How to Download, Install, and Configure Python 2.7 on Windows 7

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Caution: Before installing Python 2.7, you must first uninstall any previous versions of Python. Failure to do so may result in incompatibility issues. See `http://www.wikihow.com/Uninstall-Python` for instructions on how to uninstall Python.

Target Audience:
Anyone who knows what Python 2.7 is and wants their computer to be able to run Python 2.7 scripts. We assume familiarity with basic web browsing, including downloading and opening files.

Objective: This document explains how to download, install, and configure Python for your Windows 7 computer, allowing all users of your computer to run Python scripts and programs from the Windows Command Line.

You will need:
A 64-bit computer with Windows 7 and an internet connection. You must also have administrative priveleges on this computer.

Duration:
Completing these **5 steps** should take about **10 minutes**.

Outcome:
After completing these steps, all users on your computer should be able to run the Python 2.7 Interpreter, as well as Python 2.7 scripts (**.py** files) and compiled Python 2.7 programs (**.pyc** files).

This document does not explain how to use Python 2.7; for instructions on how to use Python 2.7, see `http://www.python.org/`.

Step 1 (on page 1) will show you how to download the Python installer.

Step 1: Downloading the Python Installer

 In this step, you will download the Python Installer, a program which will install Python on your computer. This step has 2 substeps.

a. Open the URL http://www.python.org/download/releases/2.7.5/ in your web browser.

b. Locate and single-click "Windows X86-64 MSI Installer" (highlighted in Figure 1) to download the installer.

Figure 1: Link to Python Installer (step 1b.)

Step 2 (on page 2) will show you how to use this file to Install Python.

Step 2: Installing Python

In this step, you will install Python using the file you downloaded in Step 1.

a. Locate the file `python-2.7.5.msi` on your computer. The file location will depend on your web-browser's download settings.

b. Double-click `python-2.7.5.msi` to run it.

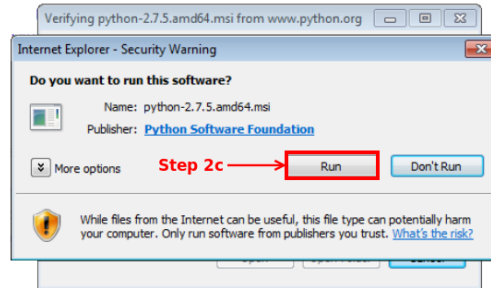c. If a 'Security Warning' window appears, click "Run" (labeled in Figure 2).

Figure 2: "Security Warning" window (steps 2b. and 3e.)

d. In the next window, click "Next" without changing any settings.

e. Typically, the default installation directory will suffice. To change the installation directory, select from the drop down menu or type the directory path in the text box labeled in Figure 3. Click "Next" when done.
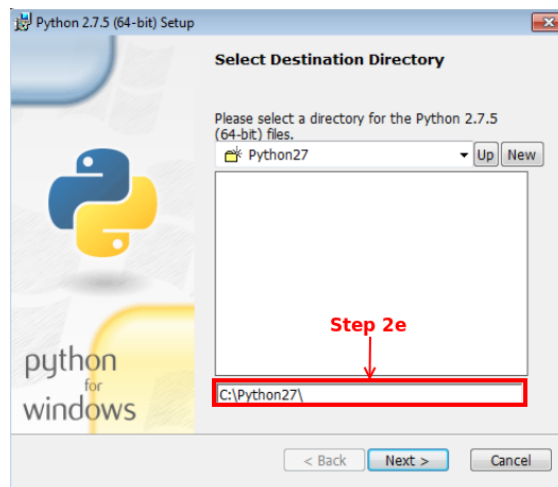

Figure 3: Choosing an Installation Directory window (step 2e.)

f. Click "Next" without changing any settings. Wait for the installation to complete. Then, click "Finish" to close the installation program.

Step 3 (on page 3) will begin explaining how to configure your computer to run Python.

Step 3: Opening the Environment Variables Menu

     In this step, you will open the Environment Variables Menu in order to modify Environment Variables. This is necessary for your command line to run Python files.

a. Open the Start Menu by clicking the bottom left corner of you screen (labeled in Figure 4).

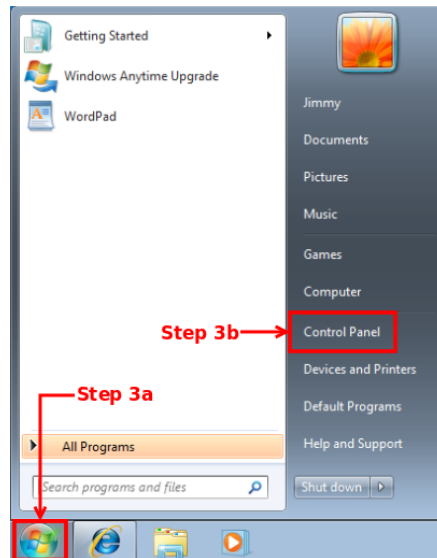b. Click on "Control Panel" (labeled in Figure 4) to open the Control Panel.

