Introduction to the Bioconductor marray package: Classes structure component

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1 Overview

This document provides a tutorial on the class structures used in the marray package. The marray packages contains basic class definitions and associated methods for pre— and post—normalization intensity data for batches of arrays. To load the marray package in your R session, type library(marray). As with any R package, detailed information on functions, classes and methods can be obtained in the help files. For instance, to view the help file for the class marrayRaw in a

browser, use help.start() followed by? marrayRaw or alternately the dyadic class? marrayRaw. Furthermore, se demonstrate the functionality of this collection of R packages using gene expression data from the Swirl zebrafish experiment. To load the Swirl dataset, use data(swirl), and to view a description of the experiments and data, type? swirl. Getting started:

2 Object-oriented programming

Microarray experiments generate large and complex multivariate datasets, which contain textual information on probe sequences (e.g. gene names, annotation, layout parameters) and mRNA target samples (e.g. description of samples, protocols, hybridization and scanning conditions), in addition to the primary fluorescence intensity data. Efficient and coordinated access to these various types of data is an important aspect of computing with microarray data. To facilitate the management of microarray data at different stages of the analysis process, a collection of microarray specific data structures or classes were defined (see also the Bioconductor package Biobase for microarray classes and methods for normalized data). The packages rely on the class/method mechanism provided by John Chambers' R methods package, which allows object-oriented programming in R. Broadly speaking, classes reflect how we think of certain objects and what information these objects should contain. Classes are defined in terms of slots which contain the relevant data for the application at hand. Methods define how a particular function should behave depending on the class of its arguments and allow computations to be adapted to particular classes, that is, data types. For example, a microarray object should contain intensity data as well as information on the probe sequences spotted on the array and the target samples hybridized to it. Useful methods for microarray classes include specializations of printing, subsetting, and plotting functions for the types of data represented by these classes.

The use of classes and methods greatly reduces the complexity of handling microarray data, by automatically coordinating various sources of information associated with microarray experiments.

3 Microarray classes

The raw data from a microarray experiment are the image files produced by the scanner; these are typically pairs of 16-bit tagged image file format (TIFF) files, one for each fluorescent dye (images usually range in size from a few megabytes (MB) to 10 or 20 MB for high resolution scans). Image analysis is required to extract foreground and background fluorescence intensity measurements for each spotted DNA sequence.

Here, we begin our analysis of microarray data with the output files of image processing packages such as GenePix or Spot. In what follows, red and green background intensities are denoted by R_b and G_b , respectively, and red and green foreground intensities by R_f and G_f , respectively. Background-corrected red and green fluorescence intensities are denoted by R and G, and M denotes the corresponding base-2 log-ratio, $M = \log_2 R/G$.

3.1 marrayLayout class

The term $array\ layout$ refers to the layout of DNA probe sequences on the array, as determined by the printing process. In general, probe sequences are spotted on a glass microscope slide using an arrayer which has an $ngr \times ngc$ print—head, that is, a regular array of ngr rows and ngc columns of print—tips or pins. The resulting microarrays are thus partitioned into an $ngr \times ngc$ grid matrix. The terms grid, sector, and print—tip—group are used interchangeably in the microarray literature. Each grid consists of an $nsr \times nsc$ spot matrix that was printed with a single print—tip. DNA probes are usually printed sequentially from a collection of 384—well plates (or 96—well plates), thus, in some sense, plates are proxies for time of printing. In addition, a number of control probe sequences may be spotted on the array for normalization or other calibration purposes. The term $array\ batch$ is used to refer to a collection of arrays with the same layout. Keeping track of spot layout information is essential for quality assessment of fluorescent intensity data and for normalization purposes.

