CHAPTER 4

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Using the Internet to Gather Information

In this chapter, you learn about using information from the Internet to make Melissa more interactive. You create modules for getting weather information, defining keywords from Wikipedia, and mining data from various web sites (such as news web sites). You then implement these modules in Python to make Melissa more useful.

The Internet is a mine full of loads of useful information and, well, useless information. Some of the meaningful, useful information you can retrieve from the Internet includes weather, definitions from Wikipedia, and business news. It would be really useful to have a virtual assistant that can provide you with all this information on demand. Let's construct these functionalities in Melissa's `GreyMatter`.

The three information-retrieval features—telling you the weather, reading definitions from Wikipedia, and retrieving business news—are of increasing code complexity, from very easy to intermediate. For the first two features, you use third-party modules that you install using pip. For the third example, you mine data and parse it to get meaningful information from a news web site.

How's the Weather?

In this section, you obtain weather information from the `weather.com` web site with the help of a Python module name `pywapi`. To install `pywapi`, enter the following command in your terminal:

```
$ pip install pywapi --allow-external --allow-unverified
```

`pywapi` requires the city code of your city in order to retrieve the weather report. To find the city code, open the `weather.com` web site, search for your city name, and look at the URL. I searched for my city name, New Delhi, and got the following URL:

`http://www.weather.com/weather/today/l/INXX0096:1:IN`