he Python standard for database interfaces is the Python DB-API. Most Python database interfaces adhere to this standard.

You can choose the right database for your application. Python Database API supports a wide range of database servers such as −

- GadFly
- mSQL
- MySQL
- PostgreSQL
- Microsoft SQL Server 2000
- Informix
- Interbase
- Oracle
- Sybase

The DB API provides a minimal standard for working with databases using Python structures and syntax wherever possible. This API includes the following:

- Importing the API module.
- Acquiring a connection with the database.
- Issuing SQL statements and stored procedures.
- Closing the connection

We would learn all the concepts using MySQL, so let us talk about MySQLdb module.

What is MySQLdb?

MySQLdb is an interface for connecting to a MySQL database server from Python. It implements the Python Database API v2.0 and is built on top of the MySQL C API.

Before proceeding, you make sure you have MySQLdb installed on your machine. Just type the following in your Python script and execute it:

```
#!/usr/bin/python

import MySQLdb
```

Database Connection

Before connecting to a MySQL database, make sure of the followings −

- You have created a database TESTDB.
- You have created a table EMPLOYEE in TESTDB.

- This table has fields FIRST_NAME, LAST_NAME, AGE, SEX and INCOME.
- User ID "testuser" and password "test123" are set to access TESTDB.
- Python module MySQLdb is installed properly on your machine.

```
#!/usr/bin/python

import MySQLdb

# Open database connection
db = MySQLdb.connect("localhost","testuser","test123","TESTDB" )

# prepare a cursor object using cursor() method
cursor = db.cursor()

# execute SQL query using execute() method.
cursor.execute("SELECT VERSION()")

# Fetch a single row using fetchone() method.
data = cursor.fetchone()

print "Database version : %s " % data

# disconnect from server
db.close()
```

If a connection is established with the datasource, then a Connection Object is returned and saved into **db** for further use, otherwise **db** is set to None. Next, **db** object is used to create a **cursor** object, which in turn is used to execute SQL queries. Finally, before coming out, it ensures that database connection is closed and resources are released.

Creating Database Table

Once a database connection is established, we are ready to create tables or records into the database tables using **execute** method of the created cursor.

Example

Let us create Database table EMPLOYEE:

```
#!/usr/bin/python

import MySQLdb

# Open database connection
db = MySQLdb.connect("localhost","testuser","test123","TESTDB" )

# prepare a cursor object using cursor() method
cursor = db.cursor()

# Drop table if it already exist using execute() method.
cursor.execute("DROP TABLE IF EXISTS EMPLOYEE")

# Create table as per requirement
sql = """CREATE TABLE EMPLOYEE (
         FIRST_NAME  CHAR(20) NOT NULL,
         LAST_NAME  CHAR(20),
         AGE INT,
         SEX CHAR(1),
         INCOME FLOAT )"""

cursor.execute(sql)

# disconnect from server
db.close()
```

INSERT Operation

It is required when you want to create your records into a database table.

Example

The following example, executes SQL *INSERT* statement to create a record into EMPLOYEE table −

```
#!/usr/bin/python

import MySQLdb

# Open database connection
db = MySQLdb.connect("localhost","testuser","test123","TESTDB" )

# prepare a cursor object using cursor() method
cursor = db.cursor()

# Prepare SQL query to INSERT a record into the database.
sql = """INSERT INTO EMPLOYEE(FIRST_NAME,
         LAST_NAME, AGE, SEX, INCOME)
         VALUES ('Mac', 'Mohan', 20, 'M', 2000)"""
try:
   # Execute the SQL command
   cursor.execute(sql)
   # Commit your changes in the database
   db.commit()
except:
   # Rollback in case there is any error
   db.rollback()

# disconnect from server
db.close()
```

READ Operation

READ Operation on any database means to fetch some useful information from the database.

Once our database connection is established, you are ready to make a query into this database. You can use either **fetchone()** method to fetch single record or **fetchall()** method to fetech multiple values from a database table.

- **fetchone():** It fetches the next row of a query result set. A result set is an object that is returned when a cursor object is used to query a table.
- **fetchall():** It fetches all the rows in a result set. If some rows have already been extracted from the result set, then it retrieves the remaining rows from the result set.

- **rowcount:** This is a read-only attribute and returns the number of rows that were affected by an execute() method.

