Programming in Python[1]

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Lecture XVI: Matplotlib

Matplotlib

When you have arrays with many data it is useful to have a way to display them graphically.

- The most popular is `matplotlib` https://matplotlib.org/
- Many other graphical frameworks (e.g., `seaborn`, `plotnine`) based on it
- Many, many possibilities to tune your graphics! It's hard to master every detail.
- Be careful: it can be used with two different styles.
  1. The (preferred) object-oriented way: clean and rational, but a bit more verbose
  2. The procedural way: mostly useful only for "throw-away" scripts, but for this reason more common in the examples you can find online

Graphical output is an operating system service

- Output is a service provided by the operating system: *textual* output is very standardized even across different platform, graphics is not so stable
- When you deal with graphical programs: expect installation headaches, portability glitches, etc.

The OO style

- You need always to objects: a `Figure` and a `Axes`
- plotting happens on axes, framed in a figure
- very flexible: you can add plots on the same axis, or you can have many axes collected in a single figure

Basic example


```
import numpy as np
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt

x = np.linspace(-2*np.pi, 2*np.pi, 100)

fig, ax = plt.subplots()

ax.plot(x, np.sin(x))

fig.show()
```

Many different types of charts

If `ax` is a `Axes`

- Scatter-plots `ax.scatter`
- Bar-plots `ax.bar`
- Histograms `ax.hist`
- 2D `ax.imshow`

Tweaks

- add labels, legends, titles
- add a grid
- combine multiple plots on the same axis
- combine multiple axes on the same figure

Save your pictures!

A `Figure` can be saved in a file with `savefig`. You should keep in mind the difference between:

- bitmap formats (`png` `jpg` ...): the file is matrix of pixels
- vector formats (`svg` `pdf` ...): the file is a set of instructions to reproduce the picture, less portable but it can be magnified