

Topic 9: Flask Applications

CITS3403 Agile Web Development

Adapted from the Flask Mega-Tutorial, by Miguel Grinberg: https://blog.miguelgrinberg.com/post/the-flask-mega-tutorial

Semester 1, 2023

Full Stack Development?



- Full stack development refers to developing all parts of a web application: database, web server, application logic and front end.
- There are various "Full stacks" people use to develop:
 - LAMP (Linux, Apache, MySQL and PHP)
 - Ruby on Rails
 - Django (Python)



- Flask: is a micro framework, that allows us to write our backend in Python. It contains its own lightweight webserver for development
- SQLite: is a lightweight database management system
- AJAX and JQuery: We have already seen these. We will use these for making responsive web pages.





- Fullstack development refers to developing every part of the web application.
- It involves knowing all the technologies used from mobile and front end, (HTML, CSS, javascript frameworks) though to the backend logic, security and database models used at the backend.
- Most developers are specialised in one part of the stack.



Development environment



- A lot of web development is done from the command line, since traditionally servers didn't need a graphical front end.
- We can use Git to develop on laptops and push code to the server, but we still rely heavily on command line tools.
- By now, every one should have a good text editor that does syntax highlighting etc, some tool to allow them to compile or run code with the command line, and a browser with developer tools to view source, and debug javascript.
- You should also have a Git client to regularly commit your code, and push to others.





Getting started with Flask

- Flask is a micro-framework to run on the server, but it will run on any machine, and has few dependencies.
- You will require python3 installed in your operating environment, with pip.
- Use pip to install venv (virtual environment) first and initialise the environment.
- Now install Flask. Any required modules will be preserved by the virtual-environment.
- You can now run flask by typing flask run, but the app doesn't know what to run.
- Write the following into app.py, run the program again.
- Use a browser to see your app in action! (http://localhost:5000)

drtnf@drtnf-ThinkPad:\$ python3 -m venv tmp-env
drtnf@drtnf-ThinkPad:\$ source tmp-env/bin/activate
(tmp-env) drtnf@drtnf-ThinkPad:\$ pip install flask
Collecting flask



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Hello world!