Example

The following procedure queries all the records from EMPLOYEE table having salary more than 1000 −

```
#!/usr/bin/python

import MySQLdb

# Open database connection
db = MySQLdb.connect("localhost","testuser","test123","TESTDB" )

# prepare a cursor object using cursor() method
cursor = db.cursor()

# Prepare SQL query to INSERT a record into the database.
sql = "SELECT * FROM EMPLOYEE \
       WHERE INCOME > '%d'" % (1000)
try:
   # Execute the SQL command
   cursor.execute(sql)
   # Fetch all the rows in a list of lists.
   results = cursor.fetchall()
   for row in results:
      fname = row[0]
      lname = row[1]
      age = row[2]
      sex = row[3]
      income = row[4]
      # Now print fetched result
      print "fname=%s,lname=%s,age=%d,sex=%s,income=%d" % \
             (fname, lname, age, sex, income )
except:
   print "Error: unable to fecth data"

# disconnect from server
db.close()
```

This will produce the following result −

```
fname=Mac, lname=Mohan, age=20, sex=M, income=2000
```

Update Operation

UPDATE Operation on any database means to update one or more records, which are already available in the database.

The following procedure updates all the records having SEX as **'M'**. Here, we increase AGE of all the males by one year.

Example

```
#!/usr/bin/python

import MySQLdb
```

```
# Open database connection
db = MySQLdb.connect("localhost","testuser","test123","TESTDB" )

# prepare a cursor object using cursor() method
cursor = db.cursor()

# Prepare SQL query to UPDATE required records
sql = "UPDATE EMPLOYEE SET AGE = AGE + 1
                          WHERE SEX = '%c'" % ('M')
try:
   # Execute the SQL command
   cursor.execute(sql)
   # Commit your changes in the database
   db.commit()
except:
   # Rollback in case there is any error
   db.rollback()

# disconnect from server
db.close()
```

DELETE Operation

DELETE operation is required when you want to delete some records from your database. Following is the procedure to delete all the records from EMPLOYEE where AGE is more than 20 –

Example

```
#!/usr/bin/python

import MySQLdb

# Open database connection
db = MySQLdb.connect("localhost","testuser","test123","TESTDB" )

# prepare a cursor object using cursor() method
cursor = db.cursor()

# Prepare SQL query to DELETE required records
sql = "DELETE FROM EMPLOYEE WHERE AGE > '%d'" % (20)
try:
   # Execute the SQL command
   cursor.execute(sql)
   # Commit your changes in the database
   db.commit()
except:
   # Rollback in case there is any error
   db.rollback()

# disconnect from server
db.close()
```

Performing Transactions

Transactions are a mechanism that ensures data consistency. Transactions have the following four properties:

- **Atomicity:** Either a transaction completes or nothing happens at all.
- **Consistency:** A transaction must start in a consistent state and leave the system in a consistent state.
- **Isolation:** Intermediate results of a transaction are not visible outside the current transaction.
- **Durability:** Once a transaction was committed, the effects are persistent, even after a system failure.

The Python DB API 2.0 provides two methods to either *commit* or *rollback* a transaction.

Example

You already know how to implement transactions. Here is again similar example −

```
# Prepare SQL query to DELETE required records
sql = "DELETE FROM EMPLOYEE WHERE AGE > '%d'" % (20)
try:
   # Execute the SQL command
   cursor.execute(sql)
   # Commit your changes in the database
   db.commit()
except:
   # Rollback in case there is any error
   db.rollback()
```

COMMIT Operation

Commit is the operation, which gives a green signal to database to finalize the changes, and after this operation, no change can be reverted back.

Here is a simple example to call **commit** method.

```
db.commit()
```

ROLLBACK Operation

If you are not satisfied with one or more of the changes and you want to revert back those changes completely, then use **rollback()** method.

Here is a simple example to call **rollback()** method.

```
db.rollback()
```

Disconnecting Database

To disconnect Database connection, use close() method.

```
db.close()
```

If the connection to a database is closed by the user with the close() method, any outstanding transactions are rolled back by the DB. However, instead of depending on any of DB lower level implementation details, your application would be better off calling commit or rollback explicitly.

The Common Gateway Interface, or CGI, is a set of standards that define how information is exchanged between the web server and a custom script. The CGI specs are currently maintained by the NCSA and NCSA.

What is CGI?

- The Common Gateway Interface, or CGI, is a standard for external gateway programs to interface with information servers such as HTTP servers.
- The current version is CGI/1.1 and CGI/1.2 is under progress.

