How to use Azure Notebooks

August 26, 2017

Up until now, we're all familiar with the age old paradigm of running code through the command line. This tutorial will introduce you to Azure Notebooks, and teach you how to use them effectively for maximum benefit.

1 About Azure Notebooks

Unlike the common norm, Azure Notebooks lets you run code directly in your browser (along with a whole bunch of other benefits), thus saving you the hassle of installing python on your own system.

2 Accessing Azure Notebooks

This tutorial along with all other course material can be accessed on the following link notebooks.azure.com/nnfl

3 Using Notebooks

When you first visit notebooks.azure.com/nnfl, you'll be greeted with the landing page [Fig. 1].

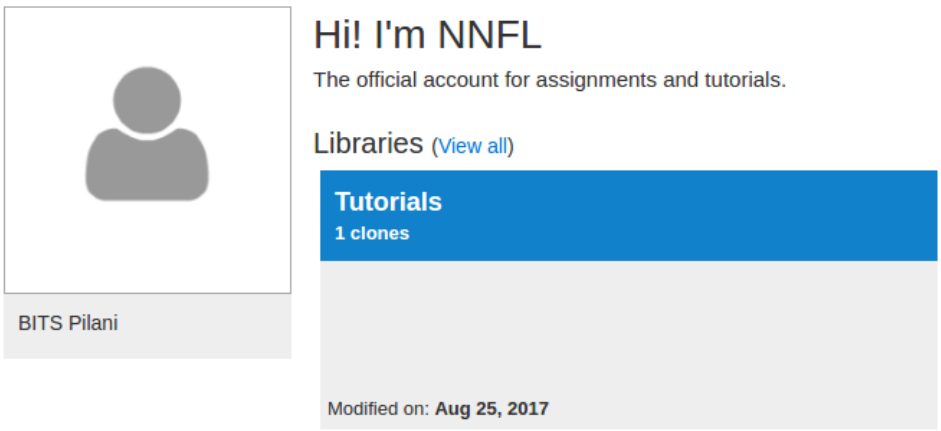

Fig. 1

Under *Libraries*, click on the *Tutorials* library [Fig. 1]. On the next screen, select `1. Python Numpy.ipynb` [Fig. 2]. You'll see a bunch of options on the menu bar. We'll specifically be using the *Preview*, *Clone*, and *Download* options.

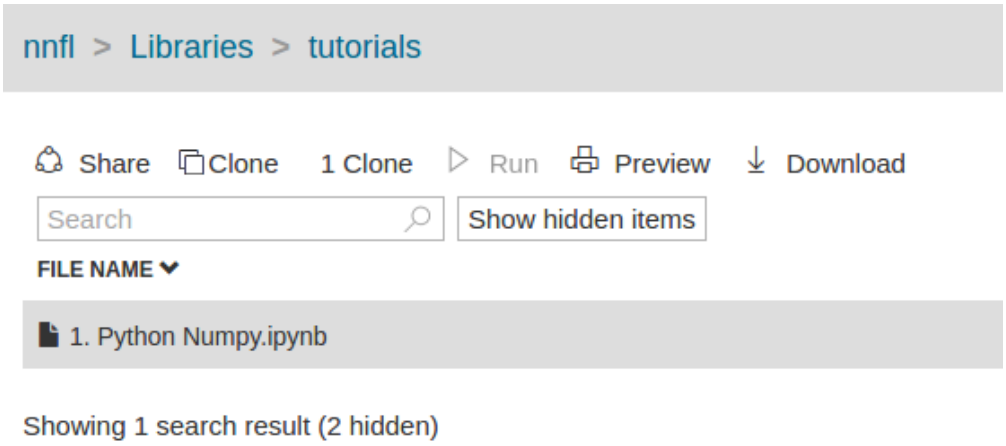

Fig. 2

3.1 Viewing notebooks online

To view the notebook in read only mode, click *Preview* [Fig. 2]. You can now see the contents of the notebook [Fig. 3], but can't run or edit any code. Use this option get a quick glance of the notebook.

