Journal of Statistical Software

August 2015, Volume 66, Book Review 4. http://www.jstatsoft.org/

Reviewer: Norm Matloff
University of California, Davis

R for Cloud Computing

Ajay Ohri
Springer-Verlag, New York, 2014.
ISBN 978-1-4939-1701-3. 267 pp. USD 99.00 (P).
http://www.springer.com/book/9781493917013

This is a lively book on a timely topic – or rather, a pair of topics, as the book is as much about R as it is on cloud computing. It should prove useful for those interested in the confluence of the two subject areas.

Chapter 1 first answers the perennial question, "What is R?", with the obvious followup, "What is the cloud?" The author then provides motivation for using both, along with citing some relevant specific products, such as AWS and the **segue** package.

Chapter 2 is more abstract, concerning general issues of data storage and analysis. Chapter 3 then apprises readers of various choices they have, e.g., in cloud platforms, R IDEs and so on, and Chapter 4 goes into to the nuts and bolts of using R in the cloud.

Chapter 5 is a lightning-fast introduction to R, probably much too quick for those who do not already know the story. Further instruction in R comes in the succeeding chapters, though. Chapter 6 is mainly on databases and their R interfaces, again likely insufficient for those without such background. The remaining chapters cover special topics, with the welcome inclusion of security.

The book aims to provide step-by-step instructions for painlessly and quickly getting the novice user into the cloud. It does succeed in this for the most part, but any such effort will not be 100% painless after all. Readers who lack background in the cloud may feel overwhelmed at times at the beginning, given all the possible choices and myriad terms. In fact, some terms seem to be undefined, and there is no index (though there is a good bibliography). The figures are inline rather than referenced via numbers, and in some cases they are rather distant from the associated text. The font size in the figures may be too small for comfortable reading for some people.

The book features a number of interviews with prominent figures in data science. Though arguably a bit out of place, I believe that most readers will find them interesting and worth inclusion.

This book should be of interest to anyone who is new to data storage and analysis in the cloud, especially with R, and even veteran users will find something new here and there.

Reviewer:

Norman Matloff
University of California, Davis
Department of Computer Science
Davis, CA 95616, United States of America
E-mail: matloff@cs.ucdavis.edu

Journal of Statistical Software http://www.jstatsoft.org/
published by the American Statistical Association http://www.amstat.org/
Volume 66, Book Review 4 *Published:* 2015-08-06
August 2015