breaks=* for the breakpoints

```
> xt <- rt(100, 3)
> hist(xt)
> plot(density(xt))
```

### I.3 Arguments to high-level plotting functions

**axes=FALSE** Suppresses generation of axes-useful for adding your own custom axes with the **axis()** function. The default, **axes=TRUE**, means include axes.

**type=** The **type=** argument controls the type of plot produced, as follows:

**type="p"** Plot individual points (the default)  
**type="l"** Plot lines  
**type="b"** Plot points connected by lines (both)  
**type="o"** Plot points overlaid by lines

**type="h"** Plot vertical lines from points to the zero axis (high-density)

**type="n"** No plotting at all. However axes are still drawn (by default) and the coordinate system is set up according to the data. Ideal for creating plots with subsequent low-level graphics functions.

**xlab=string**

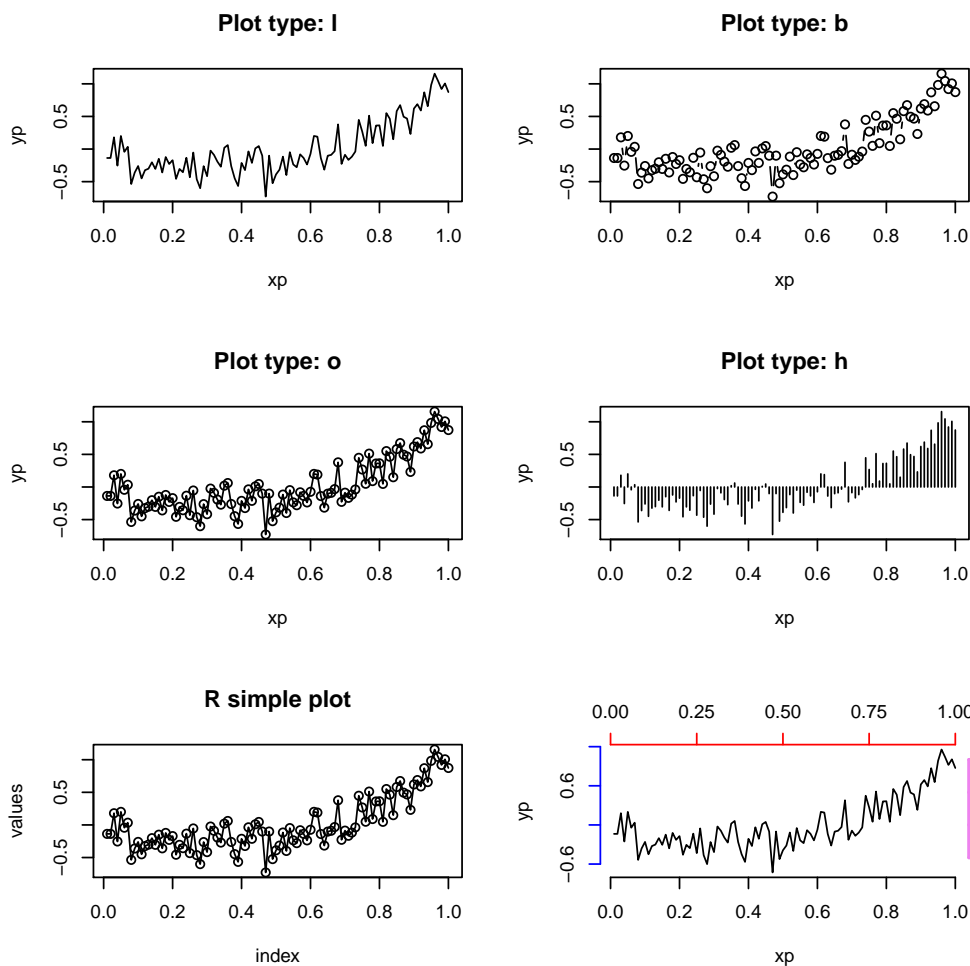
**ylab=string** Axis labels for the x and y axes. Use these arguments to change the default labels, usually the names of the objects used in the call to the high-level plotting function.

