University of Zurich[UZH]

Department of Physics

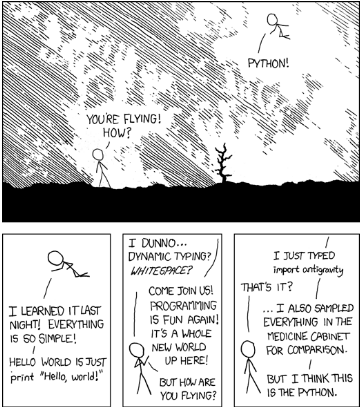
Need for Speed – Python meets C/C++

Scientific Programming with Python

Christian Elsasser

Based partially on a talk by Stéfan van der Walt

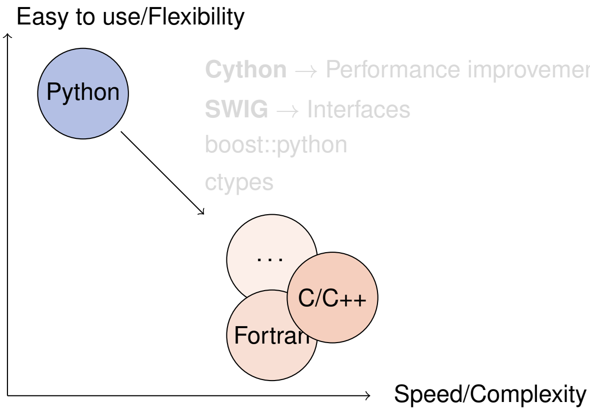
Python is nice, but by construction slow ...



[xkcd]

. . . why not therefore interfacing it with C/C++

(or something similar, *e.g.* if you don't feel too young to use Fortran)



Cython → Performance improvement

SWIG → Interfaces

boost::python

ctypes

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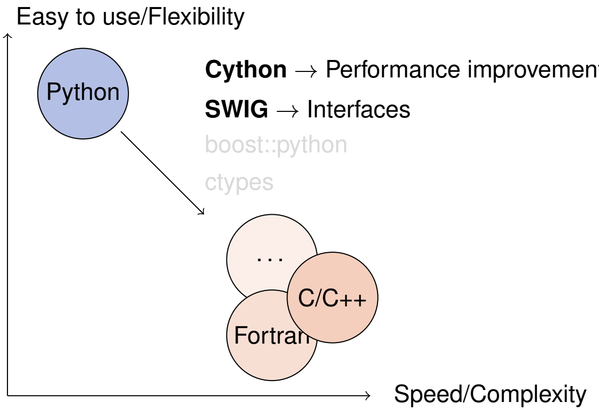

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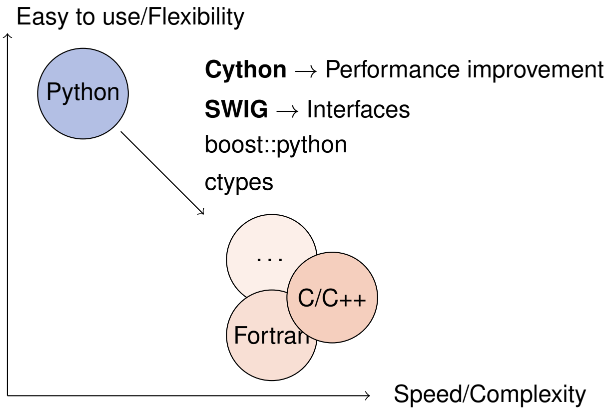

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  - Exceptions
  - Classes
- SWIG (and other wrappers)

C++ on one Slide

www.cplusplus.com and www.learncpp.com

- C++ is an (if not the) object-oriented programming language (like Python)
- including inheritance (like Python does in a slightly different way)
- . . . operator overloading (like Python)
- It has a rich variety of libraries (like Python)
- It can raise exceptions (like Python)
- It requires declaration of variables (not like Python)
- **It is (usually) a compiled language! (not like Python)**

⇒ C++ and Python share a lot of similarities!

C is just the non-object-oriented version of C++ (minus some other missing features, *e.g.* exceptions)

A Few Words of Warning

Bad code stays bad code! – Better clean it up than trying to overpaint it!

Do not expect miracles! – You have to master two languages!

C keeps Python running . . .

