Getting Started with RStudio Cloud

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RStudio Cloud

RStudio has developed an alternative to running RStudio on your own computer: you can run it from the cloud! All you need is an RStudio Cloud account, which is free (they probably will eventually charge for time used but not in the immediate future). So those of you in the class who never got your own computer to work with R and RStudio and were not able to get knitting to pdf files working, RStudio Cloud is your savior while you are working from remote locations.

Today I went through the process of setting up an account, uploading a homework help folder (zipped) and producing a complete pdf file. It was amazingly simple. When you establish an account you automatically have a "workspace" which can contain a large number of individual project folders. You use the web interface just like you were running RStudio on your own computer. You open a project folder, double click on the .Rproj file and RStudio starts up and you use it just as if it were installed on your own computer.

Activating RStudio Cloud

Here are the steps you should follow:

Create an RStudio Cloud Account

1. In your web browser go to https://rstudio.cloud and click on the big green "Get Started" Button

2. Fill in the `Email Address`, `Password`, `First Name` and `Last Name` fields and click on the blue "Sign up" button. I did not try the other two options: "Sign up with Google" or "Sign up with GitHub" but they could be useful alternatives if you know what you are doing.

3. When you log in you will most likely either already be in a new project folder called "Untitled Project" or you will be in "Your Workspace" where you will see the new project folder called "Untitled Project".

4. Click on the project folder if you are not already in it. At the top of the window where it says "Workspace -> Untitled Project" you can rename the project by clicking on the project name and typing a new name.

Install R Packages Needed for the Course

5. Open another browser window and navigate to the course website: http://psych.colorado.edu/~lharvey/P4165/P4165_2021_1_Spring/Main_Page_2021_Spring_PSYC4165.html and from there download the course R packages installer by clicking on the `R Packages Installer (optional)` just above the `Lab Material` table.

6. Switch back to RStudio Cloud and click on the `Files` tab of the lower right pane, select `Upload` and navigate to your download folder on you computer and and select the R-script file "R Packages Installer for Students.R" that you just downloaded.

7. RStudio Cloud will upload that file into your new project folder. Click the `Source` tab in the upper left pane. The script will download and install all the packages that you might need for the course. It will take about 10 minutes, so be patient and wait for the script to complete (the > prompt will appear in the console). Near the end it will ask for additional installations: Enter 1 (All) and it will finish in a couple more minutes.

Work on Homework and Knit Away

8. Now you can upload your homework help folder (first zip it on your computer) into your RStudio Cloud project and navigate into that homework folder. Click on the homework `Rproj` project file and edit the homework markdown file and knit it. I just tested it and it works.

9. When the knitted appears in your browser, save it as pdf onto your computer.

10. On Safari, the browser I use, I had to enable `pop-up windows` in order to use RStudio Cloud and when I knit, I get a dialog box saying I should try again. When I click Try Again, the knitted pdf appears.

11. It may be that each time you create a new RStudio Cloud project by clicking on the green New Project you will have to install the extra packages by running the Install Package script in the new project. But you should only have to do it once for each project.