r3Cseq: an R package for the discovery of long-range genomic interactions with chromosome conformation capture and next-generation sequencing data

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7 Session Info

Abstract

The coupling of chromosome conformation capture (3C)-based and next-generation sequencing (NGS) enable high-throughput detection of long-range genomic interactions via the generation of novel ligation products between DNA sequences that are closely juxtaposed in vivo. These interactions may involve promoter regions, enhacers and other regulatory and structural elements of chromosomes, and can reveal key details in the regulation of gene expression. 3C-seq is a a variant of the method for the detection of interactions between one chosen genomic element (viewpoint) and the rest of the genome. We present an R/Bioconductor package called r3Cseq, designed to perform 3C-seq data analysis in a number of different experimental designs, with or without a control experiment. The package can also be used to perform data analysis for the experiment with replicates. The package provides functions to perform 3C-seq data normalization, statistical analysis for cis/trans interactions and visualization to facilitate the identification of genomic regions that physically interact with the given viewpoints of interest. The r3Cseq package greatly facilitates hypothesis generation and the interpretation of experimental results.

1 Introduction

This vignette describes how to use the r3Cseq package. r3Cseq is a Bioconductorcompliant R package designed to facilitate the identification of interaction regions generated by chromosome conformation capture and next-generation sequencing (3C-seq). The fundamental principles of 3C-seq briefly described in the following Soler et al. (2010) (Figure 1), isolated cells are treated with a cross-linking agent to preserve in vivo nuclear proximity between DNA sequences. The DNA isolated from these cells is then digested using a primary restriction enzyme, typically a 6-base pairs cutting enzyme such as HindIII, EcoRI or BamHI. The digested product is then ligated under dilute conditions to favor intra-molecular over inter-molecular ligation events. This digested and ligated chromatin yields composite sequences representing (distal) genomic regions that are in close physical proximity in the cell nucleus. The digested and ligated chromatin is then de-crosslinked and subjected to a second restriction digest using either Nla III or Dpn II (a 4-cutter) as a secondary restriction enzyme to decrease the fragment sizes. The resulting digested DNA is then ligated again under diluted conditions, creating small circular fragments. These fragments are inverse PCR-amplified using primers specific for a genomic region of interest (eg. promoter, enhancer, or any other element potentially involved in long-range interactions), termed the "viewpoint". The amplified fragments are then sequenced using massively parallel high-throughput sequencing. Because the 3Cseq procedure hybrid DNA molecules being a combination of viewpoint-specific primers followed by sequences dervied from the ligated interaction fragments. As such, these composite sequences are unmappable and need to be trimmed to removed the viewpoint

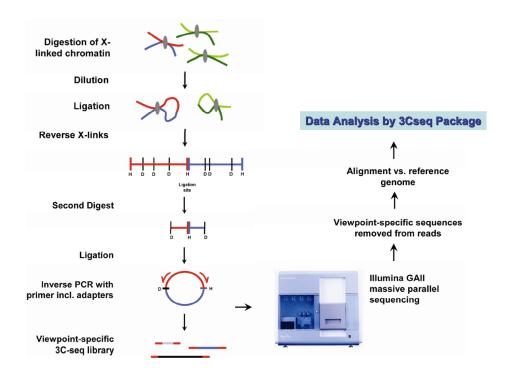


Figure 1: 3C-seq procedures

sequences, thus leaving only the capture sequence fragments for mapping. After trimming, reads are mapped against a reference genome using alignment software such as Bowtie. A mapped read file generated by the mapping software is then transformed to the BAM file and analyzed by using r3Cseq package.

