# prebs User Guide

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### 1 Abstract

The prebs package aims at making RNA-sequencing (RNA-seq) data more comparable to microarray data. The comparability is achieved by summarizing sequencing-based expressions of probe regions using standard microarray summarization algorithms: RPA (Lahti et al., 2011) or RMA (Irizarry et al., 2003). The pipeline takes mapped reads in BAM format as an input and produces either gene expressions or original microarray probe set expressions as an output. A more detailed algorithm description can be found in (Uziela and Honkela, 2013).

#### 2 Installation

prebs can be installed from Bioconductor using the BiocManager::install function. This ensures that all of the package dependencies are met.

```
> if (!requireNamespace("BiocManager", quietly=TRUE))
+    install.packages("BiocManager")
> BiocManager::install("prebs")
```

prebsdata package that is needed to run the examples in this vignette is also available from Bioconductor.

```
> if (!requireNamespace("BiocManager", quietly=TRUE))
+ install.packages("BiocManager")
> BiocManager::install("prebsdata")
```

# 3 Examples

Here we will cover a few simple examples of running *prebs* in two modes: Custom CDF and manufacturer's CDF. The major difference between these two modes is that Custom CDF gives expression values for genes while manufacturer's CDF gives the expression values for the probe sets.

#### 3.1 Loading package and data

To load the package start R and run

```
> library(prebs)
> library(prebsdata)
```

The data for our examples is contained in *prebsdata* package. The data package contains two sample BAM files, 3 Custom CDF probe sequence mapping files and 3 manufacturer's CDF probe sequence mapping files. We will use only 2 Custom CDF and 1 manufacturer's CDF probe sequence mapping file in our examples.

The full paths to data files in the prebsdata package can be retrieved using system.file function.

# 3.2 Running calc\_prebs using Custom CDF and RPA summarization method

The *prebs* package contains only one public function—calc\_prebs. The most basic usage of calc\_prebs is running it in Custom CDF mode without parallelization.

calc\_prebs has to possible microarray summarization methods: rpa and rma. The summarization mode can be chosen by setting sum.method parameter. In this case we do not set the sum.method parameter explicitly, so the default mode (rpa) is used.

The default output format of calc\_prebs is ExpressionSet object defined in affy package. The expression values can be accessed using exprs function from Biobase package.

```
> prebs_values <- calc_prebs(bam_files, custom_cdf_mapping1)
[1] "Finished: input1.bam"
[1] "Finished: input2.bam"
> head(exprs(prebs_values))
```

```
input1.bam input2.bam
ENSG00000000003 5.796576 5.303558
ENSG0000000005 -13.300589 -13.300589
ENSG00000000419 6.136572 5.798032
ENSG00000000457 4.437882 5.513711
ENSG00000000460 3.465189 4.499211
ENSG00000000938 5.542566 6.200779
```

Above we can see the expressions of the first few genes with Ensembl gene identifiers. In this example, the expression level of at least one of the genes is negligible (the expression values are in  $\log_2$  scale). In fact, most of the other genes that are not shown here also have a negligible expression level, because we designed our sample BAM files so that they contain only mapped reads from the region of the first few genes. Of course, for a real world analysis mapped reads from all of the genes are needed. However, real world BAM files take a lot of disk space, so it was not possible to include them in the sample data set.

Since in this case we did not provide explicit CDF package name, the name was inferred from the probe sequence mapping filename ("custom-cdf/HGU133Plus2\_Hs\_ENSG\_mapping.txt" -> hgu133plus2hsensgcdf). Both probe sequence mapping file and custom CDF package can be downloaded from Custom CDF website:

http://brainarray.mbni.med.umich.edu/brainarray/Database/CustomCDF/genomic\_curated\_CDF.asp

In particular, this example uses Ensembl custom CDF package for and HGU133Plus2 platform (version 16.0.0) that can be dowloaded here: http://brainarray.mbni.med.umich.edu/Brainarray/Database/CustomCDF/16.0.0/ensg.download/hgu133plus2hsensgcdf\_16.0.0.tar.gz

