

Package ‘Rarr’

July 22, 2025

Title Read Zarr Files in R

Version 1.9.0

Description The Zarr specification defines a format for chunked, compressed, N-dimensional arrays. It's design allows efficient access to subsets of the stored array, and supports both local and cloud storage systems. Rarr aims to implement this specification in R with minimal reliance on an external tools or libraries.

License MIT + file LICENSE

URL <https://github.com/grimbough/Rarr>

BugReports <https://github.com/grimbough/Rarr/issues>

Encoding UTF-8

Roxygen list(markdown = TRUE)

RoxygenNote 7.3.2

Depends R (>= 4.1.0), DelayedArray, BiocGenerics

Imports jsonlite, httr, stringr, R.utils, utils, paws.storage, methods

Suggests BiocStyle, covr, knitr, tinytest, mockery

VignetteBuilder knitr

SystemRequirements GNU make

biocViews DataImport

git_url <https://git.bioconductor.org/packages/Rarr>

git_branch devel

git_last_commit 6453ee4

git_last_commit_date 2025-04-15

Repository Bioconductor 3.22

Date/Publication 2025-07-21

Author Mike Smith [aut, cre] (ORCID: <<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7800-3848>>)

Maintainer Mike Smith <grimbough@gmail.com>

Contents

Rarr-package	2
.compress_and_write_chunk	3
.create_replace_call	3
.decompress_chunk	4
.format_chunk	4
.get_credentials	5
.normalize_array_path	6
.parse_datatype	6
compressors	7
create_empty_zarr_array	8
get_chunk_size	9
get_decompressed_chunk_size	10
read_array_metadata	10
read_chunk	11
read_zarr_array	11
update_fill_value	12
update_zarr_array	13
write_zarr_array	14
ZarrArray-class	15
ZarrRealizationSink	16
zarr_overview	16
Index	18

Rarr-package

Rarr: Read Zarr Files in R

Description

The Zarr specification defines a format for chunked, compressed, N-dimensional arrays. It's design allows efficient access to subsets of the stored array, and supports both local and cloud storage systems. Rarr aims to implement this specification in R with minimal reliance on an external tools or libraries.

Author(s)

Maintainer: Mike Smith <grimbough@gmail.com> ([ORCID](#))

See Also

Useful links:

- <https://github.com/grimbough/Rarr>
- Report bugs at <https://github.com/grimbough/Rarr/issues>

`.compress_and_write_chunk`
Compress and write a single chunk

Description

Compress and write a single chunk

Usage

```
.compress_and_write_chunk(
  input_chunk,
  chunk_path,
  compressor = use_zlib(),
  data_type_size,
  is_base64 = FALSE
)
```

Arguments

<code>input_chunk</code>	Array containing the chunk data to be compressed. Will be converted to a raw vector before compression.
<code>chunk_path</code>	Character string giving the path to the chunk that should be written.
<code>compressor</code>	A "compressor" function that returns a list giving the details of the compression tool to apply. See compressors for more details.
<code>data_type_size</code>	An integer giving the size of the original datatype. This is passed to the <code>blosc</code> algorithm, which seems to need it to achieve any compression.
<code>is_base64</code>	When dealing with <code>Py_unicode</code> strings we convert them to base64 strings for storage in our intermediate R arrays. This argument indicates if base64 is in use, because the conversion to raw in <code>.as_raw</code> should be done differently for base64 strings vs other types.

Value

Returns TRUE if writing is successful. Mostly called for the side-effect of writing the compressed chunk to disk.

<code>.create_replace_call</code>	<i>Create a string of the form <code>x[idx[[1]], idx[[2]]] <- y</code> for an array <code>x</code> where the number of dimensions is variable.</i>
-----------------------------------	---

Description

Create a string of the form `x[idx[[1]], idx[[2]]] <- y` for an array `x` where the number of dimensions is variable.

Usage

```
.create_replace_call(x_name, idx_name, idx_length, y_name)
```

Arguments

x_name	Name of the object to have items replaced
idx_name	Name of the list containing the indices
idx_length	Length of the list specified in idx_name
y_name	Name of the object containing the replacement items

Value

A character vector of length one containing the replacement commands. This is expected to be passed to `parse()` |> `eval()`.

