

Installing Python

Before you can run Python programs on your computer, you need to download and install the Python interpreter from www.python.org/download. To run the programs shown in this book, you need to install Python 3.0 or a later version. This appendix discusses installing Python for Windows. Python is also available for the Mac and many other systems.

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When you execute the Python Windows installer, it's best to accept all of the default settings by clicking the Next button on each screen. (Answer "Yes" if you are prompted with any Yes/No questions.) As you perform the installation, take note of the directory where Python is being installed. It will be something similar to `C:\Python33`. (The 33 in the path name represents the Python version. At the time of this writing Python 3.3 is the most recent version.) You will need to remember this location after finishing the installation.

When the installer is finished, the Python interpreter, the IDLE programming environment, and the Python documentation will be installed on your system. When you click the Start button and look at your All Programs list, you should see a program group named something like *Python 3.3*. The program group will contain the following items:

- **IDLE (Python GUI)**—When you click this item the IDLE programming environment will execute. IDLE is an integrated development environment that you can use to create, edit, and execute Python programs. See Appendix B for a brief introduction to IDLE.
- **Module Docs**—This item launches a utility program that allows you to browse documentation for the modules in the Python standard library.
- **Python Command Line**—Clicking this item launches the Python interpreter in interactive mode.
- **Python Manuals**—This item opens the Python Manuals in your web browser. The manuals include tutorials, a reference section for the Python standard library, an in-depth reference for the Python language, and information on many advanced topics.
- **Uninstall Python**—This item removes Python from your system.

Adding the Python Directory to the Path Variable

If you plan to execute the Python interpreter from a command prompt window, you will probably want to add the Python directory to the existing contents of your system's `Path` variable. (You saw the name of the Python directory while installing Python. It is something similar to `C:\Python33`.) Doing this will allow your system to find the Python interpreter from any directory when you run it at the command-line.

Use the following instructions to edit the `Path` variable under Windows 8, Windows 7, Vista, or XP.

Windows 8

- In the Right bottom corner of the screen, click on the **Search** icon and type **Control Panel**.
- Click on **Control Panel**, then click **System**, then click **Advanced system settings**.
- Click on the **Advanced** tab, then click **Environment Variables**.
- Under **System Variables**, find `Path`, click on it, and then click the **Edit** button.
- Add a semicolon to the end of the existing contents and then add the Python directory path. Click the **OK** buttons until all the dialog boxes are closed, and exit the control panel.

Windows 7

- Click the **Start** button.
- Right-click **Computer**.
- On the pop-up menu, select **Properties**.
- In the window that appears next, click **Advanced system settings**. This displays the System Properties window.
- Click the **Environment Variables...** button.
- In the System Variables list, scroll to the `Path` variable. Select the `Path` variable, and click the **Edit** button.
- Add a semicolon to the end of the existing contents, and then add the Python directory path. Click the **OK** buttons until all the dialog boxes are closed, and exit the control panel.

Windows Vista

- Open the Control Panel.
- Select **System and Maintenance**.
- Select **System**.
- Select **Advanced System Settings**.
- Click the **Environment Variables** button.
- In the System Variables list, scroll to the `Path` variable.
- Select the `Path` variable, and click the **Edit** button. Add a semicolon to the end of the existing contents and then add the Python directory path.
- Click the **OK** button.

Windows XP

- Open the Control Panel.
- Double-click the **System** icon. (If you are running Windows XP in Category View, click **Performance and Maintenance** in the Control Panel and then click the **System** icon.)
- Click the **Advanced** tab.
- Click the **Environment Variables** button. In the System Variables list, scroll to the **Path** variable.
- Select the **Path** variable, and click the **Edit** button. Add a semicolon to the end of the existing contents and then add the Python directory path.
- Click the **OK** button.

