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Install and Configure the Atom Editor for Python

June 7, 2015 **Marina Mele**

In this post we'll talk about the Atom editor which is, as they say, *A hackable text editor for the 21st Century*.

It's a really nice, open source and modern editor, with a broad community that provides different and new packages and functionalities. Have you tried it yet?

Here, you'll learn how to install it and how to configure it to write Python code. Let's start! 🙂

First, download Atom from the official webpage.

Once installed, if you have a Mac or Windows, you'll have two commands available: `atom` and `apm`. The first one is for opening the Atom editor, and the second one for installing Atom packages. We'll see an example of both in the following.

Edit a Python file and use Atom's Autocomplete

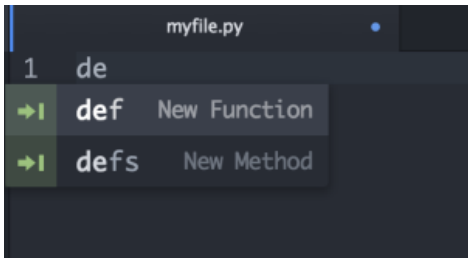
Let's start by creating a Python file with:

```
$ atom myfile.py
```

This will open the file in Atom, and you'll see the containing folder with all its contents on

the left sidebar.

In the new file, if you type `de`, you'll see that it suggests if you want to create a new function. This is because Atom has detected that the file extension is a Python extension.



If you type the `Tab` key, you'll see a template for a new function:

Note that you have the `fname` highlighted. This is because you can now type the name of your function and it will replace `fname`. Let's name our function `product`.

Next, if you hit the `Tab` key again, the arguments of the function, `arg`, will be now selected. Just write `x, y`, as we need two different arguments for our function.

Finally, hit the `Tab` key again to select the body of our function, `pass`, and replace it for our code. The end function should be something like:

```
def product(x,y):
    return x * y
```

Also notice the blue circle next to the file name. This means that there are unsaved changes in your current file. You can save it just typing the usual cmd+c (or ctrl+c in windows).

Linter for Atom

Linter is an Atom package that provides a top level API so that there is a unification among all the linter atom plugins. This means that all the extra packages that you install, that highlight your code (for example to detect errors) will use a unified method.

To install it, just type:

Next, we're going to install a Python Linter package, to help us detect errors in our Python code.

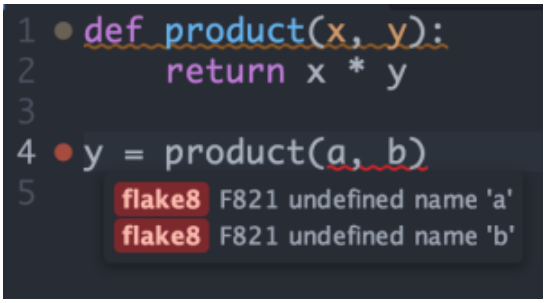
This package is called linter-flake8 and it's an interface to flake8. To install it, you need to run:

```
$ pip install flake8
$ pip install flake8-docstrings
$ apm install linter-flake8
```

You must restart Atom to see the changes. For example, if we add the folling line of code in our file:

```
y = product(a, b)
```

without specifying what `a` or `b` are, we'll see the following in our Atom screen:



If you open Atom and you find an error that says

```
The linter binary flake8 cannot be found
```

You will need to open the Atom init script (Atom –> Open your Init Script) and write the following:

```
process.env.PATH = ['/usr/local/bin/', process.env.PATH].join(':')
```

Restart Atom the apply these changes. It should work now 🙂

Moreover, there are Linters for other languages like HTML, CSS or Javascript. You can find a list here.