.decompress_chunk	<i>Decompress a chunk in memory</i>
-------------------	-------------------------------------

Description

R has internal decompression tools for zlib, bz2 and lzma compression. We use external libraries bundled with the package for blosc and lz4 decompression.

Usage

```
.decompress_chunk(compressed_chunk, metadata)
```

Arguments

compressed_chunk	Raw vector holding the compressed bytes for this chunk.
metadata	List produced by <code>read_array_metadata()</code> with the contents of the .zarray file.

Value

An array with the number of dimensions specified in the Zarr metadata. In most cases it will have the same size as the Zarr chunk, however in the case of edge chunks, which overlap the extent of the array, the returned chunk will be smaller.

.format_chunk	<i>Format the decompressed chunk as an array of the correct type</i>
---------------	--

Description

When a chunk is decompressed it is returned as a vector of raw bytes. This function uses the array metadata to select how to convert the bytes into the final datatype and then converts the resulting output into an array of the appropriate dimensions, including re-ordering if the original data is in row-major order.

Usage

```
.format_chunk(decompressed_chunk, metadata, alt_chunk_dim)
```

Arguments

<code>decompressed_chunk</code>	Raw vector holding the decompressed bytes for this chunk.
<code>metadata</code>	List produced by <code>read_array_metadata()</code> holding the contents of the <code>.zarray</code> file.
<code>alt_chunk_dim</code>	The dimensions of the array that should be created from this chunk. Normally this will be the same as the chunk shape in <code>metadata</code> , but when dealing with edge chunks, which may overlap the true extent of the array, the returned array should be smaller than the chunk shape.

Value

A list of length 2. The first element is the formatted chunk data. The second is an integer of length 1, indicating if warnings were encountered when converting types

If "chunk_data" is larger than the space remaining in destination array i.e. it contains the overflowing elements, these will be trimmed when the chunk is returned to `read_data()`

<code>.get_credentials</code>	<i>This is a modified version of <code>paws.storge::get_credentials()</code>. It is included to prevent using the <code>:::</code> operator. Look at that function if things stop working.</i>
-------------------------------	--

Description

This is a modified version of `paws.storge::get_credentials()`. It is included to prevent using the `:::` operator. Look at that function if things stop working.

Usage

```
.get_credentials(credentials)
```

Arguments

<code>credentials</code>	Content stored at <code>.internal\$config\$credentials</code> in an object created by <code>paws.storage::s3()</code> .
--------------------------	---

Value

A credentials list to be reinserted into a `paws.storage` s3 object. If no valid credentials are found this function will error, which is expected and is caught by `.check_credentials`.

`.normalize_array_path` *Normalize a Zarr array path*

Description

Taken from <https://zarr.readthedocs.io/en/stable/spec/v2.html#logical-storage-paths>

Usage

```
.normalize_array_path(path)
```

Arguments

`path` Character vector of length 1 giving the path to be normalised.

Value

A character vector of length 1 containing the normalised path.

`.parse_datatype` *Parse the data type encoding string*

Description

Parse the data type encoding string

Usage

```
.parse_datatype(typestr)
```

Arguments

`typestr` The datatype encoding string. This is in the Numpy array typestr format.

Value

A list of length 4 containing the details of the data type.

Description

These functions select a compression tool and its setting when writing a Zarr file

Usage

```
use_blosc(cname = "lz4")

use_zlib(level = 6L)

use_gzip(level = 6L)

use_bz2(level = 6L)

use_lzma(level = 9L)

use_lz4()

use_zstd(level = 3)
```

Arguments

cname	Blosc is a 'meta-compressor' providing access to several compression algorithms. This argument defines which compression tool should be used. Valid options are: 'lz4', 'lz4hc', 'blosclz', 'zstd', 'zlib', 'snappy'.
level	Specify the compression level to use. The range of possible values is dependant on the compression tool being used. For example, for use_zlib() this argument can be between 1 & 9, while for use_zstd() the valid range is 1 to 22.

Value

A list containing the details of the selected compression tool. This will be written to the .zarray metadata when the Zarr array is created.