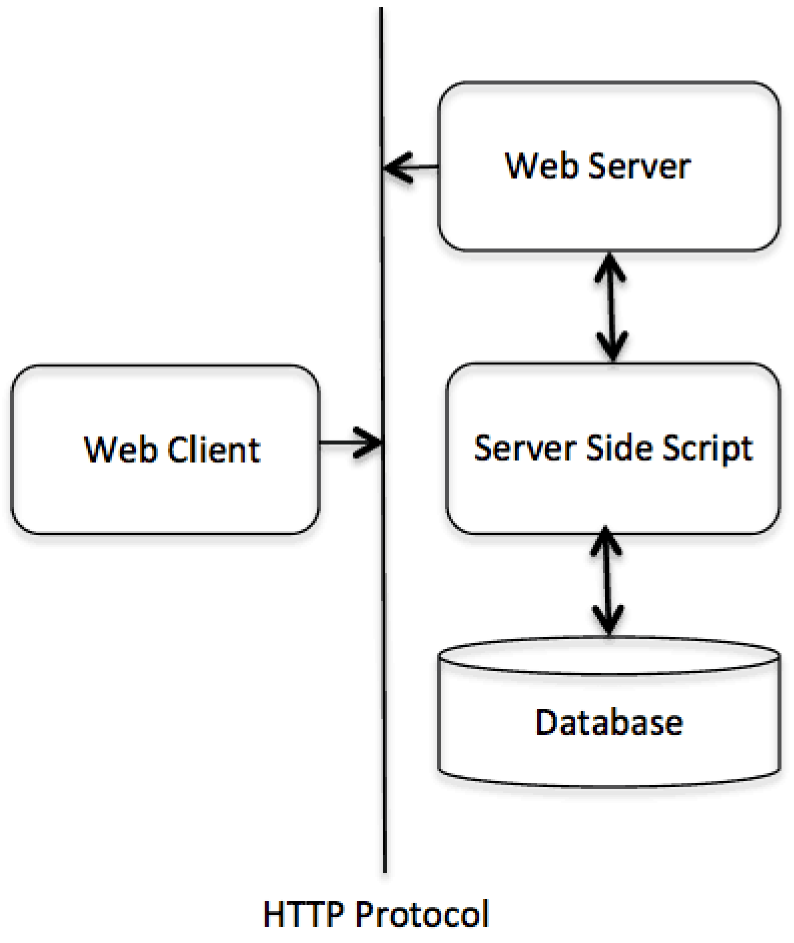
Web Browsing

To understand the concept of CGI, let us see what happens when we click a hyper link to browse a particular web page or URL.

- Your browser contacts the HTTP web server and demands for the URL, i.e., filename.
- Web Server parses the URL and looks for the filename. If it finds that file then sends it back to the browser, otherwise sends an error message indicating that you requested a wrong file.
- Web browser takes response from web server and displays either the received file or error message.

However, it is possible to set up the HTTP server so that whenever a file in a certain directory is requested that file is not sent back; instead it is executed as a program, and whatever that program outputs is sent back for your browser to display. This function is called the Common Gateway Interface or CGI and the programs are called CGI scripts. These CGI programs can be a Python Script, PERL Script, Shell Script, C or C++ program, etc.

CGI Architecture Diagram



Web Server Support and Configuration

Before you proceed with CGI Programming, make sure that your Web Server supports CGI and it is configured to handle CGI Programs. All the CGI Programs to be executed by the HTTP server are kept in a pre-configured directory. This directory is called CGI Directory and by convention it is named as /var/www/cgi-bin. By convention, CGI files have extension as.**cgi,** but you can keep your files with python extension **.py** as well.

By default, the Linux server is configured to run only the scripts in the cgi-bin directory in /var/www. If you want to specify any other directory to run your CGI scripts, comment the following lines in the httpd.conf file −

```
<Directory "/var/www/cgi-bin">
   AllowOverride None
   Options ExecCGI
   Order allow,deny
   Allow from all
</Directory>

<Directory "/var/www/cgi-bin">
Options All
</Directory>
```

Following line should also be added for apache server to treat .py file as cgi script

```
AddHandler cgi-script .py
```

Here, we assume that you have Web Server up and running successfully and you are able to run any other CGI program like Perl or Shell, etc.

First CGI Program

hello.py. This file is kept in /var/www/cgi-bin directory and it has following content. Before running your CGI program, make sure you have change mode of file using **chmod 755 hello.py** UNIX command to make file executable.

```
#!/usr/bin/python3

print ("Content-type:text/html")
print()
print ("<html>")
print ('<head>')
print ('<title>Hello Word - First CGI Program</title>')
print ('</head>')
print ('<body>')
print ('<h2>Hello Word! This is my first CGI program</h2>')
print ('</body>')
print ('</html>')
```

Note: First line in the script must be path to Python executable. In Linux it should be #!/usr/bin/python3

Enter following URL in yor browser

`http://localhost:8080/cgi-bin/hello.py`

Hello Word! This is my first CGI program

This hello.py script is a simple Python script, which writes its output on STDOUT file, i.e., screen. There is one important and extra feature available which is first line to be printed **Content-type:text/html** followed by a blank line. This line is sent back to the browser and it specifies the content type to be displayed on the browser screen.

