

# Package ‘MsExperiment’

March 15, 2023

**Title** Infrastructure for Mass Spectrometry Experiments

**Version** 1.0.0

**Description** Infrastructure to store and manage all aspects related to a complete proteomics or metabolomics mass spectrometry (MS) experiment. The MsExperiment package provides light-weight and flexible containers for MS experiments building on the new MS infrastructure provided by the Spectra, QFeatures and related packages. Along with raw data representations, links to original data files and sample annotations, additional metadata or annotations can also be stored within the MsExperiment container. To guarantee maximum flexibility only minimal constraints are put on the type and content of the data within the containers.

**Depends** R (>= 4.2), ProtGenerics (>= 1.9.1),

**Imports** methods, S4Vectors, IRanges, Spectra, SummarizedExperiment, QFeatures

**Suggests** testthat, knitr (>= 1.1.0), roxygen2, BiocStyle (>= 2.5.19), rmarkdown, rpx, mzR, msdata

**License** Artistic-2.0

**LazyData** no

**VignetteBuilder** knitr

**BugReports** <https://github.com/RforMassSpectrometry/MsExperiment/issues>

**URL** <https://github.com/RforMassSpectrometry/MsExperiment>

**biocViews** Infrastructure, Proteomics, MassSpectrometry, Metabolomics, ExperimentalDesign, DataImport

**RoxygenNote** 7.2.1

**Roxygen** list(markdown=TRUE)

**Collate** 'MsExperiment-functions.R' 'MsExperimentFiles.R'  
'MsExperiment.R' 'existMsExperimentFiles.R'

**git\_url** <https://git.bioconductor.org/packages/MsExperiment>

**git\_branch** RELEASE\_3\_16

**git\_last\_commit** 605b25f

**git\_last\_commit\_date** 2022-11-01

**Date/Publication** 2023-03-15

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## Description

The MsExperiment class allows the storage and management of all aspects related to a complete proteomics or metabolomics mass spectrometry experiment. This includes experimental design (i.e. a table with samples), raw mass spectrometry data as spectra and chromatograms, quantitative features, and identification data or any other relevant data files.

For details, see <https://rformassspectrometry.github.io/MsExperiment>

This package is part of the RforMassSpectrometry initiative: <https://www.rformassspectrometry.org/>

## Usage

```

experimentFiles(object)

experimentFiles(object) <- value

sampleData(object)

sampleData(object) <- value

qdata(object)

qdata(object) <- value

MsExperiment()

## S4 method for signature 'MsExperiment'
show(object)

## S4 method for signature 'MsExperiment'
```

```

length(x)

## S4 method for signature 'MsExperiment'
spectra(object)

spectra(object) <- value

linkSampleData(
  object,
  with = character(),
  sampleIndex = seq_len(nrow(sampleData(object))),
  withIndex = integer(),
  subsetBy = 1L
)

## S4 method for signature 'MsExperiment,ANY,ANY,ANY'
x[i, j, ..., drop = FALSE]

```

### Arguments

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| object      | An instance of class MsExperiment.   |
| value       | An object of the appropriate class for the slot to be populated.   |
| x           | an MsExperiment.   |
| with        | for linkSampleData: character(1) defining the data to which samples should be linked. See section <i>Linking sample data to other experimental data</i> for details.   |
| sampleIndex | for linkSampleData: integer with the indices of the samples in sampleData(object) that should be linked.   |
| withIndex   | for linkSampleData: integer with the indices of the elements in with to which the samples (specified by sampleIndex) should be linked to.  |
| subsetBy    | for linkSampleData: optional integer(1) defining the dimension on which the subsetting will occur on the linked data. Defaults to subsetBy = 1L thus subsetting will happen on the first dimension (rows or elements). |
| i           | for [: an integer, character or logical referring to the indices or names (rowname of sampleData) of the samples to subset.  |
| j           | for [: not supported.  |
| ...         | optional additional parameters.  |
| drop        | for [: ignored.  |

### Value

See help of the individual functions.

### Slots

experimentFiles An instance of class MsExperimentFiles or NULL.

spectra An instance of class Spectra or NULL.

qdata An instance of class QFeatures, SummarizedExperiment or NULL.

otherData A List to store any additional data objects.

sampleData A DataFrame documenting the experimental design.

sampleDataLinks A List with link definitions between samples and data elements. Should not be directly accessed or modified by the user.

metadata A list to store additional metadata.