Examples

```
## define 2 compression filters for blosc (using snappy) and bzip2 (level 5)
blosc_with_snappy_compression <- use_blosc(cname = "snappy")
bzip2_compression <- use_bz2(level = 5)

## create an example array to write to a file
x <- array(runif(n = 1000, min = -10, max = 10), dim = c(10, 20, 5))

## write the array to two files using each compression filter
blosc_path <- tempfile()
bzip2_path <- tempfile()
write_zarr_array(
  x = x, zarr_array_path = blosc_path, chunk_dim = c(2, 5, 1),
  compressor = blosc_with_snappy_compression
```

```

)
write_zarr_array(
  x = x, zarr_array_path = bzip2_path, chunk_dim = c(2, 5, 1),
  compressor = bzip2_compression
)

## the contents of the two arrays should be the same
identical(read_zarr_array(blosc_path), read_zarr_array(bzip2_path))

## the size of the files on disk are not the same
sum(file.size(list.files(blosc_path, full.names = TRUE)))
sum(file.size(list.files(bzip2_path, full.names = TRUE)))

```

create_empty_zarr_array

Create an (empty) Zarr array

Description

Create an (empty) Zarr array

Usage

```

create_empty_zarr_array(
  zarr_array_path,
  dim,
  chunk_dim,
  data_type,
  order = "F",
  compressor = use_zlib(),
  fill_value,
  nchar,
  dimension_separator = "."
)

```

Arguments

zarr_array_path	Character vector of length 1 giving the path to the new Zarr array.
dim	Dimensions of the new array. Should be a numeric vector with the same length as the number of dimensions.
chunk_dim	Dimensions of the array chunks. Should be a numeric vector with the same length as the dim argument.
data_type	Character vector giving the data type of the new array. Currently this is limited to standard R data types. Valid options are: "integer", "double", "character". You can also use the analogous NumPy formats: "<i4", "<f8", "IS". If this argument isn't provided the fill_value will be used to determine the datatype.
order	Define the layout of the bytes within each chunk. Valid options are 'column', 'row', 'F' & 'C'. 'column' or 'F' will specify "column-major" ordering, which is how R arrays are arranged in memory. 'row' or 'C' will specify "row-major" order.

compressor	What (if any) compression tool should be applied to the array chunks. The default is to use zlib compression. Supplying NULL will disable chunk compression. See compressors for more details.
fill_value	The default value for uninitialized portions of the array. Does not have to be provided, in which case the default for the specified data type will be used.
nchar	For datatype = "character" this parameter gives the maximum length of the stored strings. It is an error not to specify this for a character array, but it is ignored for other data types.
dimension_separator	The character used to separate the dimensions in the names of the chunk files. Valid options are limited to "." and "/".

Value

If successful returns (invisibly) TRUE. However this function is primarily called for the size effect of initialising a Zarr array location and creating the .zarray metadata.

See Also

[write_zarr_array\(\)](#), [update_zarr_array\(\)](#)

Examples

```
new_zarr_array <- file.path(tempdir(), "temp.zarr")
create_empty_zarr_array(new_zarr_array,
  dim = c(10, 20), chunk_dim = c(2, 5),
  data_type = "integer"
)
```

get_chunk_size	<i>Determine the size of chunk in bytes</i>
----------------	---

Description

Determine the size of chunk in bytes

Usage

```
get_chunk_size(datatype, dimensions)
```

Arguments

datatype	A list of details for the array datatype. Expected to be produced by .parse_datatype() .
dimensions	A list containing the dimensions of the chunk. Expected to be found in a list produced by read_array_metadata() .

Value

An integer giving the size of the chunk in bytes

```
get_decompressed_chunk_size
```

Determine the size of chunk in bytes after decompression

Description

Determine the size of chunk in bytes after decompression

Usage

```
get_decompressed_chunk_size(datatype, dimensions)
```

Arguments

datatype	A list of details for the array datatype. Expected to be produced by <code>.parse_datatype()</code> .
dimensions	A list containing the dimensions of the chunk. Expected to be found in a list produced by <code>read_array_metadata()</code> .

Value

An integer giving the size of the chunk in bytes

```
read_array_metadata
```

Read the .zarray metadata file associated with a Zarr array

Description

Read the .zarray metadata file associated with a Zarr array

Usage

```
read_array_metadata(path, s3_client = NULL)
```

Arguments

path	A character vector of length 1. This provides the path to a Zarr array or group of arrays. This can either be on a local file system or on S3 storage.
s3_client	A list representing an S3 client. This should be produced by <code>paws.storage::s3()</code> .