Important layout parameters are the dimensions of the spot and grid matrices, and, for each probe on the array, its grid matrix and spot matrix coordinates. In addition, it is useful to keep track of gene names, plate origin of the probes, and information on the spotted control sequences (e.g. probe sequences which should have equal abundance in the two target samples, such as housekeeping genes). The class marrayLayout was designed to keep track of these various layout parameters and contains the following slots (the classes of the slots are listed below the slot names)

> getClassDef("marrayLayout")

Slots:

Name: maNgr maNgc maNsr maNsc maNspots maSub Class: numeric numeric numeric numeric logical

Name: maPlate maControls maNotes Class: factor factor character

Extends: "ShowLargeObject"

maNgr: Object of class "numeric", number of rows for the grid matrix.

mange: Object of class "numeric", number of columns for the grid matrix.

mansr: Object of class "numeric", number of rows for the spot matrices.

mansc: Object of class "numeric", number of columns for the spot matrices.

maNspots: Object of class "numeric", total number of spots on the array, equal to $maNgr \times maNgc \times maNsr \times maNsc$.

maSub: Object of class "logical", indicating which spots are currently being considered.

maPlate: Object of class "factor", recording the plate origin of the spotted probe sequences.

maControls: Object of class "factor", recording the control status of the spotted probe sequences.

maNotes: Object of class "character", any notes concerning the microarray layout, e.g., printing conditions.

In addition, a number of *methods* were defined to compute other important layout parameters, such as print—tip, grid matrix, and spot matrix coordinates: maPrintTip, maGridRow, maGridCol, maSpotRow, and maSpotCol (see Section 4). No slots were defined for these quantities for memory management reasons.

3.2 marrayInfo class

Information on the target mRNA samples co-hybridized to the arrays is stored in objects of class marrayInfo. Such objects may include the names of the arrays, the names of the Cy3 and Cy5 labeled samples, notes on the hybridization and scanning conditions, and other textual information. Descriptions of the spotted probe sequences (e.g. matrix of gene names, annotation, notes on printing conditions) are also stored in object of class marrayInfo. The marrayInfo class is not specific to the microarray context and has the following definition

> getClassDef("marrayInfo")

Slots:

Name: maLabels maInfo maNotes Class: character data.frame character

Extends: "ShowLargeObject"

3.3 marrayRaw class

Pre-normalization intensity data for a batch of arrays are stored in objects of class marrayRaw, which contain slots for the matrices of Cy3 and Cy5 background and foreground intensities (maGb, maRb, maGf, maRf), spot quality weights (maW), layout parameters of the arrays (marrayLayout), description of the probes spotted onto the arrays (maGnames) and mRNA target samples hybridized to the arrays (maTargets).

> getClassDef("marrayRaw")

Slots:

Name: maRf maGf maRb maGb maW Class: matrix matrix matrix matrix

Name: maLayout maGnames maTargets maNotes Class: marrayLayout marrayInfo marrayInfo character

Extends: "ShowLargeObject"

maRf: Object of class "matrix", red foreground intensities, rows correspond to spotted probe sequences, columns to arrays in the batch.

maGf: Object of class "matrix", green foreground intensities, rows correspond to spotted probe sequences, columns to arrays in the batch.

maRb: Object of class "matrix", red background intensities, rows correspond to spotted probe sequences, columns to arrays in the batch.

maGb: Object of class "matrix", green background intensities, rows correspond to spotted probe sequences, columns to arrays in the batch.

maW: Object of class "matrix", spot quality weights, rows correspond to spotted probe sequences, columns to arrays in the batch.

maLayout: Object of class "marrayLayout", layout parameters for cDNA microarrays.

maGnames: Object of class "marrayInfo", description of spotted probe sequences.

maTargets: Object of class "marrayInfo", description of target samples hybridized to the arrays.

maNotes: Object of class "character", any notes concerning the microarray experiments, e.g. hybridization or scanning conditions.

3.4 marrayNorm class

Post—normalization intensity data are stored in similar objects of class marrayNorm. These objects store the normalized intensity log—ratios mam, the location and scale normalization values (mamloc and mamscale), and the average log—intensities (mam). In addition, the marrayNorm class has a slot for the function call used to normalize the data, manormCall. For more details on the creation of normalized microarray objects, the reader is referred to the vignette for the marrayNorm package.