- CPython is the standard implementation of the Python interpreter written in C.
- The Python C API (application programming interface) allows to build C libraries that can be imported into Python (`https://docs.python.org/3/c-api/`) . . .
- . . . and looks like this:

Pure Python

```
>>> a = [1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8]
>>> sum(a)
36
```

. . . but takes a lot of the fun out of Python

Python C can understand

```
sum_list(PyObject *list) {
   int i, n;
   long total = 0;
   PyObject *item;
   n = PyList_Size(list);
   if (n < 0)
     return -1; /* Not a list */
   for (i = 0; i < n; i++) {
     item = PyList_GetItem(list, i); /* Can't fail */
     if (!PyInt_Check(item)) continue; /* Skip non-integers */
     total += PyInt_AsLong(item);
   }
   return total;
}
```

C/C++ in Python: Not a New Thing

NumPy's C API

```
ndarray typedef struct PyArrayObject {
    PyObject_HEAD
    char *data;
    int nd;
    npy_intp *dimensions;
    npy_intp *strides;
    PyObject *base;
    PyArray_Descr *descr;
    int flags;
    PyObject *weakreflist;
} PyArrayObject ;
```

⇒ Several Python "standard" libraries are using C/C++ to speed things up

Cython – An easy way to get C-enhanced compiled Python code

(`http://cython.org`)

- Hybrid programming language combining Python and an interface for using C/C++ routines.
- ... or a static compiler for Python allowing to write C/C++ extensions for Python and heavily optimising this code.
- It is a successor of the Pyrex language.

$\Rightarrow$ Every valid Python statement is also valid when using cython.

$\Rightarrow$ Code needs to be compiled $\rightarrow$ Time!

- Translates you “C-enhanced” Python code into C/C++ code using the C API

Cython (v0.29.1) understands Python 3, and also most of the features of C++11

Requirements: Cython package and a C compiler

- `cython`
  The latest version can be downloaded from http://cython.org.
- C/C++ compiler, *e.g.* `gcc/g++/clang` (or for Windows: `mingw`)

  Mille viae ducunt hominem per saecula ad compilorem!

Linux:	usually already installed (Ubuntu/Debian: `sudo apt-get install build-essential`)
MacOS X:	XCode command line tools
Windows:	Download of MinGW from http:// mingw.org and install it

Benchmark One: Fibonacci series

Fibonacci (Pure Python)

```
def fib(n):
  a,b = 1,1
  for i in range(n):
    a,b = a+b,a
  return a
```

Benchmark One: Fibonacci series

Fibonacci (Cython)

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def fib(int n):
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- Type declaration (`cdef`) $\Rightarrow$ Python/Cython knows what to expect

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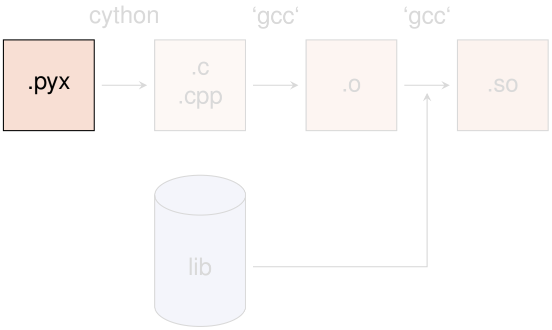
```

- Type declaration (`cdef`) $\Rightarrow$ Python/Cython knows what to expect
- A few (simple) modifications can easily change the CPU time by a factor of $\mathcal{O}(100)$

Compiling Cython Code (The hard way)



Shared object (`<name>.so`) can be imported into Python with `import name`

1. Compile Cython code to C/C++ code
   `cython/cython3 -3 <name>.pyx`
2. Create object files
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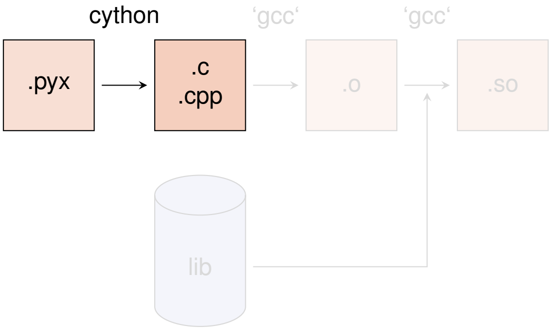

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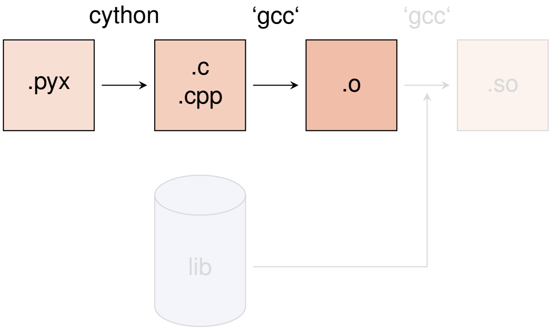

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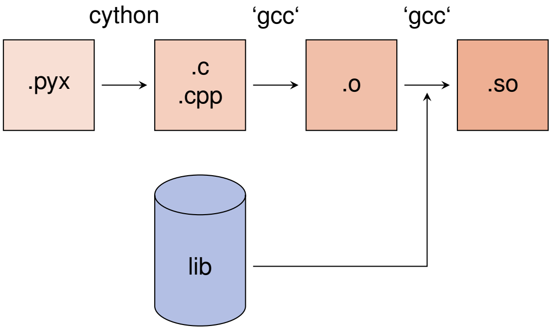

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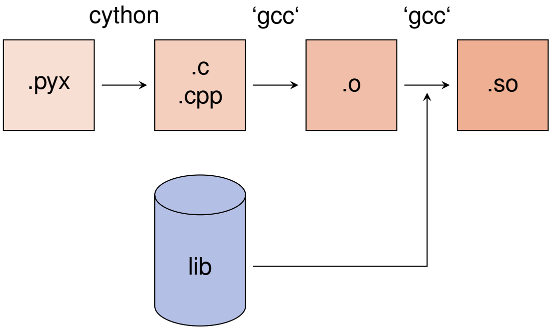

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Compiling Cython Code (The easy way)

Support via the distutils (distribution utilities) package in building and installing Python modules
⇒ applicable for cython

setup.py

