

Effective Programming Practices for Economists

Debugging

Using the Pdb+ debugger

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Setting a breakpoint

Simple

```
def cobb_douglas(x1, x2, gamma1, gamma2, a):  
    import pdb; breakpoint()  
    return (a * x1**gamma1 * x2**gamma2,)
```

Conditional

```
def cobb_douglas(x1, x2, gamma1, gamma2, a):  
    if gamma1 <= 0.5:  
        import pdb; breakpoint()  
    return (a * x1**gamma1 * x2**gamma2,)
```

- Set a breakpoint with `import pdb; breakpoint()`
- You can do that anywhere!
 - Inside function definitions
 - In loops
 - In if conditions!
- Execution will stop at the breakpoint and show you the interactive debug prompt

Important commands

Command Action

``n``

Execute the **n**ext line

``s``

Execute the next **s**tep

``c``

continue until the next breakpoint

``u``

Go one frame **u**p (go backwards through code)

``d``

Go **d**own one frame (go forward through code)

``exit``

Stop the debugging (also ``ctrl + d``)

- More commands [here](#)
- Do not use any of those as variable names!

Graphical alternatives

- VScode and other IDEs have graphical debuggers
 - Set breakpoints via clicking
 - Variable explorers
- We prefer the terminal for several reasons
 - Integrates perfectly with pytask and pytest
 - Extremely fast once you get a bit of practice
 - More robust (in our experience)