> getClassDef("marrayNorm")

Slots:

wame:	Man	man	mamiloc	mamscale	maw
Class:	matrix	matrix	matrix	matrix	matrix
Name:	${\tt maLayout}$	maGnames	maTargets	maNotes	maNormCall
Class:	marrayLayout	marrayInfo	marrayInfo	character	call

Extends: "ShowLargeObject"

maA: Object of class "matrix", average log-intensities (base 2) A, rows correspond to spotted probe sequences, columns to arrays in the batch.

maM: Object of class "matrix", intensity log-ratios (base 2) M, rows correspond to spotted probe sequences, columns to arrays in the batch.

maMloc: Object of class "matrix", location normalization values, rows correspond to spotted probe sequences, columns to arrays in the batch.

maMscale: Object of class "matrix", scale normalization values, rows correspond to spotted probe sequences, columns to arrays in the batch.

maW: Object of class "matrix", spot quality weights, rows correspond to spotted probe sequences, columns to arrays in the batch.

maLayout: Object of class "marrayLayout", layout parameters for cDNA microarrays.

maGnames: Object of class "marrayInfo", description of spotted probe sequences.

maTargets: Object of class "marrayInfo", description of target samples hybridized to the arrays.

maNotes: Object of class "character", any notes concerning the microarray experiments, e.g. hybridization or scanning conditions.

maNormCall: Object of class "call", function call for normalizing the batch of arrays.

Most microarray objects contain an maNotes slots which may be used to store any string of characters describing the experiments, for examples, notes on the printing, hybridization, or scanning conditions.

3.5 Creating and accessing slots of microarray objects

Creating new objects. The function new from the methods package may be used to create new objects from a given class. For example, to create an object of class marrayInfo describing the target samples in the Swirl experiment, one could use the following code

```
> zebra.RG <- as.data.frame(cbind(c("swirl", "WT", "swirl", "WT"),</pre>
      c("WT", "swirl", "WT", "swirl")))
> dimnames(zebra.RG)[[2]] <- c("Cy3", "Cy5")</pre>
> zebra.samples <- new("marrayInfo", maLabels = paste("Swirl array ",
      1:4, sep = ""), maInfo = zebra.RG, maNotes = "Description of targets for Swirl experiment
> zebra.samples
An object of class "marrayInfo"
@maLabels
[1] "Swirl array 1" "Swirl array 2" "Swirl array 3" "Swirl array 4"
@maInfo
    Cy3
          Cy5
1 swirl
           WT
     WT swirl
3 swirl
     WT swirl
```

@maNotes

[1] "Description of targets for Swirl experiment"

Slots which are not specified in **new** are initialized to the prototype for the corresponding class. These are usually "empty", e.g., matrix(0,0,0). In most cases, microarray objects can be created automatically using the input functions and their corresponding widgets in the marrayInput package. These were used to create the object swirl of class marrayRaw.

Accessing slots. Different components or slots of the microarray objects may be accessed using the operator @, or alternately, the function slot, which evaluates the slot name. For example, to access the maLayout slot in the object swirl and the maNgr slot in the layout object L

```
> L <- slot(swirl, "maLayout")
> L@maNgr
[1] 4
```

The function slotNames can be used to get information on the slots of a formally defined class or an instance of the class. For example, to get information on the slots for the marrayLayout class or on the slots for the object swirl use

```
> slotNames("marrayLayout")
```

```
[1] "maNgr" "maNgc" "maNsr" "maNsc" "maNspots"
[6] "maSub" "maPlate" "maControls" "maNotes"

> slotNames(swirl)
```

```
[1] "maRf" "maGf" "maRb" "maGb" "maW" "maLayout" [7] "maGnames" "maTargets" "maNotes"
```

