# Package 'snifter'

July 26, 2025

**Type** Package

**Title** R wrapper for the python openTSNE library

**Version** 1.19.3

**Date** 2025-07-17

**Depends** R (>= 4.0.0)

**Imports** basilisk, reticulate, irlba, stats, assertthat

**Description** Provides an R wrapper for the implementation of FI-tSNE from the python package openTNSE. See Poličar et al. (2019) <doi:10.1101/731877> and the algorithm described by Linderman et al. (2018) <doi:10.1038/s41592-018-0308-4>.

**License** GPL-3

**Encoding** UTF-8

**LazyData** true

**RoxygenNote** 7.2.1

**VignetteBuilder** knitr

**biocViews** DimensionReduction, Visualization, Software, SingleCell, Sequencing

**StagedInstall** no

**BugReports** https://github.com/Alanocallaghan/snifter/issues

**URL** https://bioconductor.org/packages/snifter

**Suggests** knitr, rmarkdown, BiocStyle, ggplot2, testthat (>= 3.0.0)

**Config/testthat/edition** 3

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| project | *Project new data into an existing t-SNE embedding object.* |
|---|---|

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### Description

Project new data into an existing t-SNE embedding object.

### Usage

```
project(
  x,
  new,
  old,
  perplexity = 5,
  initialization = c("median", "weighted", "random"),
  k = 25L,
  learning_rate = 0.1,
  early_exaggeration = 4,
  early_exaggeration_iter = 0L,
  exaggeration = 1.5,
  n_iter = 250L,
  initial_momentum = 0.5,
  final_momentum = 0.8,
  max_grad_norm = 0.25,
  tolerance = 1e-04
)
```

### Arguments

| | |
|---|---|
| x | t-SNE embedding created with `fitsne`. |
| new | New data to project into existing embedding |
| old | Data used to create the original embedding. |
| perplexity | Numeric scalar. Perplexity can be thought of as the continuous number of nearest neighbors, for which t-SNE will attempt to preserve distances. However, when projecting, we only consider neighbors in the existing embedding i.e. each data point is placed into the embedding, independently of other new data points. |
| initialization | Character scalar specifying the method used to compute the initial point positions to be used in the embedding space. Can be "median", "weighted" or "random". In all cases, "median" or "weighted" should be preferred. |
| k | Integer scalar specifying the number of nearest neighbors to consider when initially placing the point onto the embedding. This is different from "perplexity" because perplexity affects optimization while this only affects the initial point positions. |

| learning_rate | The learning rate for t-SNE optimization. When learning_rate="auto" the appropriate learning rate is selected according to max(200, N / 12), as determined in Belkina et al. Otherwise, a numeric scalar. |
|---|---|
| early_exaggeration | |
| | Numeric scalar; the exaggeration factor to use during the *early exaggeration* phase. Typical values range from 12 to 32. |
| early_exaggeration_iter | |
| | The number of iterations to run in the *early exaggeration* phase. |
| exaggeration | The exaggeration factor to use during the normal optimization phase. This can be used to form more densely packed clusters and is useful for large data sets. |
| n_iter | The number of iterations to run in the normal optimization regime. |
| initial_momentum | |
| | The momentum to use during the *early exaggeration* phase. |
| final_momentum | The momentum to use during the normal optimization phase. |
| max_grad_norm | Maximum gradient norm. If the norm exceeds this value, it will be clipped. When adding points into an existing embedding, and the new points overlap with the reference points, this may lead to large gradients. This can make points "shoot off" from the embedding, causing the interpolation method to compute a very large grid, and leads to worse results. |
| tolerance | Numeric scalar specifying the numeric tolerance used to ensure the affinities calculated on the old data match those of the original embedding. |

## Value

Numeric matrix of t-SNE co-ordinates resulting from embedding new into the t-SNE embedding x.