**main=string** Figure title, placed at the top of the plot in a large font.

**sub=string** Sub-title, placed just below the x-axis in a smaller font.

### Some Examples of Plotting using different plot types and axes

```
> xp <- 1:100/100
> yp <- 3 * xp^2 - 2 * xp + rnorm(100, sd = 0.2)
> par(mfrow = c(3, 2))
> for (i in c("l", "b", "o", "h")) plot(xp, yp, type = i, main = paste("Plot type:",
+ i))
> plot(xp, yp, type = "o", xlab = "index", ylab = "values", main = "R simple plot")
> plot(xp, yp, type = "l", axes = FALSE)
> axis(1)
> axis(2, at = c(-0.6, 0, 0.6, 1.2), col = "blue")
> axis(3, at = c(0, 0.25, 0.5, 0.75, 1), col = "red")
> axis(4, col = "violet", col.axis = "dark violet", lwd = 2)
```



## II Low-level plotting commands

Sometimes the high-level plotting functions don't produce exactly the kind of plot you desire. In this case, low-level plotting commands can be used to add extra information (such as points, lines or text) to the current plot. Some of the more useful low-level plotting functions are:

**points(x, y)**

**lines(x, y)** Adds points or connected lines to the current plot.

**text(x, y, labels, ...)** Add text to a plot at points given by x, y. Normally labels is an integer or character vector in which case labels[i] is plotted at point (x[i], y[i]). The default is 1:length(x). Note: This function is often used in the sequence

The graphics parameter type="n" suppresses the points but sets up the axes, and the **text()** function supplies special characters, as specified by the character vector names for the points.

**abline(a, b)** Adds a line of slope b and intercept a to the current plot.



**abline(h=y)** Adds a horizontal line

**abline(v=x)** Adds a vertical line

**polygon(x, y, ...)** Draws a polygon defined by the ordered vertices in (x, y) and (optionally) shade it in with hatch lines, or fill it if the graphics device allows the filling of figures.

**legend(x, y, legend, ...)** Adds a legend to the current plot at the specified position. Plotting characters, line styles, colors etc., are identified with the labels in the character vector legend. At least one other argument v (a vector the same length as legend) with the corresponding values of the plotting unit must also be given, as follows:

legend( , fill=v) Colors for filled boxes

legend( , col=v) Colors in which points or lines will be drawn

legend( , lty=v) Line styles

legend( , lwd=v) Line widths

legend( , pch=v) Plotting characters

**title(main, sub)** Adds a title main to the top of the current plot in a large font and (optionally) a sub-title sub at the bottom in a smaller font.

**axis(side, ...)** Adds an axis to the current plot on the side given by the first argument (1 to 4, counting clockwise from the bottom.) Other arguments control the positioning of the axis within or beside the plot, and tick positions and labels. Useful for adding custom axes after calling plot() with the axes=FALSE argument.

To add greek characters, either specify font type 5 (see below) or use the function *expression*

```
> plot(x, cos(x), main = expression(paste("A random eqn ", bar(x)) ==  
+   sum(frac(alpha[i] + beta[z], n))), sub = "This is the subtitle")
```

Example using points lines and legend

```
> attach(cars)  
> plot(cars, type = "n", xlab = "Speed [mph]", ylab = "Distance [ft]")  
> points(speed[speed < 15], dist[speed < 15], pch = "s", col = "blue")  
> points(speed[speed >= 15], dist[speed >= 15], pch = "f", col = "green")  
> lines(lowess(cars), col = "red")  
> legend(5, 120, pch = c("s", "f"), col = c("blue", "green"), legend = c("Slow",  
+   "Fast"))  
> title("Breaking distance of old cars")  
> detach(2)
```

