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Research and Statistical Support University of North Texas

RSS Matters

Tinn-R: A Convenient Script Editor for R on the Win32 Platform

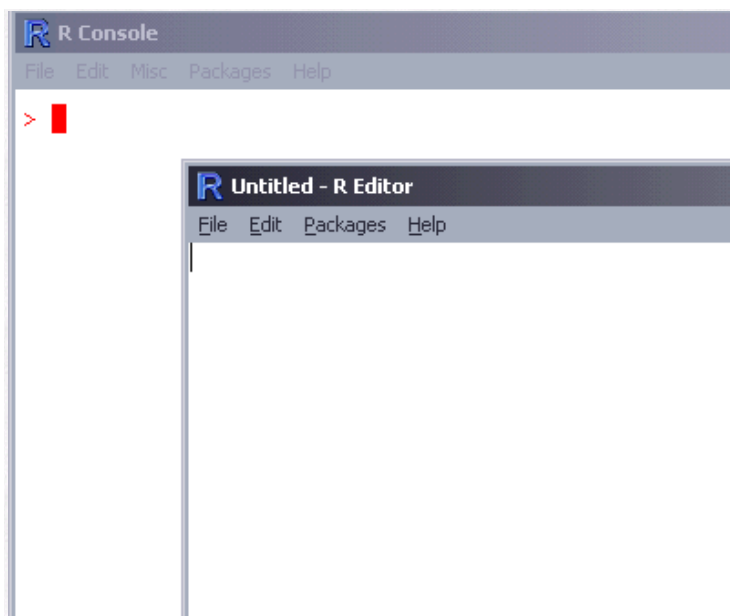
Link to the last RSS article here: [RSS FAQ](#) - Ed.

By [Dr Rich Herrington](#), ACS Research and Statistical Support Services Consultant

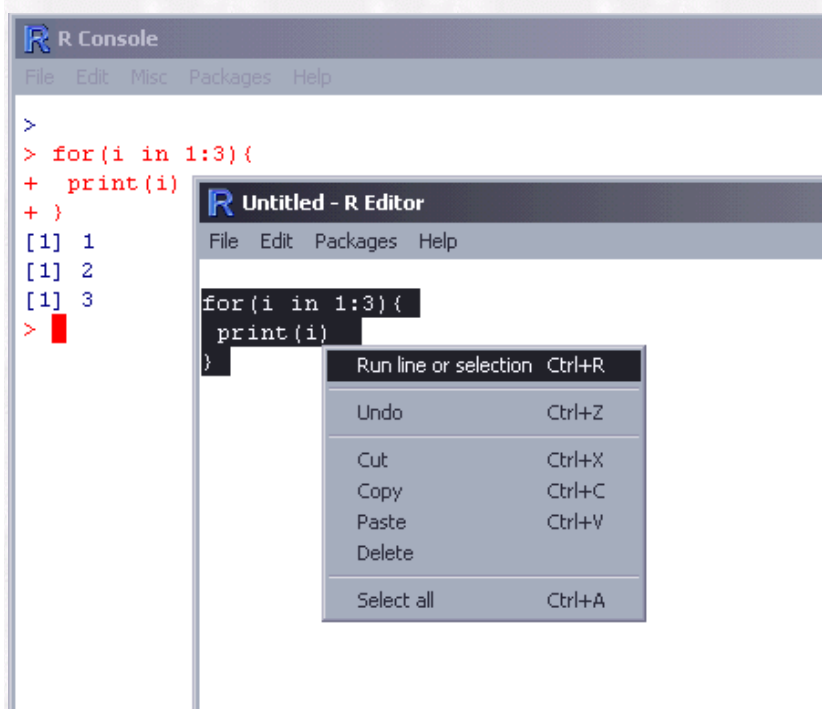
The S language was designed to translate statistical ideas into software implementations quickly and faithfully. In recognition of the success of this endeavor, the [Association for Computing Machinery \(ACM\)](#) presented their prestigious [Software System Award](#) to [John Chambers](#), the principal developer of the S language. The implementation of S that we will concern ourselves with here is the GNU version of S - [R](#). R is a cross-platform statistical programming environment that is increasingly evolving into a system that is closely integrated with the underlying operating system environments on which R is maintained. On Unix and Linux platforms, many IDE applications are available to choose from (IDE - [integrated development environment](#) or source code editor). Text based editors can be used for editing the R scripts: [Emacs](#) is one such editor; [Vi](#) is another popular editor for UNIX based systems. However, an IDE provides further enhancements such as color coding of syntax; a pager or execution shell that allows concurrent compiling and debugging of source code; the ability to paste in code templates for the different language constructs (e.g. loops; case-statements, etc); to name a few. Here, we discuss **Tinn-R**, a Win32 based GNU project (see [SourceForge project page](#)) that serves some of the purposes of an IDE for the R console on the Windows platform.

