

Foundations of Natural Language Processing

Introduction to Lab Sessions

School of Informatics, University of Edinburgh

Getting Started

This course has seven 1-hour lab sessions where you will work through a set of examples and exercises in the form of Jupyter notebooks, each linked from the appropriate week in the timetable. This document takes you through the necessary steps to prepare your work environment on a DICE machine. Please do the following **before** arriving at the first lab session.

1. Get a DICE (Distributed Informatics Computing Environment) account. All students on an Informatics degree should already have an account. If you are on a degree in another school, you will automatically get a DICE account once you have registered for this class, so please register as soon as possible.
2. Read the School's Computing Support information page for new taught students ¹ and, if you have not used Linux before, introduction to DICE ².

Preparing the workspace

To set up the workspace, log into your DICE account and open a *shell* (also called a *terminal*) following the instructions in the Introduction to DICE document. You should see a *command prompt* along the following lines:

```
[hostname] s1234567:
```

Now, create a directory (folder) called `fnlp` that you will use for all your FNLP work. You can do this by entering the following command at the prompt (`mkdir` stands for “make directory”).

```
[hostname] s1234567: mkdir fnlp
```

Create a subdirectory for the labs (*You cannot create a subdirectory before making the directory it belongs*).

```
[hostname] s1234567: mkdir fnlp/labs
```

Hello, Jupyter!

The necessary files for each lab will be linked from the timetable ³ as a zipped tar file. To run a lab the first time, use the link for that lab to download to your labs directory. Download the first lab `lab0.tar.gz` and unpack it using

```
[hostname] s1234567: cd ../fnlp/labs
[hostname] s1234567: tar -xzf lab0.tar.gz
```

Any time you need to start a lab over, you can just unpack the relevant file again. Now launch **Jupyter**:

```
[hostname] s1234567: jupyter notebook
```

This should open a window in your default web browser. Click on the `lab0.ipynb` notebook icon in that window for an introduction to Jupyter.

¹<http://computing.help.inf.ed.ac.uk/new-taught-students>

²<http://computing.help.inf.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/IntroLecture201718.pdf>

³<https://www.inf.ed.ac.uk/teaching/courses/fnlp/lectures>