r3Cseq package is built on, and extends the functionality of Bioconductor package such as GenomicRanges, BSgenome, Rsamtools, and rtracklayer. The package provides classes and methods to facilitate single-end reads, which are generated by the next-generation sequencing. The package can perform data analysis on both single input file (single lane from one experiment) and two input files from an experiment and a control. The package also provides a class and functions to perform 3C-seq data analysis from replicates (see working with replicates section). The key features workflow of r3Cseq depicts in the following figure. (Figure 2)

r3Cseq analysis workflow starts from the class initialization. There are two classes found in this package. One is r3Cseq class that is designed to support a single experiment in both with and without a control experiment. Another is r3CseqInBatch class that is designed to support analysis with replicates. To initialize the class both r3Cseq and r3CseqInBatch, a user gives the input parameters for example the input file name, genome assembly version, primary restriction fragment name and so on (see more details in the manual page of r3Cseq and r3CseqInBatch). The class is then will be created and it is ready to perform 3C-seq analysis. The getRawReads and getRawReadsInBatch functions can be next used to read in the BAM files. It may take a few minutes for data

r3C-Seq key features workflow

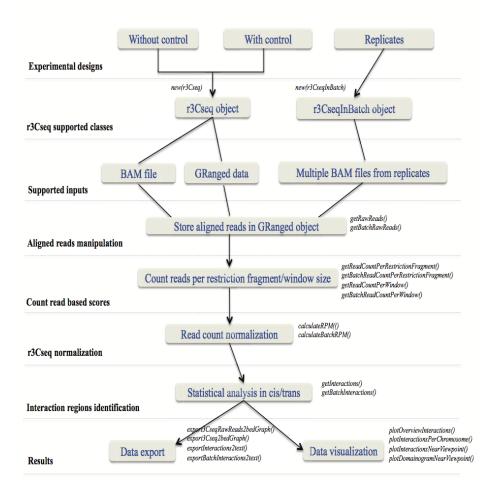


Figure 2: r3Cseq key features workflow

processing depending on the size of the input BAM files and the speed of CPU and the size of the RAM of a computer that performs analysis. To run the getRawReadsInBatch function for replicates, a user might have a powerful computer server. getRawReads function reads in aligned reads from input BAM files and transforms aligned reads to the GRanged objects that can be stored in the r3Cseq object, whereas getRawReadsInBatch processes the data in batch and stores the aligned reads GRanges in the R files (.rdata). To count number of reads preparing for downstream analysis, r3Cseq provides two ways to count number of reads per region; 1) count number of reads per resitrction fragments, using the function getReadCountPerRestrictionFragment and 2) count the number of reads per non-overlapping window size, using function getReadCountPerWindow, whereas getBatchReadCountPerRestrictionFragment and getBatchReadCountPerWindowcan do the same for replicates. r3Cseq provides calculateRPM and calculateBatchRPM functions to calculate reads per million per restriction fragment size (RPM) as normalized interaction frequency values. There are two methods to calculate RPM. which are described in the r3Cseq paper?. After data normalization, getInteractions and getBatchInteractions will be performed to identify candidate interactions. Statistical analysis for both cis and trans interactions is described in the r3Cseq paper?. r3Cseq provides functions export3CseqRawReads2BedGraph, export3Cseq2bedGraph, exportInteractions2text, and exportBatchInteractions2text to export raw reads and all identified interactions to the bedGraph file format, which is simply uploaded to the UCSC genome browser. The package also provides functionalities for plotting to show data analysis result of interaction regions. Plotting functions consist of plotOverviewInteractions, plotInteractionPerChromosome, plotInteractionNearViewpoint, and plotDomainogramNearViewpoint. These functions will be demonstrated in the visualization of 3C-seq data section.

Here is a list of some of its most important functions.

- 1. getRawReads: a function to read in BAM files.
- 2. getBatchRawReads: a function to read in multiple BAM files for replicates.
- 3. getReadCountPerRestrictionFragment: a function to count the number of reads per restriction fragment. A user has to specify the name of restriction enzyme. The package will then automatically generate the genome-wide restriction fragments and counts how many 3C-seq reads are mapped into that particular restriction fragments.
- 4. getBatchReadCountPerRestrictionFragment: Similar to getReadCountPerRestrictionFragment using it for replicates
- 5. getReadCountPerWindow: a function to count the number of reads per defined non-overalapping window size. A user has to specify the window size of interest. The package will then automatically generate the genome-wide windows and counts how many 3C-seq reads are mapped into that particular windows.

- 6. getBatchReadCountPerWindow: similar to getReadCountPerWindow using for replicates
- 7. calculateRPM: a function to calcuate reads per million (RPM) per each restriction fragment
- 8. calculateBatchRPM: similar to calculateRPM using for replicates
- 9. getInteractions: a function to perform statistical analysis to identify candidate interactions
- 10. getBatchInteractions : similar to getInteractions using for replicates
- 11. Visualiztion: the package contains functions for visualizing the interaction regions with the powerful plotting facilities. These functions are plotOverviewInteractions, plotInteractionsNearViewpoint,plotInteractionsPerChromosome, and plotDomainogramNear
- 12. Data export: the package contains functions to export the data into tab-delimited text format, which can be easily uploaded to the UCSC genome browser for further visualization and exploration. Currently it supports the bedGraph format. These functions are export3CseqRawReads2bedGraph, export3Cseq2bedGraph, exportInteractions2text, exportBatchInteractions2text. The package can also generate a summary report in PDF format by generate3CseqReport function.

2 Preparation input files for r3Cseq

The required input file for r3Cseq package is the BAM file, obtained as an output from the mapping software. The represented identifier for a reference genome shown in each input BAM file is important to run r3Cseq properly. The represented identifier for each chromosome must be in "chr[1..19XYM]" format for the mouse reference genome and "chr[1..22XYM]" format for the human reference genome. Therefore, before using r3Cseq package, a user has to check the identifier for the reference genome. If the identifier for each chromosome found in the mapped file is not in a proper format for example 'mm9_ref_chr01.fa', the Unix command like 'sed' might be used to replace 'mm9_ref_chr01.fa' to 'chr1'.

3 Getting started

The 3C-seq data generated by ? will be used for the demonstration. The current version of r3Cseq supports mouse, human, and rat genomes. Therefore, the package requires one of the followings BSgenome packages to be installed; BSgenome. Mmusculus. UCSC.mm9.masked, BSgenome. Mmusculus. UCSC.mm10.masked, BSgenome. Hsapiens. UCSC.hg18.masked, BSgenome. Hsapiens. BSgenome. Rnorvegicus. UCSC.rn5.masked.

Loading the r3Cseq package into R.

```
> library(r3Cseq)
```

There are 2 data sets found in the package.

```
> data(Myb_prom_FL)
> data(Myb_prom_FB)
```

- 1. Myb_prom_FL, the 3C-seq data contains the aligned reads of the Myb promoter interactions signal in fetal liver. It was stored in the GRanges object processed by the Rsamtools package.
- 2. Myb_prom_FB, the 3C-seq data contains the aligned reads of Myb promoter interactions signal in fetal brain.

We will perform r3Cseq to discover interaction regions, which possibly interact with the promoter region of Myb gene in both fetal liver and brain ?.

3.1 r3Cseq object initialization

In this section, we will analyze 3C-seq data, which were derived from fetal liver (expressing high levels of Myb) and fetal brain (expression low level of Myb). The latter will be used as a negative control. More examples of r3Cseq data analysis can be found at the official r3Cseq website http://r3cseq.genereg.net. We firstly initialized the r3Cseq object.

```
> my3Cseq.obj<-new("r3Cseq",organismName='mm9',isControlInvolved=TRUE,
+ viewpoint_chromosome='chr10',viewpoint_primer_forward='TCTTTGTTTGATGGCATCTGTT',
+ viewpoint_primer_reverse='AAAGGGGAGGAGGAGGAGGGT',expLabel="Myb_prom_FL",
+ contrLabel="MYb_prom_FB",restrictionEnzyme='HindIII')

Definition of input parameters is described in the r3Cseq help page. We next add raw
reads from Myb_prom_FL and Myb_prom_FB to the existing my3Cseq.obj.

> expRawData(my3Cseq.obj)<-exp.GRanges
```

```
> contrRawData(my3Cseq.obj)<-contr.GRanges</pre>
```

