

Building the Future Through Collaboration in "half-an-houR"

Alexandre Cunha, Almiro Moreira, Álvaro Combo, Bruno Lima, João Lopes, João Poças, Paula Cruz, Pedro Campos, Pedro Guerreiro, Pedro Sousa, Rita Santos, Rui Alves

Statistics Portugal

Abstract:

The "half-an-houR" sessions, initiated at Statistics Portugal (INE) in 2023, serve as an informal meeting for collaboration and integration among technicians using the R programming language. These weekly 30-minute sessions feature brief presentations followed by discussions, aimed at bringing people closer together and fostering a sense of belonging within the organization. This paper explores the structure, impact, and significance of the "half-an-houR" initiative in promoting collaboration, integration, and professional development among R users at INE (and beyond).

Keywords: collaboration, innovation, competence robustness, knowledge share, integration.

Introduction

The growing importance of data science, and in particular languages such as R, in improving the statistical process and official statistics is well recognized. It is therefore very important to support, encourage and motivate NSA staff at all organizational levels to get involved and take advantage of these emerging practices and tools. Effective collaboration and integration are vital for organizational success, particularly in fields such as data science and statistical analysis. The "half-an-houR" initiative, introduced at INE in the January of 2023, is designed to facilitate knowledge sharing, collaboration and integration among technicians using the R programming language. By providing a platform for brief presentations and discussions, the initiative aims to bring people closer together and make them feel more integrated into the organization. At the end of 2023, participation was extended to other Portuguese institutions and even other National Statistical Institutes, thus expanding this network of knowledge and

collaboration. This paper examines the structure, impact, and significance of the "half-an-houR" initiative in building the future through collaboration and integration at INE.