Application structure

- Our app.py file doesn't look like much. It has a method to return 'Hello world!' that is *decorated* with @app.route(`/').
- app is an instance of the class Flask. When it runs it listens for requests, and if the route matches a decorator, it executes the corresponding function. A request object is passed to the method.
- The return of the function becomes the response.
- But this structure doesn't scale well.



```
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```

from flask import request
<pre>@app.route() def login():</pre>
<pre>username = request.args.get('username') password = request.args.get('password')</pre>



A better application structure

- A better structure is to create a package app that will contain all the code we need for the web app.
- It has an __init__.py file to create an instance of the Flask class.
- We can create a file routes.py, to contain the request handlers.
- Finally, we need a file at the top level to import the app. We set the system variable FLASK_APP to the name of this file, so flask knows what to run.
- Now the app package can contain files for handling routes, modules, templates, tests and anything else our application requires.

app/initpy: Flask application instance
from flask import Flask
app = Flask(name)
from app import routes
app/routes.py: Home page route
from app import app
<pre>@app.route('/')</pre>
<pre>@app.route('/index')</pre>
<pre>def index():</pre>
return "Hello, World!"
microblog.py: Main application module

from app import app

- Server-side vs Client Side Rendering
- There are two approaches to serving dynamic HTML:
 - The server can build the HTML when it receives the request and send to client.
 - The server can send JS and an HTML skeleton to the client, and the client can then request JSON and build the HTML using AJAX and JQuery.
- Server Side Rendering is the traditional approach.
- *Client Side Rendering* is more flexible and allows greater support for non-browser devices.
- Flask supports both forms very well.





Client Side Rendering

- For client side rendering, the client first needs to access a HTML template and some JS.
- Flask projects have a static directory to serve non-dynamic files, including HTML, CSS, JS and images.
- We can then have flask redirect all requests for a file to the static html we want to serve.
- We now need HTML and JS for the client





〜 PAIR-UP [+ 日 ひ é	5
>pycache	
> .vscode	
\sim app	
>pycache	
> api	
\checkmark static	
> js	
# bootstrap-theme.min.css	
# bootstrap.min.css	
Js bootstrap.min.js	
demo.html	
🛧 favicon.ico	
index.html	
Js jquery-3.4.1.min.js	
# main.css	
Js pairup.js	
spa.html	
# wordle.css	
vordle.html	
Js wordle.js	
> templates	
wordle	

HTML and JS for the Client



	HTML
	<head></head>
	<meta charset="utf-8"/>
	<pre><meta content="width=device-width, initial-scale=1" name="viewport"/></pre>
	rel="stylesheet" href="https://maxcdn.bootstrapcdn.com/bootstrap/3.4.1/css/bootstrap.min.cs
	<pre><script src="https://ajax.googleapis.com/ajax/libs/jquery/3.6.0/jquery.min.js"></script></pre>
	<pre><script src="https://maxcdn.bootstrapcdn.com/bootstrap/3.4.1/js/bootstrap.min.js"></script></pre>
	<pre><script src="./wordle.is"></script></pre>
10	<link href="./wordle.css" rel="stylesheet"/>
11	
12	
13	<body></body>
14	<pre><diy class="container"></diy></pre>
15	<pre><div class="jumbotron"></div></pre>
	<h1>Wordle Clone</h1>
17	
	<n>This is a simple wordle clone demonstrating DOM manipulations and AlAX calls.$$</n>
19	<pre> // // // // // // // // // // // // //</pre>
21	<pre><div class="container col-sm-4"></div></pre>
22	<pre><div class="container col-sm-4"></div></pre>
23	43> Enter your quess here. The word changes every 2 minutes so hurry up:
24	span id="time left" (
25	
	<pre>ctable class='wordle' id="nuesses"></pre>
27	
	div class="container col=sm=4">
29	
	<pre></pre>
33	<pre>cdiv class="modal" id="end game" style="display: none:"></pre>
34	<pre> <du class="modal-dialog"></du></pre>
35	<pre></pre>
36	
	<pre>cl Modal Header></pre>
	<pre> div class="modal-header"></pre>
	cha class="model=title">Game_Over
40	And the "model of the second of the second sec
41	Advector cype outcom for close close out of outcome score subscriptions
42	
43	
11	div class="model-body" id="congrats">
	div crass model boy in complete 2
47	
48	
40	
50	
	div class="container">&nhen
52	
55	

Wordle Clone

This is a simple wordle clone demonstrating DOM manipulations and AJAX calls.

Enter your guess here. The word changes every 2 minutes so hurry up: 50 seconds to go!



HTML and JS for the Client