Type my3Cseq.obj to see the r3Cseq object:

```
> my3Cseq.obj
An object of class "r3Cseq"
Slot "alignedReadsBamExpFile":
[1] ""
Slot "alignedReadsBamContrFile":
[1] ""
```

```
Slot "expLabel":
[1] "Myb_prom_FL"
Slot "contrLabel":
[1] "MYb_prom_FB"
Slot "expLibrarySize":
integer(0)
Slot "contrLibrarySize":
integer(0)
Slot "expReadLength":
integer(0)
Slot "contrReadLength":
integer(0)
Slot "expRawData":
GRanges object with 2478476 ranges and 0 metadata columns:
            seqnames
                              ranges strand
               <Rle>
                                      <Rle>
                           <IRanges>
        [1]
                chr1 3005887-3005930
        [2]
                chr1 3005887-3005930
                                          +
        [3]
                chr1 3005887-3005930
        [4]
                chr1 3005887-3005930
        [5]
                chr1 3005887-3005930
                                          +
                . . .
  [2478472]
                       12341-12384
                chrM
                       12341-12384
  [2478473]
                chrM
                                          +
  [2478474]
                chrM
                         12341-12384
  [2478475]
                chrM
                         12341-12384
                                          +
  [2478476]
                chrM
                         12341-12384
  seqinfo: 22 sequences from an unspecified genome; no seqlengths
Slot "contrRawData":
GRanges object with 2838018 ranges and 0 metadata columns:
            seqnames
                              ranges strand
               <Rle>
                           <IRanges>
                                      <Rle>
        [1]
                chr1 3046711-3046754
```

```
[2]
                  chr1 3046711-3046754
         [3]
                  chr1 3046711-3046754
         [4] chr1 3046711-3046754
[5] chr1 3402788-3402831
                                                +
         . . .
                  . . .
 [2838014] chrM 11987-12030

[2838015] chrM 11987-12030

[2838016] chrM 11987-12030

[2838017] chrM 11987-12030

[2838018] chrM 11990-12033
                                              +
                                              +
  -----
  seqinfo: 22 sequences from an unspecified genome; no seqlengths
Slot "organismName":
[1] "mm9"
Slot "restrictionEnzyme":
[1] "HindIII"
Slot "viewpoint_chromosome":
[1] "chr10"
Slot "viewpoint_primer_forward":
[1] "TCTTTGTTTGATGGCATCTGTT"
Slot "viewpoint_primer_reverse":
[1] "AAAGGGGAGAAGGAGGT"
Slot "expReadCount":
GRanges object with 0 ranges and 0 metadata columns:
   seqnames ranges strand
      <Rle> <IRanges> <Rle>
  seqinfo: no sequences
Slot "contrReadCount":
GRanges object with 0 ranges and 0 metadata columns:
   segnames ranges strand
      <Rle> <IRanges> <Rle>
  seqinfo: no sequences
```

```
Slot "expRPM":
GRanges object with 0 ranges and 0 metadata columns:
              ranges strand
   seqnames
      <Rle> <IRanges> <Rle>
  seqinfo: no sequences
Slot "contrRPM":
GRanges object with 0 ranges and 0 metadata columns:
   segnames
             ranges strand
      <Rle> <IRanges> <Rle>
  seqinfo: no sequences
Slot "expInteractionRegions":
GRanges object with 0 ranges and 0 metadata columns:
             ranges strand
   segnames
      <Rle> <IRanges> <Rle>
  seqinfo: no sequences
Slot "contrInteractionRegions":
GRanges object with 0 ranges and 0 metadata columns:
             ranges strand
   segnames
      <Rle> <IRanges> <Rle>
  seqinfo: no sequences
Slot "isControlInvolved":
[1] TRUE
```

3.2 Getting reads per restriction fragments/user defined window size

To get number of reads per restriction fragement, function getReadCountPerRestrictionFragment will be performed.

```
> getReadCountPerRestrictionFragment(my3Cseq.obj)
```

- [1] "Fragmenting genome by....HindIII...."
- [1] "Count processing in the experiment is done."
- [1] "Count processing in the control is done."

