

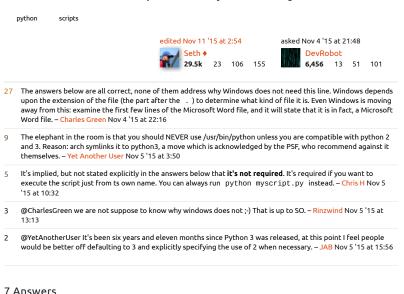
Why does Python in Linux require the line #!/usr/bin/python?

Pretty simple question: In Linux, why does Python require the line

#!/usr/bin/pvthon

at the start of a python file, since Windows doesn't?

What does it do? 'cause the description "Links to Python" is a bit vague...



Python does not have any such special requirement on Linux. It's the program loader on Unix/Linux that uses the "shebang" line, as it's called. This is actually a feature rather than a limitation, but we'll get to that in a moment. The Wiki page on "shebang" has more details, but I'll try to give an overview as well as a comparison to Windows here.

First, let's look at the situation on Windows:

- When you attempt to open or run a file, Windows first examines the extension of that file. This is the *last* part of the filename starting with . In the case of Python files, this is typically .py.
- Windows looks up what action to take based on the file extension.
 - This information is recorded in the Windows registry; when Python is installed, it typically tells Windows that .py files should be opened using the newly-installed application Python (i.e. the Python interpreter).
 - Several file-types have built-in behaviors; for instance, executable files (such as the Python interpreter itself) must end in <code>.exe</code> , and <code>.bat</code> files are executed as Windows batch-scripts.

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