Data types and import into R

Theory **R functions** Examples

R functions

- **`read.table`** - reads table in a plain text with cells delimited by some symbol (default setting for delimiter is `sep = ""`, i.e. one or more white spaces, tabs, newlines or returns).
- **`read.delim`** - reads table delimited by tabulators.
- **`read.csv`** - reads table delimited by commas (,), with decimals being dots (.).
- **`read.csv2`** - reads table delimited by semicolons (;) and decimals being commas (,).
- **`read_excel` (library `readxl`)** - reads data frames directly from Excel file (both *.xls and *.xlsx) without need to install any third party software; it stores data in `tibble` format, with rownames (if any) as the first column of the data - this needs to be treated before further analysis (see Example section to see how).
- **`read.cep` (library `vegan`)** - reads legacy *canoco condensed files* (usually with extension `*.cep` or `*.cc!`); the function can get quite slow for large datasets - if the speed is an issue, consider using `readCEP` from `cepreader` package (also maintained by Jari Oksanen)
- **`read.CEP` (library `rioja`)** the same as `read.cep` from `vegan` and `readCEP` from `cepreader`; the package `rioja` has also function `write.CEP` producing cep files.

Note that by default, functions like `read.table`, `read.delim`, `read.csv` and `read.csv2` import the columns containing characters strings into R as factors. If you don't like this behaviour, change the setting of `stringsAsFactors` argument into FALSE. If you want to know why this behaviour is set to default, read this blog post.

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