### General information

An experiment is typically composed of several items

- Description and information (covariates etc) of each sample from the experiment. These are stored in the sampleData slot as a DataFrame, each row describing a sample with columns containing all relevant information on that sample.
- Files to data or annotations. These are stored in the experimentFiles slot as an instance of class MsExperimentFiles.
- General metadata about the experiment, stored as a list in the metadata slot.
- Mass spectrometry data. Spectra and their metadata are stored as an Spectra() object in the spectra slot. Chromatographic data is not yet supported but will be stored as a Chromatograms() object in the chromatograms slot.
- Quantification data is stored as QFeatures or SummarizedExperiment objects in the qdata slot and can be accessed or replaced with the qdata or qdata<- functions, respectively.
- Any additional data, be it other spectra data, or proteomics identification data (i.e peptide-spectrum matches defined as PSM() objects) can be added as elements to the list stored in the otherData slot.

The *length* of a MsExperiment is defined by the number of samples (i.e. the number of rows of the object's sampleData). A MsExperiment with two samples will thus have a length of two, independently of the number of files or length of raw data in the object. This also defines the subsetting of the object using the [] function which will always subset by samples. See the section for filtering and subsetting below for more information.

### Accessing data

Data from an MsExperiment object can be accessed with the dedicated accessor functions:

- experimentFiles, experimentFiles<-: gets or sets experiment files.
- length: get the *length* of the object which represents the number of samples available in the object's sampleData.
- metadata, metadata<-: gets or sets the object's metadata.
- sampleData, sampleData: gets or sets the object's sample data (i.e. a DataFrame containing sample descriptions).
- spectra, spectra<-: gets or sets spectra data. spectra returns a Spectra() object, spectra<- takes a Spectra data as input and returns the updated MsExperiment.
- qdata, qdata<-: gets or sets the quantification data, which can be a QFeatures or SummarizedExperiment.

### Linking sample data to other experimental data

To start with, an `MsExperiment` is just a loose collection of files and data related to an experiment, no explicit links or associations are present between the samples and related data. Such links can however be created with the `linkSampleData()` function. This function can establish links between individual (or all) samples within the object's `sampleData` to individual, or multiple, data elements or files, such as Spectra or raw data files.

The presence of such links enables a (consistent) subsetting of an `MsExperiment` by samples. Thus, once the link is defined, any subsetting by sample will also correctly subset the linked data. All other, not linked, data elements are always retained as in the original `MsExperiment`.

To be able to link different elements within an `MsExperiment` it is also required to *identify* them with a consistent naming scheme. The naming scheme of slots and data elements within follows an SQL-like scheme, in which the variable (element) is identified by the name of the database table, followed by a "." and the name of the database table column. For `MsExperiment`, the naming scheme is defined as "`<slot name>.<element name>`". A column called "sample\_name" within the `sampleData` data frame can thus be addressed with "`sampleData.sample_name`", while `spectra.msLevel` would represent the spectra variable called `msLevel` within the Spectra stored in the spectra slot.

Links between sample data rows and any other data element are stored as integer matrices within the `sampleDataLinks` slot of the object (see also the vignette for examples and illustrations). Such links can be defined/added with the `linkSampleData` function which adds a relationship between rows in `sampleData` to elements in any other data within the `MsExperiment` that are specified with parameter `with`. `linkSampleData` supports two different ways to define the link:

- Parameter `with` defines the data to which the link should be established. To link samples to raw data files that would for example be available as a character in an element called "raw\_files" within the object's `experimentFiles`, `with = experimentFiles.raw_files` would have to be used. Next it is required to specify which samples should be linked with which elements in `with`. This needs to be defined with the parameters `sampleIndex` and `withIndex`, both are expected to be integer vectors specifying which sample in `sampleData` should be linked to which element in `with` (see examples below or vignette for examples and details).
- As an alternative way, a link could be defined with an SQL-like syntax that relates a column in `sampleData` to a column/element in the data to which the link should be established. To link for example individual spectra to the corresponding samples `with = "sampleData.raw_file = spectra.dataOrigin"` could be used assuming that `sampleData` contains a column named "raw\_file" with the (full path) of the raw data file for each sample from which the spectra were imported. In this case both `sampleIndex` and `withIndex` can be omitted, but it is expected/required that the columns/elements from `sampleData` and the data element to which the link should be established contain matching values.

Note that `linkSampleData` will **replace** a previously existing link to the same data element.

### Subsetting and filtering

- `[:` `MsExperiment` objects can be subset **by samples** with `[i]` where `i` is the index or a logical defining to which samples the data should be subset. Subsetting by sample will (correctly) subset all linked data to the respective samples. If multiple samples are linked to the same data element, subsetting might duplicate that data element. This duplication of *n:m* relationships

between samples to elements does however not affect data consistency (see examples below for more information). Not linked data (slots) will be returned as they are. Subsetting in arbitrary order is supported. See the vignette for details and examples.

