

Package ‘alabaster.se’

November 13, 2025

Title Load and Save SummarizedExperiments from File

Version 1.11.0

Date 2024-10-16

License MIT + file LICENSE

Description Save SummarizedExperiments into file artifacts, and load them back into memory.
This is a more portable alternative to serialization of such objects into RDS files.
Each artifact is associated with metadata for further interpretation;
downstream applications can enrich this metadata with context-specific properties.

Depends SummarizedExperiment, alabaster.base

Imports methods, alabaster.ranges, alabaster.matrix, BiocGenerics,
S4Vectors, IRanges, GenomicRanges, jsonlite

Suggests rmarkdown, knitr, testthat, BiocStyle

VignetteBuilder knitr

RoxygenNote 7.3.1

biocViews DataImport, DataRepresentation

git_url <https://git.bioconductor.org/packages/alabaster.se>

git_branch devel

git_last_commit 6b3a91e

git_last_commit_date 2025-10-29

Repository Bioconductor 3.23

Date/Publication 2025-11-13

Author Aaron Lun [aut, cre]

Maintainer Aaron Lun <infinite.monkeys.with.keyboards@gmail.com>

Contents

emptyRowRanges	2
readRangedSummarizedExperiment	2
readSummarizedExperiment	3
saveRangedSummarizedExperiment	4
saveSummarizedExperiment	6

Index**8**

emptyRowRanges	<i>Is the rowRanges empty?</i>
----------------	--------------------------------

Description

Check the `rowRanges` of a `RangedSummarizedExperiment` is empty, i.e., a `GRangesList` with no ranges.

Usage

```
emptyRowRanges(x)
```

Arguments

`x` A `RangedSummarizedExperiment` object or the contents of its `rowRanges`.

Details

Metadata in `mcols` is ignored for the purpose of this discussion, as this can be moved to the `rowData(x)` of the base `SummarizedExperiment` class without loss. In other words, non-empty `mcols` will not be used to determine that the `rowRanges` is not empty. However, non-empty fields in the `metadata` or in the inner `mcols` of the `GRanges` will trigger a non-emptiness decision.

Value

A logical scalar indicating whether `x` has empty `rowRanges`.

Examples

```
emptyRowRanges(SummarizedExperiment())
emptyRowRanges(SummarizedExperiment(rowRanges=GRanges()))
emptyRowRanges(SummarizedExperiment(rowRanges=GRangesList()))
```

readRangedSummarizedExperiment	<i>Read a RangedSummarizedExperiment from disk</i>
--------------------------------	--

Description

Read a `RangedSummarizedExperiment` from its on-disk representation. This is usually not directly called by users, but is instead called by dispatch in `readObject`.

Usage

```
readRangedSummarizedExperiment(path, metadata, ...)
```

Arguments

path	String containing a path to a directory, itself created using the saveObject method for RangedSummarizedExperiment objects.
metadata	Named list of metadata for this object, see readObjectFile for details.
...	Further arguments passed to readSummarizedExperiment and internal altReadObject calls.

Value

A [RangedSummarizedExperiment](#) object.

Author(s)

Aaron Lun

See Also

["saveObject,RangedSummarizedExperiment-method"](#), to save the [RangedSummarizedExperiment](#) to disk.

Examples

```
# Mocking up an experiment:
mat <- matrix(rpois(10000, 10), ncol=10)
colnames(mat) <- letters[1:10]
rownames(mat) <- sprintf("GENE_%i", seq_len(nrow(mat)))

gr <- GRanges("chrA", IRanges(1:1000, width=10))
se <- SummarizedExperiment(list(counts=mat), rowRanges=gr)
se$stuff <- LETTERS[1:10]
rowData(se)$blah <- runif(1000)
metadata(se)$whee <- "YAY"

tmp <- tempfile()
saveObject(se, tmp)
readObject(tmp)
```

readSummarizedExperiment

Read a SummarizedExperiment from disk

Description

Read a [SummarizedExperiment](#) from its on-disk representation. This is usually not directly called by users, but is instead called by dispatch in [readObject](#).

Usage

```
readSummarizedExperiment(path, metadata, ...)
```

Arguments

path	String containing a path to a directory, itself created using the saveObject method for SummarizedExperiment objects.
metadata	Named list of metadata for this object, see readObjectFile for details.
...	Further arguments passed to internal altReadObject calls.

Value

A [SummarizedExperiment](#) object.

Author(s)

Aaron Lun

See Also

["saveObject, SummarizedExperiment-method"](#), to save the SummarizedExperiment to disk.

