

2.3: The very short history of the S and R

R is the statistical environment. It was created as a freeware analog of commercial S-Plus which in turn was an implementation of the S language concept. The S language was first created in 1976 in Bell Labs, and its name was inspired by famous C language (from same Bell Labs). S-Plus started in the end of 1980s, and as many statistical software, was seriously expensive. In August 1993, two New Zealand scientists, Robert Gentleman and Ross Ihaka, decided to make R (this name was, in turn, inspired by S). The idea was to make independent realization of S language concept which would differ from S-Plus in some details (for example, in the way it works with local and global variables).

Practically, R is not an imitation of S-Plus but the new “branch” in the family of S software. In 1990s, R was developing slowly, but when users finally realized its truly amazing opportunities (like the system of R extensions—*packages*, or *libraries*) and started to migrate from other statistical systems, R started to grow exponentially. Now, there are thousands of R packages, and R is used almost everywhere! Without any exaggeration, *R is now the most important software tool for data analysis*.

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