Installing Python 3 on Your Personal Computer

Comp 112   Wesleyan University

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Introduction

In this course we will be writing computer programs using the programming language Python. Although you can do all of the assignments for this course using computers in the Wesleyan computer labs, you may want to install a Python programming environment on your personal computer so that you can work on your assignments more conveniently.

Installing Python is easy to do. This document walks you through the procedure on some common operating systems. In this course we will be using version 3 of the Python language. If you have a Python installation on your computer, but it is older than version 3, then you will need to upgrade it. In particular, Apple's Mac OS currently ships with only Python version 2 installed, so you will need to install version 3 manually. Fortunately, the two versions can live happily side-by-side without interfering with each other. Any sub-version of Python 3 will do. If you already have some version of Python 3 installed, you do not need to upgrade it to the latest one.

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1   Installing on Windows

1. Determine whether your version of Windows is 32 bit or 64 bit. If you are unsure, consult the "About" tab of the "System" settings.

2. Use a web browser to visit `https://python.org`.

3. Find the "Download" section.

4. Locate and download the current version of the Python 3 installer package (at the time of this writing, 3.6.2) for 32 bit or 64 bit Windows, as determined in step 1.
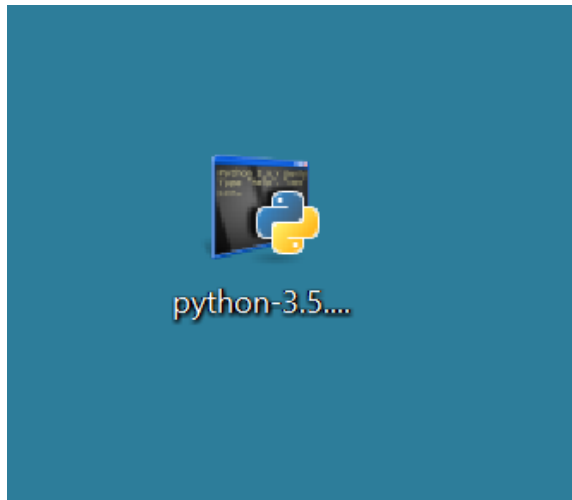
5. Run the installer package by double-clicking it. If prompted, give Windows permission to proceed.
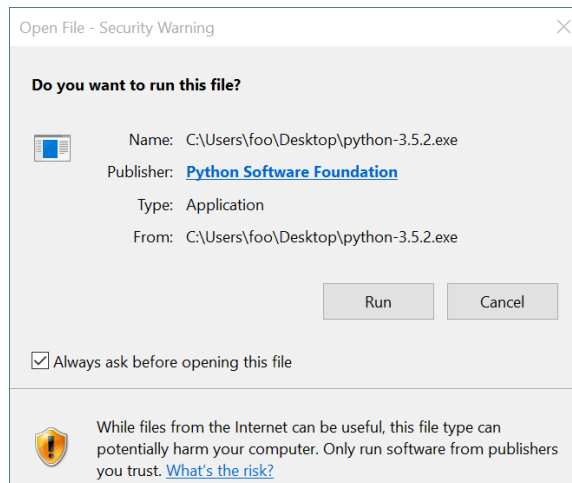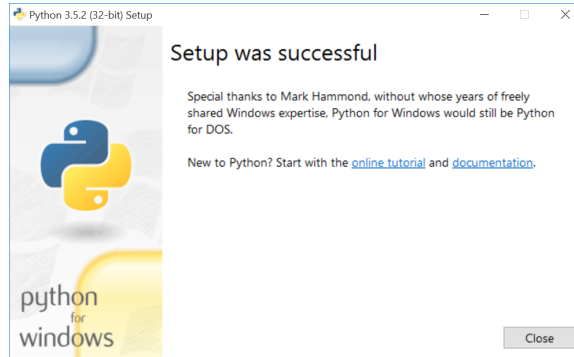

6. Select the "Install launcher for all users" and "Add Python3.x to PATH" options (unless you are an expert and have reason to do otherwise).
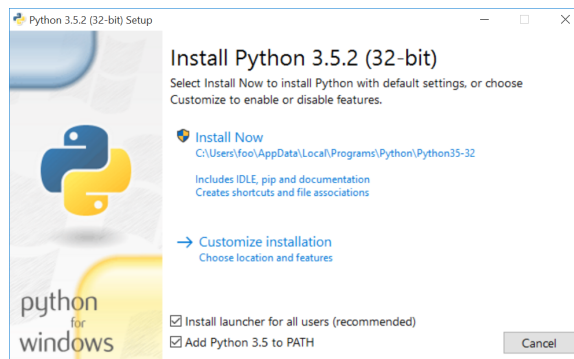

7. Click on the text "Install Now" to begin the installation.

8. If prompted by a security dialog, agree to allow the installation to proceed.

9. The installer should notify you shortly that Python has been successfully installed.
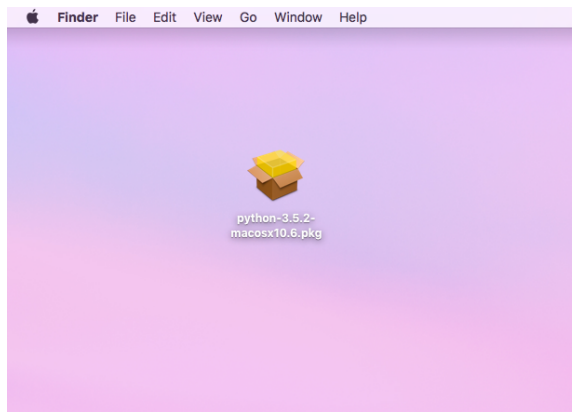

10. Exit the installer program by closing the window. You may now delete the installer package that you downloaded in step 4.