```
let table_data = [];
let current_guess = 0;
let current_cell = 0;
function init(){
 let table = document.getElementById("guesses");
 table.innerHTML="";
 let tbody = document.createElement("tbody");
 for(let i = 0; i<6; i++){</pre>
   let row_data = [];
   let row = document.createElement("TR");
   for(let j = 0; j<5; j++){</pre>
     let cell = document.createElement("TD");
     cell.innerHTML="&nbsp&nbsp&nbsp";
     row.appendChild(cell);
     row_data[j] = cell;
   table_data[i] = row_data;
   tbody.appendChild(row);
 tbody.children[0].classList.add("active");
 table.appendChild(tbody);
 current_guess = 0;
 current_cell = 0;
 getTimeLeft();
 document.getElementById("close").addEventListener("click", function(){
   document.getElementById("end_game").style.display = 'none';
function getTimeLeft(){
   const xhttp = new XMLHttpRequest();
   xhttp.open("GET", "https://drtnf.net/wordle_time_left", true);
   xhttp.onload = function(e) {
     time_left = JSON.parse(xhttp.responseText).time_left;
      let x = setInterval(function() {
       document.getElementById("time_left").innerHTML = time_left--;
       if(time_left<0){
         clearInterval(x);
         init();
     }, 1000);
   xhttp.send();
```

60	function isAlpha(c){
51	return /^[A-Z]\$/i.test(c);
52	}
53	
54	<pre>document.addEventListener("keydown", evt =>{</pre>
	<pre>let key = evt.key;</pre>
56	if(key.length==1 && isAlpha(key) && current_cell<5 && current_guess<6){
57	<pre>table_data[current_guess][current_cell].innerHTML=key.toUpperCase();</pre>
58	current_cell++;
59	}
50	<pre>else if((key=="Delete" key == "Backspace") && current_cell>0 && current_guess<6){</pre>
51	current_cell;
52	table_data[current_guess][current_cell].innerHTML=" ";
53	}
54	else if(key == "Enter" && current_cell == 5 && current_guess<6){
55	let guess="";
56	for(let i = 0; i<5; i++){
57	<pre>guess = guess + table_data[current_guess][i].innerHTML;</pre>
8	
59	<pre>const xnttp = new XMLHttpRequest();</pre>
/ L	<pre>xnttp.open("GEI", "nttps://drtnf.net/wordle_guess/guess="+guess, true);</pre>
7 Z	<pre>xnttp.ontoad = function(e) { lot result = JCON parse(whttp responseText) sutcere:</pre>
	let cum = A
75	for(lot i = 0; i < 5; i + 1)
	if(recult[i]-2)
70	
78	table data[current quess][i].class[ist.add('correct'):
79	}
30	if(result[i]==1){
31	table data[current guess][i].classList.add('misplaced'):
32	
33	
34	<pre>let tbody = document.getElementById("guesses").firstChild;</pre>
	tbody.children[current_guess++].classList.remove('active');
36	if(sum==10){
37	<pre>document.getElementById('end_game').style.display="block";</pre>
38	<pre>document.getElementById('congrats').innerHTML="Congratulations!";</pre>
39	
90	else{
91	current_cell = 0;
92	if(current_guess>5){
93	<pre>document.getElementById('end_game').style.display="block";</pre>
94	<pre>document.getElementById('congrats').innerHTML="Out of guesses!";</pre>
95	
96	<pre>else tbody.children[current_guess].classList.add('active');</pre>
97	
98	
19	xhttp.send();
10	
91 	<i>)</i>);

And routes to service the AJAX request WESTER



app > wordle > 🍦 wordle.py > ... from app import app from app.api.errors import bad_request, error_response from flask import jsonify, url_for, request, g, abort import time, random update_delta = 120words = []with open('./app/wordle/fives.txt','r') as word_file: for word in word file: words.append(word[:-1]) Renews the selected word every update delta seconds def check_time(): f = open('./app/wordle/last_update.txt','r') last_update = int(f.read()) f.close() now = int(time.time()) if (now-last_update) > update_delta: last update = now secret = words[random.randrange(len(words))] f = open('./app/wordle/answer.txt','w') f.write(secret) f.close f = open('./app/wordle/last_update.txt', 'w') f.write(str(last_update)); f.close return update_delta-(now-last_update) Gives time remaining for the current puzzle @app.route('/wordle_time_left', methods=['GET']) def wordle_time_left(): response = jsonify({'time_left':check_time()}) response.status_code = 201 return response

42	
43	route for handling wordle guesses
44	
	<pre>@app.route('/wordle_guess',methods=['POST','GET'])</pre>
46	<pre>def wordle_guess():</pre>
47	check_time()
48	data = request.args or {}
	if 'guess' not in data or not data['guess'].isalpha() or len(data['guess']) != 5:
50	return bad_request('Guess must be a five letter word')
51	<pre>f = open('./app/wordle/answer.txt','r')</pre>
52	<pre>secret = f.read()</pre>
53	f.close()
54	<pre>response = jsonify({'outcome':wordle(data['quess'].upper(), secret.upper())})</pre>
55	response.status code = 201
56	return response
57	
58	
	Wordle guess array
60	
61	<pre>def wordle(guess, target):</pre>
62	answer = [0]*5 #to return to user
63	<pre>target_free = [True]*5 #for handling multiple letters</pre>
64	for i in range(5):
	<pre>if guess[i]==target[i]:</pre>
66	answer[i] = 2
67	<pre>target_free[i] = False</pre>
68	<pre>for i, c in enumerate(guess):</pre>
	for j, d in enumerate(target):
70	<pre>if c==d and target_free[j] and answer[i]==0:</pre>
71	answer[i] = 1
72	target_free[j] = False
73	return answer
75	
76	

https://drtnf.net/static/wordle.html

Server-side Rendering



- Server-side rendering listen for requests, and uses python functions to build html pages to return as a response.
- However, this mixes the logic and the presentation.
- A typical pattern to use is to have a template or views directory to have some html that references objects and code, and a rendering function that will take a template and some data and builds the html dynamically.
- Flask uses jinja for this task, but there are many alternatives (pug, handlebars, typescript)

app/routes.py: Return complete HTML page from view function

from app import app

@app.route('/')
@app.route('/index')
def index():
 user = {'username': 'Miguel'}
 return '''
<html>
 <head>
 <title>Home Page - Microblog</title>
 <head>
 <body>
 <hl>Hello, ''' + user['username'] + '''!</hl>
 </body>
<//html>'''

22	<h3>Registered project list</h3>
23	
24	
25	Project Team
26	Project Description
27	Demo location
28	Demo time
29	<pre>{% if not current_user.is_anonymous %}</pre>
30	Action
31	{% endif %}
32	
33	{% for p in projects%}
34	
35	{{p['team']}}
36	{{p['description']}}
37	{{p['lab']}}
38	{{p['time']}}
39	<pre>{% if not current_user.is_anonymous %}</pre>
40	
41	<pre>{% if p['project_id']== current_user.project_id %}</pre>
42	<pre>delete</pre>
43	<pre>edit</pre>
44	{% endif %}
45	
46	{% endif %}
47	
48	{% endfor %}
49	

Using Jinja



- We separate presentation and logic by having a template directory to contain annotated html, and specify a rending function in the routes.py file
- When a request is received flask will look for the matching template (in the directory templates) and convert the template to pure html using named variables in the function.
- Two {{curly braces}} are used to distinguish html from python variables, and jinja does the substitution

app/templates/index.html: Main page template
< HUILI >
<head></head>
<title>{{ title }} - Microblog</title>
<body></body>
<hl>Hello, {{ user.username }}!</hl>

app/routes.py: Use render_template() function
from flask import render_template
from app import app
<pre>@app.route('/')</pre>
<pre>@app.route('/index')</pre>
<pre>def index():</pre>
<pre>user = {'username': 'Miguel'}</pre>
<pre>return render_template('index.html', title='Home', user=user)</pre>



Jinja Loops and Conditionals

- Depending on the parameters passed, we may want to display the data differently.
- Jinja provides loops and conditionals to allow the display to adapt to data.
- For example, it is common to pass in an array of objects, and then present them in a table.
- Or we may want the display to vary depending on who is logged in.