By now you must have understood basic concept of CGI and you can write many complicated CGI programs using Python. This script can interact with any other external system also to exchange information such as RDBMS.

HTTP Header

The line **Content-type:text/html\r\n\r\n** is part of HTTP header which is sent to the browser to understand the content. All the HTTP header will be in the following form −

```
HTTP Field Name: Field Content
```

```
For Example
```

```
Content-type: text/html\r\n\r\n
```

There are few other important HTTP headers, which you will use frequently in your CGI Programming.

Header	Description
Content-type:	A MIME string defining the format of the file being returned. Example is Content-type:text/html
Expires: Date	The date the information becomes invalid. It is used by the browser to decide when a page needs to be refreshed. A valid date string is in the format 01 Jan 1998 12:00:00 GMT.
Location: URL	The URL that is returned instead of the URL requested. You can use this field to redirect a request to any file.
Last-modified: Date	The date of last modification of the resource.
Content-length: N	The length, in bytes, of the data being returned. The browser uses this value to report the estimated download time for a file.
Set-Cookie: String	Set the cookie passed through the *string*

CGI Environment Variables

All the CGI programs have access to the following environment variables. These variables play an important role while writing any CGI program.

Variable Name	Description
CONTENT_TYPE	The data type of the content. Used when the client is sending attached content to the server. For example, file upload.
CONTENT_LENGTH	The length of the query information. It is available only for POST requests.
HTTP_COOKIE	Returns the set cookies in the form of key & value pair.
HTTP_USER_AGENT	The User-Agent request-header field contains information about the user agent originating the request. It is name of the web browser.
PATH_INFO	The path for the CGI script.
QUERY_STRING	The URL-encoded information that is sent with GET method request.
REMOTE_ADDR	The IP address of the remote host making the request. This is useful logging or for authentication.
REMOTE_HOST	The fully qualified name of the host making the request. If this information is not available, then REMOTE_ADDR can be used to get IR address.
REQUEST_METHOD	The method used to make the request. The most common methods are GET and POST.
SCRIPT_FILENAME	The full path to the CGI script.
SCRIPT_NAME	The name of the CGI script.
SERVER_NAME	The server's hostname or IP Address
SERVER_SOFTWARE	The name and version of the software the server is running.

Here is small CGI program to list out all the CGI variables. Click this link to see the result Get Environment

```
#!/usr/bin/python3

import os

print ("Content-type: text/html")
print ()
print ("<font size=+1>Environment</font><\br>";)
for param in os.environ.keys():
  print ("<b>%20s</b>: %s<\br>" % (param, os.environ[param]))
```

GET and POST Methods

You must have come across many situations when you need to pass some information from your browser to web server and ultimately to your CGI Program. Most frequently, browser uses two methods two pass this information to web server. These methods are GET Method and POST Method.

Passing Information using GET method

The GET method sends the encoded user information appended to the page request. The page and the encoded information are separated by the ? character as follows −

```
http://www.test.com/cgi-bin/hello.py?key1=value1&key2=value2
```

The GET method is the default method to pass information from browser to web server and it produces a long string that appears in your browser's Location:box. Never use GET method if you have password or other sensitive information to pass to the server. The GET method has size limtation: only 1024 characters can be sent in a request string. The GET method sends information using QUERY_STRING header and will be accessible in your CGI Program through QUERY_STRING environment variable.

You can pass information by simply concatenating key and value pairs along with any URL or you can use HTML <FORM> tags to pass information using GET method.

Simple URL Example:Get Method

Here is a simple URL, which passes two values to hello_get.py program using GET method.