To add formulae or greek characters to a plot

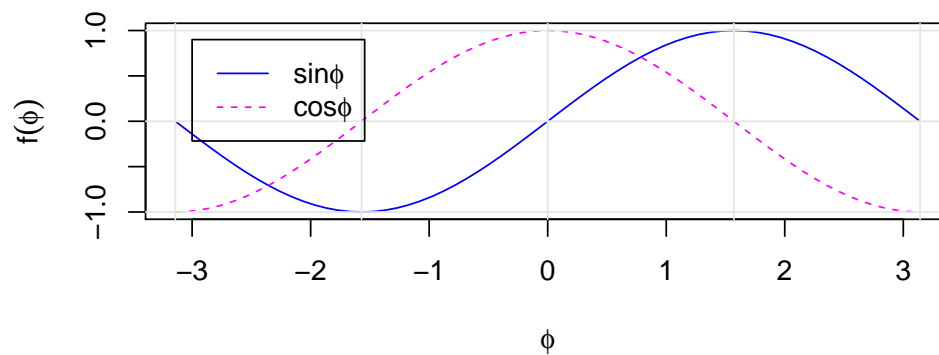
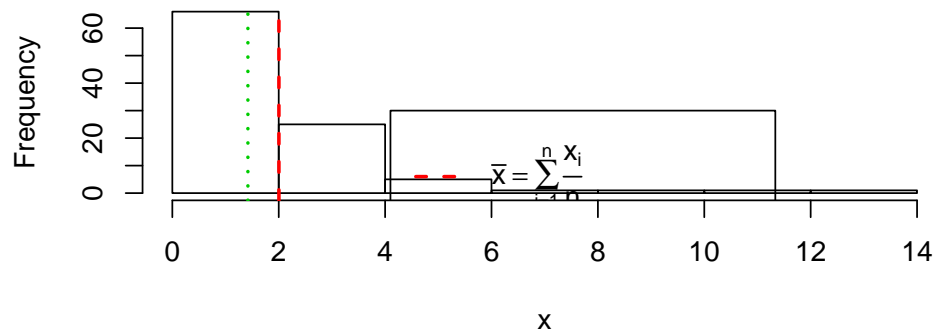
```
> par(mfrow = c(2, 1))  
> x <- rexp(100, rate = 0.5)  
> hist(x, main = "Mean and Median of a Skewed Distribution")  
> abline(v = mean(x), col = 2, lty = 2, lwd = 2)  
> abline(v = median(x), col = 3, lty = 3, lwd = 2)
```

```

> ex1 <- expression(bar(x) == sum(over(x[i], n), i == 1, n), hat(x) ==
+   median(x[i], i == 1, n))
> legend(4.1, 30, ex1, col = 2:3, lty = 2:3, lwd = 2)
> x <- seq(-pi, pi, len = 65)
> plot(x, sin(x), type = "l", col = "blue", xlab = expression(phi),
+   ylab = expression(f(phi)))
> lines(x, cos(x), col = "magenta", lty = 2)
> abline(h = -1:1, v = pi/2 * (-6:6), col = "gray90")
> ex2 <- expression(plain(sin) * phi, paste("cos", phi))
> legend(-3, 0.9, ex2, lty = 1:2, col = c("blue", "magenta"), adj = c(0,
+   0.6))

```

### Mean and Median of a Skewed Distribution



### III Interacting with graphics

R also provides functions which allow users to extract or add information to a plot using a mouse via *locator()* and *verb+identify()* functions respectively.

```
> plot(1:20, rt(20, 1))  
> text(locator(1), "outlier", adj = 0)
```

Waits for the user to select locations on the current plot using the left mouse button.

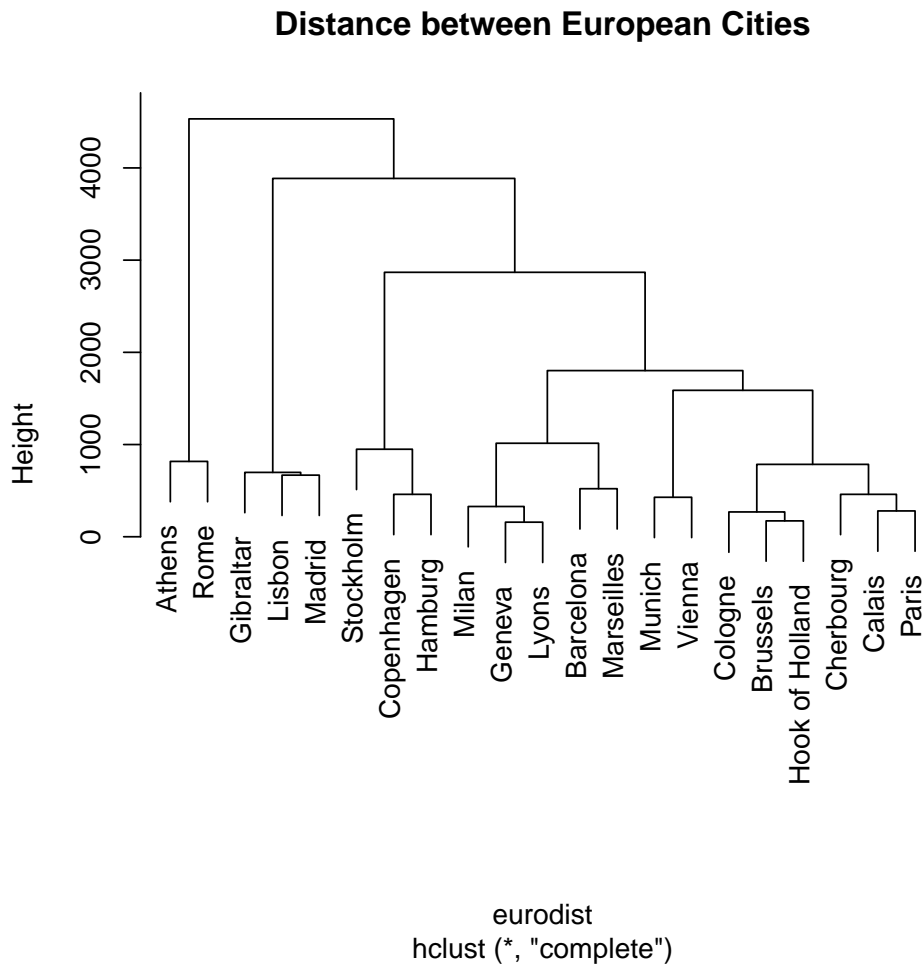
```
> attach(women)  
> plot(height, weight)  
> identify(height, weight, women)  
> detach(2)
```

