

Install R Commander

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Introduction

For beginning (bio)statistics students who need R, I recommend use of the graphic user interface, GUI, [R Commander](#). R Commander is an R package. It's a large package, and requires installation of many additional packages. Generally, these additional required packages are also installed with the installation of R Commander.

This page provides a guide about how to install R Commander onto your computer (LDE). To use R Commander, please see [Chapter 1.1 – A quick look at R and R Commander](#). You must have R installed and working correctly on your computer before proceeding to install the R Commander package. Click here to get the [Install R guide](#).

Note 1: If you plan to run R in the Cloud, you cannot install the R Commander package, which must be part of a local development environment.

Installation guides quickly become outdated. This page last updated 12 August 2025 and describes working installation protocols at that time. Like all secondary guides to software installation, I recommend reading installation notes by the coders who provide the software. For R Commander, see [R Commander Installation Notes](#), by Dr John Fox.

For your convenience, the example R code I run is listed below

```
myX <- c(1,2,3,4)
myY <- c(5,10,15,20)
plot(myY, myX)
```

For BI311, we also use R Commander

R Commander is a package that adds function to R; it provides a familiar point-and-click interface to R, which allows the user to access functions via a drop-down menu system (Fox 2017). Thus, instead of writing code to run a statistical test, `Rcmdr` provides a simple menu driven approach to help students select and apply the correct statistical test. R Commander also provides access to `Rmarkdown` and a menu approach to rendering reports.

RStudio is another way to interact with R, and compared to R Commander, is designed to help R programmers with a useful environment to manage files, generate reports, and work on R code. I continue to use R Commander in teaching because it emphasizes statistics and note coding. One advantage of R Commander for learning how to code with R is that code is reproduced from student's selections in the drop-down menu options.

Note 2: A couple of years ago the folks at Posit, who publish RStudio, introduced the IDE [Positron](#). I won't comment about this IDE, but point interested readers to a page at R-Bloggers: [Positron vs RStudio – is it time to switch?](#)

Install R Commander

To install R Commander, enter the following code at the R prompt. See Figure 1 below for a screenshot of the R Commander interface.

```
install.packages("Rcmdr")
```

In addition, download and install the plugin

```
install.packages("RcmdrMisc")
```

Note: You can combine requests as follows

```
install.packages("Rcmdr", "RcmdrMisc", dependencies=TRUE)
```

Adding “dependencies=TRUE” will also install other packages that Rcmdr needs (which would get downloaded once you start Rcmdr for the first time).

If you have not set a mirror site, you’ll be prompted to do so before you can download and install packages. I recommend 0-Cloud as default mirror site. Be advised: because our university shares a single public IP address, you may experience download delays if we all try to use the same mirror site at the same time.

To start R Commander, load the packages via the `library()` command.

```
library(Rcmdr)
```

Follow installation prompts. You can skip adding the “otools,” for now. However, Rcmdr will prompt you to install otools every time you start, so go ahead and install them at your convenience.

MacOS users: To improve Rcmdr performance you must turn off “[app nap](#).” From Rcmdr, go to Tools, then select “Manage Mac OS X app nap for R.app ...” Once you select “off” (click OK to apply), restart Rcmdr, the delay will be removed. Windows 11 folks don’t have to contend with nap.

Test Rcmdr

Figure 30 shows a basic R Commander session. Enter code in the **script window** (1), click on the Submit button to run the code, and results show up in the **output window** (2). Figure 30 shows R Commander opened in a [MDI](#).