And the corresponding description archive containing probe sequence mapping file can be downloaded here:

 $\label{lem:http://brainarray.mbni.med.umich.edu/Brainarray/Database/CustomCDF/16.0.0/ensg.download/HGU133Plus2_Hs_ENSG_16.0.0.zip$ 

If you want to save prebs values to a text file, you can run this command:

> write.table(exprs(prebs\_values), file="prebs\_values.txt", quote=FALSE)

# 3.3 Running calc\_prebs using Custom CDF and RPA summarization method

Running calc\_prebs in rma mode is very similar to rpa mode. All that has to be changed is sum.method parameter.

```
> prebs_values <- calc_prebs(bam_files, custom_cdf_mapping1, sum.method="rma")
```

[1] "Finished: input1.bam"
[1] "Finished: input2.bam"

Normalizing

Calculating Expression

#### > head(exprs(prebs\_values))

```
input1.bam input2.bam
ENSG00000000003 5.727919 4.960582
ENSG00000000045 -13.300589 -13.300589
ENSG00000000457 3.619474 5.194778
ENSG00000000460 2.858413 3.925149
ENSG00000000938 5.173077 6.253996
```

The rest of the results in this vignette will be based on the default (rpa) mode.

#### 3.4 Setting calc\_prebs output format to a data frame

By default calc\_prebs outputs an ExpressionSet object with PREBS values. If you prefer to have a data frame as an output, you can set output\_eset option to FALSE.

```
> prebs_values <- calc_prebs(bam_files, custom_cdf_mapping1, output_eset=FALSE)
```

```
[1] "Finished: input1.bam"
[1] "Finished: input2.bam"
```

#### > head(prebs\_values)

```
input1.bam input2.bam ID
1 5.796314 5.303296 ENSG00000000003
2 -13.300589 -13.300589 ENSG00000000005
3 6.136587 5.798048 ENSG00000000419
4 4.437882 5.513711 ENSG000000000457
5 3.465243 4.499266 ENSG000000000460
6 5.542566 6.200779 ENSG000000000938
```

# 3.5 Running calc\_prebs with parallelization

Now let's run the same task with a simple parallelization. The results will be identical to the ones above.

```
> library("parallel")
> N_CORES = 2
> CLUSTER <- makeCluster(N_CORES)
> prebs_values <- calc_prebs(bam_files, custom_cdf_mapping1, cluster=CLUSTER)
> stopCluster(CLUSTER)
```

# 3.6 Running calc\_prebs for another microarray platform

If we want to run calc\_prebs with a different microarray platform, we just have to provide another probe sequence mapping file.

```
> prebs_values <- calc_prebs(bam_files, custom_cdf_mapping2)
```

The corresponding Custom CDF package hgu133a2hsensgcdf has to be downloaded and installed prior to running this command. It can be found here: http://brainarray.mbni.med.umich.edu/Brainarray/Database/CustomCDF/16.0.0/ensg.download/hgu133a2hsensgcdf\_16.0.0.tar.gz

## 3.7 Running calc\_prebs using manufacturer's CDF

Running calc\_prebs with manufacturer's CDF is not so much different either. All we have to do is to provide a suitably formatted probe sequence mapping file.

```
> prebs_values <- calc_prebs(bam_files, manufacturer_cdf_mapping)
[1] "Finished: input1.bam"
[1] "Finished: input2.bam"
Calculating Expression
> head(exprs(prebs_values))
       input1.bam input2.bam
1007_s -13.307292 -13.307292
1053
        3.536032
                   3.424836
117
        -5.413422 -5.913413
121
       -13.307292 -13.307292
1255_g -13.307292 -13.307292
1294
        2.772925
                    2.187970
```

As mentioned before, manufacturer's CDF mode gives probe set expressions as an output. In the above example, you can see the the expression values for the first few probe sets of our example data set.