Examples

```
# Mocking up an experiment:
mat <- matrix(rpois(10000, 10), ncol=10)
colnames(mat) <- letters[1:10]
rownames(mat) <- sprintf("GENE_%i", seq_len(nrow(mat)))

se <- SummarizedExperiment(list(counts=mat))
se$stuff <- LETTERS[1:10]
rowData(se)$blah <- runif(1000)
metadata(se)$whee <- "YAY"

tmp <- tempfile()
saveObject(se, tmp)
readObject(tmp)
```

```
saveRangedSummarizedExperiment
```

Save a RangedSummarizedExperiment to disk

Description

Save a [RangedSummarizedExperiment](#) to its on-disk representation.

Usage

```
## S4 method for signature 'RangedSummarizedExperiment'  
saveObject(x, path, ...)
```

Arguments

x	A RangedSummarizedExperiment object or one of its subclasses.
path	String containing the path to a directory in which to save x.
...	Further arguments to pass to " saveObject, SummarizedExperiment-method " and internal altSaveObject calls.

Value

x is saved into path and NULL is invisibly returned.

Author(s)

Aaron Lun

See Also

[readRangedSummarizedExperiment](#), to read the RangedSummarizedExperiment back into the R session.

Examples

```
mat <- matrix(rpois(10000, 10), ncol=10)  
colnames(mat) <- letters[1:10]  
rownames(mat) <- sprintf("GENE_%i", seq_len(nrow(mat)))  
  
gr <- GRanges("chrA", IRanges(1:1000, width=10))  
se <- SummarizedExperiment(list(counts=mat), rowRanges=gr)  
se$stuff <- LETTERS[1:10]  
rowData(se)$blah <- runif(1000)  
metadata(se)$whee <- "YAY"  
  
tmp <- tempfile()  
saveObject(se, tmp)  
list.files(tmp, recursive=TRUE)
```

saveSummarizedExperiment

Save a SummarizedExperiment to disk

Description

Save a [SummarizedExperiment](#) to its on-disk representation.

Usage

```
## S4 method for signature 'SummarizedExperiment'  
saveObject(x, path, SummarizedExperiment.allow.dataframe.assay = FALSE, ...)
```

Arguments

x	A SummarizedExperiment object or one of its subclasses.
path	String containing the path to a directory in which to save x.
SummarizedExperiment.allow.dataframe.assay	Logical scalar indicating whether to allow data frames as assays of x.
...	Further arguments to pass to internal altSaveObject calls.

Details

By default, we consider the presence of data frames in the assays to be an error. Users should coerce these into an appropriate matrix type, e.g., a dense matrix or a sparse dgCMatrix. If a DataFrame as an assay is truly desired, users may set `options(alabaster.se.reject_data.frames=FALSE)` to skip the error. Note that this only works for [DataFrame](#) objects - data.frame objects will not be saved correctly.

Value

x is saved into path and NULL is invisibly returned.

Author(s)

Aaron Lun

See Also

[readSummarizedExperiment](#), to read the SummarizedExperiment back into the R session.

Examples

```
mat <- matrix(rpois(10000, 10), ncol=10)
colnames(mat) <- letters[1:10]
rownames(mat) <- sprintf("GENE_%i", seq_len(nrow(mat)))

se <- SummarizedExperiment(list(counts=mat))
se$stuff <- LETTERS[1:10]
rowData(se)$blah <- runif(1000)
metadata(se)$whee <- "YAY"

tmp <- tempfile()
saveObject(se, tmp)
list.files(tmp, recursive=TRUE)
```

Index

`altReadObject`, [3](#), [4](#)
`altSaveObject`, [5](#), [6](#)

`DataFrame`, [6](#)

`emptyRowRanges`, [2](#)

`GRanges`, [2](#)
`GRangesList`, [2](#)

`loadSummarizedExperiment`
 (`readSummarizedExperiment`), [3](#)

`mcols`, [2](#)
`metadata`, [2](#)

`options`, [6](#)

`RangedSummarizedExperiment`, [2–5](#)
`readObject`, [2](#), [3](#)
`readObjectFile`, [3](#), [4](#)
`readRangedSummarizedExperiment`, [2](#), [5](#)
`readSummarizedExperiment`, [3](#), [3](#), [6](#)
`rowData`, [2](#)
`rowRanges`, [2](#)

`saveObject`, [3](#), [4](#)
`saveObject,RangedSummarizedExperiment-method`
 (`saveRangedSummarizedExperiment`),
 [4](#)
`saveObject,SummarizedExperiment-method`
 (`saveSummarizedExperiment`), [6](#)
`saveRangedSummarizedExperiment`, [4](#)
`saveSummarizedExperiment`, [6](#)
`stageObject,RangedSummarizedExperiment-method`
 (`saveRangedSummarizedExperiment`),
 [4](#)
`stageObject,SummarizedExperiment-method`
 (`saveSummarizedExperiment`), [6](#)
`SummarizedExperiment`, [2–4](#), [6](#)