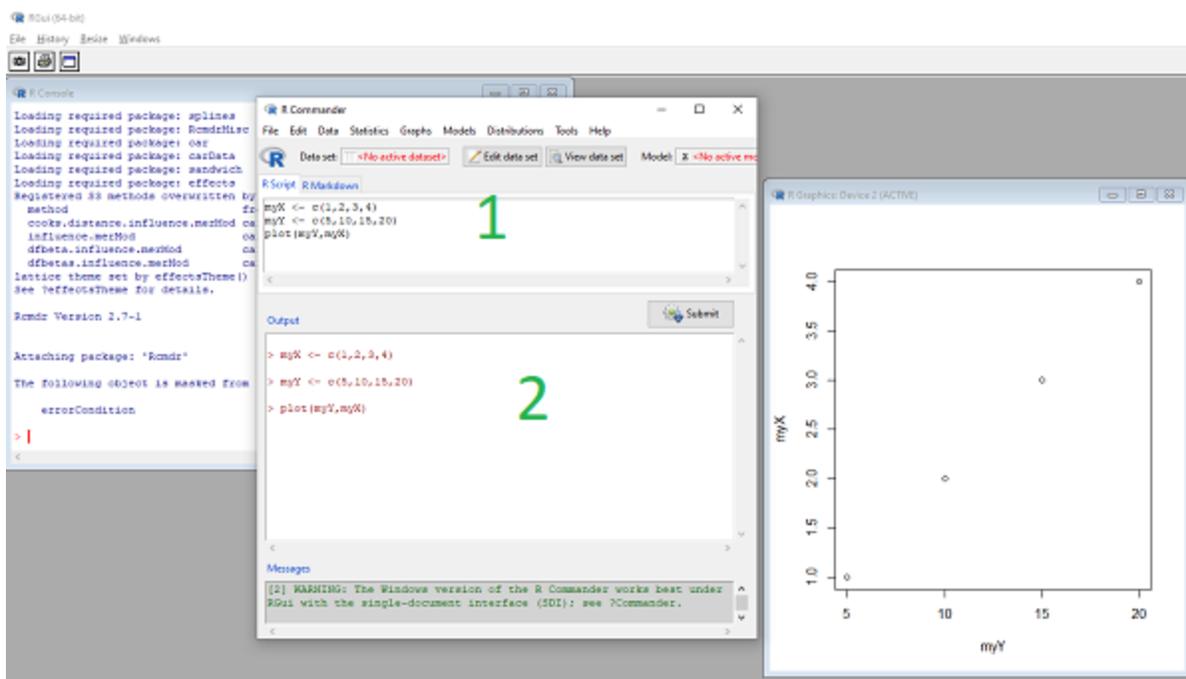


Figure 30. Screenshot of basic R Commander session on WinPC.

Click on R Markdown tab, edit (e.g., replace with your own title and name), then click on the Generate Report button to create a pdf of your work, default file name is RcmdrMarkdown.pdf (Fig 31). If you do not have pandoc and LaTeX properly installed, then only an HTML document will be available as an option.

My first report

Mike

2021-04-16

```
> myX <- c(1,2,3,4)
> myY <- c(5,10,15,20)
> plot(myY,myX)
```

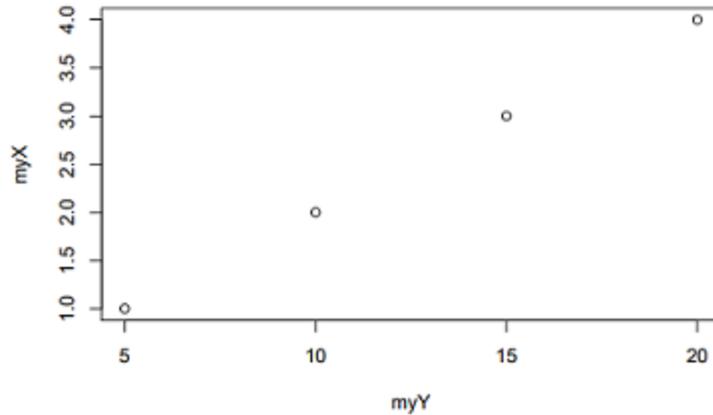


Figure 31. Screenshot of portion of *RcmdrMarkdown.pdf*.

Although I don't recommend this practice, you can run R Commander from within RStudio. The downside is that multiple windows may be generated (Fig 32). On Windows pc some of this can be controlled by selecting the SDI windowing option as opposed to the default MDI windowing option.