One problem with running calc\_prebs using manufacturer's CDF is that Affymetrix does not provide probe sequence mappings for most of the microarray platforms. Therefore, probe sequence mapping files have to be created manually, as it will be discussed in Section 4.

As in Custom CDF case, the CDF package name is inferred from probe sequence mapping file ("custom-cdf/HGU133Plus2\_mapping.txt" -> hgu133plus2cdf). If we are not sure if the mapping file is named correctly, it is better to provide CDF package filename explicitly.

Now we have presented pretty much all important ways of running calc\_prebs function. From this point, you can proceed with downstream analysis of calc\_prebs results. However, so far we have left out some important details about input requirements of calc\_prebs function that will be discussed in the next section.

# 4 Detailed input specification

The main function of the package calc\_prebs has the following input arguments:

bam\_files Mapped reads in BAM format

name of CDF package

**cluster** Cluster object for parallelization

output eset Option that controls output format (Expres-

sionSet vs data frame)

paired ended reads, Options that control the process of counting

ignore\_strand reads

sum.method Summarization method ("rpa" or "rma")

In this section we will discuss all the input requirements in more detail. Note that only two input arguments are mandatory: bam\_files and probe\_mapping\_file. The rest of the arguments are optional and have their default values.

#### 4.1 BAM files

For using calc\_prebs function you will need to have mapped reads in BAM format. For read mapping we recommend using TopHat software (Trapnell et al., 2009). We suggest to align the reads only to the known transcriptome. You can do this by using --transcriptome-only option and supplying your own transcriptome annotation file via --GTF option. Transcriptome annotation files can be downloaded from Ensembl FTP server. Finally, we require that reads are mapped to no more than 1 location in the genome. This can be achieved by using option --max-multihits 1. So for human genome, sample TopHat run could look like this:

```
tophat --transcriptome-only --max-multihits 1 \
--GTF ./Human_transcriptome/Homo_sapiens.GRCh37.65.gtf \
--transcriptome-index=./Human_transcriptome/known \
--output-dir ./tophat-out hg19 input1.fastq input2.fastq
```

### 4.2 Probe sequence mappings and CDF packages

calc\_prebs function can be used in two modes: Custom CDF (Dai et al., 2005) and manufacturer's CDF. Custom CDF mode produces gene expressions while manufacturer's CDF mode produces original probe set expressions. Now we will discuss the input requirements for the two modes in more detail.

#### 4.2.1 Custom CDF

As we have already mentioned calc\_prebs function requires a probe sequence mapping file and CDF package name as its arguments. For Custom CDF mode,

both the mapping file and the package can be downloaded from the Custom CDF website:

http://brainarray.mbni.med.umich.edu/brainarray/Database/CustomCDF/genomic\_curated\_CDF.asp

The Custom CDF supports many types of gene identifiers, but in our examples we are using Custom CDF files with Ensembl gene identifiers (version 16.0.0). In the Custom CDF download page for each microarray platform you can find both the Custom CDF package file (denoted by "C") and the Custom CDF description archive (denoted by "Z") containing the probe sequence mapping file

If you get a message "Note: X probe sequences are missing in \_mapping.txt file." while running prebs in Custom CDF mode, it is probably because the Custom CDF file that you installed and the mapping file have different versions. You can fix this by downloading and installing corresponding Custom CDF package and \_mapping.txt file. However, if you get this message while running prebs in manufacturer's CDF mode, you shouldn't worry too much. You will understand the reason after you read the next section.

The Custom CDF package can be installed like a regular R package (using R CMD INSTALL command). For example, to install hgu133plus2hsensgcdf in Unix-like systems type R CMD INSTALL hgu133plus2hsensgcdf 16.0.0.tar.gz.