Allow the user to highlight any of the points (*identify(x,y,label)*) defined by x and y (using the left mouse button) by plotting the corresponding component of labels nearby (or the index number of the point if labels is absent).

Right mouse click, to "stop".

Identify members in a hierarchical cluster analysis of distances between European cities

```
> hca <- hclust(eurodist)  
> plot(hca, main = "Distance between European Cities")
```



```
> (x <- identify(hca))
> x
```

## IV Graphics parameters

When creating graphics, particularly for presentation or publication purposes, R's defaults do not always produce exactly that which is required. You can, however, customize almost every aspect of the display using graphics parameters. R maintains a list of a large number of graphics parameters which control things such as line style, colors, figure arrangement and text justification among many others. Every graphics parameter has a name (such as 'col', which controls colors,) and a value (a color number, for example.) Graphics parameters can be set in two ways: either permanently, affecting all graphics functions which access the current device; or temporarily, affecting only a single graphics function call.

The *par()* function is used to access and modify the list of graphics parameters for the current graphics device. See help on *par()* for more details.

## IV.1 Temporary changes: Arguments to graphics functions

Graphics parameters may also be passed to any graphics function as named arguments. This has the same effect as passing the arguments to the `par()` function, except that the changes only last for the duration of the function call. For example:

```
> plot(1:20, rnorm(20), pch = "+")
```

produces a scatterplot using a plus sign as the plotting character, without changing the default plotting character for future plots.

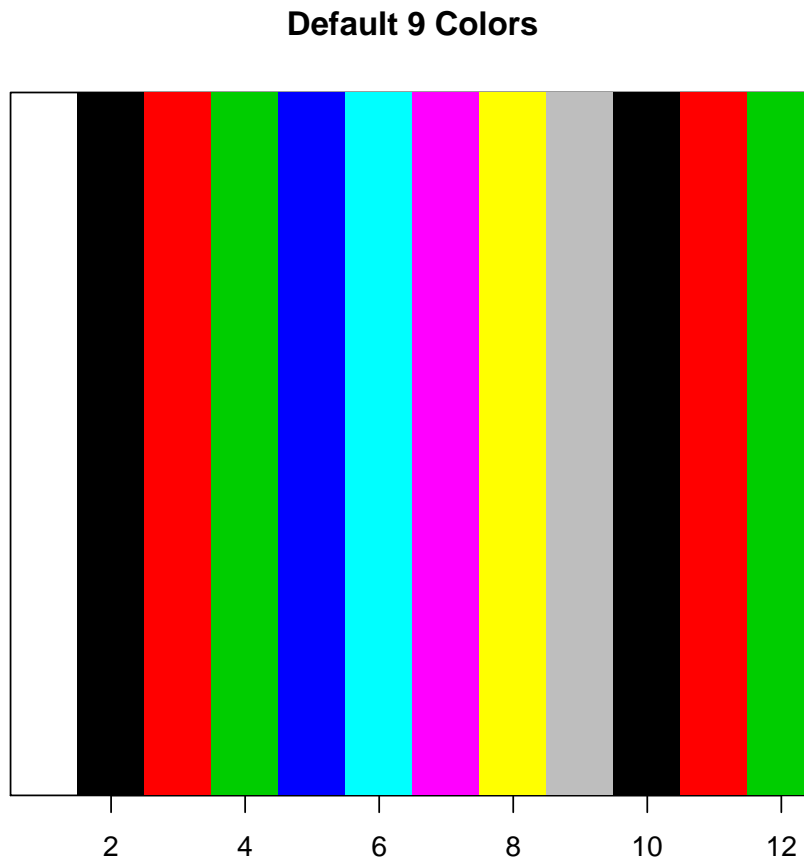
To see a sample of point type available in R, type

```
example(pch)
```