The package provides the function getReadCountPerWindow to count number of reads per non-overlapping window size defined by a user.

3.3 Normalization

We next perform normalization.

- > calculateRPM(my3Cseq.obj)
- [1] "Normal RPM calculation is done."

3.4 Getting interaction regions

After normalization, the getInteractions function will be performed.

- > getInteractions(my3Cseq.obj,fdr=0.05)
- [1] "Calculation is done. Use function 'expInteractionRegions' or 'contrInteractionRegions'

In order to see the result of interaction regions, Two functions expInteractionRegions and contrInteractionRegions need to be used to access the slot of r3Cseq object. To get the result of interaction regions for the experiment, expInteractionRegions will be performed.

- > fetal.liver.interactions<-expInteractionRegions(my3Cseq.obj)</pre>
- > fetal.liver.interactions

GRanges object with 19502 ranges and 5 metadata columns:

	seqnames	rang	ges	strand	nReads
	<rle></rle>	<irange< td=""><td>es></td><td><rle></rle></td><td> <integer></integer></td></irange<>	es>	<rle></rle>	<integer></integer>
[1]	chr10 3	3009255-30143	345	*	3
[2]	chr10 3	3067271-30681	193	*	122
[3]	chr10 3	3127452-31323	355	*	101
[4]	chr10 3	3132360-31340	33	*	70
[5]	chr10 3	3141247-31457	770	*	113
[19498]	chrY 1	229367-12312	265	*	2
[19499]	chrY 1	279671-12874	127	*	2
[19500]	chrY 1	293808-12955	589	*	137
[19501]	chrY 1	686797-16871	184	*	1 2
[19502]	chrY 2	2641919-26423	337	*	1
	RPMs	S Z	p	.value	q.value
	<numeric></numeric>	<pre>> <numeric></numeric></pre>	<nu< td=""><td>meric></td><td><numeric></numeric></td></nu<>	meric>	<numeric></numeric>
Г17	0.0605738	3 -0.1731100	1.	000000	1

```
[2] 11.8504107 0.1063353 0.915316
   [3] 9.0555762 0.0407624 0.967485
                                         1
   [4] 5.3727006 -0.0368364 1.000000
                                         1
   [5] 10.6253420 0.0673961 0.946266
                                         1
                                       . . .
                      . . .
                               . . .
                                        1
[19498] 0.0340050 -0.459528 1.000000
                                         1
[19499] 0.0340050 -0.459528 1.000000
[19500] 13.9779585  0.238250  0.811687
                                         1
[19501] 0.0340050 -0.459528 1.000000
                                      1
1
[19502] 0.0126735 -0.464697 1.000000
```

seqinfo: 21 sequences from an unspecified genome; no seqlengths

To get the result of interaction regions for the control, contrInteractionRegions will be performed.

- > fetal.brain.interactions<-contrInteractionRegions(my3Cseq.obj)
- > fetal.brain.interactions

GRanges object with 9684 ranges and 5 metadata columns:

	seqnames	rai	iges	strand	l nRea	ads
	<rle></rle>	<irang< td=""><td>ges></td><td><rle></rle></td><td>· <intege< td=""><td>er></td></intege<></td></irang<>	ges>	<rle></rle>	· <intege< td=""><td>er></td></intege<>	er>
[1]	chr10	3019822-3022	2796	k	< 4	125
[2]	chr10	3063618-3067	7025	k	· [525
[3]	chr10	3087994-3096	5004	k	: ا	309
[4]	chr10	3138895-3143	1226	k	·	750
[5]	chr10	3148290-3157	7485	k	·	4
					•	
[9680]	chrY	1686797-1687	7184	k	٠	1
[9681]	chrY	1690876-1693	1262	k	٠	1
[9682]	chrY	2371312-239	1988	k	٠	1
[9683]	chrY	2884699-2887	7174	k	٠	1
[9684]	chrY	2890136-2899	9310	k	٠	1
	RPMs	S Z	p.	.value	q.value	
	<numeric></numeric>	<pre>> <numeric></numeric></pre>	<nur< td=""><td>meric></td><td><numeric></numeric></td><td></td></nur<>	meric>	<numeric></numeric>	
[1]	44.851838	0.2283635	0.8	319364	1	
[2]	59.109041	0.3818504	0.7	702572	1	
[3]	29.577233	0.0709858	0.9	943409	1	
[4]	94.187285	0.7229188	0.4	469730	1	
[5]	0.101139	9 -0.3636379	1.0	000000	1	
[9680]	0.0165381	L -0.472889		1	1	
[9681]	0.0165381	-0.472889		1	1	

```
      [9682]
      0.0165381
      -0.472889
      1
      1

      [9683]
      0.0165381
      -0.472889
      1
      1

      [9684]
      0.0165381
      -0.472889
      1
      1
```

