

Timings of common tasks using the **data.table** package in R

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(A later revision may be available on the [homepage](#))

* WORK IN PROGRESS *

This document contains a series of tests, followed by a summary table of various timings and comparisons. Please go straight to the summary table first [<here>](#) in which each row has a link back to the test.

This document is reproducible. Simply run the .Rnw file yourself in your environment to confirm the results. Also see `?vignette`, which says that `edit(vignette("datatable-timings"))` will extract the code from this document so you can easily work with it.

The .Rnw included in the package has $N=10,000,000$. This is a small number so that 'R CMD build' completes in a reasonable time (about 5 minutes). We don't want the nightly builds on R-Forge and CRAN to slow down just to run long timing comparisons. We have increased this to $N=100,000,000$ ourselves, and included the output on the [datatable homepage](#) ([<link>](#)).

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1 Timing tests

1.1 Extraction

This is a repeat of the test in section 1 of the Introduction vignette. The syntax is explained there. This demonstrates the large difference in speed between vector scans and binary search. Therefore, please avoid using `==` in the `i` expression.

```
> n = ceiling(1e7/26^2) # 10 million rows
> DF = data.frame(x=rep(LETTERS,each=26*n),
+               y=rep(letters,each=n),
+               v=rnorm(n*26^2))
> DT = data.table(DF,key="x,y")
> tables()
```

```
      NAME      NROW MB COLS KEY
[1,] DT    10,000,068 153 x,y,v x,y
Total: 153MB
```

```
> tt=system.time(ans1 <- DF[DF$x=="R" & DF$y=="h",]); tt
```

```

      user  system elapsed
12.536    0.948   13.523

> head(ans1)

      x y          v
6642058 R h -0.5094762
6642059 R h  0.8752557
6642060 R h  1.1313182
6642061 R h  1.7026602
6642062 R h  1.3019364
6642063 R h  1.2590939

> dim(ans1)

[1] 14793      3

> ss=system.time(ans2 <- DT[J("R","h")]); ss

      user  system elapsed
0.028    0.000    0.027

> head(ans2)

      x y          v
[1,] R h -0.5094762
[2,] R h  0.8752557
[3,] R h  1.1313182
[4,] R h  1.7026602
[5,] R h  1.3019364
[6,] R h  1.2590939

> dim(ans2)

[1] 14793      3

> identical(ans1$v,ans2$v)

[1] TRUE

```

1.2 Grouping

This is a repeat of the test in section 2 of the Introduction vignette. The syntax is explained there.

```

> ttt=system.time(ans1 <- tapply(DF$v,DF$x,sum)); ttt

      user  system elapsed
17.210    0.968   18.217

> head(ans1)

      A          B          C          D          E          F
995.40335 1034.87699 -292.58804  17.61974 -125.36021  161.09058

> sss=system.time(ans2 <- DT[,sum(v),by=x]); sss

      user  system elapsed
0.440    0.168    0.612

> head(ans2)

```

```

      x      V1
[1,] A  995.40335
[2,] B 1034.87699
[3,] C -292.58804
[4,] D   17.61974
[5,] E -125.36021
[6,] F  161.09058

> identical(as.vector(ans1), ans2$V1)

[1] TRUE

```

1.3 Test 3

1.4 Test 4

1.5 Test 5

2 Summary table

```

> ans

      base data.table times faster
==      13.523      0.027      500
tapply 18.217      0.612      29

> toLatex(sessionInfo())

• R version 2.13.0 (2011-04-13), i686-pc-linux-gnu

• Locale: LC_CTYPE=en_GB.UTF-8, LC_NUMERIC=C, LC_TIME=en_GB.UTF-8, LC_COLLATE=C,
  LC_MONETARY=C, LC_MESSAGES=en_GB.UTF-8, LC_PAPER=en_GB.UTF-8, LC_NAME=C,
  LC_ADDRESS=C, LC_TELEPHONE=C, LC_MEASUREMENT=en_GB.UTF-8, LC_IDENTIFICATION=C

• Base packages: base, datasets, grDevices, graphics, methods, stats, utils

• Other packages: data.table~1.6.1

• Loaded via a namespace (and not attached): tools~2.13.0

```