## IV.2 R Colors

Thus far, we have frequently used numbers in plot to refer to a simple set of colors. There are 8 colors where 0:8 are white, black, red, green, blue, cyan, magenta, yellow and grey. If you provide a number greater than 8, the colors are recycled. Therefore for plots where other or greater numbers of colors are required, we need to access a larger palette of colors.

```
> image(1:12, 1, as.matrix(1:12), col = 0:11, main = "Default 9 Colors",  
+       ylab = "", xlab = "", yaxt = "n")
```



R has a large list of over 650 colors that R knows about. This list is held in the vector `colors()`. Have a look at this list, and maybe search for a set you are interested in.

```
> colors()[1:10]
```

```
[1] "white"          "aliceblue"      "antiquewhite"   "antiquewhite1"  
[5] "antiquewhite2" "antiquewhite3" "antiquewhite4" "aquamarine"  
[9] "aquamarine1"   "aquamarine2"
```

```
> length(colors())
```

```
[1] 657
```

```
> grep("yellow", colors(), value = TRUE)
```

```
[1] "greenyellow"          "lightgoldenrodyellow" "lightyellow"
[4] "lightyellow1"         "lightyellow2"         "lightyellow3"
[7] "lightyellow4"         "yellow"               "yellow1"
[10] "yellow2"             "yellow3"              "yellow4"
[13] "yellowgreen"
```

R has defined palettes of colors, which provide complementing or contrasting color sets. For example look at the color palette rainbow.

```
> example(rainbow)
```

For a more complete listing of colors, along with the RGB numbers for each color, the following script generates a several page pdf document which maybe a useful reference document for you.

```
> source("http://research.stowers-institute.org/efg/R/Color/Chart/ColorChart.R")
```

A very useful RColorBrewer <http://colorbrewer.org>. This package will generate a ramp color to provide color plattes that are sequential, diverging, and qualitative ramped, for example:

