



PyQB

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Third-party
libraries

Programming in Python¹

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Lecture XII: Using Third-party libraries

Third-party libraries

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Third-party libraries

Python is “sold” *batteries included* (with many useful built-in libraries). Moreover, like many modern programming environments, it has standard **online package directories** that list libraries produced by independent developers.

<https://pypi.org/>

The Python package index currently lists almost 300K libraries!

Installing a library



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The details are explained here: <https://packaging.python.org/tutorials/installing-packages/>

- In most cases it is very easy, the pip program does all the magic
- It is **very** important to understand the difference between a **system-wide** and a **project-specific** installation.

System-wide vs. Project-specific



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If you don't take special precautions, a package is installed in a way that makes it available to your Python system: every Python interpreter you launch sees them.

- In many cases, this is **not** what you want
- Different projects/programs might depend on different versions of the libraries
- Libraries themselves depend on other libraries, you want to understand exactly which packages your program is using in order to **reproduce** the settings on other machines



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Python provides the idea of **virtual development environments** (venv)

- You can create one with: `python -m venv CHOOSE_A_NAME`
- You must activate it (syntax depends on your OS):
`CHOOSE_A_NAME\Scripts\activate.bat`
- In an active virtual environment all the installation are **confined** to it
- You can get the list of installed packages with `pip freeze`



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Virtual environments are key to avoid messing up your system.

Many tools might simplify their administration.

- pipenv (my preferred one)
- poetry (similar to pipenv, currently less popular, but it has a better dependency control, a bit more complex)
- conda (uses its own package index, great flexibility and complexity, manage different python versions)

Virtual environments caveats



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When you are working in a Python virtual environment, remember to launch **all** your development tools “inside” the virtual space.

For example, to use Thonny you have to activate the proper virtual environment each time you launch the application.