```
from distutils.core import setup
from Cython.Build import cythonize

setup(ext_modules = cythonize([<list of .pyx files>],
                              language="c++" # optional
                              )
     )
```

Command `python setup.py build_ext --inplace` creates for each `.pyx` file a `.c/.cpp` file, compiles it to an executable (in the build directory of the corresponding OS/architecture/Python version) and compiles a `.so` file (or a `.pxd` if you are using Windows)

Further options for `cythonize` via help explorable

How Performant is My Code?

`cython -3 -a/--annotate <name>.pxy` → additional HTML file

- bad performance → yellow marking
- allows to investigate code and to learn about performance tuning

```
Generated by Cython 0.26

Yellow lines hint at Python interaction.
Click on a line that starts with a "+" to see the C code that Cython generated for it.

Raw output: fib_py.c

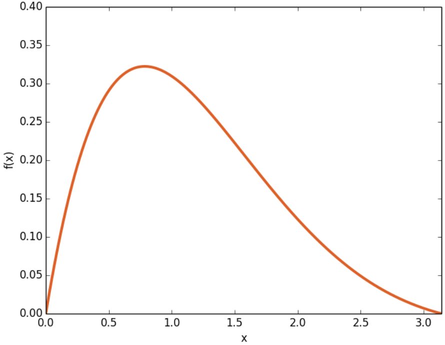
 1: # Calculation of n-th fibonacci number
+2: def fib(n):
+3:     a,b = 1,1
+4:     for i in range(n):
+5:         a,b = a+b,a
+6:     return a
    __Pyx_XDECREF(__pyx_r);
    __Pyx_INCREF(__pyx_v_a);
    __pyx_r = __pyx_v_a;
    goto __pyx_L0;
```

- Not every yellow part can be improved!

Benchmark Two: Numerical Integration

Integral of $f(x) = \sin x \cdot e^{-x}$ between 0 and π

$\Rightarrow$ Exact result: $(e^{-\pi} + 1)/2 = 0.521607$



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Integrate

```
from math import sin,exp

def f(double x):
  return sin(x)*exp(-x)

def integrate(double a,double b,int N):
  cdef double dx,s
  cdef int i
  dx = (b-a)/N
  s = 0.0
  for i in range(N):
    s += f(a+(i+0.5)*dx)
  return s*dx
```

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Python layer (expensive)	C layer (cheap)
`integrate(a,b,N)`	
	`'_pyx_integrate'(a,b,N)`
	`for (i=0; i<N; i++)`
`f(x)`	
	`'_pyx_f'(x)`
	`sum updated`

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from libc.math cimport sin,exp

cpdef double f(double x):
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def integrate(double a,double b,int N):
  cdef double dx,s
  cdef Py_ssize_t i
  dx = (b-a)/N
  s = 0.0
  for i in range(N):
    s += f(a+(i+0.5)*dx)
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```

Benchmark Two: Numerical Integration

Integral of $f(x) = \sin x \cdot e^{-x}$ between 0 and π
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- Return values of function can be specified via the key word `cdef`
- `cpdef` $\Rightarrow$ function also transparent to Python itself (no performance penalty)

- C/C++ library can be imported via `from libc/libcpp.<module> cimport <name>` (see later)
- Using C++ functions can lead to a huge speed-up
- Try to do as much as you can in the C-layer

- Already huge speed-up when levaraging numpy and its vectorisation

You are here!

STL Containers

An often used feature of C++ are the Standard Template Library containters (*e.g.* std::vector, std::map, etc.)

Object holders with specific memory access structure, *e.g.*

- `std::vector` allows to access any element
- `std::list` only allows to access elements via iteration
- `std::map` represents an associative container with a key and a mapped values

STL Containers

An often used feature of C++ are the Standard Template Library containters (*e.g.* std::vector, std::map, etc.)

. . . and Cython knows how to treat them!

Python ⟶ C++ ⟶ Python

iterable	→	std::vector	→	list
iterable	→	std::list	→	list
iterable	→	std::set	→	set
iterable (len 2)	→	std::pair	→	tuple (len 2)
dict	→	std::map	→	dict
bytes	→	std::string	→	bytes

STL Containers

An often used feature of C++ are the Standard Template Library containters (*e.g.* std::vector, std::map, etc.)

A few remarks!

- iterators (*e.g.* `it`) can be used ⇒ dereferencing with `dereference(it)` and incrementing/decrementing with `preincrement` (*i.e.* `++it`), `postincrement` (*i.e.* `it++`), `predecrement` (*i.e.* `--it`) and `postdecrement` (*i.e.* `it--`) from `cython.operator`
- Be careful with performance! ⇒ performance lost due to shuffling of data
- More indepth information can be found directly in the corresponding sections of the cython code https://github.com/cython/cython/tree/master/Cython/Includes/libcpp
- C++11 containters (like `std::unordered_map`) are partially implemented

Exceptions/Errors

In terms of exception and error handling three different cases need to be considered:

- Raising of a **Python error** in cython code $\Rightarrow$ return values make it impossible to raise properly Python errors (Warning message, but continuing)
- Handling of **error codes from pure C functions**
- Raising of a **C++ exception** in C++ code used in cython $\Rightarrow$ C++ exception terminates – if not caught – program

Errors in Python

Python Error

