

# Package ‘megadepth’

September 12, 2025

**Title** megadepth: BigWig and BAM related utilities

**Version** 1.19.0

**Date** 2021-08-05

**Description** This package provides an R interface to Megadepth by Christopher Wilks available at <https://github.com/ChristopherWilks/megadepth>. It is particularly useful for computing the coverage of a set of genomic regions across bigWig or BAM files. With this package, you can build base-pair coverage matrices for regions or annotations of your choice from BigWig files. Megadepth was used to create the raw files provided by <https://bioconductor.org/packages/recount3>.

**License** Artistic-2.0

**URL** <https://github.com/LieberInstitute/megadepth>

**BugReports** <https://support.bioconductor.org/t/megadepth>

**biocViews** Software, Coverage, DataImport, Transcriptomics, RNASeq, Preprocessing

**Encoding** UTF-8

**LazyData** true

**Roxygen** list(markdown = TRUE)

**RoxygenNote** 7.2.3

**Suggests** covr, knitr, BiocStyle, sessioninfo, rmarkdown, rtracklayer, derfinder, GenomeInfoDb, tools, RefManageR, testthat

**SystemRequirements** megadepth  
(<<https://github.com/ChristopherWilks/megadepth>>)

**VignetteBuilder** knitr

**Imports** xfun, utils, fs, GenomicRanges, readr, cmdfun, dplyr, magrittr

**Config/testthat/edition** 3

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

**git\_branch** devel

**git\_last\_commit** 7e5f5e4

**git\_last\_commit\_date** 2025-04-15

**Repository** Bioconductor 3.22

**Date/Publication** 2025-09-11

**Author** Leonardo Collado-Torres [aut] (ORCID:

<<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2140-308X>>),

David Zhang [aut, cre] (ORCID: <<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2382-8460>>)

**Maintainer** David Zhang <david.zhang.12@ucl.ac.uk>

## Contents

|                                  |    |
|----------------------------------|----|
| bam_to_bigwig . . . . .          | 2  |
| bam_to_junctions . . . . .       | 3  |
| get_coverage . . . . .           | 5  |
| install_megadepth . . . . .      | 6  |
| megadepth_cmd . . . . .          | 7  |
| process_junction_table . . . . . | 8  |
| read_coverage . . . . .          | 9  |
| read_junction_table . . . . .    | 10 |

|              |           |
|--------------|-----------|
| <b>Index</b> | <b>12</b> |
|--------------|-----------|

---

|               |                                       |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| bam_to_bigwig | <i>Convert a BAM file to a BigWig</i> |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|

---

## Description

Given an input BAM file, convert this to the BigWig format which can then be used in `get_coverage()`.

## Usage

```
bam_to_bigwig(
  bam_file,
  prefix = file.path(tempdir(), basename(bam_file)),
  min_unique_qual = FALSE,
  double_count = FALSE,
  overwrite = FALSE
)
```

## Arguments

|                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| bam_file        | A character(1) with the path to the input BAM file.                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| prefix          | A character(1) specifying the output file prefix. This function creates a BigWig file called {prefix}.all.bw. By default, the prefix is the BAM file name and the file is created in the <code>tempdir()</code> and will be deleted after you close your R session. |
| min_unique_qual | A integer(1) specifying a mapping quality threshold and only bases above this will be used to generate the BigWig. If set to FALSE this argument is not used by Megadepth. Otherwise it will generate files {prefix}.unique.bw and {prefix}.unique.tsv.             |
| double_count    | A logical(1) determining whether to count the overlapping ends of paired ends reads twice.                                                                                                                                                                          |
| overwrite       | A logical(1) specifying whether to overwrite the output file(s), if they exist already.                                                                                                                                                                             |

**Details**

Note that this functionality is currently not supported on Windows by Megadepth.

**Value**

A character() with the path to the output files(s).

**Examples**

```
## Install the latest version if necessary
install_megadepth(force = TRUE)

## Find the example BAM file
example_bam <- system.file("tests", "test.bam",
  package = "megadepth", mustWork = TRUE
)

## Create the BigWig file
## Currently Megadepth does not support this on Windows
if (!xfun::is_windows()) {
  example_bw <- bam_to_bigwig(example_bam, overwrite = TRUE)

  ## Path to the output file(s) generated by bam_to_bigwig()
  example_bw

  ## Use the all.bw file in get_coverage(), first find an annotation file
  annotation_file <- system.file("tests", "testbw2.bed",
    package = "megadepth", mustWork = TRUE
  )

  ## Compute the coverage
  bw_cov <- get_coverage(
    example_bw["all.bw"],
    op = "mean",
    annotation = annotation_file
  )
  bw_cov
}
```

---

bam\_to\_junctions

---

*Extract junctions from a BAM file*


---

**Description**

Given a BAM file, extract junction information including co-ordinates, strand, anchor length for each junction read. For details on the format of the output TSV file, check <https://github.com/ChristopherWilks/megadepth#junctions>.

