

# Package ‘littler’

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**Type** Package

**Title** R at the Command-Line via 'r'

**Version** 0.3.22

**Date** 2026-02-03

**Description** A scripting and command-line front-end is provided by 'r' (aka 'littler') as a lightweight binary wrapper around the GNU R language and environment for statistical computing and graphics. While R can be used in batch mode, the r binary adds full support for both 'shebang'-style scripting (i.e. using a hash-mark-exclamation-path expression as the first line in scripts) as well as command-line use in standard Unix pipelines. In other words, r provides the R language without the environment.

**URL** <https://github.com/eddelbuettel/littler>,  
<https://dirk.eddelbuettel.com/code/littler.html>,  
<https://eddelbuettel.github.io/littler/>

**BugReports** <https://github.com/eddelbuettel/littler/issues>

**License** GPL (>= 2)

**OS\_type** unix

**SystemRequirements** libR

**Suggests** simplermardown, docopt, rcmdcheck, whoami

**VignetteBuilder** simplermardown

**RoxygenNote** 5.0.1

**NeedsCompilation** yes

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**Repository** CRAN

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littler	<i>Command-line and scripting front-end for R</i>
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## Description

The *r* binary provides a convenient and powerful front-end. By embedding R, it permits four distinct ways to leverage the power of R at the shell prompt: scripting, filename execution, piping and direct expression evaluation.

## Details

The *r* front-end was written with four distinct usage modes in mind.

First, it allow to write so-called ‘shebang’ scripts starting with `#!/usr/bin/env r`. These ‘shebang’ scripts are perfectly suited for automation and execution via e.g. via cron.

Second, we can use `r somefile.R` to quickly execute the name R source file. This is useful as *r* is both easy to type—and quicker to start that either R itself, or its scripting tool *Rscript*, while still loading the *methods* package.

Third, *r* can be used in ‘pipes’ which are very common in Unix. A simple and trivial example is `echo 'cat(2+2)' | r` illustrating that the standard output of one program can be used as the standard input of another program.

Fourth, *r* can be used as a calculator by supplying expressions after the `-e` or `--eval` options.

## Value

Common with other shell tools and programs, *r* returns its exit code where a value of zero indicates success.

## Note

On OS X one may have to link the binary to, say, `lr` instead. As OS X insists that files named *R* and *r* are the same, we cannot use the latter.

## Author(s)

Jeff Horner and Dirk Eddelbuettel wrote *littler* from 2006 to today, with contributions from several others.

Dirk Eddelbuettel <edd@debian.org> is the maintainer.

## Examples

```
## Not run:
#!/usr/bin/env r          ## for use in scripts

other input | r           ## for use in pipes

r somefile.R              ## for running files

r -e 'expr'               ## for evaluating expressions

r --help                  ## to show a quick synopsis

## End(Not run)
```

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r

*Return Path to r Binary*

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## Description

Return the path of the install r binary.

## Usage

```
r(usecat = FALSE)
```

## Arguments

usecat                      Optional toggle to request output to stdout (useful in Makefiles)

## Details

The test for Windows is of course superfluous as we have no binary for Windows. Maybe one day...

## Value

The path is returned as character variable. If the usecat option is set the character variable is displayed via `cat` instead.

## Author(s)

Dirk Eddelbuettel

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