```
22
    <h3>Registered project list</h3>
    23
24
     >
25
       Project Team
26
       Project Description
27
       Demo location
28
       >Demo time
29
       {% if not current user.is anonymous %}
30
         Action
31
       {% endif %}
32
     33
     {% for p in projects%}
34
       35
         {{p['team']}}
36
         {{p['description']}}
37
         {{p['lab']}}
38
         {{p['time']}}
39
         {% if not current user.is anonymous %}
40
          >
41
          {% if p['project_id']== current_user.project_id %}
42
          <a href='{{url_for("delete_project") }}'>delete</a>
43
            <a href='{{ url for("edit project") }}'>edit</a>
44
          {% endif %}
45
          46
         {% endif %}
47
     48
     {% endfor %}
```

9	<pre>@app.route('/')</pre>
10	<pre>@app.route('/index')</pre>
11	<pre>def index():</pre>
12	<pre>print('index')</pre>
13	<pre>if current_user.is_authenticated:</pre>
14	projects = get_all_projects()
15	else:
16	projects = []
17	<pre>return render_template('index.html', projects=projects)</pre>

Jinja Control Statements



- The syntax for control statements is to use {% braces %}.
- Conditionals use if, else, elif, as well as endif, since whitespace scoping doesn't work for html.
- We can also use for and while loops for iterating through collections.

app/templates/index.html: Conditional statement in template

```
<html>
<head>
<head>
<fi if title %}
<title>{{ title }} - Microblog</title>
<fi else %}
<title>Welcome to Microblog!</title>
<fi endif %}
</head>
<body>
<hl>Hello, {{ user.username }}!</hl>
</body>
</html>
```

