

Intro to Flask

Brian Cherinka
.Astronomy 8 - June 18, 2016
Oxford, UK

What is Flask

- Flask is a Python Micro-Framework!
- Allows for easy and fast implementation of a web application
- `pip install Flask`
- `pip install Flask-JSGlue` (for later)

Github

- Go to github.com/havok2063/introtoflask
- Clone or Download button, and copy link
- `git clone github.com/havok2063/introtoflask .`

Quick Start

Copy and paste this into a file called newapp.py

```
#!/usr/bin/env python2
# encoding: utf-8

from __future__ import print_function, division, absolute_import
from flask import Flask

app = Flask(__name__)

@app.route('/')
def main():
    return 'This is my brand new app'

if __name__ == '__main__':
    app.run()
```

Go to its location and type `python newapp.py`

Navigate to <http://localhost:5000>

Simple Example

- Go to [introtoflask/simpleexample](#)
- `python app.py -d -p 8000`
- I used argparse to add command line arguments
 - -d tells Flask to run the app in debug mode
 - -p lets me specify an optional port to run the app on

Routes

- Routes decorate your methods and define the URL
- They can make your URLs pretty and memorable

```
@app.route('/add/', endpoint='doadd')  
@app.route('/addnumbers/')  
def add():
```

- You can set multiple routes per method.
- Endpoints - sets the name of the URL endpoint, otherwise uses function name

Routes - Variables

- Variable rules or inputs [`@app.route('/hello/<name>/')`]
- Set defaults [`@app.route('/hello/', defaults={'name': 'Bob'})`]
- Use converters [`@app.route('/subtract/<int:x>/<int:y>/')`]
 - allowed: int, float, string (no slashes), path (like string but accepts slashes)

Routes - Methods

- Routes accept Methods on them, e.g. GET or POST
- Set with the `methods=['GET', 'POST']` route keyword
- **GET** - parameter passing straight in the url (default)
 - e.g. www.badwebsite.com/login?username=Brian&password=12345
- **POST** - encoded parameter passing (html forms, json objects)
 - e.g. `form = {'username': Brian, 'password': 12345}`
- Flask has a global object to capture any requests
 - `from flask import request` (**see use in myapp/controllers/__init__**)

url_for and redirect

- **url_for** generates a string relative url path inside your app ; can be used anywhere
 - Useful for dynamic changes to route urls (no hard-coding)
 - Formatting
 - `url_for(method_name, **values)`
 - `url_for(endpoint_name, **values)` if endpoint is set
 - `url_for(blueprint.method/endpoint, **values)` if route in a blueprint
- **redirect** redirects one route path to another

```
@app.route('/addagain/')
def do_more_adding():
    addurl = url_for('doadd')
    return redirect(addurl)
```
- **see do_more_adding inside app.py**

A Real App

- Complete Separation of Data, Back-end Code, and UI/UX code
- In Model-Controller-View (MCV) framework
 - Controllers - Your server side code
 - Views - Your front end html template code
 - Model - Your data source (e.g. a database)
- Go to `introtoflask/myapp` and `run python run_myapp.py -d -p 9000`

Blueprints

- A way of modularizing your code into chunks (pages?)

```
# In your individual pages
from flask import Blueprint
index_page = Blueprint("index_page", __name__)
```

```
@index_page.route('/', methods=['GET'])
def index():
    ...
```

```
# In your app init, you must register your blueprint with your app
from myapp.controllers.index import index_page
app = Flask(__name__)
...
app.register_blueprint(index_page)
return app
```


Blueprints - Organization

- Option A

```
myapp/  
  controllers/  
    home  
    admin  
    user  
  model/  
  static/  
    images/  
    js/  
  templates/  
    home  
    admin  
    user
```

- Option B

```
myapp/  
  home/  
    controllers/  
    static/  
    templates/  
  admin/  
    controllers/  
    static/  
    templates/  
  user/  
    controllers/  
    static/  
    templates/
```

- Option C - or do whatever ..

Jinja2 Html Templates

- Control and Customize the data sent to the front-end
- Modularize your HTML
- `from flask import render_template`

```
@example_page.route('/examples/')
def example():
    output = {}
    output['title'] = 'MyApp Examples'
    output['page'] = 'example'
    return render_template('examples.html', **output)
```

Jinja2 Template Syntax

- `{{ variable }}` - substitutes parameter from back-end into its place
- Variables passed in as dictionary parameters
- `{# comments #}`
- Conditionals, Code Insertions, Loops, Variable Assignment, etc
- <http://jinja.pocoo.org/docs/dev/templates/>

Jinja2 Filters and Tests

- Don't worry about visual presentation of data on back-end
- Jinja2 has filters to sort out and format your data (to an extent) and tests for expression testing
- See <http://jinja.pocoo.org/docs/dev/templates/#builtin-filters>
- Can also make Custom Filters (python code)
- See `myapp/jinja_filters.py` and the registration of the filters in `myapp/_init_.py`

g and session

- Flask allows for variables to be passed around within special objects
- **g - stores variables persistent within a single request , safe in threaded envs**
 - from flask import g
 - Storing: g.ra = 234.2344
 - Retrieving: ra = g.get('ra', None)
- **session - stores variables persistent across all requests in an entire browser session (cookies)**
 - from flask import session [as current_session]
 - Storing: session['ra'] = 234.2344
 - Retrieving: ra = session['ra'] or session.get('ra', None)
 - session behaves like a Python dictionary

Hosting Your App

- Host your locally running app with ngrok
- Host a production version with uwsgi+Nginx or Apache
- Host on a cloud-based platform (e.g Heroku)

ngrok

- Allows for secure tunnels to localhost
- Quick and Dirty
- <https://ngrok.com/>
- `ngrok http [port number]`
- Forwarding - <http://24f55f75.ngrok.io>
- Web Interface for Stats - <http://127.0.0.1:4040>

Profiling Your App

- How to time or profile your Flask app?
- Flask has a built in profiler with Werkzeug, which uses cProfile under the hood
- see `profile_myapp.py`
- runs like an app: `python profile_myapp.py -p 9000`

```
from flask import Flask
from werkzeug.contrib.profiler import ProfilerMiddleware
```

```
app.config['PROFILE'] = True
app.wsgi_app = ProfilerMiddleware(app.wsgi_app)
app.run(debug = True, port=args.port)
```

Unit testing Your App

- Flask has a built-in testing suite, made a bit easier with the extension Flask-Testing
- see [introtoflasks/myapp/tests](#)

Resources

- Flask has a ton of extensions.
 - Some - <http://flask.pocoo.org/extensions/>
 - More - <https://github.com/humiaozuzu/awesome-flask>
- Try the Flask Snippets for code tips
 - <http://flask.pocoo.org/snippets/>
- Stackoverflow - <http://stackoverflow.com/questions/tagged/flask>