**Usage**

```
bam_to_junctions(
  bam_file,
  prefix = file.path(tempdir(), basename(bam_file)),
```

```

    all_junctions = TRUE,
    junctions = FALSE,
    long_reads = FALSE,
    filter_in = 65535,
    filter_out = 260,
    overwrite = FALSE
  )

```

## Arguments

|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <code>bam_file</code>      | A character(1) with the path to the input BAM file.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <code>prefix</code>        | A character(1) specifying the output file prefix. This function creates a file called <code>prefix.jxs.tsv</code> . By default, the prefix is the BAM file name and the file is created in the <code>tempdir()</code> and will be deleted after you close your R session.                                                                                      |
| <code>all_junctions</code> | A logical(1) indicating whether to obtain all junctions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <code>junctions</code>     | A logical(1) indicating whether to obtain co-occurring jx coordinates.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <code>long_reads</code>    | A logical(1) indicating whether to increase the buffer size to accommodate for long-read RNA-sequencing.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <code>filter_in</code>     | A integer(1) used to filter in read alignments. See <a href="https://github.com/ChristopherWilks/megadepth#processing">https://github.com/ChristopherWilks/megadepth#processing</a> and <a href="https://samtools.github.io/hts-specs/SAMv1.pdf">https://samtools.github.io/hts-specs/SAMv1.pdf</a> for further documentation on how to apply this parameter.  |
| <code>filter_out</code>    | A integer(1) used to filter out read alignments. See <a href="https://github.com/ChristopherWilks/megadepth#processing">https://github.com/ChristopherWilks/megadepth#processing</a> and <a href="https://samtools.github.io/hts-specs/SAMv1.pdf">https://samtools.github.io/hts-specs/SAMv1.pdf</a> for further documentation on how to apply this parameter. |
| <code>overwrite</code>     | A logical(1) specifying whether to overwrite the output file(s), if they exist already.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

## Value

A character(1) with the path to the output junction tsv file.

## Examples

```

## Install if necessary
install_megadepth()

## Find the example BAM file
example_bam <- system.file("tests", "test.bam",
  package = "megadepth", mustWork = TRUE
)

## Run bam_to_junctions()
example_jxs <- bam_to_junctions(example_bam, overwrite = TRUE)

## Path to the output file generated by bam_to_junctions()
example_jxs

```

---

`get_coverage`*Compute coverage summarizations across a set of regions*

---

## Description

Given an input set of annotation regions, compute coverage summarizations using Megadepth for a given BigWig file.

## Usage

```
get_coverage(  
  bigwig_file,  
  op = c("sum", "mean", "max", "min"),  
  annotation,  
  prefix = file.path(tempdir(), "bw.mean")  
)
```

## Arguments

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <code>bigwig_file</code> | A character(1) with the path to the input BigWig file.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <code>op</code>          | A character(1) specifying the summarization operation to perform.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <code>annotation</code>  | A character(1) path to a BED file with the genomic coordinates you are interested in.                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <code>prefix</code>      | A character(1) specifying the output file prefix. This function creates a file called <code>prefix.annotation.tsv</code> that can be read again later with <code>read_coverage()</code> . By default the file is created in the <code>tempdir()</code> and will be deleted after you close your R session. |

## Details

Note that the chromosome names (seqnames) in the BigWig file and the annotation file should use the same format. Otherwise, Megadepth will return 0 counts.

## Value

A [GRanges-class](#) object with the coverage summarization across the annotation ranges.

## See Also

Other Coverage functions: [read\\_coverage\(\)](#)

## Examples

```
## Install if necessary  
install_megadepth()  
  
## Next, we locate the example BigWig and annotation files  
example_bw <- system.file("tests", "test.bam.all.bw",  
  package = "megadepth", mustWork = TRUE  
)  
annotation_file <- system.file("tests", "testbw2.bed",  
  package = "megadepth", mustWork = TRUE)
```

```

)

## Compute the coverage
bw_cov <- get_coverage(example_bw, op = "mean", annotation = annotation_file)
bw_cov

## If you want to cast this into a RleList object use the following code:
## (it's equivalent to rtracklayer::import.bw(as = "RleList"))
## although in the megadepth case the data has been summarized
GenomicRanges::coverage(bw_cov)

## Checking with derfinder and rtracklayer
bed <- rtracklayer::import(annotation_file)

## The file needs a name
names(example_bw) <- "example"

## Read in the base-pair coverage data
if (!xfun::is_windows()) {
  regionCov <- derfinder::getRegionCoverage(
    regions = bed,
    files = example_bw,
    verbose = FALSE
  )

  ## Summarize the base-pair coverage data.
  ## Note that we have to round the mean to make them comparable.
  testthat::expect_equivalent(
    round(sapply(regionCov[c(1, 3:4, 2)], function(x) mean(x$value)), 2),
    bw_cov$score,
  )

  ## If we compute the sum, there's no need to round
  testthat::expect_equivalent(
    sapply(regionCov[c(1, 3:4, 2)], function(x) sum(x$value)),
    get_coverage(example_bw, op = "sum", annotation = annotation_file)$score,
  )
}