Value

A list containing the array metadata

read_chunk	<i>Read a single Zarr chunk</i>
------------	---------------------------------

Description

Read a single Zarr chunk

Usage

```
read_chunk(
  zarr_array_path,
  chunk_id,
  metadata,
  s3_client = NULL,
  alt_chunk_dim = NULL
)
```

Arguments

zarr_array_path	A character vector of length 1, giving the path to the Zarr array
chunk_id	A numeric vector or single data.frame row with length equal to the number of dimensions of a chunk.
metadata	List produced by read_array_metadata() holding the contents of the .zarray file. If missing this function will be called automatically, but it is probably preferable to pass the meta data rather than read it repeatedly for every chunk.
s3_client	Object created by <code>paws.storage::s3()</code> . Only required for a file on S3. Leave as NULL for a file on local storage.
alt_chunk_dim	The dimensions of the array that should be created from this chunk. Normally this will be the same as the chunk shape in metadata, but when dealing with edge chunks, which may overlap the true extent of the array the returned array should be smaller than the chunk shape.

Value

A list of length 2. The entries should be names "chunk_data" and "warning". The first is an array containing the decompressed chunk values, the second is an integer indicating whether there were any overflow warnings generated while reading the chunk into an R datatype.

read_zarr_array	<i>Read a Zarr array</i>
-----------------	--------------------------

Description

Read a Zarr array

Usage

```
read_zarr_array(zarr_array_path, index, s3_client)
```

Arguments

<code>zarr_array_path</code>	Path to a Zarr array. A character vector of length 1. This can either be a location on a local file system or the URI to an array in S3 storage.
<code>index</code>	A list of the same length as the number of dimensions in the Zarr array. Each entry in the list provides the indices in that dimension that should be read from the array. Setting a list entry to NULL will read everything in the associated dimension. If this argument is missing the entirety of the the Zarr array will be read.
<code>s3_client</code>	Object created by <code>paws.storage::s3()</code> . Only required for a file on S3. Leave as NULL for a file on local storage.

Value

An array with the same number of dimensions as the input array. The extent of each dimension will correspond to the length of the values provided to the `index` argument.

Examples

```
## Using a local file provided with the package
## This array has 3 dimensions
z1 <- system.file("extdata", "zarr_examples", "row-first",
  "int32.zarr",
  package = "Rarr"
)

## read the entire array
read_zarr_array(zarr_array_path = z1)

## extract values for first 10 rows, all columns, first slice
read_zarr_array(zarr_array_path = z1, index = list(1:10, NULL, 1))

## using a Zarr file hosted on Amazon S3
## This array has a single dimension with length 576
z2 <- "https://power-analysis-ready-datastore.s3.amazonaws.com/power_901_constants.zarr/lon/"

## read the entire array
read_zarr_array(zarr_array_path = z2)

## read alternating elements
read_zarr_array(zarr_array_path = z2, index = list(seq(1, 576, 2)))
```

Description

Special case fill values (NaN, Inf, -Inf) are encoded as strings in the Zarr metadata. R will create arrays of type character if these are defined and the chunk isn't present on disk. This function updates the fill value to be R's representation of these special values, so numeric arrays are created. A "null" fill value implies no missing values. We set this to NA as you can't create an array of type NULL in R. It should have no impact if there are really no missing values.

Usage

```
update_fill_value(metadata)
```

Arguments

metadata	A list containing the array metadata. This should normally be generated by running <code>read_json()</code> on the <code>.zarray</code> file.
----------	---

Value

Returns a list with the same structure as the input. The returned list will be identical to the input, unless the `fill_value` entry was on of: NULL, "NaN", "Infinity" or "-Infinity".

update_zarr_array	<i>Update (a subset of) an existing Zarr array</i>
-------------------	--

Description

Update (a subset of) an existing Zarr array

Usage

```
update_zarr_array(zarr_array_path, x, index)
```

Arguments

zarr_array_path	Character vector of length 1 giving the path to the Zarr array that is to be modified.
x	The R array (or object that can be coerced to an array) that will be written to the Zarr array.
index	A list with the same length as the number of dimensions of the target array. This argument indicates which elements in the target array should be updated.

