

Effective Programming Practices for Economists

Installation and execution

Environment files and environments

Janoś Gabler and Hans-Martin von Gaudecker

Environment files vs. environments

- An **environment.yml** file:
 - A recipe to create an environment
 - Under version control
 - Shared with team members
- A conda/mamba **environment**:
 - A collection of Python packages stored on your computer
 - Independent of other environments you might have
- You create an environment from an environment file by typing

```
mamba env create -f environment.yml
```

Anatomy of environment.yml

```
name: mini-env
channels:
  - conda-forge
  - nodefaults
dependencies:
  - python==3.11
  - pandas
  - pip:
    - pdbp
```

- Name can be anything, except that it must not contain spaces
- Channels: You rarely need more than conda-forge
- Dependencies: Python, list of Python packages
 - Can have equality or inequality constraints on versions
 - Only use pip for packages that are not conda/mamba installable
- Environment files should be hand-written and maintained

Dependencies installed automatically

- The mini environment from above will contain the following packages
- Most are low-level dependencies you don't have to care about
- Some exact versions are OS specific

_libgcc_mutex	0.1
_openmp_mutex	4.5
bzip2	1.0.8
ca-certificates	2023.11.17
ld_impl_linux-64	2.40
libblas	3.9.0
libcbblas	3.9.0
libffi	3.4.2
libgcc-ng	13.2.0
libgfortran-ng	13.2.0
libgfortran5	13.2.0
libgomp	13.2.0
liblapack	3.9.0
libns1	2.0.1
libopenblas	0.3.25
libsqlite	3.44.2

numpy	1.26.2
openssl	3.2.0
pandas	2.1.4
pdbp	1.5.0
pip	23.3.1
pygments	2.17.2
python	3.11.0
python-dateutil	2.8.2
python-tzdata	2023.3
python_abi	3.11
pytz	2023.3.post1
readline	8.2
setuptools	68.2.2
six	1.16.0
tabcompleter	1.3.0
tk	8.6.13

How to add a package

- Just installing packages into an environment from the shell is not reproducible
- Instead:
 - Add the package to `environment.yml`
 - Use `mamba env update -f environment.yml`
- If you have any problem:
 - `mamba env remove -n mini-env`
 - `mamba env create -f environment.yml`