```
app/templates/index.html: for-loop in template
```

```
<html>
<html>
<html>
<html>
<br/>
{% if title %}
<br/>
```

Jinja Inheritance



- Since we often want the titles, menus, footers in an application to be the same, we can have the templates inherit from each other.
- The block xxxx is left unspecified for other templates to fill in, and they can extend the ase template by just specifying how they would fill in xxxx

<html>
<html>
<head>
<f% if title %}
<fwead>
<fwead>
<fwead>
<fwead>
<fwead>
<fwead>
<title>Welcome to Microblog</title>
<fwead>
<body>
</html>
</body>
</html>

app/templates/base.html: Base template with navigation bar

 This principle is refered to as DRY: *dont repeat yourself*

Forms



- To build PUT requests, we typically use forms.
 Flask uses the WTForms module to validate Post Requests
- Install flask-wtf with pip and create a new file in app, forms.py
- There are three parts to the form: the form class, the template containing the form, and the route for processing the form.

```
app = Flask(__name__)
app.config['SECRET_KEY'] = 'you-will-never-guess'
# ... add more variables here as needed
```

Flask apps should have a secret key to protect against cross site request forgery (CSRF). You can set in app.py, but there are better ways.

app/forms.py: Login form

```
from flask_wtf import FlaskForm
from wtforms import StringField, PasswordField, BooleanField, SubmitField
from wtforms.validators import DataRequired
class LoginForm(FlaskForm):
    username = StringField('Username', validators=[DataRequired()])
    password = PasswordField('Password', validators=[DataRequired()])
    remember_me = BooleanField('Remember Me')
    submit = SubmitField('Sign In')
```

Rendering Forms



- Jinja works with flask-wtf to put the appropriate input elements in the page.
- The form.hidden_tag() is used to protect against CSRF attacks
- The form elements are defined by the forms.py class
- Attributes can be appended to the elements in brackets.
- If a form doesn't validate, the errors are accessible in a list, but are rendered server side.
 Faster client side validation can be applied using javascript.
- The url_for()maps back from the function name to the route.

1	🖇 extends "base.html" 🖏
2	
3 {	<pre>[% block content %]</pre>
4 <	<h2>Login</h2>
5	
б	<form action="" method="post" name="login"></form>
7	<div class="form-group"></div>
8	{{form.hidden_tag()}}
9	
10	<pre>{{ form.student_number.label }} </pre>
11	<pre>{{ form.student_number(size=8) }}</pre>
12	<pre>{% for error in form.student_number.errors %}</pre>
13	[{{ error}}]
14	{% endfor %}
15	
16	
17	{{ form.pin.label }}
18	<pre>{{ form.pin(size=4) }}</pre>
19	{% for error in form.pin.errors %}
20	[{{ error}}]
21	{% endfor %}
22	
23	{{form.remember_me() }} {{form.remember_me.label }}
24	{{ form.submit() }}
25	
26	
27	To register <u>click here</u>
28	{% endblock %}

<form action="" method="post" name="login"> <div class="form-group"> <input id="csrf_token" name="csrf_token" student_number"="" type="hidden" value="ImU2NzU5ODlhMDg2YWE3NzE4ZWM
<n></th></tr><tr><th><pre><label for="/>Student Number <pre>cinput id="student_number" name="student_number" required size="8" type="text" value=""></pre></div></form>
label for="pin">Pin Code <input id="pin" name="pin" size="4" type="password" value=""/>
<input id="remember_me" name="remember_me" type="checkbox" value="y"/> <label for="rem
<input id=" name="submit" submit"="" type="submit" value="Sign In"></label>
To register <a href="<u">/register>click here

Processing Forms



- To process a form, we configure a route for the POST method.
- We define an instance of the form class, for both rendering and wrapping posted data.
- A GET request won't validate, so it will jump to the last line, and render the page.
- If a POST request validates, a flash message is created, and the page is redirected to the index.
- The flash messages are just a list that can be accessed by other pages.
- To actually check a users passwords, we need a database (next lecture).

app/routes.py: Receiving login credentials