3.6 Testing the validity of an object

The function validObject from the R package methods may be used to test the validity of an object with respect to its class definition. This function has two arguments: object, the object to be tested; and test. If test is TRUE, the function returns a vector of strings describing the problems, if any.

```
> validObject(maLayout(swirl), test = TRUE)
[1] TRUE
```

4 Basic microarray methods

The following basic methods were defined to facilitate manipulation of microarray data objects. To see all methods available for a particular class, e.g., marrayLayout, or just the print methods

```
> showMethods(classes = "marrayLayout")
> showMethods("show", classes = "marrayLayout")
```

4.1 Printing methods for microarray objects

Since there is usually no need to print out fluorescence intensities for thousands of genes, the print method was overloaded for microarray classes by simple report generators. For an overview of the available microarray printing methods, type methods? summary, or to see all summary methods for the session

```
> showMethods("summary")
Function: summary (package base)
object="ANY"
object="marrayInfo"
object="marrayLayout"
object="marrayNorm"
object="marrayRaw"
For example, summary statistics for an object of class marrayRaw, such as swirl, can be obtained
by print(swirl) or simply swirl.
> summary(swirl)
Pre-normalization intensity data:
                                           Object of class marrayRaw.
Number of arrays:
                           4 arrays.
A) Layout of spots on the array:
Array layout:
                      Object of class marrayLayout.
Total number of spots:
                                                8448
Dimensions of grid matrix:
                                           4 rows by 4 cols
Dimensions of spot matrices:
                                              22 rows by 24 cols
Currently working with a subset of 8448spots.
Control spots:
There are
            2 types of controls :
7680 768
Notes on layout:
No Input File
B) Samples hybridized to the array:
Object of class marrayInfo.
```

```
Names slide number experiment Cy3 experiment Cy5
      maLabels
1 swirl.1.spot swirl.1.spot
                                       81
                                                    swirl
                                                                wild type
2 swirl.2.spot swirl.2.spot
                                       82
                                                wild type
                                                                    swirl
3 swirl.3.spot swirl.3.spot
                                       93
                                                    swirl
                                                                wild type
4 swirl.4.spot swirl.4.spot
                                       94
                                                wild type
                                                                    swirl
       date comments
1 2001/9/20
2 2001/9/20
3 2001/11/8
                  NA
4 2001/11/8
                  NΑ
```

Number of labels: 4

Dimensions of maInfo matrix: 4 rows by 6 columns

Notes:

C:/GNU/R/R-2.4.1/library/marray/swirldata/SwirlSample.txt

C) Summary statistics for log-ratio distribution:

```
Min. 1st Qu. Median
C:/GNU/R/R-2.4.1/library/marray/swirldata/swirl.1.spot -2.73
                                                               -0.79
                                                                     -0.58
C:/GNU/R/R-2.4.1/library/marray/swirldata/swirl.2.spot -2.72
                                                               -0.15
                                                                       0.03
C:/GNU/R/R-2.4.1/library/marray/swirldata/swirl.3.spot -2.29
                                                               -0.75
                                                                      -0.46
C:/GNU/R/R-2.4.1/library/marray/swirldata/swirl.4.spot -3.21
                                                               -0.46 - 0.26
                                                        Mean 3rd Qu. Max.
C:/GNU/R/R-2.4.1/library/marray/swirldata/swirl.1.spot -0.48
                                                               -0.294.42
C:/GNU/R/R-2.4.1/library/marray/swirldata/swirl.2.spot 0.03
                                                                0.21 2.35
C:/GNU/R/R-2.4.1/library/marray/swirldata/swirl.3.spot -0.42
                                                               -0.12 2.65
C:/GNU/R/R-2.4.1/library/marray/swirldata/swirl.4.spot -0.27
                                                               -0.06 2.90
```