```
cpdef int raiseError():
    raise RuntimeError("A problem")
    return 1
```

⇒ Just prints a warning (and worse gives an ambigious return value)

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```

⇒ Just prints a warning (and worse gives an ambigious return value)

Python Error

```
cpdef int raiseError() except *:
    raise RuntimeError("A problem")
    return 1
```

⇒ Propagates the `RuntimeError`

Errors in C

C does not know exceptions like Python or C++. If errors should be caught, it is usually done via dedicated return values of functions which cannot appear in a regular function call.

Use the `except` statement to tell cython about this value

C Error

```
cpdef int raiseException() except -1:
    return -1
```

⇒ allows to indicate error codes from C ⇒ raises `SystemError`

Exceptions in C++

[xkcd]

In cython this is also true for C++ exceptions!

Cython is not able to deal with C++ exceptions in a `try`'n'`except` clause!

⇒ But caption in cython and translation to Python exceptions/errors is possible!

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Exceptions in C++

…and how to tackle them!

- cdef <C++ function>() except +
  ⇒ translates a C++ exception into a Python error according to the right-hand scheme
- cdef <C++ function>() except +<Python Error> *e.g.* MemoryError ⇒ translates every thrown C++ exception into a MemoryError
- cdef <C++ function>() except +<function raising Python error> ⇒ runs the indicated function if the C++ function throws any exception. If <function raising Python error> does not raise an error, a RuntimeError will be raised.

C++	⟶	Python
bad_alloc	→	MemoryError
bad_cast	→	TypeError
domain_error	→	ValueError
invalid_argument	→	ValueError
ios_base::failure	→	IOError
out_of_range	→	IndexError
overflow_error	→	OverflowError
range_error	→	ArithmeticError
underflow_error	→	ArithmeticError
(all others)	→	RuntimeError

Classes

Classes are a common feature of Python and C++

There are two aspects when dealing with cython:

- **Defining classes containing C++ code in cython**
- C++ classes integrated into Python

Defining Classes in Cython

Let's go back to the integration examples

Integrate with classes

```
cdef class Integrand:
    cpdef double evaluate(self,double x) except *:
        raise NotImplementedError()

cdef class SinExpFunction(Integrand):
    cpdef double evaluate(self,double x):
        return sin(x)*exp(-x)

def integrate(Integrand f,double a,double b,int N):
    ...
    s += f.evaluate(a+(i+0.5)*dx)
    ...
```

Cython does not know `@abstractmethod` from the module `abc`!

Defining Classes in Cython

Let's go back to the integration examples

Integrate with classes

```
class Poly(Integrand):
    def evaluate(self,double x):
        return x*x-3*x


integrate(Poly(),0.0,2.0,1000)
```

⇒ Speed lost with respect to definition in cython, but still faster than a pure Python implementation

Integration of C++ Classes in Cython – Possible but cumbersome

Starting point: `.cpp/.h` file for class `Rectangle` defined in a namespace `shapes`

1. Expose it to Cython by delaring the class structure and method signatures
2. Integrating it into Cython either via direct usage or by defining a wrapper class

`rect.pyx` (File to expose C++ class to cython)

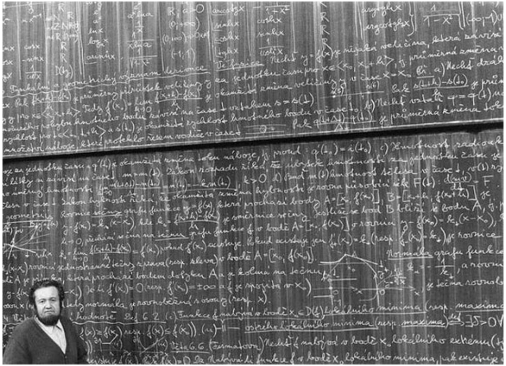
```
# distutils:  language = c++
# distutils:  sources = Rectangle.cpp

