

# 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
12.760   0.988  13.872

> head(ans1)

      x y      v
6642058 R h  0.7294430
6642059 R h  1.3117811
6642060 R h -0.5817332
6642061 R h  0.1433714
6642062 R h  1.3691651
6642063 R h -0.8156846

> dim(ans1)

[1] 14793      3

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

      user system elapsed
 0.028   0.000   0.028

> head(ans2)

      x y      v
[1,] R h  0.7294430
[2,] R h  1.3117811
[3,] R h -0.5817332
[4,] R h  0.1433714
[5,] R h  1.3691651
[6,] R h -0.8156846

> 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
17.598   0.988  18.621

> head(ans1)

      A      B      C      D      E
-553.164403 -29.481029 -956.749287 343.213492 -9.616587
      F
-837.146201

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

      user system elapsed
 0.448   0.196   0.648

```

```
> head(ans2)

      x      V1
[1,] A -553.164403
[2,] B  -29.481029
[3,] C -956.749287
[4,] D  343.213492
[5,] E   -9.616587
[6,] F -837.146201

> 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
==      13.872      0.028      495
tapply 18.621      0.648      28

> toLatex(sessionInfo())

• R version 2.13.1 (2011-07-08), 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~1.6.6

• Loaded via a namespace (and not attached): tools~2.13.1
```