

# Bioc Technical Advisory Board Minutes

3 June 2021

**Attending:** Vince Carey, Laurent Gatto, Lori Kern, Shila Ghazanfar (until :30), Charlotte Soneson, Levi Waldron, Rafael Irizarry, Michael Love, Aaron Lun, Stephanie Hicks, Aedin Culhane, Marcel Ramos, Jennifer Wokaty, Martin Morgan, Robert Gentleman, Nitesh Turaga  
**Regrets:** Héctor Corrada Bravo, Wolfgang Huber, Kasper Hansen

:03 - :05 Welcome/information points

- Thanks to the core team for a smooth 3.13 launch
- The [2021-05-06 minutes](#) were approved
- 3 CZI applications submitted on May 19
- #nullranges slack channel
- [slimming ML data via butcher](#)
- The control over the costs related to bulk package downloads is improving
- Miles McBain's [letter to CRAN](#)

:05 - :15 <https://github.com/lcolladotor/biocthis/issues/21> and limitations on package components.

- GitHub Actions, other CI, and pkgdown components are good
- Adding complexity to review and verification processes is bad
- Cost-benefit analysis of restrictions vs leaving it alone
- Proposal: .Rbuildignore must identify all entities not directly related to the package/man/vignette functionality per se; package review addresses issues with the built tarball only; BiocCheck will flag files deemed extraneous to Bioc review processes that are not in .Rbuildignore
  - TAB generally supportive (GitHub Actions/pkgdown etc offer a lot to users)
- Recent [query to bioc-devel](#) shows how scope of activities related to package maintenance can bloom; a community response is already provided!

:15 - :18 Approve/disapprove the management of package name for contributed packages. If approved this will be added to the contribution checklist. Any concern with retroactivity?

- Is there any way to check whether a package name is available?
  - Try to install the desired package name
  - The [available](#) package
  - A neat package to help change package name:  
<https://github.com/helske/changer>
- Should the wording be extended to packages under submission?
- Copyright issues?
- Clarify definition of 'orphaned' (available on [website](#))
- TAB agrees with the policy, just need to make sure the wording is appropriate. Lori will send out an updated version of the suggestion below for approval via email.

BIOCONDUCTOR PACKAGE NAMING POLICY: Packages should be named in a way that does not conflict (irrespective of case) with any current or past BIOCONDUCTOR package (the Archive area can be consulted), nor any current CRAN package. Package maintainers give the right to use that package name to BIOCONDUCTOR when they submit, so the BIOCONDUCTOR team may "orphan" a package and allow another maintainer to take it over. When a new maintainer wishes to take over a package, this should be accompanied by the written agreement of the previous maintainer (unless the package has been formally orphaned). [Acknowledgement that this text is derived from CRAN at <https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/policies.html>]

:18 - :25 Infrastructure committee concept - relationship to approach to git (looking at gitea, concept of bioc identity for credentials management)

- Involve:
  - Individuals involved in implementing the Bioc infrastructure
  - Outside experts
  - Azure engineers
  - Other interested community members

:25 - :30 Suggestion to organize quarterly lightning talk sessions. Possible topics: Q1: Matrix (already done), Q2: Scalability, Q3: AI/ML model reuse, Q4: OOP

- Overlap with developer forum? Influencing developer practice vs short research updates.
- Other suggested topics: Spatial transcriptomics, multiomics, education/training
- What is the end goal of the lightning talks?
  - provide an overview, potentially put together a white paper -> written product. Will be important to assign a person to lead each session/topic.

:30 - :40 Community Advisory Board update (Aedin)

- Aedin (Chair), Matt (Vice/co Chair) and Lori (secretary) ran unopposed and were elected as 2021-2022 CAB officers
- CZI EOSS submitted
- Received a request from the BioC2021 committee to form a new working group on privacy policy, to draft a privacy statement and related issues such that we comply with VA, CA, GDPR, etc. Working Group: Katerina, Benilton, Estefania
- Carpentries training - Discussed possibility of a community jamboree (maybe at BioC2021 or outside of it) to develop materials with The Carpentries trained folks. The teaching committee is running a workshop at BioC2021 (<https://github.com/jdrnevich/BuildACarpentriesWorkshop>). Saskia and Kevin will maintain a list of Bioconductor affiliates that are Carpentry trained. Several CAB members are interested in Carpentries training. Are TAB members?
- New Developer mentorship program will hopefully begin at the next package release cycle (~October), but if it becomes too burdensome then it will be implemented before the next Spring release (~April). Started to [collect resources on new package creation](#).

