

Bioc Technical Advisory Board Minutes

4 September 2025

Present: Michael Lawrence, Vince Carey, Charlotte Soneson, Hanxia Li, Helena Crowell, Lori Kern, Levi Waldron, Jacques Serizay, Davide Risso, Laurent Gatto, Kasper Hansen, Ludwig Geistlinger, Tim Triche, Andres Wokaty, Rafael Irizarry, Henrik Bengtsson, Hervé Pagès, Stephanie Hicks, Dario Righelli, Alexandru Mahmoud

Absent: Wolfgang Huber

:00 - :04 Welcome

- Suggestion: Have a rotating schedule to give each TAB member 15 minutes at one meeting to present something of interest to them.
- In the TAB nomination form/when new members are invited to join, communicate clearly that meetings happen on the first Thursday of the month at noon Eastern US time (and that for the moment this is not likely to change).

:04 - :05 Previous [minutes](#) approved.

:06 - :08 Our Windows build processes have ended due to loss of Azure access.

- NIH support is pending.
- There is a shelved windows machine in JS2.
- How many licenses are needed for a reasonable turnaround?

:09 - :25 Invited speaker: Hanxia Li on R coding assistant (ChatR).

- [Slides](#)
- <https://github.com/freedom12321/chatR-GSOC>

:25 - :30 Discussion of invited talk.

- Considered comparing to tools that are good at coding tools specifically? E.g. Claude Sonnet, Claude Opus? Yes, plan to make more comparisons.
- Confidence intervals/uncertainty quantification for performance estimates?
- Is it publicly available? Yes (see link above).
- What about privacy? Is information sent to third-party tools? Trying to enable keeping everything locally.
- What if you're heavily relying on local packages (not on CRAN)? Would ChatR be able to learn from and give suggestions using these private packages? Right now mainly works with CRAN snapshot, but the pipeline can be extended to local/private packages by indexing their manuals, vignettes or source code. Definitely feasible and exciting direction on the roadmap.
- Using a RAG store with vignettes, manuals etc is great, but requires some thinking about how to make sure the RAG store stays up to date.

- Re: evaluation, you have some ground truth e.g. from Bioconductor support site or StackOverflow that could be leveraged to assess how close model answers come to expert/top-voted answers on a user forum. <https://github.com/vjcitn/biocSuppAPI> might be helpful for programmatically pulling down questions and answers from the support site.
- For the evaluation, have not yet tried allowing GPT to search the web.

:31 - :50 Governance

- Discussion of new draft charter.
- If necessary, have a special call with La Piana as needed by board members.
- Comments:
 - Learn from how R (and other open-source projects) is doing things. R Foundation. R Core is not formally defined. R Consortium well organized (supported by the Linux Foundation).
 - What are the "core aspects" that we need to "control".
 - Would be useful to think about what conflicts could happen.
 - The SAB is a requirement for the U24 - somewhat independent of the open source project governance.

:50 - :51 Updates from CAB and working groups.

- CAB
 - Helena was a guest speaker for Spatial Transcriptomics.
 - Kozo is working on documenting the new event calendar and moderation. Eventually will be looking for volunteers.
 - BiocConference Updates.
 - EuroBioC2025 registration deadline.
 - BiocAsia Workshop Stream as ABACBS.
 - Reminder about elections.
- Hervé's investigation of BLAS.
 - [BLAS benchmarks](#) (work in progress) - also see the [Books now being built on macOS in devel?](#) topic on zulip (bioc-builds channel) for some preliminary results of experimenting with alternate BLAS for building the OSCA book (plus some concerns about things going wrong on Mac).

:51 - :60 Discussion of TAB nominees (voting, non-nominated TAB members only).

Appendix

R Foundation

- Governance:
 - Board and Auditors: <https://www.r-project.org/foundation/board.html>
 - R Foundation Membership: <https://www.r-project.org/foundation/members.html>
- Statutes of "The R Foundation for Statistical Computing" (2024-01-22): <https://www.r-project.org/foundation/Rfoundation-statutes.pdf>

R Consortium

- Governance:
 - Board of Directors, Infrastructure Steering Committee, Leadership:
<https://r-consortium.org/about/governance.html>
- R Consortium By Laws (2024-07-09):
<https://r-consortium.org/rc-docs/R-Consortium-Bylaws-7-9-2024.pdf>
- R Consortium Infrastructure Steering Committee (ISC) Charter (2024-08-13):
<https://r-consortium.org/governance/isc-charter.html>
- R Consortium Marketing Committee (2021-10-27):
<https://r-consortium.org/rc-docs/R-Consortium-Marketing-Committee-Charter-2021-10-27.pdf>