Value

The function is primarily called for the side effect of writing to disk. Returns (invisibly) TRUE if the array is successfully updated.

Examples

```
## first create a new, empty, Zarr array
new_zarray_array <- file.path(tempdir(), "new_array.zarr")
create_empty_zarr_array(
  zarr_array_path = new_zarray_array, dim = c(20, 10),
  chunk_dim = c(10, 5), data_type = "double"
)

## create a matrix smaller than our Zarr array
small_matrix <- matrix(runif(6), nrow = 3)

## insert the matrix into the first 3 rows, 2 columns of the Zarr array
update_zarr_array(new_zarray_array, x = small_matrix, index = list(1:3, 1:2))

## reading back a slightly larger subset,
## we can see only the top left corner has been changed
read_zarr_array(new_zarray_array, index = list(1:5, 1:5))
```

write_zarr_array	<i>Write an R array to Zarr</i>
------------------	---------------------------------

Description

Write an R array to Zarr

Usage

```
write_zarr_array(
  x,
  zarr_array_path,
  chunk_dim,
  order = "F",
  compressor = use_zlib(),
  fill_value,
  nchar,
  dimension_separator = "."
)
```

Arguments

x	The R array (or object that can be coerced to an array) that will be written to the Zarr array.
zarr_array_path	Character vector of length 1 giving the path to the new Zarr array.
chunk_dim	Dimensions of the array chunks. Should be a numeric vector with the same length as the dim argument.
order	Define the layout of the bytes within each chunk. Valid options are 'column', 'row', 'F' & 'C'. 'column' or 'F' will specify "column-major" ordering, which is how R arrays are arranged in memory. 'row' or 'C' will specify "row-major" order.

compressor	What (if any) compression tool should be applied to the array chunks. The default is to use <code>zlib</code> compression. Supplying <code>NULL</code> will disable chunk compression. See compressors for more details.
fill_value	The default value for uninitialized portions of the array. Does not have to be provided, in which case the default for the specified data type will be used.
nchar	For character arrays this parameter gives the maximum length of the stored strings. If this argument is not specified the array provided to <code>x</code> will be checked and the length of the longest string found will be used so no data are truncated. However this may be slow and providing a value to <code>nchar</code> can provide a modest performance improvement.
dimension_separator	The character used to to separate the dimensions in the names of the chunk files. Valid options are limited to <code>"."</code> and <code>"/"</code> .

Value

The function is primarily called for the side effect of writing to disk. Returns (invisibly) `TRUE` if the array is successfully written.

Examples

```
new_zarr_array <- file.path(tempdir(), "integer.zarr")
x <- array(1:50, dim = c(10, 5))
write_zarr_array(
  x = x, zarr_array_path = new_zarr_array,
  chunk_dim = c(2, 5)
)
```

ZarrArray-class

ZarrArray constructor

Description

`ZarrArray`: function to create a new object of class `ZarrArray`.

Usage

```
ZarrArray(zarr_array_path)
```

Arguments

`zarr_array_path`

Path to a Zarr array. A character vector of length 1. This can either be a location on a local file system or the URI to an array in S3 storage.

Value

Object of class `ZarrArray`

ZarrRealizationSink	<i>Write arrays to Zarr</i>
---------------------	-----------------------------

Description

Write array data to a Zarr backend via **DelayedArray**'s [RealizationSink](#) machinery.

zarr_overview	<i>Print a summary of a Zarr array</i>
---------------	--

Description

When reading a Zarr array using [read_zarr_array\(\)](#) it is necessary to know it's shape and size. [zarr_overview\(\)](#) can be used to get a quick overview of the array shape and contents, based on the .zarray metadata file each array contains.

Usage

```
zarr_overview(zarr_array_path, s3_client, as_data_frame = FALSE)
```

Arguments

zarr_array_path	A character vector of length 1. This provides the path to a Zarr array or group of arrays. This can either be on a local file system or on S3 storage.
s3_client	A list representing an S3 client. This should be produced by paws.storage::s3() .
as_data_frame	Logical determining whether the Zarr array details should be printed to screen (FALSE) or returned as a <code>data.frame</code> (TRUE) so they can be used computationally.