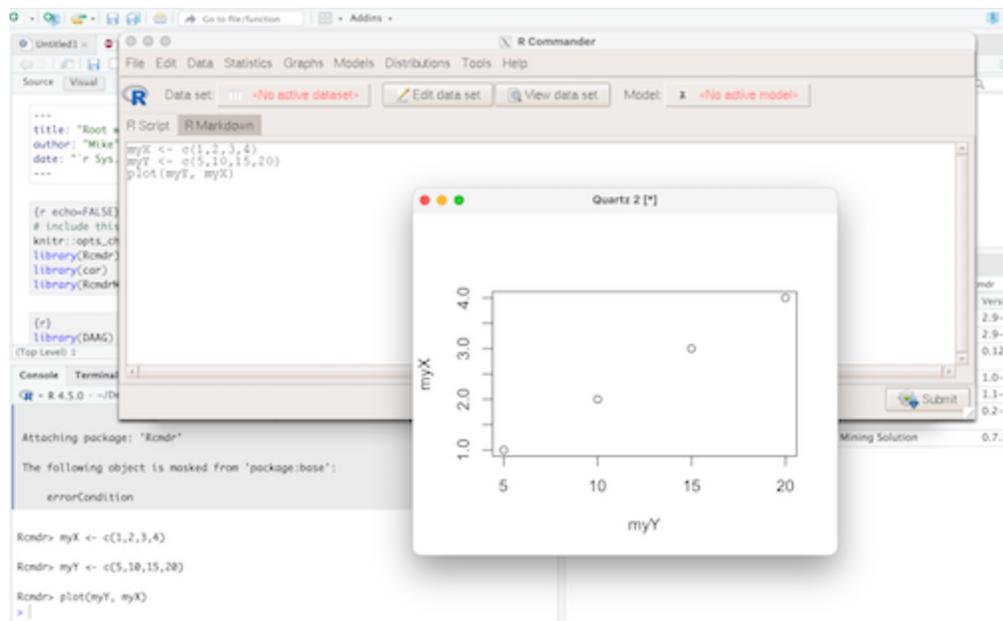


Figure 32. Screenshot of basic R Commander session in RStudio on macOS.

Add pandoc and LaTeX support

To complete your R Commander installation you may want to add additional document handling software, [LaTeX](#) and [pandoc](#). R Commander already contains R Markdown, but these additional software allow you to take advantage of “[high-quality typesetting](#).”

Note 4: BI-311 students: It's not necessary to install pandoc and LaTeX. With the included RMarkdown options in R Commander, the default page generated is an html (web) document, which will be displayed in the default browser. BI-311 reports are submitted as pdf files — therefore, it's a straightforward to save the html page as a pdf within the browser. For example, Google Chrome select Print, then select save as pdf for the destination.

In Rcmdr, select **Tools** from the menu, then **Install Auxillary Software**. Click OK, which will open links in your default browser to download pages for LaTeX and pandoc. Download the files, follow the installation instructions for pandoc and LaTeX, then restart R and Rcmdr.

Here are direct links to the files, plus installation notes

LaTeX — links verified 27 August 2025

MikTeX from <https://miktex.org/download>:

- for Windows systems, select `basic-miktex-24.1-x64.exe`
- for MacOS, select `miktex-22.1-darwin-x86_64.dmg`

pandoc — links verified 12 August 2025

Windows 11

https://github.com/jgm/pandoc/releases/download/3.7.0.2/pandoc-3.7.0.2-windows-x86_64.msi

MacOS

ARM CPU (M1 – M4): <https://github.com/jgm/pandoc/releases/download/3.7.0.2/pandoc-3.7.0.2-1-arm64.deb>

INTEL CPU: https://github.com/jgm/pandoc/releases/download/3.7.0.2/pandoc-3.7.0.2-x86_64-macOS.pkg

/MD