```

---

install\_megadepth

*Install Megadepth*


---

## Description

Download the appropriate Megadepth executable for your platform from Github and try to copy it to a system directory so **megadepth** can run the megadepth command.

## Usage

```
install_megadepth(version = "latest", force = FALSE)
```

## Arguments

|         |                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| version | A character() specifying the Megadepth version number, e.g., 1.0.4; the special value latest means the latest version (fetched from Github releases). |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**force** A logical(1) specifying whether to install megadepth even if it has already been installed.

## Details

If this function is run in a non-interactive session such as R CMD Check, it will install Megadepth to `tempdir()`. If this function is run interactively, the user will be prompted to agree to allow Megadepth to be installed at `Sys.getenv('APPDATA')` on Windows, `~/Library/Application Support` on macOS, and `~/bin/` on other platforms (such as Linux). If these directories are not writable, the package directory 'Megadepth' of **megadepth** will be used. If it still fails, you have to install Megadepth by yourself and make sure it can be found via the environment variable `PATH`.

If you want to install Megadepth to a custom path, you can set the global option `megadepth.dir` to a directory to store the Megadepth executable before you call `install_megadepth()`, e.g., `options(megadepth.hugo.dir = '~/Downloads/Megadepth_1.0.4/')`. This may be useful for you to use a specific version of Megadepth for a specific project. You can set this option per project, similar to how `blogdown.hugo.dir` is used for specifying the directory for Hugo in the **blogdown** package.. See [Section 1.4 Global options](#) for details, or store a copy of Megadepth on a USB Flash drive along with your project code.

## Value

Returns NULL. The main use is to install Megadepth.

## References

This function is based on `blogdown::install_hugo()` which is available from <https://github.com/rstudio/blogdown/blob/master/R/install.R>.

## Examples

```
## Install megadepth
install_megadepth()
```

---

|                            |                               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <code>megadepth_cmd</code> | <i>Run Megadepth commands</i> |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|

---

## Description

Wrapper functions to run Megadepth commands via `system2('megadepth', ...)`.

## Usage

```
megadepth_cmd(...)

megadepth_shell(input = ".", ...)
```

## Arguments

**...** Arguments to be passed to `system2('megadepth', ...)`, e.g. `annotation(path)` is basically `megadepth_cmd(c('--annotation', path))` (i.e. run the command `megadepth --annotation path`).

**input** A character(1) with the path to the input BAM, BigWig or text file for Megadepth.

**Value**

See `base::system2()` for the types of output you can generate.

A `character()` with the capture of the standard output stream generated by Megadepth.

**Functions**

- `megadepth_cmd()`: Run an arbitrary Megadepth command.
- `megadepth_shell()`: Run an arbitrary Megadepth command.

**References**

`megadepth_cmd()` is based on `blogdown::hugo_cmd()` which is available at <https://github.com/rstudio/blogdown/blob/master/R/hugo.R>.

`megadepth_shell()` is based on the `shell_ls()` example from `cmdfun` which is available at <https://snystrom.github.io/cmdfun/index.html>.

**Examples**

```
## Install if necessary
install_megadepth()

## Find version
## megadepth_shell() provides an interface more familiar to R users
megadepth_shell(version = TRUE)
## megadepth_cmd() requires using directly the command line syntax for
## Megadepth
megadepth_cmd("--version", stdout = TRUE)

## Compare the help files:
# megadepth_shell() captures the standard output and returns a character()
# megadepth_cmd() shows the standard output on the console
megadepth_shell("--help")
megadepth_cmd("--help")
```

---

process\_junction\_table

*Process junctions into a STAR compatible format*

---

**Description**

Parses the junctions outputted from `process_junction_table()` into an STAR compatible format (SJ.out) for more convenient use in downstream analyses. The columns `strand`, `intron_motif` and `annotated` will always be 0 (undefined) but can be derived through extracting the dinucleotide motifs for the given reference coordinates for canonical motifs. This function is an R-implementation of the Megadepth helper script, on which further details of column definitions can be found: <https://github.com/ChristopherWilks/megadepth#junctions>.