cdef extern from "Rectangle.h" namespace "shapes":
    cdef cppclass Rectangle:
        Rectangle(int, int, int, int) except +
        int x0, y0, x1, y1
        int getLength()
        int getHeight()
        int getArea()
        void move(int, int)
```

Automatic Wrappers

…since not everybody likes to write lines of error-prone code

- SWIG
- boost::python
- ctypes
- …



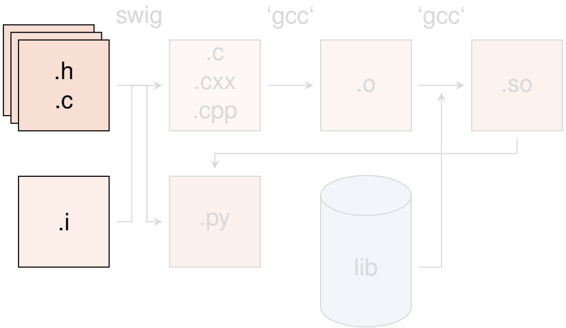
Goal: creating compilable C/C++ code based on the Python C API

SWIG

SWIG: Simplified Wrapper and Interface Generator

- Generic Wrapper for C/C++ to script-like languages
  - R
  - Perl
  - Ruby
  - Tcl
  - PHP5
  - Java
  - . . . and **Python**
- Pretty old – created in 1995 by Dave Beazley
- Current version is 3.0.12

SWIG – in a Nutshell



1. Create python wrapper and necessary C files
   `swig -c++ -python <name>.i`
2. Create object files based on output from the wrapper plus native C/C++ code
3. Compile shared object (*i.e.* library)

   Normally step 2 and 3 can be combined with via Distutils `setup.py`
   `python setup.py build_ext --inplace`

Moduel (`<name>.py`) can be imported into Python with `import name` ⇒ Shared object needs different name

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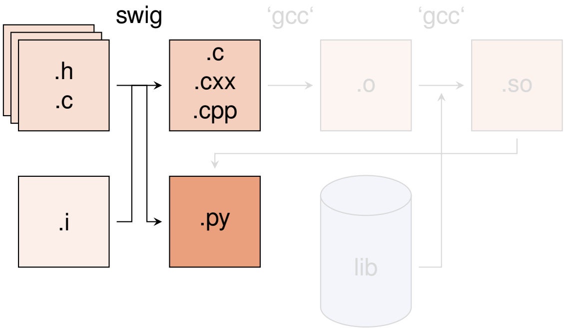

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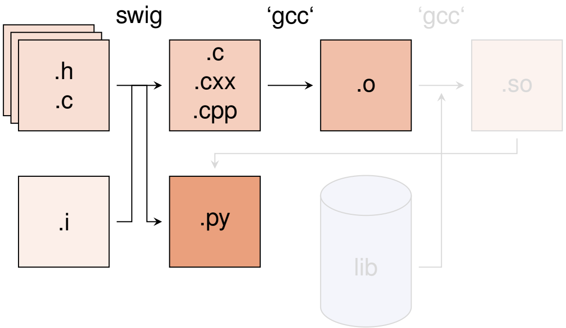

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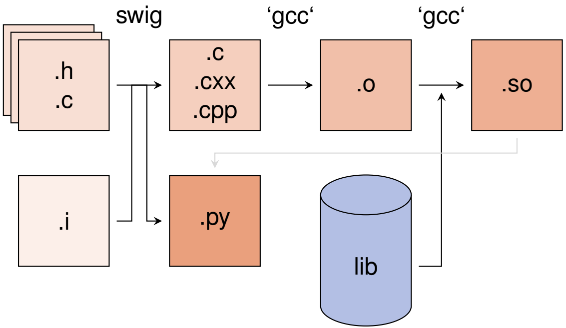
SWIG – in a Nutshell



1. Create python wrapper and necessary C files
   `swig -c++ -python <name>.i`
2. Create object files based on output from the wrapper plus native C/C++ code
3. Compile shared object (*i.e.* library)

   Normally step 2 and 3 can be combined with via Distutils `setup.py`
   `python setup.py build_ext --inplace`

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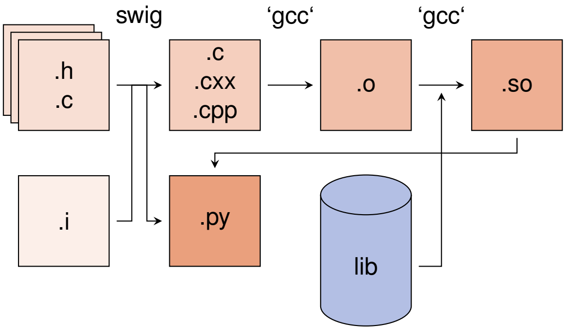
SWIG – in a Nutshell



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SWIG – The interface file

Main configuration with interface (`.i`) files

- tells which (header) file(s) contains the C/C++ code to wrap
- defines some special data types (*e.g.* `std::vector<...>`)
- handles some additional configuration (*e.g.* exception/error translation)

Interface file

