Leveraging data technologies + SQL to bring bigger data into the classroom

Nicholas J. Horton, Amherst College

May 20, 2025, nhorton@amherst.edu

Image source: SQL Humor

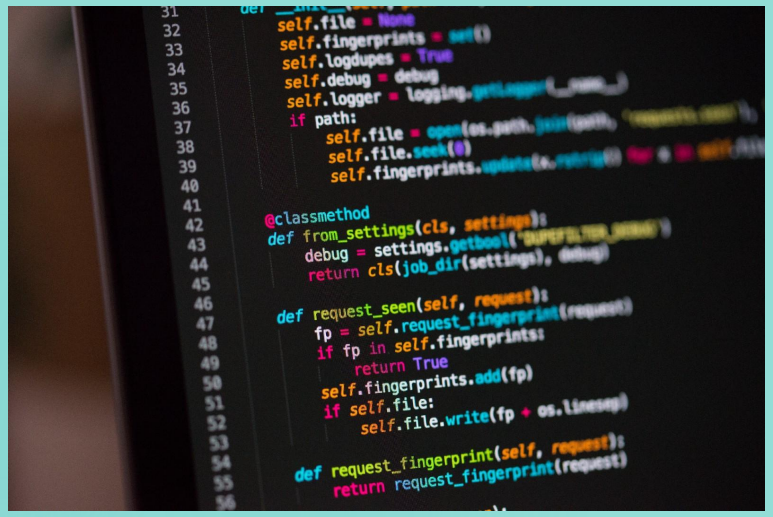

Image source: Wikicommons

Image source: Wikimedia Commons

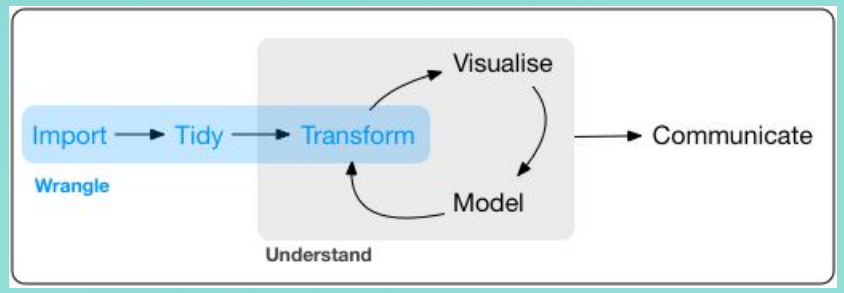

Image source: Hadley Wickham and Garrett Grolemund

Links at https://nicholasjhorton.github.io/K12-Data-Tools/icerm.html

DATA SCIENCE FOR UNDERGRADUATES

Opportunities and Options

consensus report published in 2018
free download from
https://nas.edu/envisioningds

Study funded by the National Science Foundation

The National Academies of SCIENCES ENGINEERING MEDICINE

nas.edu/EnvisioningDS

Data management concepts

Key **data management and curation** concepts/skills that would be important for all students in their data science programs and critical for their success in the workforce are the following:

- Data provenance;
- Data preparation, especially data cleansing and data transformation;
- Data management (of a variety of data types);
- Record retention policies;
- Data subject privacy;
- Missing and conflicting data; and
- **Modern databases**.

SQL + Databases

Common response seen from reflections from statistics graduates (program review):

"You should have taught us SQL: I needed it for my job".

SQL + Databases

Common response seen from reflections from statistics graduates (program review):

"You should have taught us SQL: I needed it for my job".

"But the good news is that I taught it to myself over a weekend."

SQL + Databases

- Structured Query Language (SQL) implements Codd's relational model
- Since 1970 has provided a framework for relational databases, now lingua franca for large data stores
- Relatively easy to learn to access
- Lets the highly optimized database do much of the work
- "Ensuring that Mathematics is Relevant in a World of Data Science" (Hardin and Horton, *Notices of the American Mathematical Society*, 2017)

SQL + Databases

- Want to explore? See the sample Quarto file (+ associated pdf) https://nicholasjhorton.github.io/K12-Data-Tools/icerm.html

```
dbGetQuery(db, "EXPLAIN Measurements")
```

	Field	Type	Null	Key	Default	Extra
1	Identifier	varchar(50)	NO	PRI	<NA>	
2	SubjectNumber	int	NO	PRI	<NA>	
3	Session	int	NO	PRI	<NA>	
4	Ear	varchar(50)	NO	PRI		
5	Instrument	varchar(50)	NO	PRI		
6	Age	float	YES		<NA>	
7	AgeCategory	varchar(50)	YES		<NA>	
8	EarStatus	varchar(50)	YES		<NA>	
9	TPP	float	YES		<NA>	
10	AreaCanal	float	YES		<NA>	

- see more:"Modern Data Science with R (2e+)" (Baumer, Kaplan, and Horton, 2024, https://mdsr-book.github.io/mdsr3e/)

SQL + Databases

- Want to explore? See the sample Quarto file (+ associated pdf) https://nicholasjhorton.github.io/K12-Data-Tools/icerm.html

```
first_ten <- dbGetQuery(db, "SELECT * from Measurements LIMIT 10")
first_ten
```

	Identifier	SubjectNumber	Session	Ear	Instrument	Age	AgeCategory
1	Abur_2014	1	1	Left	HearID	20	Adult
2	Abur_2014	1	1	Left	HearID	20	Adult
3	Abur_2014	1	1	Left	HearID	20	Adult
4	Abur_2014	1	1	Left	HearID	20	Adult
5	Abur_2014	1	1	Left	HearID	20	Adult
6	Abur_2014	1	1	Left	HearID	20	Adult

- see more: "Modern Data Science with R (2e+)" (Baumer, Kaplan, and Horton, 2024, https://mdsr-book.github.io/mdsr3e/)