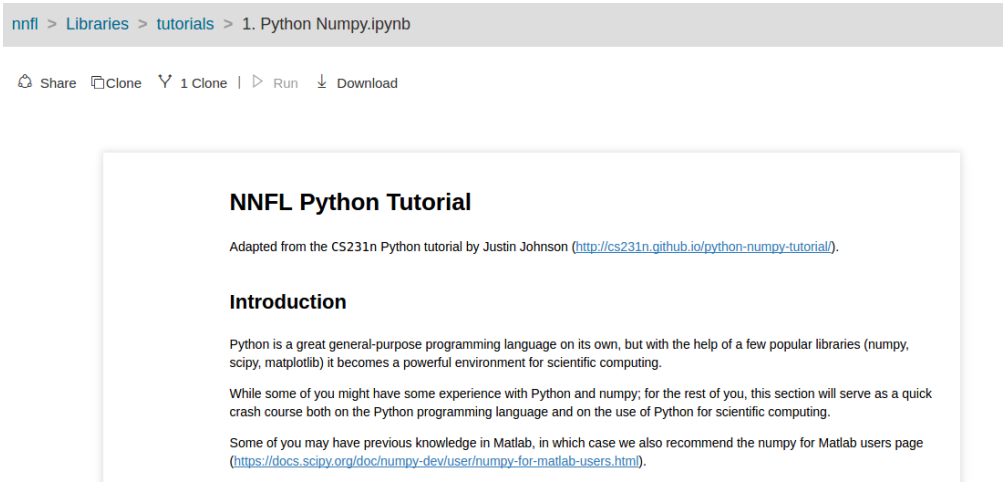

Fig. 3

3.2 Running notebooks online

Here comes the fun part. To execute code in the browser, you'll need to first *Clone* the library into your own account.
To do so, click on the *Clone* button [Fig. 2], and **sign in to your personal microsoft account** on the

next screen (or create one if you don't have any. Don't worry, this is completely free). On the modal that appears [Fig. 4], click *Clone*.

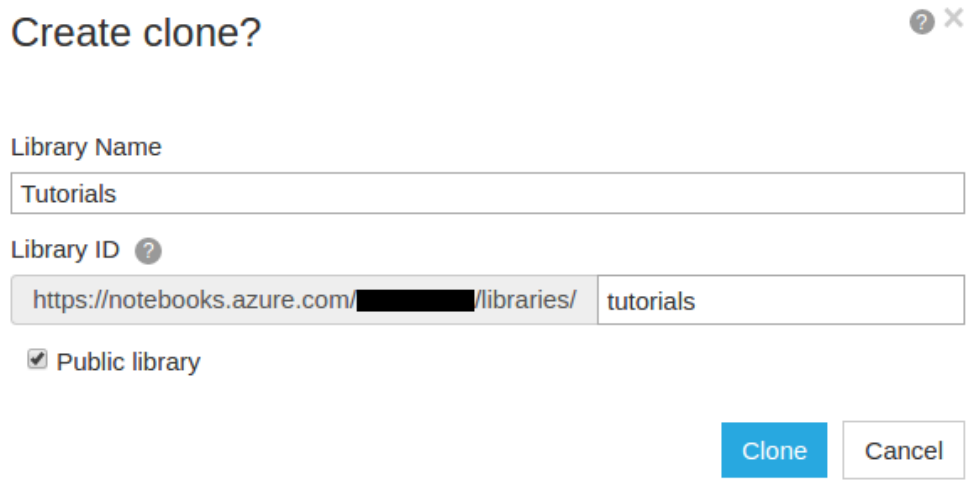

Fig. 4

Select `1. Python Numpy.ipynb` again. You'll now be able to see a lot more menu items [Fig. 5]. Finally, click *Run* to run the notebook. See Section 4 below for further info.

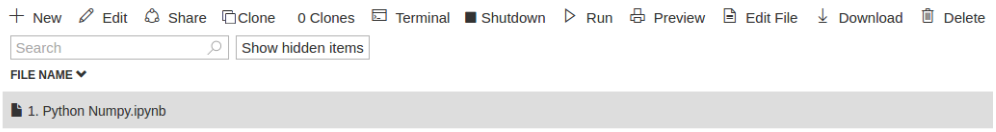

Fig. 5

3.3 Running notebooks locally

By running notebooks online, all the processing takes place on Azure. There's also a way to use your own PC (local machine) for processing. To do so, you'll first need to install Python on your system. We recommend using Anaconda, which installs Python along with a bunch of frequently used libraries.

Please head over to continuum.io/downloads to download Anaconda for your OS. Make sure you use the Python 3 version.

Once you have Anaconda installed, click on *Download* [Fig. 2] to download the notebook to your PC. Next, open a terminal / command prompt and navigate to the folder where you just downloaded the notebook. Type in the command `jupyter notebook`. Within a few seconds you should see the notebook open in your default browser. See Section 4 below for further info.

4 Jupyter Notebook Basics

Please spare 13 minutes of your time and head over to this video. This will give you a much better idea than a PDF tutorial.