### Author(s)

Laurent Gatto, Johannes Rainer

### Examples

```
## An empty MsExperiment object
msexp <- MsExperiment()
msexp

example(MsExperimentFiles)
experimentFiles(msexp) <- fls
msexp

## Linking samples to data elements

## Create a small experiment
library(S4Vectors)
mse <- MsExperiment()
sd <- DataFrame(sample_id = c("QC1", "QC2"),
                sample_name = c("QC Pool", "QC Pool"),
                injection_idx = c(1, 3))
sampleData(mse) <- sd

## define file names containing spectra data for the samples and
## add them, along with other arbitrary files to the experiment
fls <- dir(system.file("sciex", package = "msdata"), full.names = TRUE)
experimentFiles(mse) <- MsExperimentFiles(
  mzML_files = fls,
  annotations = "internal_standards.txt")

## Link samples to data files: first sample to first file in "mzML_files",
## second sample to second file in "mzML_files"
mse <- linkSampleData(mse, with = "experimentFiles.mzML_files",
  sampleIndex = c(1, 2), withIndex = c(1, 2))

## Link all samples to the one file in "annotations"
mse <- linkSampleData(mse, with = "experimentFiles.annotations",
  sampleIndex = c(1, 2), withIndex = c(1, 1))
mse

## Import the spectra data and add it to the experiment
library(Spectra)
spectra(mse) <- Spectra(fls, backend = MsBackendMzR())

## Link each spectrum to the respective sample. We use the alternative
## link definition that does not require sampleIndex and withIndex but
## links elements based on matching values in the specified data elements.
```

```

## We need to add the full file name as an additional column to sampleData
## in order to allow matching this file names with the value in
## spectra(mse)$dataOrigin which contains the original file names from which
## the spectra were imported.
sampleData(mse)$raw_file <- normalizePath(fls)

## The links can be added using the short notation below
mse <- linkSampleData(mse, with = "sampleData.raw_file = spectra.dataOrigin")
mse

## With sampleData links present, any subsetting of the experiment by sample
## will ensure that all linked elements are subset accordingly
b <- mse[2]
b
sampleData(b)
experimentFiles(b)$mzML_files

## Subsetting with duplication of n:m sample to data relationships
##
## Both samples were assigned above to one "annotation" file in
## `experimentFiles`:
experimentFiles(mse[1])[["annotations"]]
experimentFiles(mse[2])[["annotations"]]

## Subsetting will always keep the relationship between samples and linked
## data elements. Subsetting will however eventually duplicate data elements
## that are shared among samples. Thus, while in the original object the
## element "annotations" has a single entry, subsetting with [1:2] will
## result in an MsExperiment with duplicated entries in "annotations"
experimentFiles(mse)[["annotations"]]
experimentFiles(mse[1:2])[["annotations"]]

```

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MsExperimentFiles      *A class to store experiment files*

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## Description

The MsExperimentFiles class stores files that are part of a mass spectrometry experiment. The objects are created with the MsExperimentFiles() function.

The files encoded in a MsExperimentFiles instance don't need to exist on the current filesystem - sometimes, these might be created in anticipation of their creation. The existMsExperimentFiles() function can be used to verify which ones currently exist: it returns a list of logicals (formally an instance of IRanges::LogicalList() of lengths equal to the MsExperimentFiles used as input.

## Usage

```

MsExperimentFiles(..., metadata = list())

## S4 method for signature 'MsExperimentFiles'

```

```
show(object)
```

```
existMsExperimentFiles(object)
```

### Arguments

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| ...      | Either a named list or a set of named vectors. All elements are coerced to characters.                    |
| metadata | list() holding arbitrary R objects as annotations.  |
| object   | The existMsExperimentFiles() function works with either an instance of MsExperimentFiles or MsExperiment. |

### Value

MsExperimentFiles returns an instance of MsExperimentFiles.

### Author(s)

Laurent Gatto

### Examples

```
f1s <- MsExperimentFiles(mzmls = c("/path/to/f1.mzML", "/path/to/f2.mzML"),
                        mzids = "/another/path/to/id1.mzid",
                        fasta = "file.fas")

f1s

## A new MsExperimentFiles containing mzML or mzid files
f1s[1]
f1s["mzids"]

## The actual file names
f1s[[1]]
f1s[[2]]
f1s[["fasta"]]

## None of the files used in this example actually exist
existMsExperimentFiles(f1s)
```



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