## References

Automated optimized parameters for T-distributed stochastic neighbor embedding improve visualization and analysis of large datasets. Belkina, A.C., Ciccolella, C.O., Anno, R. et al. Nature Communications 10, 5415 (2019). doi: https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-019-13055-y

## Examples

```
set.seed(42)
m <- matrix(rnorm(2000), ncol=20)
out_binding <- fitsne(m[-(1:2), ], random_state = 42L)
new_points <- project(out_binding, new = m[1:2, ], old = m[-(1:2), ])
plot(as.matrix(out_binding), col = "black", pch = 19,
    xlab = "t-SNE 1", ylab = "t-SNE 2")
points(new_points, col = "red", pch = 19)
```

---

| snifter | *snifter: fast interpolated t-SNE in R* |
|---|---|

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## Description

An R package for running openTSNE's implementation of fast interpolated t-SNE.

See the openTSNE documentation for further details on these arguments and the general usage of this algorithm.

## Usage

```
fitsne(
  x,
  simplified = FALSE,
  n_components = 2L,
  n_jobs = 1L,
  perplexity = 30,
  n_iter = 500L,
  initialization = c("pca", "spectral", "random"),
  pca = FALSE,
  pca_dims = 50L,
  partial_pca = FALSE,
  pca_center = TRUE,
  pca_scale = TRUE,
  neighbors = c("auto", "exact", "annoy", "pynndescent", "approx"),
  negative_gradient_method = c("fft", "bh"),
  learning_rate = "auto",
  early_exaggeration = 12,
  early_exaggeration_iter = 250L,
  exaggeration = NULL,
  dof = 1,
  theta = 0.5,
  n_interpolation_points = 3L,
  min_num_intervals = 50L,
  ints_in_interval = 1,
  metric = "euclidean",
  metric_params = NULL,
  initial_momentum = 0.5,
  final_momentum = 0.8,
  max_grad_norm = NULL,
  random_state = NULL,
  verbose = FALSE
)
```

## Arguments

| | |
|---|---|
| x | Input data matrix. |
| simplified | Logical scalar. When FALSE, the function returns an object of class snifter. This contains all information necessary to project new data into the embedding using project If TRUE, all extra attributes will be omitted, and the return value is a base matrix. |
| n_components | Number of t-SNE components to be produced. |
| n_jobs | Integer scalar specifying the number of cores to be used. |
| perplexity | Numeric scalar controlling the neighborhood used when estimating the embedding. |
| n_iter | Integer scalar specifying the number of iterations to complete. |
| initialization | Character scalar specifying the initialization to use. "pca" may preserve global distance better than other options. |
| pca | Logical scalar specifying whether PCA should be run on the data before creating the embedding. |