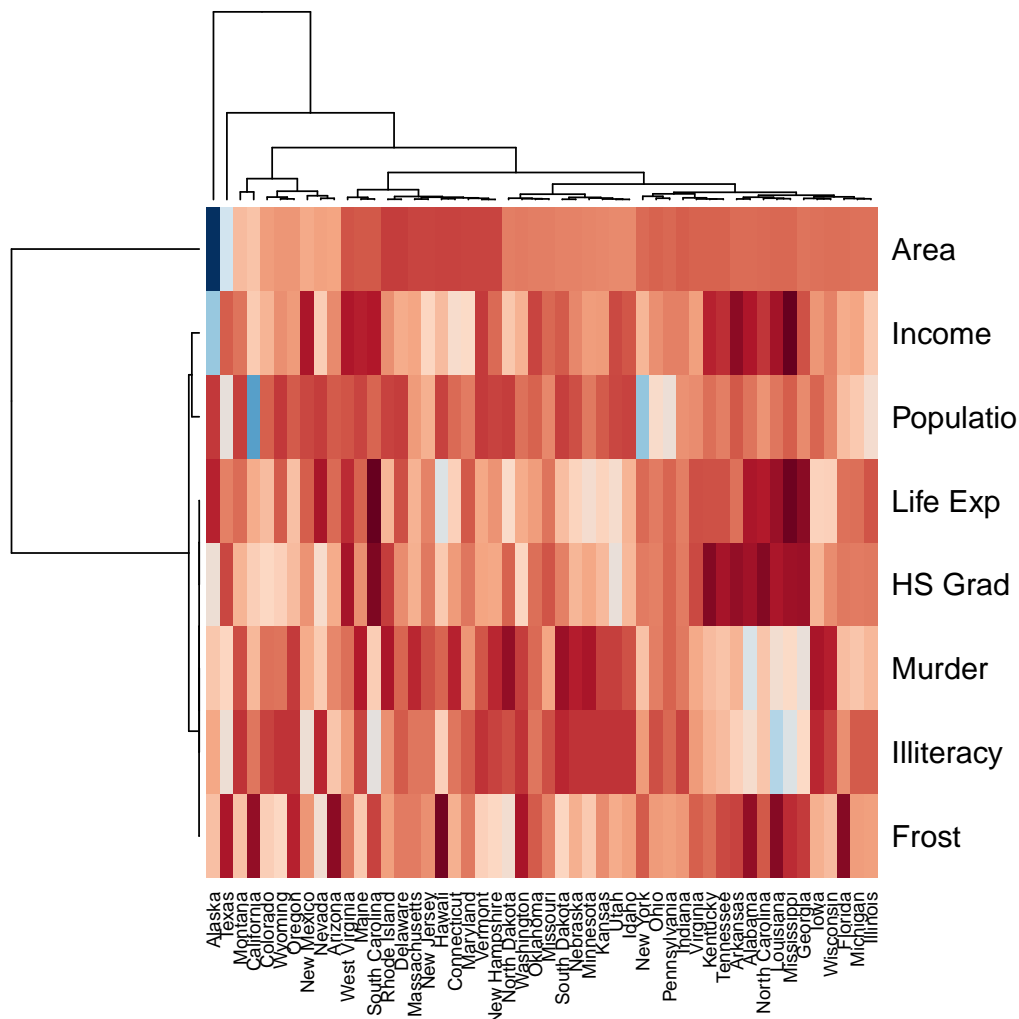
- Sequential palettes are suited to ordered data that progress from low to high. Lightness steps dominate the look of these schemes, with light colors for low data values to dark colors for high data values.
- Diverging palettes put equal emphasis on mid-range critical values and extremes at both ends of the data range. The critical class or break in the middle of the legend is emphasized with light colors and low and high extremes are emphasized with dark colors that have contrasting hues.
- Qualitative palettes do not imply magnitude differences between legend classes, and hues are used to create the primary visual differences between classes. Qualitative schemes are best suited to representing nominal or categorical data.

To see more about RColorBrewer run the example

```
> library(RColorBrewer)
> example(brewer.pal)
```

I use RColorBrewer to produce nicer colors in clustering heatmaps. For example if we look at the US state fact and figure information in the package `state`, which contains a matrix called `state.x77` containing information on 50 US states (50 rows) on population, income, illiteracy, life expectancy, murder, high school graduation, number of days with frost, and area (8 columns). The default clustering of this uses a rather ugly red-yellow color scheme which I changed to a red/brown-blue.

```
> library(RColorBrewer)
> hmccl <- colorRampPalette(brewer.pal(10, "RdBu"))(256)
> heatmap(t(state.x77), col = hmccl)
```





## V Advanced plotting using lattice library

Lattice plots allow the use of the layout on the page to reflect meaningful aspects of data structure. They offer abilities similar to those in the S-PLUS trellis library.

An incomplete list of lattice Functions

```
sploM( ~ data.frame)      # Scatterplot matrix
bwplot(factor ~ numeric , . .) # Box and whisker plot
dotplot(factor ~ numeric , . .) # 1-dim. Display
stripplot(factor ~ numeric , . .) # 1-dim. Display
barchart(character ~ numeric,...)
histogram( ~ numeric, ...)    # Histogram
densityplot( ~ numeric, ...)  # Smoothed version of histogram
qqmath(numeric ~ numeric, ...) # QQ plot
sploM( ~ dataframe, ...)     # Scatterplot matrix
parallel( ~ dataframe, ...)   # Parallel coordinate plots
```

## VI Saving plots

R can generate graphics (of varying levels of quality) on almost any type of display or printing device. Before this can begin, however, R needs to be informed what type of device it is dealing with. This is done by starting a device driver. The purpose of a device driver is to convert graphical instructions from R ("draw a line," for example) into a form that the particular device can understand. Device drivers are started by calling a device driver function. There is one such function for every device driver: type *help(Devices)* for a list of them all.