seqinfo: 21 sequences from an unspecified genome; no seqlengths

3.5 Getting the viewpoint information

To see the viewpoint information, getViewpoint function can be used. getViewpoint will return the RangedData object of the viewpoint information.

```
> viewpoint<-getViewpoint(my3Cseq.obj)
> viewpoint

GRanges object with 1 range and 0 metadata columns:
```

seqinfo: 1 sequence from an unspecified genome; no seqlengths

4 Visualization of 3C-seq data

r3Cseq package provides visualization functions. These functions are plotOverviewInteractions, plotInteractionsNearViewpoint, plotInteractionsPerChromosome, and PlotDomainogramNearViewpoint

4.1 The overview plot of interactions

plotOverviewInteractions function shows the overview of interaction regions distributed across genome.

> plotOverviewInteractions(my3Cseq.obj)

4.2 Plot of interactions in cis

plotInteractionsNearViewpoint function shows the zoom in of interaction regions located close to the viewpoint.

> plotInteractionsNearViewpoint(my3Cseq.obj)

3C-seq distribution of interaction regions (q-value <= 0.05)

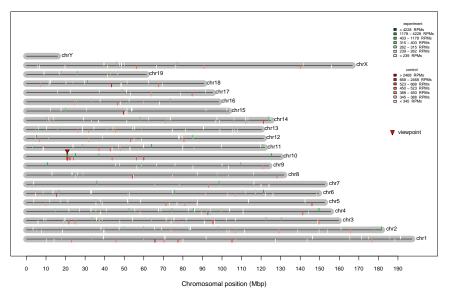


Figure 3: Distribution of interaction regions across genome

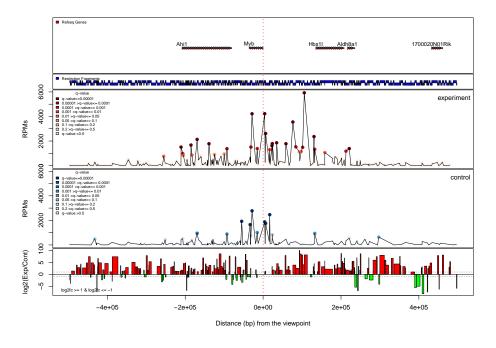


Figure 4: Zoom in interaction regions near the viewpoint

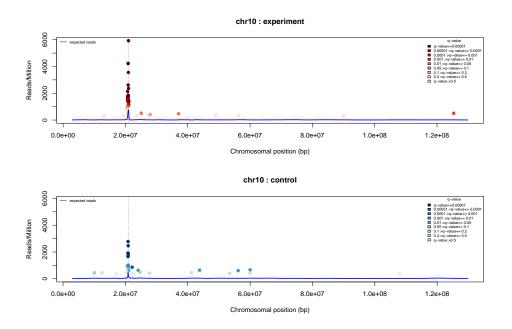


Figure 5: Distribution of interaction regions across chromosome 10

4.3 Plot of interactions in each selected chromosome

plotInteractionsPerChromosome function shows the interaction regions found in the chromosome 10.

> plotInteractionsPerChromosome(my3Cseq.obj,"chr10")

4.4 Domainogram of interactions

plotDomainogramNearViewpoint function shows the domainogram of interactions found in cis. This function may takes several minutes to produce domainograms. We therefore, skip this command to produce plots for the vignette. You can see the example of the plots and find more details at http://r3Cseq.genereg.net.