Figure 4: The Start Menu (steps 3a. and 3b.)

c. Type "advanced" (without quotes) into the Search Box in the top right corner of the Control Panel window (as in Figure 5).

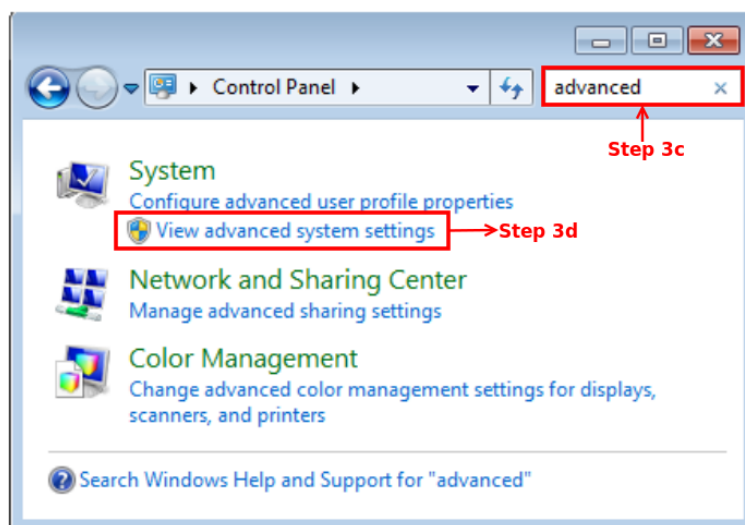d. Click "View advanced system settings" (labeled in Figure 5).

Figure 5: The Control Panel (steps 3c. and 3d.)

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e. If a "User Account Control" window appears, click "Yes" (as in Figure 6).

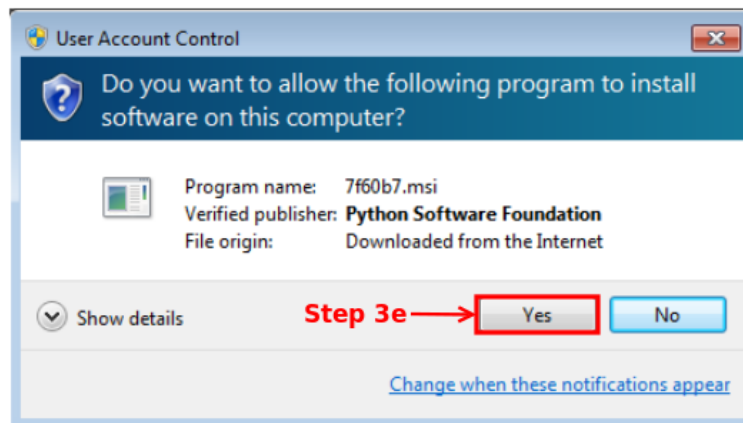Figure 6: The User Account Control window (step 3e.)

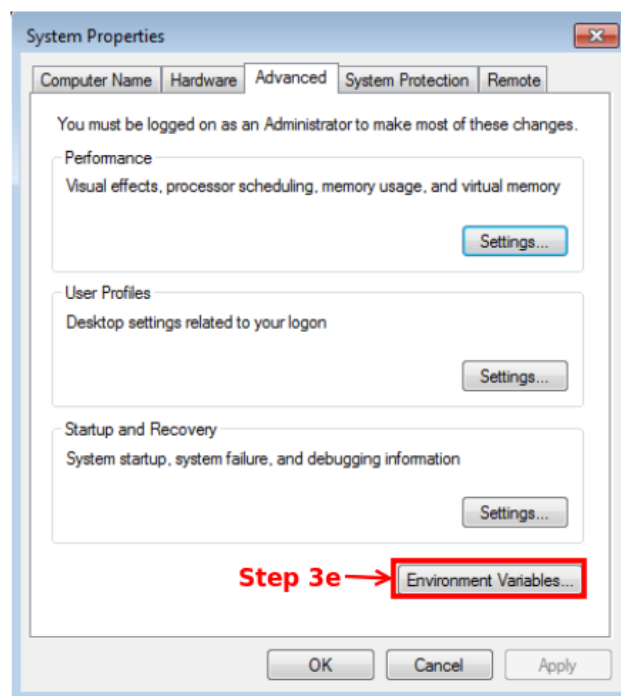f. In the "System Properties" window, click "Environment Variables" (labeled in Figure 7).

Figure 7: System Properties window and the Environment Variables button (step 3f.)

Step 4 (on page 5) will show you how to modify the Path Environment Variable.

Step 4: Modifying the Path Environment Variable

In this step, you will modify the Path environment variable, telling your command line the location of your Python Installation.

