

High Performance Python

Micha Gorelick and Ian Ozsvald

Table of Contents

Preface	ix
1. Understanding Performant Python	1
The Fundamental Computer System	1
Computing Units	2
Memory Units	5
Communications Layers	7
Putting the Fundamental Elements Together	9
Idealized Computing Versus the Python Virtual Machine	10
So Why Use Python?	13
2. Profiling to Find Bottlenecks	17
Profiling Efficiently	18
Introducing the Julia Set	19
Calculating the Full Julia Set	23
Simple Approaches to Timing—print and a Decorator	26
Simple Timing Using the Unix time Command	29
Using the cProfile Module	31
Using runsnakerun to Visualize cProfile Output	36
Using line_profiler for Line-by-Line Measurements	37
Using memory_profiler to Diagnose Memory Usage	42
Inspecting Objects on the Heap with heapy	48
Using dowser for Live Graphing of Instantiated Variables	50
Using the dis Module to Examine CPython Bytecode	52
Different Approaches, Different Complexity	54
Unit Testing During Optimization to Maintain Correctness	56
No-op @profile Decorator	57
Strategies to Profile Your Code Successfully	59
Wrap-Up	60

3. Lists and Tuples	61
A More Efficient Search	64
Lists Versus Tuples	66
Lists as Dynamic Arrays	67
Tuples As Static Arrays	70
Wrap-Up	72
4. Dictionaries and Sets	73
How Do Dictionaries and Sets Work?	77
Inserting and Retrieving	77
Deletion	80
Resizing	81
Hash Functions and Entropy	81
Dictionaries and Namespaces	85
Wrap-Up	88
5. Iterators and Generators	89
Iterators for Infinite Series	92
Lazy Generator Evaluation	94
Wrap-Up	98
6. Matrix and Vector Computation	99
Introduction to the Problem	100
Aren't Python Lists Good Enough?	105
Problems with Allocating Too Much	106
Memory Fragmentation	109
Understanding perf	111
Making Decisions with perf's Output	113
Enter numpy	114
Applying numpy to the Diffusion Problem	117
Memory Allocations and In-Place Operations	120
Selective Optimizations: Finding What Needs to Be Fixed	124
numexpr: Making In-Place Operations Faster and Easier	127
A Cautionary Tale: Verify "Optimizations" (scipy)	129
Wrap-Up	130
7. Compiling to C	135
What Sort of Speed Gains Are Possible?	136
JIT Versus AOT Compilers	138
Why Does Type Information Help the Code Run Faster?	138
Using a C Compiler	139
Reviewing the Julia Set Example	140
Cython	140

Compiling a Pure-Python Version Using Cython	141
Cython Annotations to Analyze a Block of Code	143
Adding Some Type Annotations	145
Shed Skin	150
Building an Extension Module	151
The Cost of the Memory Copies	153
Cython and numpy	154
Parallelizing the Solution with OpenMP on One Machine	155
Numba	157
Pythran	159
PyPy	160
Garbage Collection Differences	161
Running PyPy and Installing Modules	162
When to Use Each Technology	164
Other Upcoming Projects	165
A Note on Graphics Processing Units (GPUs)	166
A Wish for a Future Compiler Project	166
Foreign Function Interfaces	167
ctypes	167
cffi	170
f2py	173
CPython Module	175
Wrap-Up	179
8. Concurrency	181
Introduction to Asynchronous Programming	182
Serial Crawler	185
gevent	187
tornado	192
AsyncIO	196
Database Example	198
Wrap-Up	201
9. The multiprocessing Module	203
An Overview of the Multiprocessing Module	206
Estimating Pi Using the Monte Carlo Method	208
Estimating Pi Using Processes and Threads	210
Using Python Objects	210
Random Numbers in Parallel Systems	217
Using numpy	218
Finding Prime Numbers	221
Queues of Work	227
Verifying Primes Using Interprocess Communication	232

Serial Solution	236
Naive Pool Solution	236
A Less Naive Pool Solution	238
Using Manager.Value as a Flag	239
Using Redis as a Flag	241
Using RawValue as a Flag	243
Using mmap as a Flag	244
Using mmap as a Flag Redux	245
Sharing numpy Data with multiprocessing	248
Synchronizing File and Variable Access	254
File Locking	255
Locking a Value	258
Wrap-Up	261
10. Clusters and Job Queues	263
Benefits of Clustering	264
Drawbacks of Clustering	265
\$462 Million Wall Street Loss Through Poor Cluster Upgrade Strategy	266
Skype's 24-Hour Global Outage	267
Common Cluster Designs	268
How to Start a Clustered Solution	268
Ways to Avoid Pain When Using Clusters	269
Three Clustering Solutions	270
Using the Parallel Python Module for Simple Local Clusters	271
Using IPython Parallel to Support Research	273
NSQ for Robust Production Clustering	277
Queues	277
Pub/sub	278
Distributed Prime Calculation	280
Other Clustering Tools to Look At	284
Wrap-Up	285
11. Using Less RAM	287
Objects for Primitives Are Expensive	288
The Array Module Stores Many Primitive Objects Cheaply	289
Understanding the RAM Used in a Collection	292
Bytes Versus Unicode	294
Efficiently Storing Lots of Text in RAM	295
Trying These Approaches on 8 Million Tokens	296
Tips for Using Less RAM	304
Probabilistic Data Structures	305
Very Approximate Counting with a 1-byte Morris Counter	306
K-Minimum Values	308

Bloom Filters	312
LogLog Counter	317
Real-World Example	321
12. Lessons from the Field	325
Adaptive Labs Social Media Analytics (SoMA)	325
Python at Adaptive Lab	326
SoMA's Design	326
Our Development Methodology	327
Maintaining SoMA	327
Advice for Fellow Engineers	328
Making Deep Learning Fly with RadimRehurek.com	328
The Sweet Spot	328
Lessons in Optimizing	330
Wrap-Up	332
Large-Scale Productionized Machine Learning at Lyst.com	333
Pythons Place at Lyst	333
Cluster Design	333
Code Evolution in a Fast-Moving Start-Up	333
Building the Recommendation Engine	334
Reporting and Monitoring	334
Some Advice	335
Large-Scale Social Media Analysis at Smesh	335
Python's Role at Smesh	335
The Platform	336
High Performance Real-Time String Matching	336
Reporting, Monitoring, Debugging, and Deployment	338
PyPy for Successful Web and Data Processing Systems	339
Prerequisites	339
The Database	340
The Web Application	340
OCR and Translation	341
Task Distribution and Workers	341
Conclusion	341
Task Queues at Lanyrd.com	342
Python's Role at Lanyrd	342
Making the Task Queue Performant	343
Reporting, Monitoring, Debugging, and Deployment	343
Advice to a Fellow Developer	343
Index	345