> #plotDomainogramNearViewpoint(my3Cseq.obj)

4.5 Associate interaction signals to the Refseq genes

getExpInteractionsInRefseq and getContrInteractionsInRefseq functions can be used to detect the list of genes that contain significant interaction signals in their proximity.

- > detected_genes<-getExpInteractionsInRefseq(my3Cseq.obj)
- > head(detected_genes)

	${\tt chromosome}$	gene_name	${\tt total_nReads}$	total_RPMs
155	chr10	Myb	43217	20539.955
129	chr10	Hbs1l	34310	16031.869
24	chr10	Ahi1	29738	11912.850
121	chr4	Gm5506	15074	3791.479
28	chr10	Aldh8a1	9422	3633.383
123	chr4	Gm5801	12764	3202.235

4.6 Export interactions to the bedGraph format

export3Cseq2bedGraph function exports all interactions from the RangedData to the bedGraph format, which simply upload to the UCSC genome browser.

> #export3Cseq2bedGraph(my3Cseq.obj)

4.7 Summary report

generate3CseqReport function generates the summary report from r3Cseq analysis results. The report contains a pdf file for all plots and text files of interaction regions. This function may takes several minutes to produce the report. We therefore, skip this command during the vignette creation.

> #generate3CseqReport(my3Cseq.obj)

5 Working with replicates

The example of how to work with replicats can be found at http://r3cseq.genereg.net/.

6 r3Cseq website

We have developed the website http://r3cseq.genereg.net. The website provides more details of r3Cseq analysis pipeline. The example data sets and the current version of r3Cseq package can be downloaded from the website.

7 Session Info

> sessionInfo()

R version 4.5.0 RC (2025-04-04 r88126)

Platform: x86_64-pc-linux-gnu

Running under: Ubuntu 24.04.2 LTS

Matrix products: default

BLAS: /home/biocbuild/bbs-3.21-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 LC_COLLATE=C
- [5] LC_MONETARY=C LC_MESSAGES=en_US.UTF-8
- [7] LC_PAPER=en_US.UTF-8 LC_NAME=C
- [9] LC_ADDRESS=C LC_TELEPHONE=C
- [11] LC_MEASUREMENT=en_US.UTF-8 LC_IDENTIFICATION=C

time zone: America/New_York
tzcode source: system (glibc)

attached base packages:

- [1] splines stats4 stats graphics grDevices
- [6] utils datasets methods base

other attached packages:

- [1] RSQLite_2.3.9
- [2] BSgenome.Mmusculus.UCSC.mm9.masked_1.3.99
- [3] BSgenome.Mmusculus.UCSC.mm9_1.4.0
- [4] BSgenome_1.76.0
- [5] BiocIO_1.18.0
- [6] r3Cseq_1.54.0
- [7] qvalue_2.40.0
- [8] VGAM_1.1-13
- [9] rtracklayer_1.68.0
- [10] Rsamtools_2.24.0
- [11] Biostrings_2.76.0
- [12] XVector_0.48.0
- [13] GenomicRanges_1.60.0
- [14] GenomeInfoDb_1.44.0
- [15] IRanges_2.42.0
- [16] S4Vectors_0.46.0
- [17] BiocGenerics_0.54.0
- [18] generics_0.1.3

loaded via a namespace (and not attached):

```
[1] DBI_1.2.3
                                  bitops_1.0-9
[3] tcltk_4.5.0
                                  rlang_1.1.6
[5] magrittr_2.0.3
                                  matrixStats_1.5.0
[7] compiler_4.5.0
                                  vctrs_0.6.5
[9] reshape2_1.4.4
                                  stringr_1.5.1
[11] pkgconfig_2.0.3
                                  crayon_1.5.3
[13] fastmap_1.2.0
                                  UCSC.utils_1.4.0
[15] bit_4.6.0
                                  cachem_1.1.0
[17] jsonlite_2.0.0
                                  blob_1.2.4
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