

File IO

Python for Ecologists

Tao Hong, Tom Purucker, Jonathan Flaishans, Marcia Snyder

Ecological Society of America Workshop
Minneapolis, MN
hongtao510@gmail.com

August 1, 2013

Notes

Overview of files

- What is a file?
- Where is a file stored?
- Reading files
- Writing files
- Opening files on the Internet
- Hairy Issues
- Problems!

Notes

What is a file?

- Technically - long strings of 0s and 1s
- Informally - a name for the place your program reads from and writes to

Notes

Where is a file stored?

- Files can be stored on your computer, or on a remote computer.
 - When files are on your computer, life is easy, ex:
 - 'myFileName.txt'
 - When files are on a remote computer, you need a specific protocol to retrieve them, ex:
 - 'http://mywebsite.com/myFileName.txt'

Notes

How do I get data out of a file?

- 1 Open the file.

```
file = open("myFileName.txt")
```

- 2 Loop through the File (here we loop through)

```
for line in file:  
    print(line)    # line is a string, print it!
```

- 3 Close the File

```
file.close()
```

Notes

I want to do more than print!

- Code:

```
file = open('myFileName.txt')  
for line in file:  
    print(line)    # line is a string, lets print it!  
file.close()
```

- line is a string, so we can do whatever we want to it. If the line is a sentence, and we wanted to break it up by words, we could do this instead :

```
file = open('myFileName.txt')  
for line in file:  
    for word in line.split():  
        print(word)    # lets print each word!  
file.close()
```

Notes

I want to save a file

- We can open a file for writing, as well as reading.

```
file = open('anotherFile.txt', 'w')  
file.write('This_is_output!\n')  
file.close()
```

- Be careful not to overwrite an important file!

Notes

How can we open a file from the Internet?

- The 'urlopen' function tries to open URLs

```
import urllib2  
file = urllib2.urlopen('YourFilePathHere')
```

Notes

Why you'll hate files

- Files can be open in different modes
 - w - write
 - a - appends
 - r - read (default)
 - and more!
- Files involve string parsing and manipulation
 - This can be a real pain!
 - Corruption prone!

Notes

Exercise

- 1 Read a file
 - 1 Read StateoftheUnion.txt
 - 2 Output each word on its own line
- 2 Sum a file
 - 1 Read IntegerFile.txt, which has many numbers on one line.
 - 2 Calculate the sum, and the mean. Hint, the int() function turns a string into a number.
- 3 File copier
 - 1 Copy <http://www.ubertool.org/index.html> to a file on your local disk.

Notes

Notes

Notes