The probe sequence mapping file is named as "\*cdfname\*\_mapping.txt". Since CDF package name can be inferred from probe sequence mapping filename, explicitly providing CDF package name to calc\_prebs function is optional. For example, if you are using "HGU133Plus2\_Hs\_ENSG\_mapping.txt" probe sequence mapping file do not provide CDF package name, it is assumed that hgu133plus2hsensgcdf package is used.

#### 4.2.2 Manufacturer's CDF

The manufacturer's CDF packages can be downloaded and installed from the bioconductor. For example, to install CDF package for HGU133Plus2 platform, type:

```
> if (!requireNamespace("BiocManager", quietly=TRUE))
+ install.packages("BiocManager")
> BiocManager::install("hgu133plus2cdf")
```

Unfortunately, probe sequence mapping files are not provided for most of the microarray platforms. For some microarray platoforms, such as HuEx10stv2, the probe sequence mappings are available from the Affymetrix website (HuEx1\_0-st-v2 Probe Sequences, tabular format). However, they are mapped to an old version of genome assembly (hg16), so we do not recommend using them.

In our data package *prebsdata*, we provide probe sequence mapping files for three microarray platforms: HGU133Plus2, HGU133A2 and HGFocus. We have created these files by mapping probe sequences to human genome using Bowtie software Langmead et al. (2009). If you want to use another microarray platform, you will have to map probe sequences yourself. A detailed procedure of

creating probe sequence mapping files using Bowtie is outlined below.

For most of the microarray platforms, the probe sequences can be retrieved from the platform's probe package. The probe package name is the same as CDF package name, except that it ends with "probe" instead of "cdf". For example, to install probe package for "hgu133plus2" platform, type:

```
> if (!requireNamespace("BiocManager", quietly=TRUE))
+ install.packages("BiocManager")
> BiocManager::install("hgu133plus2probe")
```

Once you load the hgu133plus2probe package, you can find the information about the probe sequences stored in hgu133plus2probe object which can be converted to a data frame.

```
> library("hgu133plus2probe")
> probes <- as.data.frame(hgu133plus2probe)
> head(probes)
```

```
y Probe.Set.Name
                   sequence
                               х
1 CACCCAGCTGGTCCTGTGGATGGGA 718 317
                                          1007_s_at
2 GCCCCACTGGACAACACTGATTCCT 1105 483
                                          1007_s_at
3 TGGACCCCACTGGCTGAGAATCTGG 584 901
                                          1007 s at
4 AAATGTTTCCTTGTGCCTGCTCCTG 192 205
                                          1007_s_at
5 TCCTTGTGCCTGCTCCTGTACTTGT 844 979
                                          1007_s_at
6 TGCCTGCTCCTGTACTTGTCCTCAG 537 971
                                          1007_s_at
  Probe.Interrogation.Position Target.Strandedness
1
                          3330
                                         Antisense
2
                          3443
                                         Antisense
3
                          3512
                                         Antisense
4
                          3563
                                         Antisense
5
                          3570
                                         Antisense
                          3576
                                         Antisense
```

Next, we should remove rows that have probe set identifiers that start if "AFFX", because these do not target genes and are not relevant to us. Also, we use xy2indices function from affy package to convert probe X and Y coordinates to probe IDs and add a new column to the data frame. We will save the resulting data frame to a file "probes.txt".

```
> library("affy")
> probes <- probes[substr(probes$Probe.Set.Name,1,4) != "AFFX",]
> probes$Probe.ID <- xy2indices(probes$x, probes$y, cdf="hgu133plus2cdf")
> write.table(probes, file="probes.txt", quote=FALSE, row.names=FALSE, col.names=TRUE)
```

The first column in a file "probes.txt" contains probe sequence and the seventh column contains probe ID. To format an input for Bowtie, we need to extract these two columns and format a fasta file:

```
tail -n +2 "probes.txt" | awk '{print ">" $7 "\n" $1 }' > probe_sequences.fa
```