The most useful formats for saving R graphics:

**postscript()** For printing on PostScript printers, or creating PostScript graphics files.

**pdf()** Produces a PDF file, which can also be included into PDF files.

**jpeg()** Produces a bitmap JPEG file, best used for image plots.

Note there is a big difference between saving files in jpeg or postscript files. Image files save in jpg, bmp, gif etc are pixel image files, these are like photographs, where you can just select a line and change its color. By contrast vector graphic, such as postscript, or windows meta files can be imported into drawing packages such as Adobe illustrator (or some even into powerpoint), you can double click on an axes, and since its a vector graphic you can change the color of the line easily.

When in doubt, I save files in postscript format (eps), as several journals request this format. EPS files can be open directly in adobe illustrator or other vector editing graphics packages.

We will demonstrate these different formats in class.

To list the current graphics devices that are open use *dev.cur*. When you have finished with a device, be sure to terminate the device driver by issuing the command *dev.off()*.

If you have open a device to write to for example *pdf* or *png*, *dev.off* will ensures that the device finishes cleanly; for example in the case of hardcopy devices this ensures that every page is completed and has been sent to the printer or file.

### Example:

```
> myPath <- file.path("P:/Bio503/Plots")
> pdf(file = paste(myPath, "nicePlot.pdf", sep = ""))
> x <- seq(0, 2 * pi, length = 100)
> y <- sin(3 * x) + cos(x) + rnorm(100, sd = 0.2)
> plot(x, y)
> dev.off()
```

## VI.1 Useful Graphics Resources

If you have plots saved in a non-vector format, we have found the web-site VectorMagic from Stanford <http://vectormagic.stanford.edu/> to be very useful. It will convert bmp or jpeg files to vector format.

The free software ImageMagick <http://www.imagemagick.org> can be downloaded and is also useful for converting between image format.

## VII More on R graphics

One of the strengths of R is the variety and quality of its graphics capabilities. Lets looks at some of the news worthy graphics from R

1. Google visualization

<http://code.google.com/apis/visualization/documentation/gallery/motionchart.html>  
and how to run in R

See <http://blog.revolutionanalytics.com/graphics/> for some exampels of R code

```
> library(googleVis)
> M <- gvisMotionChart(Fruits, "Fruit", "Year")
> plot(M)
> cat(M$html$chart, file = "tmp.html")
```

2. Lattice <http://lmdvr.r-forge.r-project.org/figures/figures.html>

3. From R you ready -InfoMaps <http://ryouready.wordpress.com/> blogs on creating InfoMaps  
useful for spatial data analysis

<http://ryouready.wordpress.com/2009/11/16/infomaps-using-r-visualizing-german-unemployment/>

4. Rggobi <http://www.ggobi.org/rggobi/> 3D visualization of multidimensional data <http://www.ggobi.org/rggobi/introduction.pdf>

5. Graph theory and visualization of data as a graph  
using the package network

```
> library(network)
> m <- matrix(rbinom(100, 1, 1.5/9), 10)
> diag(m) <- 0
> g <- network(m)
> plot(g)
> data(flo)
> nflo <- network(flo)
> plot(nflo, vertex.cex = apply(flo, 2, sum) + 1, usearrows = FALSE,
+       vertex.sides = 3 + apply(flo, 2, sum), vertex.col = 2 + (network.vertex.names(nflo)
+       "Medici"))
```

using the package igraph

```
> library(igraph)
> adj.mat <- matrix(sample(c(0, 1), 9, replace = TRUE), nr = 3)
> g <- graph.adjacency(adj.mat)
> plot(g)
```

6. For a discussion on different graph packages see

using Rgraphviz [http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/moac/students/peter\\_cock/r/rgraphviz/](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/moac/students/peter_cock/r/rgraphviz/)  
or see the many examples on the bioconductor website

a recent discussion online about the topic: <http://stats.stackexchange.com/questions/6155/graph-theory-analysis-and-visualization>

R cytoscape <http://db.systemsbiology.net:8080/cytoscape/RCytoscape/vignette/RCytoscape.html>

7. Additional demos available in the graphics package: *demo(image)*, *demo(persp)* and *example(symbol)*.

## VII.1 Exercise - Plotting

Using the women dataset

1. Set the plot layout to be a 2 x 2 grid (ie 2 rows, 2 columns)
2. Draw weight on the Y axis and height on the X axis.
3. Switch the orientation, Draw weight on the X axis and height on the Y axis.
4. Drawing a new plot, set the pch (point type) to be a filled circle, and color them red
5. Add a title to the plot, using the paramter main
6. Change the X axis label to be "Weight of Women"
7. Make the point size (using the paramter cex) larger to 1.5