The R Script Editor

R comes with a built in script editor (from the R console go to the **File-New Script** menu entry). Invoking the script editor produces the following:



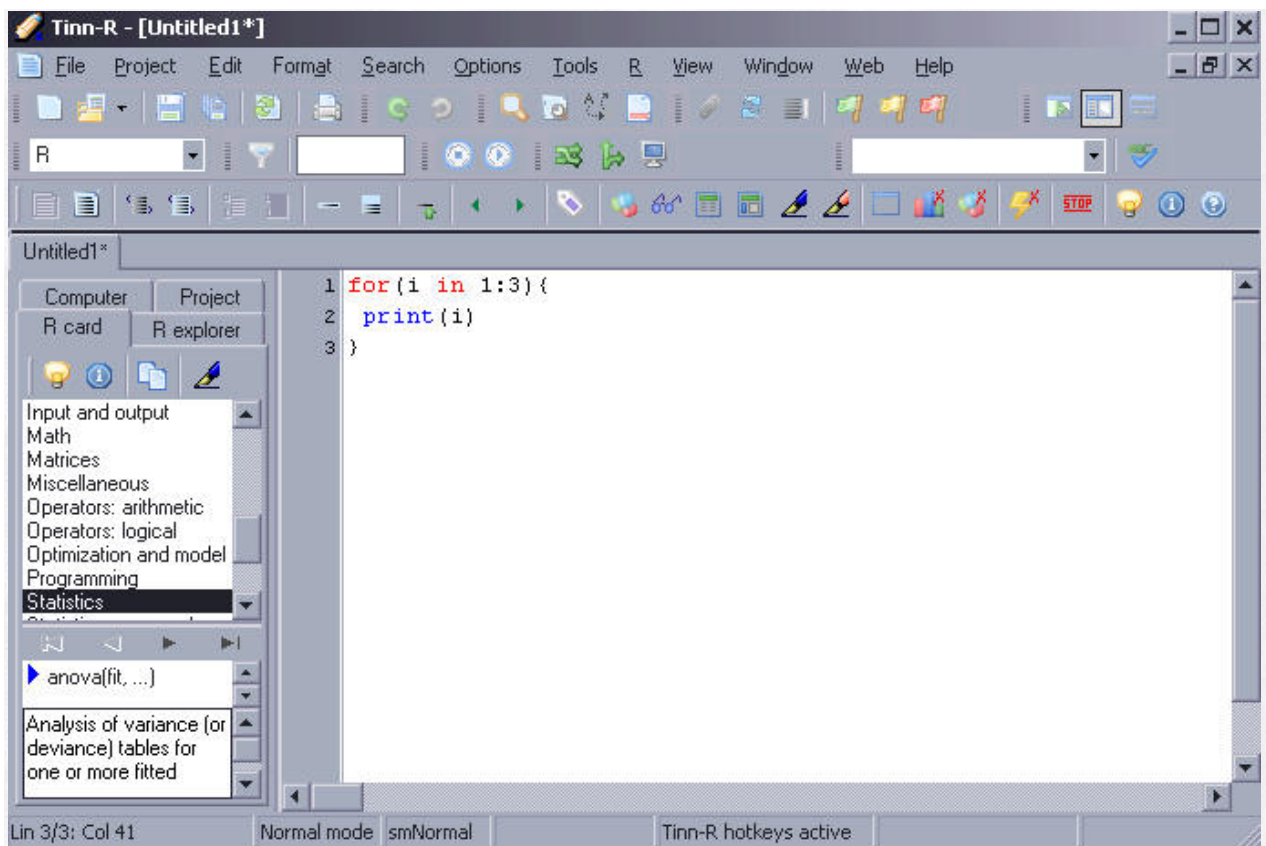
To use this editor, a script is typed into the R Editor (or a script file is loaded). Then a user selects the R script in the R editor window (i.e. mouse select and drag operation of the relevant R script). Finally, a right mouse click and selection of "**Run line or selection**" produces output in the R console window. For example, the red and blue output in the R console is produced below:



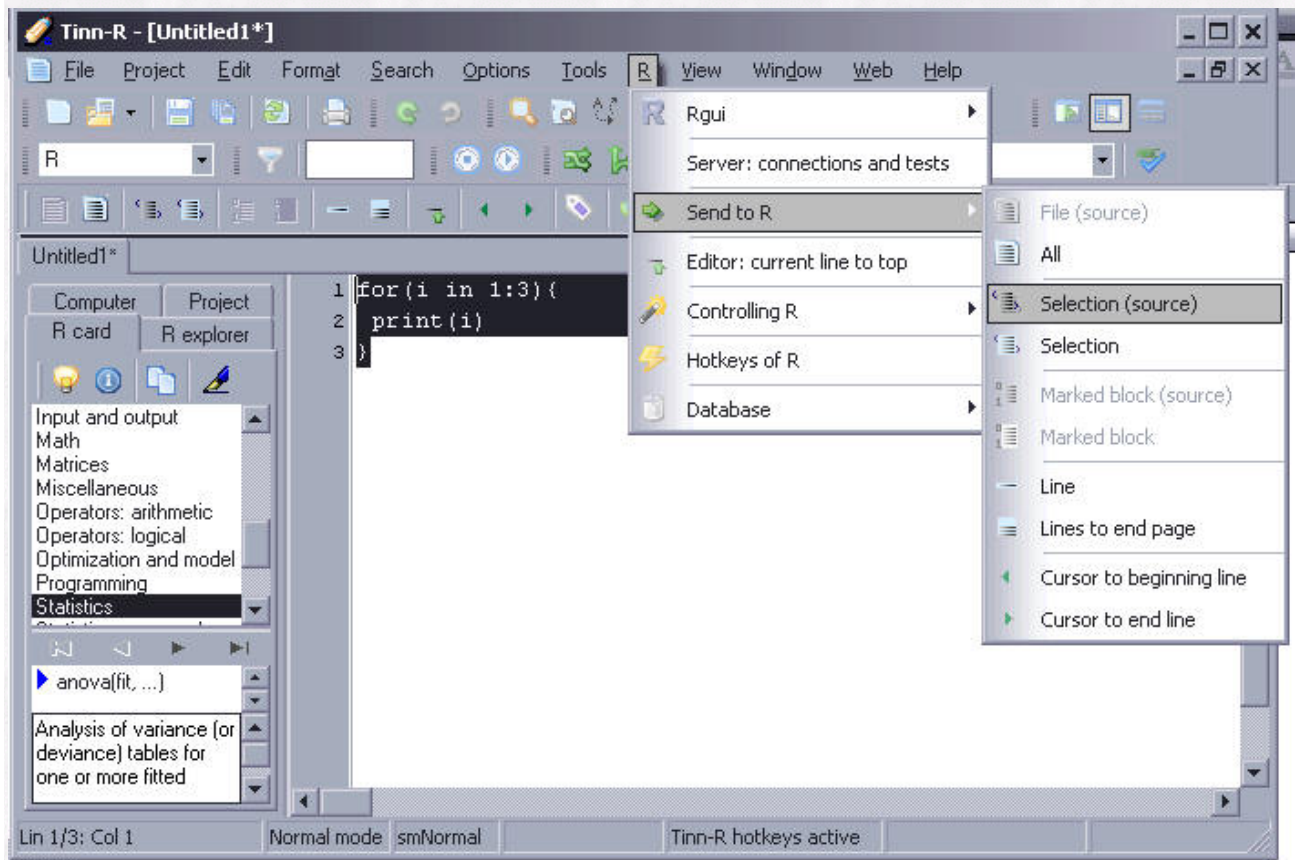
The R editor that is integrated into the R Windows installation is a fairly basic and feature-less editor - a far cry from an IDE. However, the Tinn-R editor is an indispensable helper tool for users of R on the Windows platform.