D) Notes on intensity data: Spot Data

4.2 Subsetting methods for microarray objects

In many instances, one is interested in accessing only a subset of arrays in a batch and/or spots in an array. Subsetting methods "[" were defined for this purpose. For an overview of the available microarray subsetting methods, type methods? "[" or to see all subsetting methods for the session showMethods("[")). When using the "[" operator, the first index refers to spots and the second to arrays in a batch. Thus, to access the first 100 probe sequences in the second and third arrays in the batch swirl use

```
> swirl[1:100, 2:3]
```

An object of class "marrayRaw" @maRf

C:/GNU/R/R-2.4.1/library/marray/swirldata/swirl.2.spot

```
[1,]
                                                    16138.720
[2,]
                                                    17247.670
[3,]
                                                     17317.150
[4,]
                                                     6794.381
[5,]
                                                     6043.542
     C:/GNU/R/R-2.4.1/library/marray/swirldata/swirl.3.spot
[1,]
                                                    2895.1600
[2,]
                                                    2976.6230
[3,]
                                                    2735.6190
[4,]
                                                     318.9524
[5,]
                                                     780.6667
95 more rows ...
@maGf
     C:/GNU/R/R-2.4.1/library/marray/swirldata/swirl.2.spot
[1,]
                                                    19278.770
[2,]
                                                    21438.960
                                                    20386.470
[3,]
[4,]
                                                     6677.619
[5,]
                                                     6576.292
     C:/GNU/R/R-2.4.1/library/marray/swirldata/swirl.3.spot
[1,]
                                                    2727.5600
[2,]
                                                    2787.0330
[3,]
                                                    2419.8810
[4,]
                                                     383.2381
[5,]
                                                     901.0000
95 more rows ...
@maRb
     C:/GNU/R/R-2.4.1/library/marray/swirldata/swirl.2.spot
[1,]
                                                           136
[2,]
                                                           133
[3,]
                                                           133
[4,]
                                                           105
[5,]
                                                           105
     C:/GNU/R/R-2.4.1/library/marray/swirldata/swirl.3.spot
[1,]
                                                            82
[2,]
                                                            82
[3,]
                                                            76
[4,]
                                                            61
[5,]
                                                            61
95 more rows ...
@maGb
     C:/GNU/R/R-2.4.1/library/marray/swirldata/swirl.2.spot
```

10

```
[1,]
                                                          175
[2,]
                                                          183
[3,]
                                                          183
[4,]
                                                          142
[5,]
                                                          142
     C:/GNU/R/R-2.4.1/library/marray/swirldata/swirl.3.spot
[1,]
[2,]
                                                           86
[3,]
                                                           86
[4,]
                                                           71
[5,]
                                                           71
95 more rows ...
@maW
<0 x 0 matrix>
@maLayout
An object of class "marrayLayout"
@maNgr
[1] 4
@maNgc
[1] 4
@maNsr
[1] 22
@maNsc
[1] 24
@maNspots
[1] 8448
@maSub
[1] TRUE TRUE TRUE TRUE TRUE
8443 more elements ...
@maPlate
[1] 1 1 1 1 1
Levels: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22
95 more elements ...
@maControls
[1] 1 1 1 1 1
Levels: 0 1
```

```
95 more elements ...
@maNotes
[1] "No Input File"
@maGnames
An object of class "marrayInfo"
@maLabels
[1] "geno1" "geno2" "geno3" "3XSSC" "3XSSC"
95 more elements ...
@maInfo
     "ID" "Name"
1 control geno1
2 control geno2
3 control geno3
4 control 3XSSC
5 control 3XSSC
95 more rows ...
@maNotes
[1] "C:/GNU/R/R-2.4.1/library/marray/swirldata/fish.gal"
@maTargets
An object of class "marrayInfo"
@maLabels
[1] "swirl.2.spot" "swirl.3.spot"
@maInfo
         Names slide number experiment Cy3 experiment Cy5
                                                                date comments
2 swirl.2.spot
                         82
                                 wild type
                                                     swirl 2001/9/20
                                                                           NA
3 swirl.3.spot
                         93
                                                 wild type 2001/11/8
                                      swirl
                                                                           NA
@maNotes
[1] "C:/GNU/R/R-2.4.1/library/marray/swirldata/SwirlSample.txt"
@maNotes
[1] "Spot Data"
```