```
%module geom // name of the module
...
// things swig should know about
%include "Shape.h"
%include "Rectangle.h"
...
// things that should be put into the
header of the wrapper file (.c/.cxx)
%{
#include "Shape.h"
#include "Rectangle.h"
%}
```

SWIG – The Distutils file

Distutils (`setup.py`)

```
from distutils.core import setup, Extension

extension_mod = Extension("_<name>",
                          ["<name_wrap>.cxx",
                           "<source1>.cpp",
                           "<source2>.cpp","..."],
                          language="c++")

setup(name = "_<name>", ext_modules=[extension_mod])
```

- To be build extension needs a different name than the module set up by switch ⇒ Avoid name conflicts
- Language option only for C++
- `python setup.py build_ext --inplace`

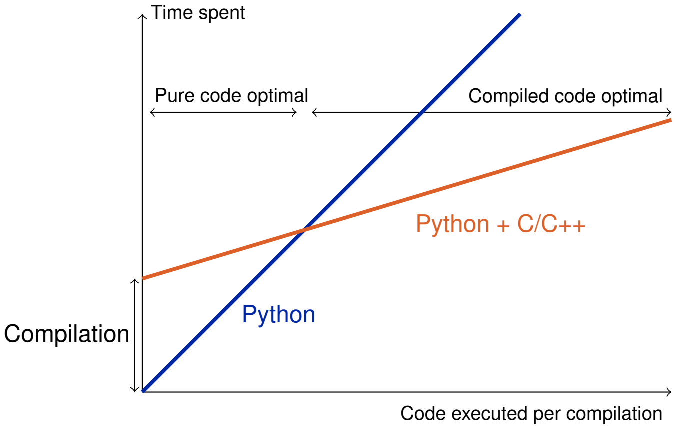
A Few Remarks about SWIG

- SWIG ≈ performance loss with respect to cython
- If SWIG works: ☺
- If it does not: ☹
- . . . and therefore you can lose a lot of time with special problems
- It is not always optimal to expose the whole class to Python

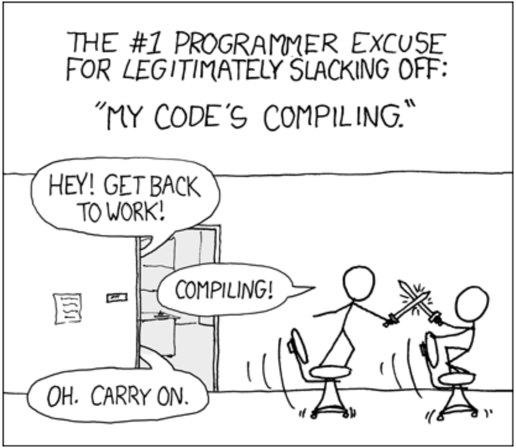
Conclusion

- Interfacing Python with C/C++ is – or better – can be a way to create powerful code
- cython and SWIG are two nice tools to do so
- . . . but always make the interfacing maintainable/useful/etc. *i.e.* not a British train door
- And it's all about finding the sweet spot!

The Sweet Spot!



The End!


THE #1 PROGRAMMER EXCUSE FOR LEGITIMATELY SLACKING OFF:
"MY CODE'S COMPILING."
HEY! GET BACK TO WORK!
COMPILING!
OH. CARRY ON.

[xkcd]

References

1. Stéfan van der Walt, *Speeding up scientific Python code using Cython*, Advanced Scientific Programming in Python, 2013 (Zurich) & 2014 (Split)
2. Stefan Behnel et al., *Cython tutorial*, Proceedings of the 8th Python in Science Conference (SciPy 2009) ⇒ based on older cython version, but the main reference of cython
3. Dave Beazley, *Swig Master Class*, PyCon'2008
4. http://docs.cython.org/src/tutorial/
5. http://www.swig.org

Backup

Fortran meets Python

The `f2py` compiler (`http://docs.scipy.org/doc/numpy-dev/f2py/`) offers – in a similar way as cython – the possibility to generate extension modules for Python from Fortran code.

`f2py -c -m <module name> <fortran file>.f/.f90 -I<path to python header file>`
builds from the code in `<fortran file>.f/.f90` a importable module (*i.e.* shared object) `<module name>.so`

Fortran modules and subroutines are exposed to Python on time of the import of the built module.

The compilation can also be split into a first step generating a signature file, which is in a second step compiled into the extension module

Exceptions in C++

Examples
Two C++ functions `void raiseException()` and `void raiseBadAlloc()` defined in `except_cy.h`

Exception Example 1

