

Introduction to programming

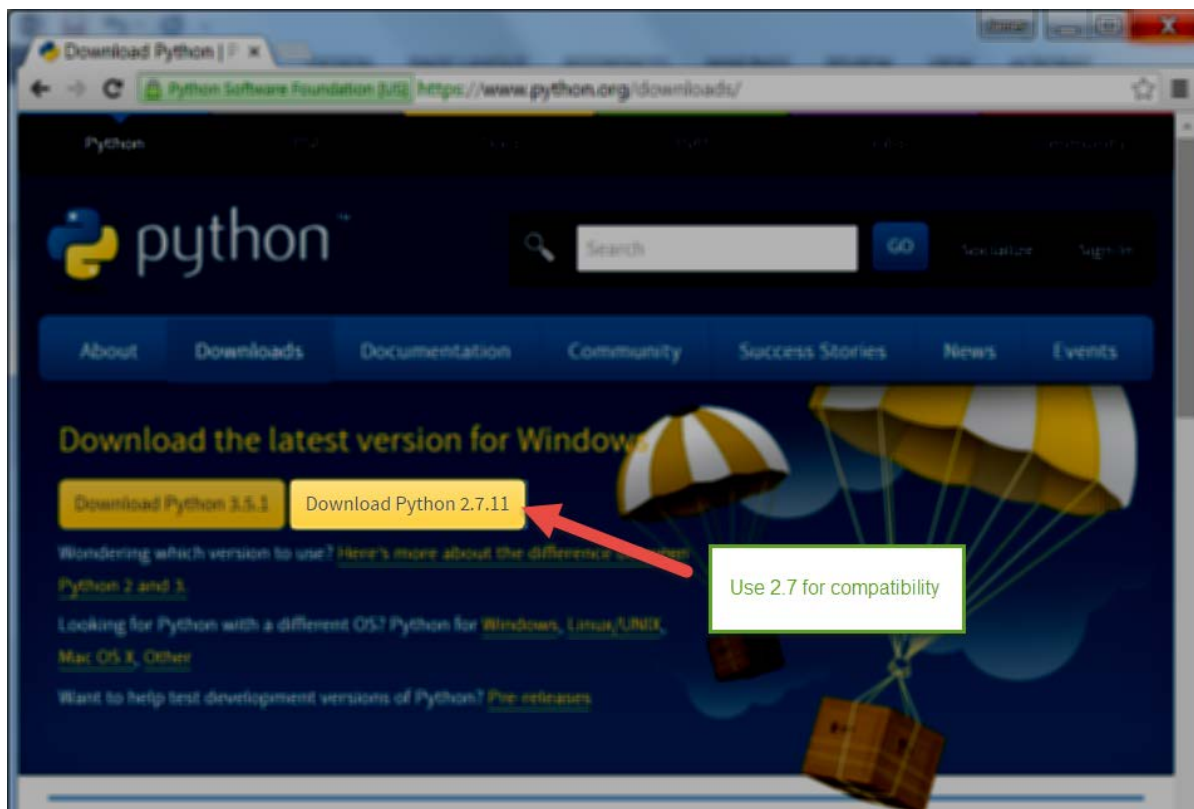
Setting up your programming environment

In this guide we will configure our learning laptop to be ready for the programming exercises we will be looking at in Semester 1.

Install Python

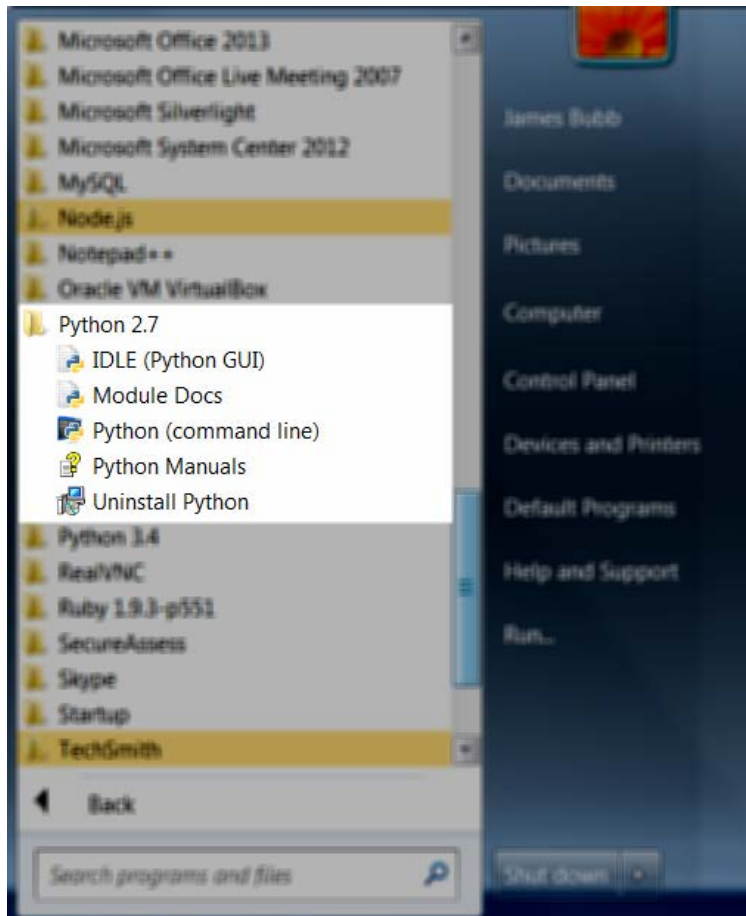
In order to be able to run Python programs the Python environment or *interpreter* must be installed on our computers. We will learn more about compilers and interpreters in Week 1 – Understanding programming.