| | |
|---|---|
| pca_dims | Integer scalar specifying the number of principal components to be calculated in the initial PCA step if pca=TRUE. |
| partial_pca | Logical scalar specifying whether [prcomp_irlba](prcomp_irlba) should be used if pca=TRUE. This is useful for very large data matrices. |
| pca_center, pca_scale | |
| | Logical scalars specifying whether centering and scaling should be performed before running PCA, if pca=TRUE. |
| neighbors | Character scalar specifying the nearest neighbour algorithm to use. |
| negative_gradient_method | |
| | Character scalar specifying the negative gradient approximation to use. "bh", referring to Barnes-Hut, is more appropriate for smaller data sets, while "fft" referring to fast Fourier transform, is more appropriate for larger datasets. |
| learning_rate | Numeric scalar specifying the learning rate, or the string "auto", which uses max(200, N / 12), where N is the number of observations. |
| early_exaggeration | |
| | Numeric scalar specifying the exaggeration factor to use during the early exaggeration phase. Typical values range from 12 to 32. |
| early_exaggeration_iter | |
| | Integer scalar specifying the number of iterations to run in the early exaggeration phase. |
| exaggeration | Numeric scalar specifying the exaggeration factor to use during the normal optimization phase. This can be used to form more densely packed clusters and is useful for large data sets. |
| dof | Numeric scalar specifying the degrees of freedom, as described in Kobak et al. (2019). |
| theta | Numeric scalar, only used when negative_gradient_method="bh". This is the trade-off parameter between speed and accuracy of the tree approximation method. Typical values range from 0.2 to 0.8. The value 0 indicates that no approximation is to be made and produces exact results also producing longer runtime. |
| n_interpolation_points | |
| | Integer scalar, only used when negative_gradient_method="fft". The number of interpolation points to use within each grid cell for interpolation based t-SNE. It is highly recommended leaving this value at the default 3. |
| min_num_intervals | |
| | Integer scalar, only used when negative_gradient_method="fft". The minimum number of grid cells to use, regardless of the ints_in_interval parameter. Higher values provide more accurate gradient estimations. |
| ints_in_interval | |
| | Numeric scalar, only used when negative_gradient_method="fft". Indicates how large a grid cell should be e.g. a value of 3 indicates a grid side length of 3. Lower values provide more accurate gradient estimations. |
| metric | Character scalar specifying the metric to be used to compute affinities between points in the original space. |
| metric_params | Named list of additional keyword arguments for the metric function. |
| initial_momentum | |
| | Numeric scalar specifying the momentum to use during the early exaggeration phase. |
| final_momentum | Numeric scalar specifying the momentum to use during the normal optimization phase. |

| max_grad_norm | Numeric scalar specifying the maximum gradient norm. If the norm exceeds this value, it will be clipped. |
| random_state | Integer scalar specifying the seed used by the random number generator. |
| verbose | Logical scalar controlling verbosity. |

## Value

A matrix of t-SNE embeddings.

## References

openTSNE: a modular Python library for t-SNE dimensionality reduction and embedding Pavlin G. Poličar, Martin Stražar, Blaž Zupan bioRxiv (2019) 731877; doi: https://doi.org/10.1101/731877

Fast interpolation-based t-SNE for improved visualization of single-cell RNA-seq data George C. Linderman, Manas Rachh, Jeremy G. Hoskins, Stefan Steinerberger, and Yuval Kluger Nature Methods 16, 243–245 (2019) doi: https://doi.org/10.1038/s41592-018-0308-4

Accelerating t-SNE using Tree-Based Algorithms Laurens van der Maaten Journal of Machine Learning Research (2014) http://jmlr.org/papers/v15/vandermaaten14a.html

openTSNE: a modular Python library for t-SNE dimensionality reduction and embedding Pavlin G. Poličar, Martin Stražar, Blaž Zupan bioRxiv (2019) 731877; doi: https://doi.org/10.1101/731877

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Accelerating t-SNE using Tree-Based Algorithms Laurens van der Maaten Journal of Machine Learning Research (2014) http://jmlr.org/papers/v15/vandermaaten14a.html

Heavy-tailed kernels reveal a finer cluster structure in t-SNE visualisations Dmitry Kobak, George Linderman, Stefan Steinerberger, Yuval Kluger and Philipp Berens arXiv (2019) doi: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-46150-8_8.

## Examples

```
set.seed(42)
m <- matrix(rnorm(2000), ncol=20)
out <- fitsne(m, random_state = 42L)
plot(out, pch = 19, xlab = "t-SNE 1", ylab = "t-SNE 2")

## openTSNE allows us to project new points into the existing
## embedding - useful for extremely large data.
## see https://opentsne.readthedocs.io/en/latest/api/index.html

out_binding <- fitsne(m[-(1:2), ], random_state = 42L)
new_points <- project(out_binding, new = m[1:2, ], old = m[-(1:2), ])
plot(as.matrix(out_binding), col = "black", pch = 19,
    xlab = "t-SNE 1", ylab = "t-SNE 2")
points(new_points, col = "red", pch = 19)
```

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