The Rcpp converter functions Rcpp::as and Rcpp::wrap are extensible to user-defined types and third-party types.

2. Extending Rcpp::wrap

The Rcpp::wrap converter is extensible in essentially two ways: intrusive and non-intrusive.

2.1. Intrusive extension. When extending Rcpp with your own data type, the recommended way is to implement a conversion to SEXP. This lets Rcpp::wrap know about the new data type. The template meta programming (or TMP) dispatch is able to recognize that a type is convertible to a SEXP and Rcpp::wrap will use that conversion.

The caveat is that the type must be declared before the main header file Rcpp.h is included.

```cpp
#include <RcppCommon.h>

// third party library that declares class Bar
#include <foobar.h>

namespace Rcpp {

  template <> SEXP wrap(const Bar& object);
}
```

This is called intrusive because the conversion to SEXP operator has to be declared within the class.

2.2. Non-intrusive extension. It is often desirable to offer automatic conversion to third-party types, over which the developer has no control and can therefore not include a conversion to SEXP operator in the class definition.

To provide automatic conversion from C++ to R, one must declare a specialization of the Rcpp::wrap template between the includes of RcppCommon.h and Rcpp.h.

```cpp
#include <RcppCommon.h>

// declaring the specialization
namespace Rcpp {

  template <> SEXP wrap(const Bar&);
}
```

// this must appear after the specialization,
// otherwise the specialization will not be
// seen by Rcpp types
```
It should be noted that only the declaration is required. The implementation can appear after the .h file is included, and therefore take full advantage of the Rcpp type system.

Another non-intrusive option is to expose an external pointer. The macro RCPP_EXPOSED_WRAP provides an easy way to expose a C++ class to R as an external pointer. It can be used instead of specializing Rcpp::wrap, and should not be used simultaneously. Note that the C++ class has to use Rcpp modules. See the Rcpp modules vignette for more details.

#include <Rcpp.h>
#include <foobar.h>

RCPP_EXPOSED_WRAP(Bar)

2.3. Templates and partial specialization. It is perfectly valid to declare a partial specialization for the Rcpp::wrap template. The compiler will identify the appropriate overload:

#include <RcppCommon.h>
#include <foobar.h>

namespace Rcpp {
    namespace traits {
        template<
type T>
        SEXP wrap(const Bling<T>&);
    }
}

// this must appear after the specialization, or
// specialization will not be seen by Rcpp types
#include <Rcpp.h>

3. Extending Rcpp::as
Conversion from R to C++ is also possible in both intrusive and non-intrusive ways.

3.1. Intrusive extension. As part of its template meta programming dispatch logic, Rcpp::as will attempt to use the constructor of the target class taking a SEXP.

#include <RcppCommon.h>

class Foo{
    public:
    Foo();

    // this ctor enables implicit Rcpp::as
    Foo(SEXP);
}

// this must appear after the specialization, or
// specialization will not be seen by Rcpp types
#include <Rcpp.h>

3.2. Non-intrusive extension. It is also possible to fully specialize Rcpp::as to enable non-intrusive implicit conversion capabilities.

#include <RcppCommon.h>

// third party library that declares class Bar
#include <foobar.h>

// declaring the specialization
namespace Rcpp {
    template <> Bar as(SEXP);
}

// this must appear after the specialization, or
// specialization will not be seen by Rcpp types
#include <Rcpp.h>

Furthermore, another non-intrusive option is to opt for sharing an R external pointer. The macro RCPP_EXPOSED_AS provides an easy way to extend Rcpp::as to expose R external pointers to C++. It can be used instead of specializing Rcpp::as, and should not be used simultaneously. Note that the C++ class has to use Rcpp modules. See the Rcpp modules vignette for more details.

#include <Rcpp.h>
#include <foobar.h>

RCPP_EXPOSED_AS(Bar)

With this being said, there is one additional macro that can be used to simultaneously define both Rcpp::wrap and Rcpp::as specialization for an external pointer. The macro RCPP_EXPOSED_CLASS can be use to transparently exchange a class between R and C++ as an external pointer. Do not simultaneously use it alongside RCPP_EXPOSED_AS, RCPP_EXPOSED_WRAP, Rcpp::wrap, or Rcpp::as.

3.3. Templates and partial specialization. The signature of Rcpp::as does not allow partial specialization. When exposing a templated class to Rcpp::as, the programer must specialize the Rcpp::traits::Exporter template class. The TMP dispatch will recognize that a specialization of Exporter is available and delegate the conversion to this class. Rcpp defines the Rcpp::traits::Exporter template class as follows:

namespace Rcpp {
    namespace traits {
        template<
type T>
        class Exporter{
            public:
            Exporter(SEXP x) : t(x){}
            inline T get() { return t; }

            private:
            T t;
        };
    }
}

This is the reason why the default behavior of Rcpp::as is to invoke the constructor of the type T taking a SEXP.

Since partial specialization of class templates is allowed, we can expose a set of classes as follows:

namespace Rcpp {
    namespace traits {
        template<
type T>
        class Exporter{
            public:
            Exporter(SEXP x) : t(x){}
            inline T get() { return t; }

            private:
            T t;
        };
    }
}
Using this approach, the requirements for the `Exporter<Blind<T>>` class are:

- it should have a constructor taking a SEXP
- it should have a method called `get` that returns an instance of the `Blind<T>` type.

### 4. Summary

The `Rcpp` package greatly facilitates the transfer of objects between R and C++. This note has shown how to extend `Rcpp` to either user-defined or third-party classes via the `Rcpp::as` and `Rcpp::wrap` template functions. Both intrusive and non-intrusive approaches were discussed.

### References