- Bioc Awards - Deadline May 31st. 39 total responses; 23 unique nominations and 10 with more than one vote are moving into the next phase of voting. CAB to vote on awardees. Simone to present awards at BioC2021.
- Package Review Working Group would like to open up volunteer applications soon while continuing to improve and organize documents. Kevin - [https://github.com/kevinrue/bioc\\_package\\_guide](https://github.com/kevinrue/bioc_package_guide)
  - Would be useful to have a template package for users to practice making pull requests etc. to
  - Value in making documents that look promisingly like they will become 'official', like Kevin's bookdown guide to packages, available under the Bioconductor github account, partly to increase awareness (this is planned)
  - Mike has a [demo package](#) with an S4 class
- Brainstorming of community outreach idea started (in process).
- Kozo introduced "[Bioconductor and its community](#)" in a bioinformatics community meeting at the University of Tsukuba (Japan).

:40 - :42 European Bioconductor Society developments (Wolfgang)

- The European Bioconductor Society will be notarized in Heidelberg / Germany / EU next week. It has already had three board meetings, mostly about CSAMA and the European conference.
- Next CSAMA summer school will be 19-24 June \*2022\* in Brixen, Italy, for now the aim is to reproduce the format similar to what worked very well in the years before the pandemic, although of course always open to new ideas.
- The European conference 2021 (traditionally in December and sometimes January) will be in March 2022 in Heidelberg as an in-person event (plus live-streaming and chats), probably 16-18 March (2 days conference + 1 day developer conference). We'll set up a conference committee and work on it in earnest after BioC2021. Earlier dates did not work out for a variety of reasons; but we may do the subsequent one in Basel in December 2022. There's also interest from Oxford and from Padova.
- <https://code.bioconductor.org/> seems to work very well (thanks to Mike Smith), feedback welcome.

:42 - :50 Core development agenda for Bioc Release 3.14

- Discussion of tasks/scope
- Thorny questions:
  - rename git branch name from master to devel (will need intensive testing, and updates to documentation). git training required (as part of BioC2021)? Make it explicit *why* we want to change.
    - Test it extensively! There are many components in this, gitolite, GitHub, Bioc git server, documentation change, training.
    - Make announcements 6 weeks before the change to warn users, and should happen around release time (when people pay most attention to emails).
  - options:

- stay as it is (use master)
  - use main
  - use devel (could allow having a 'clean' Bioc-specific branch on GitHub, not conflicting with the default branch for the user)
- BiocManager and other installation utilities: aggressive update vs always opt-in; proposal: only update on user request
- Container-based binary repositories: valuable but egress costs could rise to unsustainable levels?

:50 - :60 Membership discussion. Sources of enthusiasm. Aims of TAB participation. Moving the technical agenda forward or listening to what is happening. Discussion of nominations (candidates to leave the meeting).

- Seven nominations. Up to six positions available.
- [Governance document](#)
- Procedure:
  - Today: review and discuss nominees
  - Tomorrow: link to survey will be sent out. Each TAB member votes to approve or disapprove each candidate (or abstain). Vote to close on **June 9**. Anonymous (only IP address is recorded). Only possible to vote once (responses can **not** be modified afterwards).
  - Nominees with supermajority ("yes"/("yes" + "no") votes) approved. If more than the number of available positions, nominees are ranked by the fraction of "yes" votes. In case of ties, there will be a new round of votes where each TAB member casts a vote for exactly one of the candidates with the same number of approving votes.

Other:

- Martin asked about BioC2021 conference sponsorship and transparency in finances of foundation.
- ROpenSci is about to start reviewing and accepting statistical software packages: <https://ropensci.org/stat-software-review/>
- There was a [discussion on Twitter](#) about whether or not MultiAssayExperiment supports not-in-memory usage, in terms of sharing the object
- Thinking Ahead: Thur Aug 5, 2021 this meeting will be the same time as the “meet the TAB” session at BioC2021.