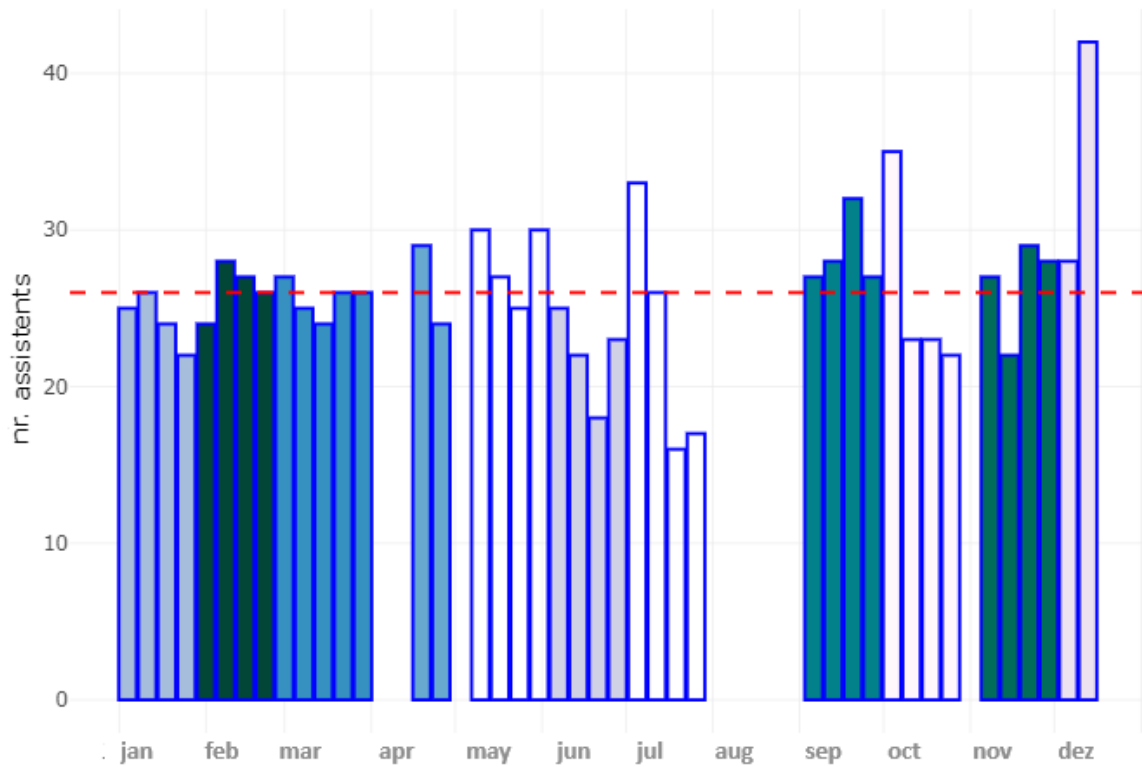
Methodology

The "half-an-houR" initiative consists of weekly 30-minute sessions held on Wednesdays, online using Microsoft Teams, at 12h00. Each session features a brief presentation on a designated theme, followed by a discussion period. Themes for the presentations are selected monthly by a designated curator, who also recruits presenters and moderates the sessions for that month. Participation in the sessions is open to all INE technicians, external partners and invited guests that already use R in their work (or just interested in starting to use R), with an emphasis on promoting engagement and interaction among participants. The documentation, examples and exercises provided in the sessions are also available on a website that is restricted to participants in these sessions. To assess the impact and effectiveness of the initiative, participation rates, engagement levels, and feedback from participants are collected and analyzed.

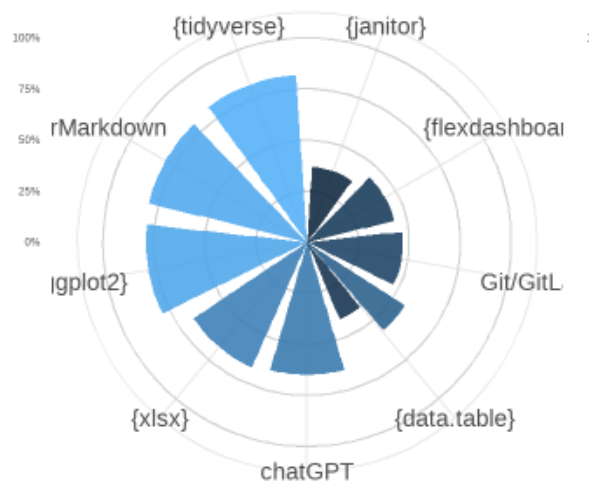
Results

Analysis of participation data indicates a high level of engagement among INE technicians in the "half-an-houR" sessions, with consistent attendance throughout the year. The presentations cover a wide range of topics related to the use of R in statistical production and data analysis, including data visualization, programming techniques and best practices. Feedback from participants highlights the value of the sessions in promoting collaboration, integration and professional development. Despite physical distance, the "half-an-houR" initiative has facilitated closer collaboration and communication among R users across the organization.

The findings suggest that the "half-an-houR" initiative plays a significant role in promoting collaboration, integration, and professional development among R users at INE. By providing a platform for sharing knowledge and experiences, the initiative helps build a sense of community among colleagues and fosters the exchange of ideas and best practices. Moreover, the initiative contributes to making participants feel more integrated into the organization, thereby enhancing their sense of belonging and commitment.



During 2023, 41 sessions were held and a total of 73 different useRs took part, with an average of 26 participants each week. The structured format of the sessions ensures that a wide range of topics is covered, catering to the diverse needs and interests of participants.



Top 10+ packages most used by useRs

Conclusions

The "half-an-houR" initiative has emerged as a valuable initiative for building the future through collaboration and integration at INE, particularly relevant at a time when the organization is undergoing renovation, both in terms of human resources and the working model (presential vs remote).

By bringing people closer together and fostering a sense of belonging, the initiative contributes to organizational success and employee satisfaction. This action is also complemented by rapprochement with other organizations within the National Statistical System or even from the European Statistical System, broadening horizons and creating synergies. Moving forward, efforts to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the initiative will be crucial for sustaining its impact and relevance in an ever-changing organizational landscape.