Details

The function currently prints the following information to the R console:

- array path
- array shape and size
- chunk and size
- the number of chunks
- the datatype of the array
- codec used for data compression (if any)

If given the path to a group of arrays the function will attempt to print the details of all sub-arrays in the group.

Value

If `as_data_frame = FALSE` the function invisibly returns TRUE if successful. However it is primarily called for the side effect of printing details of the Zarr array(s) to the screen. If `as_data_frame = TRUE` then a `data.frame` containing details of the array is returned.

Examples

```
## Using a local file provided with the package
z1 <- system.file("extdata", "zarr_examples", "row-first",
  "int32.zarr",
  package = "Rarr"
)

## read the entire array
zarr_overview(zarr_array_path = z1)

## using a file on S3 storage
## don't run this on the BioC Linux build - it's very slow there
is_BBS_linux <- nzchar(Sys.getenv("IS_BIOC_BUILD_MACHINE")) && Sys.info()["sysname"] == "Linux"
if(!is_BBS_linux) {
  z2 <- "https://uk1s3.embassy.ebi.ac.uk/idr/zarr/v0.4/idr0101A/13457539.zarr/1"
  zarr_overview(z2)
}
```

Index

* Internal

- .compress_and_write_chunk, 3
- .create_replace_call, 3
- .decompress_chunk, 4
- .format_chunk, 4
- .get_credentials, 5
- .normalize_array_path, 6
- get_chunk_size, 9
- get_decompressed_chunk_size, 10
- read_array_metadata, 10
- read_chunk, 11
- update_fill_value, 12

* internal

- Rarr-package, 2
- .compress_and_write_chunk, 3
- .create_replace_call, 3
- .decompress_chunk, 4
- .format_chunk, 4
- .get_credentials, 5
- .normalize_array_path, 6
- .parse_datatype, 6
- .parse_datatype(), 9, 10

chunkdim, ZarrArraySeed-method
(ZarrArray-class), 15

chunkdim, ZarrRealizationSink-method
(ZarrRealizationSink), 16

coerce (ZarrArray-class), 15

coerce, ANY, ZarrArray-method
(ZarrRealizationSink), 16

coerce, ANY, ZarrMatrix-method
(ZarrArray-class), 15

coerce, ANY, ZarrRealizationSink-method
(ZarrRealizationSink), 16

coerce, ZarrArray, ZarrMatrix-method
(ZarrArray-class), 15

coerce, ZarrMatrix, ZarrArray-method
(ZarrArray-class), 15

coerce, ZarrRealizationSink, DelayedArray-method
(ZarrRealizationSink), 16

coerce, ZarrRealizationSink, ZarrArray-method
(ZarrRealizationSink), 16

coerce, ZarrRealizationSink, ZarrArraySeed-method
(ZarrRealizationSink), 16

coerce, ZarrRealizationSink, ZarrMatrix-method
(ZarrRealizationSink), 16

compressors, 3, 7, 9, 15

create_empty_zarr_array, 8

get_chunk_size, 9

get_decompressed_chunk_size, 10

matrixClass, ZarrArray-method
(ZarrArray-class), 15

paws.storage::s3(), 10–12, 16

Rarr (Rarr-package), 2

Rarr-package, 2

read_array_metadata, 10

read_array_metadata(), 9, 10

read_chunk, 11

read_zarr_array, 11

read_zarr_array(), 16

RealizationSink, 16

type, ZarrRealizationSink-method
(ZarrRealizationSink), 16

update_fill_value, 12

update_zarr_array, 13

update_zarr_array(), 9

use_blosc (compressors), 7

use_bz2 (compressors), 7

use_gzip (compressors), 7

use_lz4 (compressors), 7

use_lzma (compressors), 7

use_zlib (compressors), 7

use_zstd (compressors), 7

write_block, ZarrRealizationSink-method
(ZarrRealizationSink), 16

write_zarr_array, 14

write_zarr_array(), 9

writeZarrArray (ZarrRealizationSink), 16

zarr_overview, 16

ZarrArray (ZarrArray-class), 15

ZarrArray-class, 15

ZarrArray-method (ZarrArray-class), [15](#)
ZarrMatrix (ZarrArray-class), [15](#)
ZarrMatrix-class (ZarrArray-class), [15](#)
ZarrRealizationSink, [16](#)
ZarrRealizationSink-class
 (ZarrRealizationSink), [16](#)