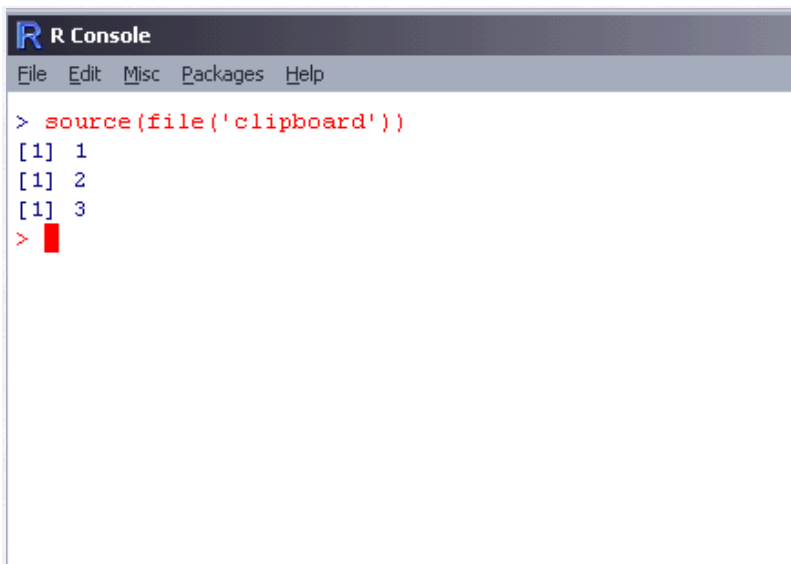
Tinn-R

The Tinn is an editor under development under Borland - Delphi 5. Tinn-R is licensed under GPL (GNU Public License) and can be downloaded from the [SourceForge project Page](#). Tinn-R contains enhancements to allow syntax highlighting of S language. Additionally, Tinn-R interacts with the R console and submits code in part or in whole to R directly:



For example, the following produces output in the R console:



A screenshot of the R Console window. The title bar reads "R Console" and the menu bar includes "File", "Edit", "Misc", "Packages", and "Help". The console shows the command `> source(file('clipboard'))` being executed, followed by three lines of output: `[1] 1`, `[1] 2`, and `[1] 3`. A red cursor is visible on the line following the last output.

```
R Console
File Edit Misc Packages Help

> source(file('clipboard'))
[1] 1
[1] 2
[1] 3
>
```

Some of the general features of Tinn-R are: syntax highlighting for R code as well as many as 20 other languages; bracket matching; project management (with multiple files); copy code with syntax coloring in RTF, HTML or TeX; and Tinn-R can act as a TeX compile shell. A major advantage of using Tinn-R is that if R crashes (which does happen rarely), one doesn't lose all of the R code that has been written but not yet saved to file. Another advantage is that one can return to Tinn-R and continue writing R code while is performing computations. A nice tutorial on downloading, installing R and Tinn-R can be found at: <http://mcs.une.edu.au/~Rguide/Rnotes.pdf> (a [local copy is housed here at RSS](#)).

Special Announcements: RSS will be maintaining a blog devoted to research and statistics related news - [RSS-Blogs](#); Additionally, RSS will be maintaining a Zope/Plone website devoted organizing communities and resources involved in survey research - [RSS-Surveys](#).

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