qualtRics: retrieve survey data using the Qualtrics API

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Summary

Qualtrics (L. Qualtrics 2018) allows users to create and disseminate online surveys. It is used by researchers and other analysts to field responses for the purposes of (academic) research. While users can manually download survey responses from Qualtrics, importing this data into R is cumbersome. The R package `qualtRics` (Ginn 2017) focuses on the retrieval of survey data using the Qualtrics API and aims to reduce the pre-processing steps needed to prepare this data for analysis. Currently, the package is the only package on CRAN that offers such functionality, and is included in the official Qualtrics API documentation (Qualtrics n.d.).

The primary goal of the package is to provide a bridge between the Qualtrics user interface (where the survey is designed) and R (where the results can be analyzed) by using as few steps as possible. Users can store their API credentials in a file in an R project root directory that automatically loads when the library is called. This eliminates the need to remember API credentials and prevents the user from accidentally sharing sensitive information if they share their work. The package contains three core functions to retrieve survey data. The first of these functions - `getSurveys()` - retrieves a data frame containing an overview of surveys to which the user has access. Using a unique survey id, the user can download and import their data using `getSurvey()`. This function takes care of requesting, downloading and unpacking the data. It is then imported into R with the `readSurvey()` function. This last function can also be used to import manual data exports and supports both current and legacy data formats.

Apart from the above functionality, the package supports the automatic conversion of single-choice multiple choice questions. Using the rich metadata that Qualtrics provides about surveys, it is possible to automatically convert ordinal data to ordered factors. This functionality will be expanded on an ongoing basis to include other variable types.

References

Ginn, Jasper. 2017. "qualtRics: Download Qualtrics Survey Data Directly into R." https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/qualtRics/index.html.

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