Now we are ready to map the probe sequences to the genome. We suggest using Bowtie options -a -v 0 to report all perfect match hits. A sample Bowtie run could look like this:

```
bowtie -a -v 0 hg19 -f probe_sequences.fa output_probe_mappings.map
```

After we map probe sequences to the genome, we must convert Bowtie output to the format identical to Custom CDF probe sequence mapping files. The default format of Bowtie output is documented in Bowtie homepage. The first column contains "Read ID" which in our case is "Probe.ID". We have to read Bowtie output file "output\_probe\_mappings.map", and probe sequence information file "probes.txt" and merge the two data frames based on "Probe.ID" column. Then, we have to extract the necessary information from the resulting merged table and save it into "\_mapping.txt" file. Note that we also have to shift Bowtie mapping positions by 1, because it uses a different offset than "\_mapping.txt" files.

Briefly, here are the commands we have to run:

The resulting "\_mapping.txt" file can be used as an input for calc\_prebs. If some of the probe sequences were mapped to multiple locations, calc\_prebs function will handle them by summing up the read overlaps from all of these locations. If some probe sequences could not be mapped, calc\_prebs will assign minimal expression values to these probes. If you are using a manually created "\_mapping.txt" file, calc\_prebs will show notifications about the missing probe sequences (that were not mapped) and probe sequences that have duplicates (that were mapped to multiple locations).

#### 4.3 Cluster object for parallel computation

If you have many input BAM files, processing them can be a computationally expensive task. Therefore, *prebs* provides a possibility to parallelize BAM file processing using *parallel* package. In order to parallelize the work, you must use makeCluster function to create a cluster object and pass it to calc\_prebs function. The function makeCluster has several parameters that support different types of clusters. For a detailed explanation of makeCluster, please,

refer to parallel package manual. One simple example of using makeCluster was already covered in Section 3.

### 4.4 Output format

calc\_prebs provides two arguments for output format: ExpressionSet or data.frame. ExpressionSet is a container for high-throughput assays and experimental metadata from Biobase package, whereas data frame is just a standard R data structure.

### 4.5 Read counting options

calc\_prebs has a couple of arguments that control the process of the read counting. paired\_ended\_reads argument ensures the correct treatment of paired-ended reads. If your data contains paired-ended reads, you should set this option to TRUE, otherwise the two mate reads will be treated as independent units. Another argument, ignore\_strand controls whether the strand from which the reads comes should be considered during read-counting. If your data comes from strand-specific RNA-seq protocol, set this option to FALSE, otherwise, leave it at its default value (TRUE).

#### 4.6 Summarization method

prebs Supports two summarization methods: rpa and rma. You can set the summarization method using sum.method parameter. The default summarization method is rpa. Please, note that before prebs version 1.7.1, only rma mode was available and it was the default mode. However, we decided to make rpa the default mode, because it gives slightly higher RNA-seq-microarray comparability, provided that the data from both platforms is processed using rpa method.

# 5 Session Info

> sessionInfo()

R version 4.5.0 beta (2025-04-02 r88102)

Platform: x86\_64-pc-linux-gnu Running under: Ubuntu 24.04.2 LTS

Matrix products: default

BLAS: /home/biocbuild/bbs-3.22-bioc/R/lib/libRblas.so

LAPACK: /usr/lib/x86\_64-linux-gnu/lapack/liblapack.so.3.12.0 LAPACK version 3.12.0

locale:

[1] LC\_CTYPE=en\_US.UTF-8 LC\_NUMERIC=C
[3] LC\_TIME=en\_GB LC\_COLLATE=C

[5] LC\_MONETARY=en\_US.UTF-8 LC\_MESSAGES=en\_US.UTF-8

```
LC_NAME=C
                                 LC_TELEPHONE=C
 [9] LC_ADDRESS=C
[11] LC_MEASUREMENT=en_US.UTF-8 LC_IDENTIFICATION=C
time zone: America/New_York
tzcode source: system (glibc)
attached base packages:
[1] stats4
              stats
                        graphics grDevices utils
                                                       datasets methods
[8] base
other attached packages:
 [1] hgu133plus2probe_2.18.0
                                  AnnotationDbi_1.71.0
 [3] hgu133plus2cdf_2.18.0
                                  prebsdata_1.43.0
 [5] prebs_1.49.0
                                  RPA_1.65.0
 [7] rmarkdown_2.29
                                  BiocStyle_2.37.0
 [9] affy_1.87.0
                                  GenomicAlignments_1.45.0
[11] Rsamtools_2.25.0
                                  Biostrings_2.77.0
[13] XVector_0.49.0
                                  SummarizedExperiment_1.39.0
[15] Biobase_2.69.0
                                  MatrixGenerics_1.21.0
[17] matrixStats_1.5.0
                                  GenomicRanges_1.61.0
[19] GenomeInfoDb_1.45.0
                                  IRanges_2.43.0
[21] S4Vectors_0.47.0
                                  BiocGenerics_0.55.0
[23] generics_0.1.3
loaded via a namespace (and not attached):
 [1] DBI_1.2.3
                                                      permute_0.9-7
                              bitops_1.0-9
 [4] rlang_1.1.6
                              magrittr_2.0.3
                                                      ade4_1.7-23
 [7] compiler_4.5.0
                              RSQLite_2.3.9
                                                      mgcv_1.9-3
[10] png_0.1-8
                              vctrs_0.6.5
                                                      reshape2_1.4.4
[13] stringr_1.5.1
                              pkgconfig_2.0.3
                                                      crayon_1.5.3
[16] fastmap_1.2.0
                              UCSC.utils_1.5.0
                                                      preprocessCore_1.71.0
[19] bit_4.6.0
                              xfun_0.52
                                                      cachem_1.1.0
[22] jsonlite_2.0.0
                              biomformat_1.37.0
                                                      blob_1.2.4
[25] rhdf5filters_1.21.0
                              DelayedArray_0.35.0
                                                      Rhdf5lib_1.31.0
[28] BiocParallel_1.43.0
                              parallel_4.5.0
                                                      cluster_2.1.8.1
[31] R6_2.6.1
                              stringi_1.8.7
                                                      Rcpp_1.0.14
[34] iterators_1.0.14
                              knitr_1.50
                                                      Matrix_1.7-3
[37] splines_4.5.0
                              igraph_2.1.4
                                                      tidyselect_1.2.1
[40] abind_1.4-8
                              yaml_2.3.10
                                                      vegan_2.6-10
[43] codetools_0.2-20
                              lattice_0.22-7
                                                      tibble_3.2.1
[46] plyr_1.8.9
                              KEGGREST_1.49.0
                                                      evaluate_1.0.3
[49] survival_3.8-3
                              pillar_1.10.2
                                                      affyio_1.79.0
[52] BiocManager_1.30.25
                              phyloseq_1.53.0
                                                      foreach_1.5.2
[55] ggplot2_3.5.2
                              munsell_0.5.1
                                                      scales_1.3.0
[58] glue_1.8.0
                              tools_4.5.0
                                                      data.table_1.17.0
[61] rhdf5_2.53.0
                              grid_4.5.0
                                                      ape_5.8-1
[64] colorspace_2.1-1
                                                      GenomeInfoDbData_1.2.14
                              nlme_3.1-168
[67] cli_3.6.4
                              S4Arrays_1.9.0
                                                      dplyr_1.1.4
```

[7] LC\_PAPER=en\_US.UTF-8

digest\_0.6.37

SparseArray\_1.9.0

[70] gtable\_0.3.6

[73] memoise\_2.0.1 [76] lifecycle\_1.0.4 htmltools\_0.5.8.1 httr\_1.4.7 multtest\_2.65.0 bit64\_4.6.0-1

## References

[79] MASS\_7.3-65

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