4.3 Methods for accessing slots of microarray objects

A number of simple methods were defined to access slots of the microarray classes. Using such methods is more general than using the slot function or @ operator. In particular, if the class def-

initions are changed, any function which uses the @ operator will need to be modified. When using a method to access the data in the slot, only that particular method needs to be modified. Thus, to access the layout information for the array batch swirl one may also use malayout(swirl).

In addition, various methods were defined to compute basic statistics from microarray object slots. For instance, for memory management reasons, objects of class marrayLayout do not store the spot coordinates of each probe. Rather, these can be obtained from the dimensions of the grid and spot matrices by applying methods: maGridRow, maGridCol, maSpotRow, and maSpotCol to objects of class marrayLayout. Print—tip—group coordinates are given by maPrintTip. Similar methods were also defined to operate directly on objects of class marrayRaw and marrayNorm. The commands below may be used to display the number of spots on the array, the dimensions of the grid matrix, and the print—tip—group coordinates.

```
> swirl.layout <- maLayout(swirl)
> maNspots(swirl)

[1] 8448
> maNspots(swirl.layout)

[1] 8448
> maNgr(swirl)

[1] 4
> maNgc(swirl.layout)

[1] 4
> maPrintTip(swirl[1:10, 3])

[1] 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1
```

4.4 Methods for assigning slots of microarray objects

A number of methods were defined to replace slots of microarray objects, without explicitly using the @ operator or slot function. These make use of the setReplaceMethod function from the R methods package. As with the accessor methods just described, the assignment methods are named after the slots. For example, to replace the maNotes slot of swirl.layout

```
> maNotes(swirl.layout)
[1] "No Input File"
> maNotes(swirl.layout) <- "New value"
> maNotes(swirl.layout)
```

```
[1] "New value"
To initialize slots of an empty marrayLayout object
> L <- new("marrayLayout")</pre>
> L
An object of class "marrayLayout"
@maNgr
numeric(0)
@maNgc
numeric(0)
@maNsr
numeric(0)
@maNsc
numeric(0)
@maNspots
numeric(0)
@maSub
[1] TRUE
@maPlate
factor(0)
Levels:
@maControls
factor(0)
Levels:
@maNotes
character(0)
> maNgr(L) <- 4
```

Similar methods were defined to operate on objects of class marrayInfo, marrayRaw and marrayNorm.

4.5 Methods for coercing microarray objects

To facilitate navigation between different classes of microarray objects, we have defined methods for coercing microarray objects from one class into another. A list of such methods can be obtained by methods? coerce. For example, to coerce an object of class marrayRaw into an object of class marrayNorm:

```
> swirl.norm <- as(swirl, "marrayNorm")</pre>
```

It is also possible to convert objects of class marrayRaw or marrayNorm into objects of class exprSet (see definition in the Biobase package), see package convert package for more details.

```
> library(convert)
> as(normdata, "exprSet")
```

4.6 Functions for computing layout parameters

In some cases, plate information is not stored in marrayLayout objects when the data are first read into R. We have defined a function maCompPlate which computes plate indices from the dimensions of the grid matrix and number of wells in a plate. For example, the Swirl arrays were printed from 384-well plates, but the plate IDs were not stored in the fish.gal file. To generate plate IDs (arbitrarily labeled by integers starting with 1) and store these in the maPlate slot of the marrayLayout object use

```
> maPlate(swirl) <- maCompPlate(swirl, n = 384)</pre>
```

Similar functions were defined to generate and manipulate spot coordinates: maCompCoord, maCompInd, maCoord2Ind, maInd2Coord. The function maGeneTable produces a table of spot coordinates and gene names for objects of class marrayRaw and marrayNorm.