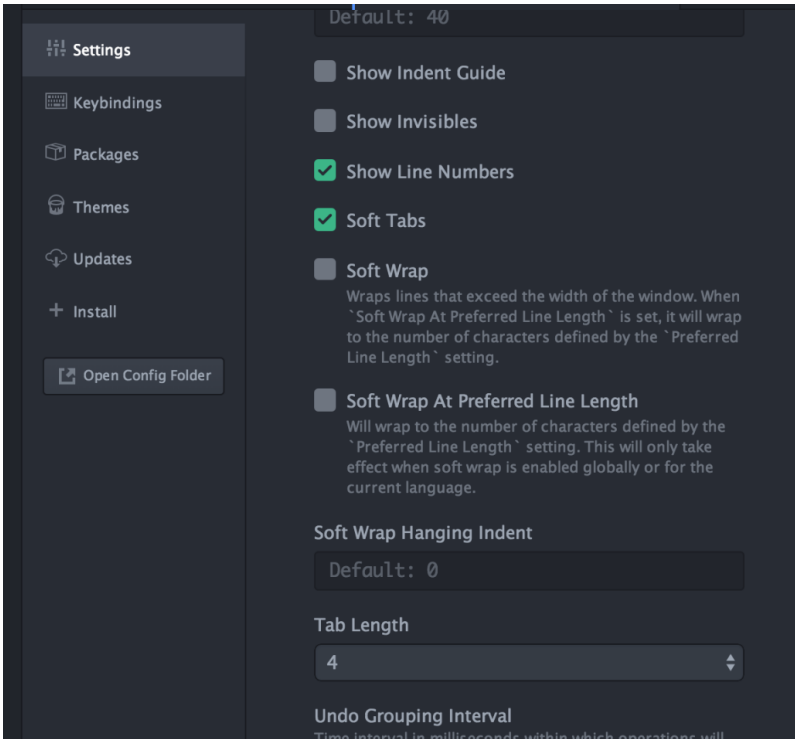
Further customisation for Python to follow PEP8

Here I'll show you how you can configure Atom to follow PEP8, the official Python styling guide.

First, open the Atom –> Preferences window.

1. Use spaces instead of tabs.

Scroll down the Settings panel until you see the Soft Tabs option. Make sure it's checked. This setting will convert tabs into spaces automatically.



2. Set the tab length to 4 spaces

A little below the Soft Tab setting, you"ll see the Tab Length. Set it to 4 spaces.

3. Automatic PEP8 validation.

If you installed the linter-flake8 package discussed in the previous section, you already have automatic PEP8 validation 🙂

Keybindings customisation

In the same Preferences panel, you can see the Keybindings menu on the left. There, you'll find a list of all the default keybindings active in your Atom editor.

However, by default, Atom confirms an autocomplete suggestion with both the Tab and

Enter keys. But I only want to use the Tab key.

In order to **disable Enter as an autocomplete confirm key**, we need to go to the Keybindings menu where you'll see a link that says your keymap file. Click on that link to open the keymap.cson file.

There, you need to write:

```
# Disable Enter key for confirming an autocomplete suggestion
'atom-text-editor:not(mini).autocomplete-active':
  'enter': 'editor:newline'
```

Save the file and you'll see the changes immediately. No need to restart Atom 🙂

Other Useful Packages

Project manager: a package for saving your projects.

Atom Django: Django support for Atom

Minimap: Displays a small map of the current file on the right side of your document (like Sublime Text by default).

Do you use other Packages? Write a comment below about them! 🙂

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Fuyang Liu 2 years ago - Shared publicly

would be nice to have a python shell in the editor as well, then I can run some code and do some command in shell to check certain values or operations, like in Canopy. However the editor looks way cooler :)

+7 1 · Reply

Markus Dittrich 1 year ago *+3*

"script" - just run ctrl shift b and it runs nearly everything https://atom.io/packages/script

jack griffin 1 year ago *+1*

+Markus Dittrich

Yes but it does not support user input. See below.

vignesh saravanan 3 months ago - Shared publicly

kindly help me this.
i don't know how to install flask module in atom text editor.
in jupyter or anaconda i can install but in atom i am unable to proceed further.

+1 1 · Reply

Mario Staykov 3 months ago - Shared publicly

Thanks for the guide, very useful for quickstarting on using Atom with a Python linter! The only additional thing I found myself doing is ignoring some error codes, since it does it job a bit too well :)

1 · Reply

phil lighbothe 4 months ago - Shared publicly

Amazing. I enjoyed that. Also check more helpful information for student's at my blog https://writemypaper4me.org/blog/research-paper-conclusion I recommend this, because it's also very helpful and informative.

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