**Usage**

```
process_junction_table(all_jxs)
```

**Arguments**

`all_jxs` A `tibble::tibble()` containing junction data ("all.jxs.tsv") generated by `bam_to_junctions(all_jxs = TRUE)` and imported through `megadepth::read_junction_table()`.

**Value**

Processed junctions in a STAR-compatible format.

**Examples**

```
## Install if necessary
install_megadepth()

## Find the example BAM file
example_bam <- system.file("tests", "test.bam",
  package = "megadepth", mustWork = TRUE
)

## Run bam_to_junctions()
example_jxs <- bam_to_junctions(example_bam, overwrite = TRUE)

## Read the junctions in as a tibble
all_jxs <- read_junction_table(example_jxs[["all_jxs.tsv"]])

## Process junctions into a STAR-compatible format
processed_jxs <- process_junction_table(all_jxs)

processed_jxs
```

---

|               |                                                      |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| read_coverage | <i>Read a coverage TSV file created by Megadepth</i> |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------|

---

**Description**

Read an `*annotation.tsv` file created by `get_coverage()` or manually by the user using Megadepth.

**Usage**

```
read_coverage(tsv_file, verbose = TRUE)

read_coverage_table(tsv_file)
```

**Arguments**

`tsv_file` A `character(1)` specifying the path to the tab-separated (TSV) file created manually using `megadepth_shell()` or on a previous `get_coverage()` run.

`verbose` A `logical(1)` controlling whether to suppress messages when reading the data.

**Value**

A [GRanges-class](#) object with the coverage summarization across the annotation ranges.

A `tibble::tibble()` with columns `chr`, `start`, `end` and `score`.

## Functions

- `read_coverage_table()`: Read a coverage TSV file created by Megadepth as a table

## See Also

Other Coverage functions: `get_coverage()`

## Examples

```
## Install if necessary
install_megadepth()

## Locate example BigWig and annotation files
example_bw <- system.file("tests", "test.bam.all.bw",
  package = "megadepth", mustWork = TRUE
)
annotation_file <- system.file("tests", "testbw2.bed",
  package = "megadepth", mustWork = TRUE
)

## Compute the coverage
bw_cov <- get_coverage(example_bw, op = "mean", annotation = annotation_file)
bw_cov

## Read in the coverage file again, using read_coverage()
## First, lets locate the tsv file that was generated by get_coverage()
tsv_file <- file.path(tempdir(), "bw.mean.annotation.tsv")
bw_cov_manual <- read_coverage(tsv_file)
stopifnot(identical(bw_cov, bw_cov_manual))

## To get an RleList object, just like the one you would get
## from using rtracklayer::import.bw(as = "RleList") directly on the
## BigWig file, use:
GenomicRanges::coverage(bw_cov_manual)

## The coverage data can also be read as a `tibble::tibble()`
read_coverage_table(tsv_file)
```

---

|                     |                                                                 |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| read_junction_table | <i>Read a junction TSV file created by Megadepth as a table</i> |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|

---

## Description

Read an `*all_jxs.tsv` or `*jxs.tsv` file created by `bam_to_junctions()` or manually by the user using Megadepth. The rows of a `*jxs.tsv` can have either 7 or 14 columns, which can lead to warnings when reading in - these are safe to ignore. For details on the format of the input TSV file, check <https://github.com/ChristopherWilks/megadepth#junctions>.

## Usage

```
read_junction_table(tsv_file)
```

**Arguments**

**tsv\_file** A character(1) specifying the path to the tab-separated (TSV) file created manually using `megadepth_shell()` or on a previous `bam_to_junctions()` run.

**Value**

A `tibble::tibble()` with the junction data that follows the format specified at <https://github.com/ChristopherWilks/megadepth#junctions>.

**Examples**

```
## Install if necessary
install_megadepth()

## Find the example BAM file
example_bam <- system.file("tests", "test.bam",
  package = "megadepth", mustWork = TRUE
)

## Run bam_to_junctions()
example_jxs <- bam_to_junctions(example_bam, overwrite = TRUE)

## Read the junctions in as a tibble
all_jxs <- read_junction_table(example_jxs[["all_jxs.tsv"]])

all_jxs
```

# Index

## \* Coverage functions

get\_coverage, [5](#)

read\_coverage, [9](#)

bam\_to\_bigwig, [2](#)

bam\_to\_junctions, [3](#)

get\_coverage, [5](#), [10](#)

GRanges-class, [5](#), [9](#)

install\_megadepth, [6](#)

megadepth\_cmd, [7](#)

megadepth\_shell (megadepth\_cmd), [7](#)

process\_junction\_table, [8](#)

read\_coverage, [5](#), [9](#)

read\_coverage\_table (read\_coverage), [9](#)

read\_junction\_table, [10](#)

system2, [7](#)