11. You should find several new Python-related programs in the "Python" subfolder of your computer's Start Menu.

12. Try running the program called "IDLE", you should see something similar to the following:
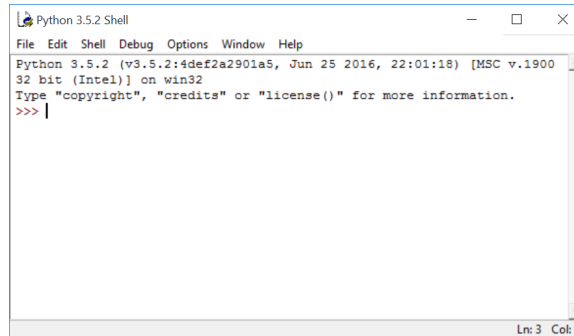

2 Installing on Mac OS

1. Determine which version of Mac OS you are using. If you are unsure, consult the "About This Mac" item in the "Apple" (leftmost) menu.

2. Use a web browser to visit `https://python.org`.

3. Find the "Download" section.

4. Locate and download the current version of the Python 3 installer package (at the time of this writing, 3.6.2) for Mac OS.

   If your Mac OS version (as determined in step 1) is 10.6 (circa 2009) or older, then see the page at `https://www.python.org/download/mac/tcltk/` for information about a potential problem running graphical applications. More recent versions of Mac OS should be fine, so long as you don't try to enter so-called "composed characters" (e.g. "ü") from the keyboard into a running graphical Python program. For the purposes of this course, this is a restriction we can live with.
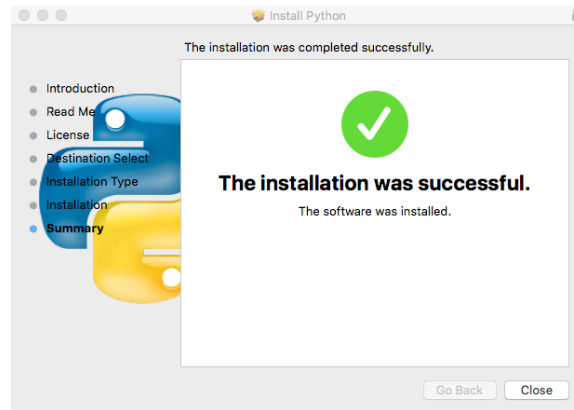
5. Run the installer package by double-clicking it.

6. "Continue" through the "Read Me" and "License" dialogs.
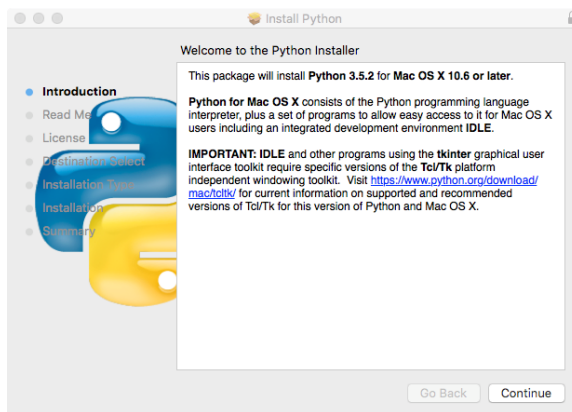
7. Accept the standard installation type by clicking "Install".
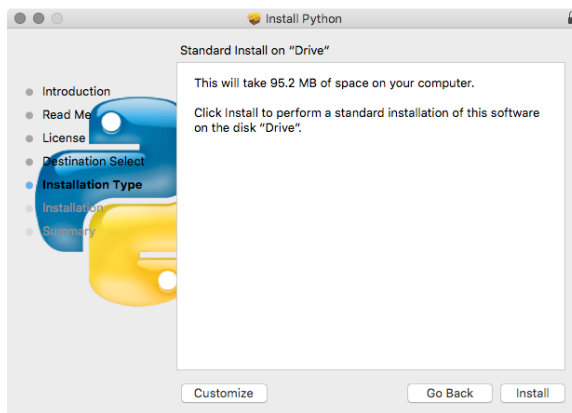
8. If prompted, enter your password to allow the installation to proceed.

9. The installer should shortly notify you that Python has been successfully installed.

10. Exit the installer program by closing the window. You may delete the installer package file that you downloaded in step 4.

11. You should find several new Python-related programs in the "Python" subfolder of your computer's "Applications" folder.

12. Try running the program called "IDLE", you should see something similar to the following:

3 Installing on Linux

There are several different Linux distributions, each with its own way of doing things. Your Linux distribution may already have Python installed, as it is commonly used by other programs for scripting. You can check whether Python is installed by using your package manager, or more quickly (but less decisively), by typing "`which python3`" at the command prompt. If this doesn't return a path, try "`python --version`" and look for a reply of `3.x.y`. If neither of these attempts is successful, you may need go ahead and install Python using your package manager. Consult your system documentation for the way to do this on your particular Linux distribution.