```
cdef extern from 'except_cy.h'
    cdef void raiseException() except +
def tryIt():
    try:
        raiseException()
    except RuntimeError as e:
        print(e)
```

$\Rightarrow$ OK as `raiseException()` throws a `std::exception` $\rightarrow$ `RuntimeError`

Exceptions in C++

Examples

Two C++ functions `void raiseException()` and `void raiseBadAlloc()` defined in `except_cy.h`

Exception Example 2

```
cdef extern from 'except_cy.h'
    cdef void raiseException() except +MemoryError
def tryIt():
    try:
        raiseException()
    except RuntimeError as e:
        print(e)
```

⇒ Not OK as `raiseException()` throws a `std::exception` which is explicitly transformed into a `MemoryError`

Exceptions in C++

Examples

Two C++ functions `void raiseException()` and `void raiseBadAlloc()` defined in `except_cy.h`

Exception Example 3

```
cdef extern from 'except_cy.h'
    cdef void raiseBadAlloc() except +
def tryIt():
    try:
        raiseBadAlloc()
    except RuntimeError as e:
        print(e)
```

⇒ Not OK as `raiseBadAlloc()` throws a `std::bad_alloc` which is transformed into a `MemoryError`

Exceptions in C++

Examples

Two C++ functions `void raiseException()` and `void raiseBadAlloc()` defined in `except_cy.h`

Exception Example 4

```
cdef extern from 'except_cy.h'
    cdef void raiseBadAlloc() except +
def tryIt():
    try:
        raiseBadAlloc()
    except MemoryError as e:
        print(e)
```

⇒ OK as `raiseBadAlloc()` throws a `std::bad_alloc` which is transformed into a `MemoryError`

Exceptions in C++

Examples

Two C++ functions `void raiseException()` and `void raiseBadAlloc()` defined in `except_cy.h`

Exception Example 5

```
cdef void raise_py_error() except *:
    raise MemoryError("Problem")

cdef extern from 'except_cy.h':
    cdef void raiseBadAlloc() except +raise_py_error

def tryIt():
    try:
        raiseBadAlloc()
    except MemoryError as e:
        print(e)
```

⇒ OK as `raise_py_error()` throws an error

Exceptions in C++

Examples

Two C++ functions `void raiseException()` and `void raiseBadAlloc()` defined in `except_cy.h`

Exception Example 6

```
cdef void raise_py_error() except *:
    pass

cdef extern from 'except_cy.h':
    cdef void raiseBadAlloc() except +raise_py_error

def tryIt():
    try:
        raiseBadAlloc()
    except MemoryError as e:
        print(e)
```

⇒ Not OK as no error is thrown by `raise_py_error()`

Integration of C++ Classes

Assuming a C++ class `Rectangle`

Rectangle.h

```
namespace shapes {
    class Rectangle {
    public:
        int x0, y0, x1, y1;
        Rectangle(int x0, int y0, int x1, int y1);
        ~Rectangle(); // destructor
        int getLength();
        int getHeight();
        int getArea();
        void move(int dx, int dy);
    };
}
```

Integration of C++ Classes

Assuming a C++ class `Rectangle`

Rectangle.cpp

```
#include "Rectangle.h"
#include <iostream>
using namespace shapes;
Rectangle::Rectangle(int X0, int Y0, int X1, int Y1) {
    x0 = X0;
    y0 = Y0;
    x1 = X1;
    y1 = Y1;
    std::cout << "Here I am" << std::endl;}
Rectangle::~Rectangle() {
    std::cout << "Byebye" << std::endl;}
...
```

Integration of C++ Classes

Now exposing it to cython

rect.pyx

```
# distutils:  language = c++
# distutils:  sources = Rectangle.cpp

cdef extern from "Rectangle.h" namespace "shapes":
    cdef cppclass Rectangle:
        Rectangle(int, int, int, int) except +
        int x0, y0, x1, y1
        int getLength()
        int getHeight()
        int getArea()
        void move(int, int)
```

Integration of C++ Classes

. . . and using it!

Either in further cython code!

rect.pyx

```
def tryIt():
    cdef Rectangle* r
    try:
        r = new Rectangle(1,2,3,4)
        print("My length is:  %f"%r.getLength())
        print("My first x-coordinate is:  %f"%r.x0)
    finally:
        del r
```

Integration of C++ Classes

. . . and using it!

Or for creating a Python (wrapper) class!

rect.pyx

```
cdef class PyRectangle:
    cdef Rectangle *thisptr
    def __cinit__(self, int x0, int y0, int x1, int y1):
        self.thisptr = new Rectangle(x0, y0, x1, y1)
    def __dealloc__(self):
        del self.thisptr
    def getLength(self):
        return self.thisptr.getLength()
    def getHeight(self):
        return self.thisptr.getHeight()
    ...
```

Special features: STL Stuff with SWIG

- Dedicated interface files need to be integrated when running SWIG
- . . . and templates for **each** containers + **each** content need to be defined

Interface file