/cgi-bin/hello_get.py?first_name=Malhar&last_name=Lathkar

Below is **hello_get.py** script to handle input given by web browser. We are going to use **cgi** module, which makes it very easy to access passed information −

```
#!/usr/bin/python3

# Import modules for CGI handling
import cgi, cgitb

# Create instance of FieldStorage
form = cgi.FieldStorage()

# Get data from fields
first_name = form.getvalue('first_name')
last_name  = form.getvalue('last_name')
```

```
print ("Content-type:text/html")
print()
print ("<html>)"
print ("<head>")
print ("<title>Hello - Second CGI Program</title>")
print ("</head>")
print ("<body>")
print ("<h2>Hello %s %s</h2>" % (first_name, last_name))
print ("</body>")
print ("</html>">)
```

This would generate the following result:

Hello ZARA ALI

Simple FORM Example:GET Method

This example passes two values using HTML FORM and submit button. We use same CGI script hello_get.py to handle this input.

```
<form action="/cgi-bin/hello_get.py" method="get">
First Name: <input type="text" name="first_name">  <br />

Last Name: <input type="text" name="last_name" />
<input type="submit" value="Submit" />
</form>
```

Here is the actual output of the above form, you enter First and Last Name and then click submit button to see the result.

First Name:

Last Name:

Passing Information Using POST Method

A generally more reliable method of passing information to a CGI program is the POST method. This packages the information in exactly the same way as GET methods, but instead of sending it as a text string after a ? in the URL it sends it as a separate message. This message comes into the CGI script in the form of the standard input.

Below is same hello_get.py script which handles GET as well as POST method.

```
#!/usr/bin/python3

# Import modules for CGI handling
import cgi, cgitb

# Create instance of FieldStorage
form = cgi.FieldStorage()

# Get data from fields
first_name = form.getvalue('first_name')
last_name  = form.getvalue('last_name')
```

```
print ("Content-type:text/html")
print()
print ("<html>")
print ("<head>")
print ("<title>Hello - Second CGI Program</title>")
print ("</head>")
print ("<body>")
print ("<h2>Hello %s %s</h2>" % (first_name, last_name))
print ("</body>")
print ("</html>")
```

Let us take again same example as above which passes two values using HTML FORM and submit button. We use same CGI script hello_get.py to handle this input.

```
<form action="/cgi-bin/hello_get.py" method="post">
First Name: <input type="text" name="first_name"><br />
Last Name: <input type="text" name="last_name" />

<input type="submit" value="Submit" />
</form>
```

Here is the actual output of the above form. You enter First and Last Name and then click submit button to see the result.

First Name:

Last Name:

Passing Checkbox Data to CGI Program

Checkboxes are used when more than one option is required to be selected.

Here is example HTML code for a form with two checkboxes −

```
<form action="/cgi-bin/checkbox.py" method="POST" target="_blank">
<input type="checkbox" name="maths" value="on" /> Maths
<input type="checkbox" name="physics" value="on" /> Physics
<input type="submit" value="Select Subject" />
</form>
```

The result of this code is the above form:

☐ Maths ☐ Physics

Below is checkbox.cgi script to handle input given by web browser for checkbox button.

```
#!/usr/bin/python3

# Import modules for CGI handling
import cgi, cgitb

# Create instance of FieldStorage
form = cgi.FieldStorage()

# Get data from fields
if form.getvalue('maths'):
   math_flag = "ON"
else:
   math_flag = "OFF"

if form.getvalue('physics'):
   physics_flag = "ON"
else:
   physics_flag = "OFF"

print ("Content-type:text/html")
print()
print ("<html>")
print ("<head>")
print ("<title>Checkbox - Third CGI Program</title>")
print ("</head>")
print ("<body>")
print ("<h2> CheckBox Maths is : %s</h2>" % math_flag)
print ("<h2> CheckBox Physics is : %s</h2>" % physics_flag)
print ("</body>")
print ("</html>")
```

Passing Radio Button Data to CGI Program

Radio Buttons are used when only one option is required to be selected.

Here is example HTML code for a form with two radio buttons −

```
<form action="/cgi-bin/radiobutton.py" method="post" target="_blank">
<input type="radio" name="subject" value="maths" /> Maths
<input type="radio" name="subject" value="physics" /> Physics
<input type="submit" value="Select Subject" />
</form>
```

The result of this code is the following form −

○ Maths ○ Physics

Below is radiobutton.py script to handle input given by web browser for radio button:

```
#!/usr/bin/python3

# Import modules for CGI handling
import cgi, cgitb

# Create instance of FieldStorage
form = cgi.FieldStorage()

# Get data from fields
if form.getvalue('subject'):
   subject = form.getvalue('subject')
else:
   subject = "Not set"

print "Content-type:text/html")
print()
print ("<html>")
print ("<head>")
print ("<title>Radio - Fourth CGI Program</title>")
print ("</head>")
print ("<body>")
print ("<h2> Selected Subject is %s</h2>" % subject)
print ("</body>")
print ("</html>")
```