

FAQ --- Change in Spyder that eliminates 'Open command prompt' used in lectures.

Python programs are commonly run in a terminal window (called a command prompt in Windows). This involves opening a cmd.exe on a PC or a terminal on Mac and Linux. Up until version 3.2 of Spyder (not 3.2 of Python), you could open a command prompt or terminal from within Spyder. The videos took advantage of this convenience, but now that convenience is going away. Originally, 8 videos in modules 3 and 4, used this feature to run whole Python programs. The convenience included the fact that Windows, Mac, and Linux systems were alike.

Three videos have been added to Module 3, Lesson 3, to show how to run these programs without using the command prompt provided by Spyder.

First, there is the video for Windows alone. This is simplest. You run cmd.exe to open the command prompt, move to the directory containing your program and run

```
python yourprogramname.py
```

And that is all there is to it. Much of this video is spent showing convenient ways to get to that directory.

Sometimes, python isn't on your path. You can add it to your path, but it is simpler to go to the start menu, then to Anaconda and run the Anaconda Prompt. It is already set up properly for you and modifying the path requires some above average PC skills. I RECOMMEND USING THE ANACONDA PROMPT.

For the Macintosh, things are a bit more complicated. The main complication is that Macs come with Python 2.7 installed. And the Mac often wants to run Python 2 instead of Python 3, which is used in this course. So there are two videos for the Mac. The second one, is much like the PC one, showing you how to run the program.

But the first one of the two, tells you how to tell whether your system defaults to Python 2. It first asks you to open a terminal and run Python to see whether your system runs Python 2 or Python 3. If Python 3, you skip the rest of the video. If Python 2, you must set up an environment to run Python 3. This is simple, once you know how. It requires two commands: one to create a Python 3 environment and one to activate it. Here are the commands:

```
conda create -n mypython3 python=3.6
```

```
source activate mypython3
```

After that it is just like the PC. The first of these commands creates an environment called mypython3 (you can use any name) and installs Python 3.6 in it (you can choose what version you want). This command you run once and that environment is available forever. The second command shifts to using that environment; you run that each time you open a terminal window to run Python. After that you do as you would do on a PC: move to the directory with your program and run

```
python yourprogramname.py
```

I didn't re-record the videos that use the command prompt provided by Spyder. They would be essentially the same. They just use Spyder to start up the command prompt, but you will have to open a cmd.exe (Windows) or run terminal (Macintosh) to open that command prompt.

Linux works just like the Macintosh, so there is no separate video for Linux.

Occasionally, the PATH variable is not set by the installation of Anaconda. I don't know why. If that is the case, you will have to set the PATH variable yourself to point to the directory where Python is located. You can tell if you need to do this by opening a command prompt and typing python. If your computer can't find python, then you need to set the PATH variable. If this happens, post in the Discussion Forum and we'll explain how.