

# **Python OR-tools Notes**

Kunlei Lian

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# Preface

# 1 Introduction

This book covers the usage of Google OR-Tools to solve optimization problems in Python. There are several major chapters in this book:

In Chapter 2, we explain the steps needed to setup OR-Tools in a Python environment.

In Chapter 3, we use an example to illustrate the modeling capability of OR-Tools to solve linear programming problems.

In Chapter 4, we go through the modeling techniques made available in OR-Tools.

## 2 Environment Setup

In this chapter, we explain the steps needed to set up Python and Google OR-Tools. All the steps below are based on MacBook Air with M1 chip and macOS Ventura 13.1.

### 2.1 Install Homebrew

The first tool we need is Homebrew, ‘the Missing Package Manager for macOS (or Linux)’, and it can be accessed at <https://brew.sh/>. To install Homebrew, just copy the command below and run it in the Terminal.

```
/bin/bash -c "$(curl -fsSL https://raw.githubusercontent.com/Homebrew/install/HEAD/installation)"
```

We can then use the `brew --version` command to check the installed version. On my system, it shows the info below.

```
~/ brew --version
Homebrew 3.6.20
Homebrew/homebrew-core (git revision 5f1582e4d55; last commit 2023-02-05)
Homebrew/homebrew-cask (git revision fa3b8a669d; last commit 2023-02-05)
```

### 2.2 Install Anaconda

Since there are several Python versions available for our use and we may end up having multiple Python versions installed on our machine, it is important to use a consistent environment to work on our project in. Anaconda is a package and environment manager for Python and it provides easy-to-use tools to facilitate our data science needs. To install Anaconda, run the below command in the Terminal.

```
~/ brew install anaconda
```

After the installation is done, we can use `conda --version` to verify whether it is available on our machine or not.

```
~/ conda --version
conda 23.1.0
```

## 2.3 Create a Conda Environment

Now we will create a Conda environment named 'ortools'. Execute the below command in the Terminal, which effectively creates the required environment with Python version 3.10.

```
~/ conda create -n ortools python=3.10
Retrieving notices: ...working... done
Collecting package metadata (current_repodata.json): done
Solving environment: done
```

```
## Package Plan ##
```

```
environment location: /opt/homebrew/anaconda3/envs/test
```

```
added / updated specs:
- python=3.10
```

The following packages will be downloaded:

package	build		
----- -----			
setuptools-67.4.0	pyhd8ed1ab_0	567 KB	conda-forge
----- -----			
	Total:	567 KB	

The following NEW packages will be INSTALLED:

bzip2	conda-forge/osx-arm64::bzip2-1.0.8-h3422bc3_4
ca-certificates	conda-forge/osx-arm64::ca-certificates-2022.12.7-h4653dfc_0
libffi	conda-forge/osx-arm64::libffi-3.4.2-h3422bc3_5
libsqlite	conda-forge/osx-arm64::libsqlite-3.40.0-h76d750c_0
libzlib	conda-forge/osx-arm64::libzlib-1.2.13-h03a7124_4
ncurses	conda-forge/osx-arm64::ncurses-6.3-h07bb92c_1
openssl	conda-forge/osx-arm64::openssl-3.0.8-h03a7124_0
pip	conda-forge/noarch::pip-23.0.1-pyhd8ed1ab_0
python	conda-forge/osx-arm64::python-3.10.9-h3ba56d0_0_cpython

```

readline          conda-forge/osx-arm64::readline-8.1.2-h46ed386_0
setuptools        conda-forge/noarch::setuptools-67.4.0-pyhd8ed1ab_0
tk                conda-forge/osx-arm64::tk-8.6.12-he1e0b03_0
tzdata            conda-forge/noarch::tzdata-2022g-h191b570_0
wheel             conda-forge/noarch::wheel-0.38.4-pyhd8ed1ab_0
xz                conda-forge/osx-arm64::xz-5.2.6-h57fd34a_0

```

Proceed ([y]/n)?

Type 'y' to proceed and Conda will create the environment for us. We can use `conda env list` to show all the created environments on our machine:

```

~/ conda env list
# conda environments:
#
base                /opt/homebrew/anaconda3
ortools             /opt/homebrew/anaconda3/envs/ortools

```

Note that we need to manually activate an environment in order to use it: `conda activate ortools`. On my machine, the activated environment `ortools` will appear in the beginning of my prompt.

```

~/ conda activate ortools
(ortools) ~/

```

## 2.4 Install Google OR-Tools

As of this writing, the latest version of Google OR-Tools is 9.5.2237, and we can install it in our newly created environment using the command `pip install ortools==9.5.2237`. We can use `conda list` to verify whether it is available in our environment.

```

(ortools) ~/ conda list
# packages in environment at /opt/homebrew/anaconda3/envs/ortools:
#
# Name                Version                Build    Channel
abs1-py               1.4.0                  pypi_0   pypi
bzip2                 1.0.8                  h3422bc3_4  conda-forge
ca-certificates       2022.12.7              h4653dfc_0  conda-forge
libffi                 3.4.2                  h3422bc3_5  conda-forge

```

libsqlite	3.40.0	h76d750c_0	conda-forge
libzlib	1.2.13	h03a7124_4	conda-forge
ncurses	6.3	h07bb92c_1	conda-forge
numpy	1.24.2	pypi_0	pypi
openssl	3.0.8	h03a7124_0	conda-forge
ortools	9.5.2237	pypi_0	pypi
pip	23.0.1	pyhd8ed1ab_0	conda-forge
protobuf	4.22.0	pypi_0	pypi
python	3.10.9	h3ba56d0_0_cpython	conda-forge
readline	8.1.2	h46ed386_0	conda-forge
setuptools	67.4.0	pyhd8ed1ab_0	conda-forge
tk	8.6.12	he1e0b03_0	conda-forge
tzdata	2022g	h191b570_0	conda-forge
wheel	0.38.4	pyhd8ed1ab_0	conda-forge
xz	5.2.6	h57fd34a_0	conda-forge

Now we have Python and Google OR-Tools ready, we can start our next journey.



## 3 Linear Programming

In this chapter, we first go through the modeling capabilities provided by Google OR-Tools to solve linear programming problems. Then we get our hands dirty by solving some linear programming problems.

### 3.1 Modeling Capabilities

There are three components in a mathematical model, namely, decision variables, constraints and objective, for which we will go over in the following sections.

#### 3.1.1 Solver

In Google OR-Tools, a `Solver` instance must be created first so that variables, constraints and objective can be added to it. The `Solver` class is defined in the `ortools.linear_solver.pywraplp` module and it requires a solver id to instantiate an object. In the code snippet below, the required module is imported first and a `solver` object is created with `GLOP`, Google's own optimization engine for solving linear programming problems. It is good practice to verify whether the desired solver is indeed created successfully or not.

```
from ortools.linear_solver import pywraplp

solver = pywraplp.Solver.CreateSolver("GLOP")

if solver:
    print("solver creation success!")
else:
    print("solver creation failure!")
```

```
solver creation success!
```

### 3.1.2 Decision Variables

The `Solver` class defines a number of ways to create decision variables:

1. `Var(lb, ub, integer, name)`
  2. `NumVar(lb, ub, name)`
  3. `IntVar(lb, ub, name)`
  4. `BoolVar(name)`
- Function `Var()`

The `Var()` method is the most flexible way to define variables, as it can be used to create numerical, integral and boolean variables. In the following code, a numerical variable named 'var1' is created with bound (0.0, 1.0). Note that the parameter `integer` is set to `False` in the call to function `Var()`.

```
var1 = solver.Var(lb=0, ub=1.0, integer=False, name="var1")
```

We could create an integer variable using the same function:

```
var2 = solver.Var(lb=0, ub=1.0, integer=True, name="var2")
```

- Function `NumVar()`

`var1` could be created alternatively using the specialized function `NumVar()`:

```
var1 = solver.NumVar(lb=0, ub=1.0, name='var1')
```

- Function `IntVar()`

Similarly, `var2` could be created alternatively using the specialized function `IntVar()`:

```
var2 = solver.IntVar(lb=0, ub=1.0, name='var2')
```

- Function `BoolVar()`

A boolean variable could be created using the `BoolVar()` function:

```
var3 = solver.BoolVar(name='var3')
```

### 3.1.3 Constraints

Constraints limit the solution space of an optimization problem, and there are two ways to define constraints in Google OR-Tools. In the first approach, we could use the `Add()` function to create a constraint and automatically add it to the model at the same time, as the below code snippet illustrates.

```
cons1 = solver.Add(constraint=var1 + var2 <= 1, name="cons1")  
  
type(cons1)
```

`ortools.linear_solver.pywraplp.Constraint`

Note that the `Add()` function returns an object of the `Constraint` class defined in the `pywraplp` module, as shown in the code output. It is a good practice to retain the reference of the newly created constraint, as we might want to query its information later on.

The second approach works in a slightly different way. It starts with an empty constraint, with potential lower bound and upper bounds provided, and add components of the constraint gradually. The code snippet below shows an example of adding a second constraint to the model. In this approach, we must retain the reference to the constraint, as it is needed to add decision variables to the constraint in following steps.

```
cons2 = solver.Constraint(-solver.infinity(), 10.0, "cons2")  
cons2.SetCoefficient(var1, 2)  
cons2.SetCoefficient(var2, 3)  
cons2.SetCoefficient(var3, 4)
```

### 3.1.4 Objective

### 3.1.5 Objective and Constraint Expressions

### 3.1.6 Query the Model

## 3.2 Applications

### 3.2.1 An Artificial Example

### 3.2.2 The Stigler Diet Problem

## 4 Integer Programming

## 5 Column Generation

## 6 Summary

In summary, this book has no content whatsoever.

## References