To install Python, simply go to the [downloads section of the Python website](https://www.python.org/downloads/).



You have a choice to download either version 2 or 3 of Python. The older version 2 of Python is still bundled with lots of Unix and Linux operating systems so it's best if we use this version for compatibility with any systems you might use at work. It should not make much difference to the introduction to programming that we will be looking at in the first semester.

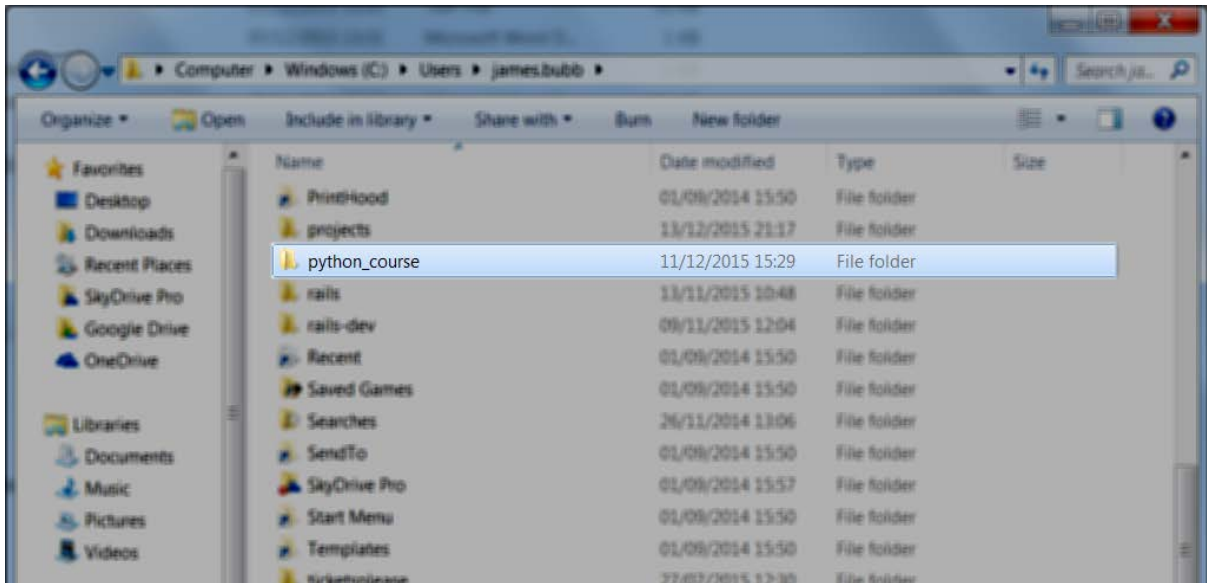
Once downloaded, open the installer and choose the defaults for each option, there's no need to customise any of the settings. If all goes OK and there are no errors with the installation you should find some new entries in your programs list in the Start Menu.



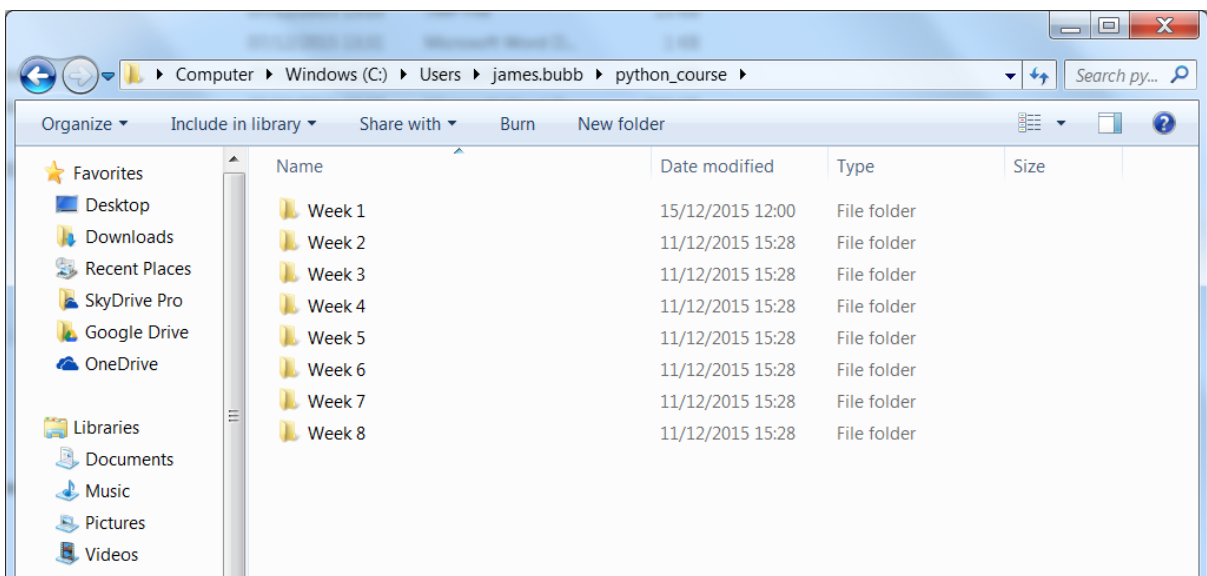
You can access the Python interpreter by opening the **IDLE (Python GUI)** program which will open up an interactive command prompt. You can also use IDLE to make more complex programs and save them in files for later use / review.

Create folders

It is a good idea to keep all of our programs in one place so create a folder somewhere to store them all. I have just created one in my user folder called **python_course** but you can call it something else if you prefer.



It would also probably be a good idea to separate your programs week by week so create eight new folders inside your course folder that you can store your programs for each week in.



Now when you are completing your lab exercises, you can save your program files in an easy to find location.