

Python on Windows. Kthxbye!

[Cross-posted from ICanHazDataScience]

At one point, I had Windows, Mac and Linux laptops, an android tablet, android phone and iphone... but now I'm just down to the things that aren't forbidden fruit. I used to write all my code on the Linux machine, and use the Windows one for writing (it has a bigger screen that lets me view two documents side-by-side). But now I *like* coding on my Windows 7 machine. Here are some of the things that I've learnt doing it.

- Find some [friendly instructions](#) to help you with things like setting environment variables (i.e. the thing that means you can just type "python" in your terminal window instead of a really long address to the python executable file).
- Install 32-bit Python instead of 64-bit Python. Yes, it sounds wierd on a 64-bit machine, but trust me, some libraries will break horribly (and some will be just plain unavailable) if you try using the 64-bit version. The 32-bit version works fine, honest!
- "Real" coders will laugh at you in Hackathons. Ignore them... or just blow them away with your awesome webpage scrapers.
- Python 3.x is the latest version, but Python 2.x has better support. I'm currently on Python 2.7.3. It works.
- If you're adding Python libraries (aka "packages") to your machine (and you will), pip wins out over easy_install because it comes with things like uninstall (easy_install doesn't). Install [Distribute](#), then install [Pip](#)... here are some [geek notes](#) on why and how.
- Some packages need slightly different code if you're running on a Windows machine. for instance, connecting to Skype using Skype4Py has these variations between machines: