

Slice Table by Time

Description

Slice Table By Time is an algorithm to chop a table up into new tables, based on a date/time column. It takes the column with the date/time data, a string describing the format of that column, the intervals that the data should be sliced into, whether or not the slices are cumulative, whether or not the slices should be aligned with the calendar, and what day the week is considered to start on (which only matters if the slices are aligned with the calendar) as parameters.

The column to use for date/time values should have a single value for each row of data. It is used by the algorithm to choose which slice(s) the row should end up in. In order to determine what date/time is represented by that row, you must provide the algorithm with a descriptive format, in the second parameter. For instance, a four digit year would be represented by yyyy (the default value). See <http://joda-time.sourceforge.net/api-release/org/joda/time/format/DateTimeFormat.html> for details of all the various formatting options.

The next dropdown has the available intervals to slice the table into. These include milliseconds, seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, fortnights, months, quarters, years, decades, and centuries. A future version of the algorithm may include the ability to select how many of these intervals should be grouped together at once.

The checkbox that follows determines if the slices will be cumulative. If the slices are not cumulative, every row in the original table is in one and only one resulting slice. However, if the slices are cumulative, every row in the original table is in the slice it is for and every slice for a period after that.

The checkbox that follows determines if the slices will be aligned with the calendar. For instance, if the first row is for June 7th, 2006 and yearly slices are chosen, then the default behavior will be to have the first slice be from June 7th, 2006 to June 6th, 2007. However, if the slices are aligned with the calendar, the first slice will be from January 1st, 2006 to December 31st, 2006. Alignment does not affect the output for intervals of fortnights, quarters, decades, or milliseconds.

If the slices are aligned with the calendar and are weekly, then the day the week starts is used to determine how they are aligned.

Pros & Cons

The output of the slice algorithm is in separate tables, so a longitudinal analysis will require working with each slice separately, which can be awkward. There will likely be future versions of the time slice algorithm that annotate the original table with the slice the rows belong to.

Applications

When doing longitudinal analysis of data, it can be useful to consider it in chunks, such as to calculate how statistics have changed over time. Alternatively, only a particular time period might be of interest, and this algorithm can extract it from data for a larger time range.

Implementation Details

This algorithm uses the Joda Time library extensively, which provides significantly improved capabilities compared to the default Java algorithms for dates and times.

Usage Hints

Consider using this algorithm on scientometric data to extract subsets for further analysis.

Links

- [Source Code](#)

See Also



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