```
...
%include "std_vector.i"
%include "std_string.i"
...
%template(dVector) std::vector<double>;
%template(rectVector) std::vector<Rectangle*>;
...
```

Special features: Exceptions with SWIG

Interface file

```
...
%include "exception.i"
...
%exceptionclass ShapeError;
%exception *::whine {

  try {

    $action

  } catch(ShapeError & e) {

    ShapeError *ecopy = new ShapeError(e);
    PyObject *err = SWIG_NewPointerObj(ecopy, SWIGTYPE_p_ShapeError, 1);
    PyErr_SetObject(SWIG_Python_ExceptionType(SWIGTYPE_p_ShapeError), err);
    SWIG_fail;

  }
}
```

Special features: Overloading

Cython deals the usual way with overloaded methods in C++:

`rect.pyx` works

```
cdef extern from "Rectangle.h" namespace "shapes":
        ...
        void move(int, int)
        void move(int)
```

but it cannot happen in a Python wrapper class:

`rect.pyx` does not work

```
cdef class PyRectangle:
    ...
    def move(self,dx,dy):
        return self.thisptr.move(dx,dy)
    def move(self,d):
        return self.thisptr.move(d)
```

Special features: Inheritance

As in Python C++ classes can inherit from parent classes including overriding of methods

C++ classes

```
class Shape {
public:
    ...
    void virtual printInfo(); // Prints "Shape"
};

class Rectangle :  public Shape {
public:
    ...
    void printInfo(); // Prints "Rectangle"
};
```

Special features: Inheritance

Cython can also deal with this feature, but there are two points to keep in mind:
1. If parent class is also exposed to cython, no redefinition of overridden methods is required (and also allow → mis-interpreted as overloading)

C++ classes

```
cdef extern from "Rectangle.h" namespace "shapes":
    cdef cppclass Shape:
        Shape() except +
        void printInfo()

    cdef cppclass Rectangle(Shape):
        Rectangle(int, int, int, int) except +
        ...
        void printInfo() # causes problems
        ...
```

Special features: Inheritance

2. The inheritance can only be transported into wrapper classes if child classes have the same set of methods as the mother class

C++ classes

```
cdef class PyObject:
    cdef Object* thisptr
    def __cinit__(self):
        self.thisptr = new Object()
    def __dealloc__(self):
        del self.thisptr
    def printInfo(self):
        self.thisptr.printInfo()

cdef class PyRectangle(PyObject):
    def __cinit__(self,int x0,int y0,int x1,int y1):
        self.thisptr = new Rectangle(x0,y0,x1,y1)
```

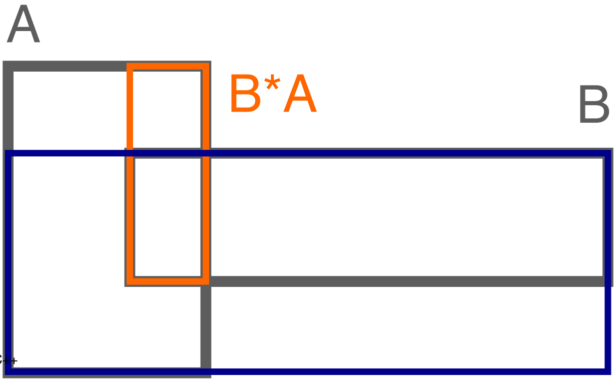
University of Zurich[UZH]

Department of Physics

Special features: Operator Overloading

C++ as well as Python offers the potential to define operators for objects.

Example with Rectangles:



Special features: Operator Overloading

C++ code

```
Rectangle operator*(Rectangle& rhs){
    return Rectangle(x0,y0,rhs.x1,rhs.y1);
};
```

rect.pyx

```
# to expose it to cython
Rectangle operator*(Rectangle)


# in the wrapper class
def __mul__(PyRectangle lhs,PyRectangle rhs):
    res = PyRectangle(0,0,0,0)
    res.thisptr[0] = lhs.thisptr[0]*rhs.thisptr[0] # ptr deref
    return res
```

Arrays

Arrays in cython are usually treated via typed memoryviews (*e.g.* `double[:,:]` means a two-dimensional array of doubles, *i.e.* compatible with *e.g.* `np.ones((3,4))`)

Further you can specify which is the fastest changing index by `:1`, *e.g.*

- `double[::1,:,:]` is a F-contiguous three-dimensional array
- `double[:,:,::1]` is a C-contiguous three-dimensional array
- `double[:,::1,:]` is neither F- nor C-contiguous

For example a variable `double[:,::1] a` has as NumPy arrays variables like `shape` and `size` and the elements can be accessed by `a[i,j]`

But be aware: NumPy is already heavily optimised, so do not to reinvent the wheel!