Warning: Important system services depend on Environment Variables. Do not modify any Environment Variables except Path, and do not remove anything from the Path variable; you should only **add** information to the Path variable.

a. In the "Environment Variables" window that appears, under the "System Variables" section scroll down to locate the Path variable, as shown in Figure 8. Double-click the word "Path."
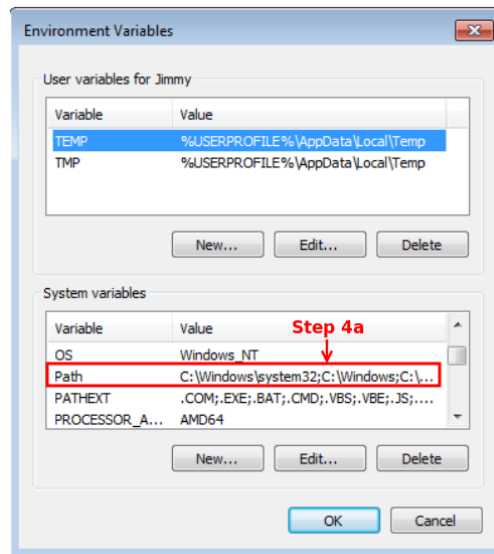

Figure 8: Environment Variables window and the Path variable (step 4a.)

b. An "Edit System Variable" window will appear. In the "Variable value" box (do not delete anything!), add ";C:" followed by the name of the directory you selected in step 2e. (for the default directory, add ";C:Python27" (without quotes), as shown in Figure 9).
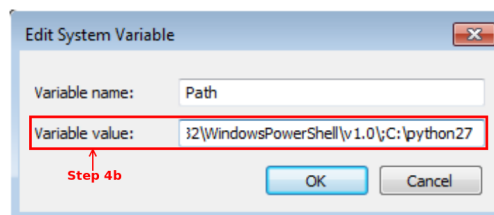

Figure 9: The Edit System Variable window (step 4b.)

c. Click "OK" to close each of the "Edit System Variable" and "Environment Variables" windows.

You now have Python 2.7 installed and configured on your computer. **Step 5** (on page 6) will show you how to access the Python interpreter to start using Python right away.

Step 5: Opening the Python Interpreter

In this step, you will verify that the previous steps worked by opening the Command Line Python Interpreter.

a. Open the Start Menu by clicking the bottom left corner of you screen (labeled in Figure 10).

b. In the search box, type "cmd" (without quotes), as shown in Figure 10).
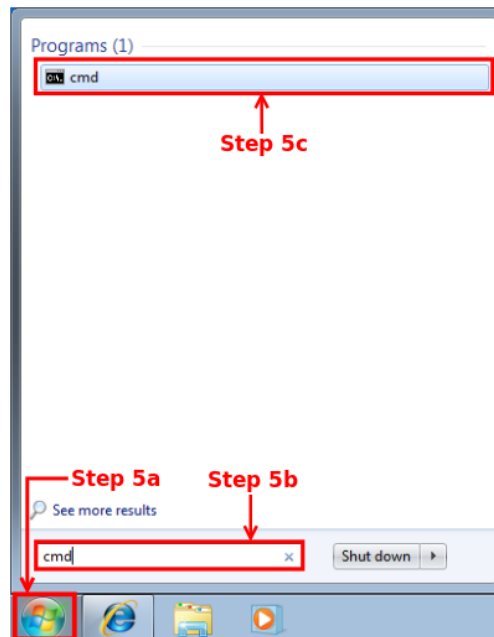
c. Click on "cmd" (labelled in Figure 10).

Figure 10: Accessing the command line from the Start Menu (steps 5a-5c.)

d. A Command Line window should appear. Type "Python" and press Enter. Python should begin running, as shown in Figure 11. Once the "> > >" prompt appears, you may begin entering Python commands.
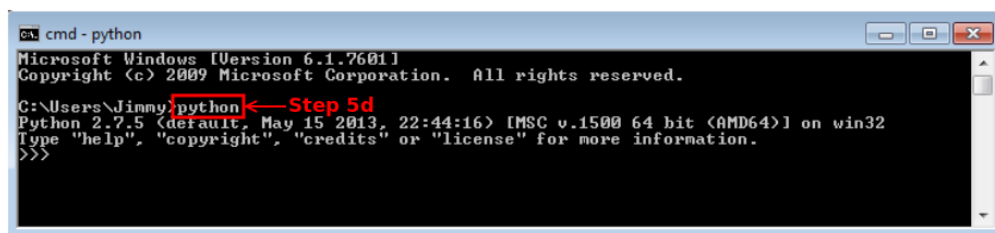

Figure 11: The Windows Command Line running the Python Interpreter (step 5d.)

For tutorials and other help using Python, see the documentation at `http://www.python.org/`.