from flask import render_template, flash, redirect
<pre>@app.route('/login', methods=['GET', 'POST'])</pre>
def login():
<pre>form = LoginForm()</pre>
if form.validate_on_submit():
<pre>flash('Login requested for user (), remember_me=()'.format(</pre>
form.username.data, form.remember_me.data))
return redirect('/index')
<pre>return render_template('login.html', title='Sign In', form=form)</pre>

<box< th=""><th>ody></th></box<>	ody>
	<div></div>
	Microblog:
	Home
	Login
	chr>
	<pre>(% with messages = get_flashed_messages() %)</pre>
	<pre>{% if messages %}</pre>
	
	<pre>{% for message in messages %}</pre>
	((message))
	(% endfor %)
	(% endif %)
	{% endwith %}

App Configuration

- Storing the secret key in a source file isn't a good idea. Secret keys and user credentials should always be manually configured, and never part of the repository. Setting them as system variables is a good approach.
- Create a configuration file to store all configuration variables. This can then be loaded when the app runs.
- The environment variables can also store database locations and credentials, and keys for third party services





app/	initpy: Flask configuration
from	flask import Flask
from	config import Config
app =	Flask(name)
app.c	onrig.rion_objecc(conrig)
from	app import routes





- The Flask shell is a useful way to test small functions and their integration with flask, without using a browser.
- It loads the flask app, and all the dependencies, but doesn't need the server running. You can set the shell context to have variables predefined when you start the shell.
- Debug mode is also very useful. Set the system variable FLASK_DEBUG=1 to get a trace of the errors when the server crashes.

from app import app, db

- 2 from app.models import Student, Project, Lab
- 4 @app.shell_context_processor
- 5 def make_shell_context():
- 6 return {'db':db, 'Student':Student, "Project":Project, 'Lab':Lab]

(virtual-environment) drtnf@drtnf-ThinkPad:\$ export SECRET_KEY='poor_secret' (virtual-environment) drtnf@drtnf-ThinkPad:\$ echo \$SECRET_KEY poor_secret (virtual-environment) drtnf@drtnf-ThinkPad:\$ flask shell Python 3.6.7 (default, Oct 22 2018, 11:32:17) [GCC 8.2.0] on linux App: app [production] Instance: /Dropbox/ArePricks/Dropbox/Tim/teaching/2019/CITS3403/pair-up/instance >>> print(app.config['SECRET_KEY']) poor secret >>>

builtins.NameError

NameError: name 'FlaskForm' is not defined

maceback (most recent can assy	
File "/Dropbox/ArePricks/Dropbox/Tim/teaching/2019/CITS3403/ raise value	/pair-up/virtual-environment/lib/python3.6/site-packages/flask/_compat.py*, line 35, in rerais
File "/Dropbox/ArePricks/Dropbox/Tim/teaching/2019/CIT53403/ from app import app, db	/pair-up/pair-up.py", line J, in <module></module>
File "/Dropbox/ArePricks/Dropbox/Tim/teaching/2019/CITS3403/ from app import routes,models	/pair-up/app/initpy*, line 14, in <module></module>
File "/Dropbox/ArePricks/Dropbox/Tim/teaching/2019/CITS3403/ from app.forms import LoginForm, RegistrationForm, P	/pair-up/app/routes.py", line 4, in <module></module>
File "/Dropbox/ArePricks/Dropbox/Tim/teaching/2019/CITS3403/ class LoginForm(FlaskForm):	/pair-up/app/forms.py*, line 7, in <module></module>
NameError: name 'FlaskForm' is not defined	
File "/Dropbox/ArePricks/Dropbox/Tim/teaching/2019/CITS3403/ from app import routes,models File "/Dropbox/ArePricks/Dropbox/Tim/teaching/2019/CITS3403/ from app.forms import LoginForm, RegistrationForm, P File "/Dropbox/ArePricks/Dropbox/Tim/teaching/2019/CITS3403/ class LoginForm(FlaskForm): NameError: name 'FlaskForm' is not defined	'pair-up/app/routes.py", line 24, in «module> 'pair-up/app/routes.py", line 4, in «module> 'rojectForm /pair-up/app/forms.py", line 7, in «module>

(venv) \$ export FLASK DEBUG=1

Suggested Reading



Read "What is Code" by Paul Ford:

http://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2015-paul-ford-what-is-code/



There are bugs in your code! Click the line of code that looks like it's bug-free. But be careful: Any time you don't fix a bug, a new one is born.





