
Python Software Foundation Docs Documentation

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These documents are notes and information collected by [Jesse Noller](#). These documents do not replace the existing [Python Software Foundation](#) documentation or notes. These are meant as a staging ground for notes, frequently (or infrequently) asked questions which can then be rolled into the main [Python Software Foundation](#) documentation. In no way are these documents comprehensive. Contact [Jesse Noller](#) ([via email](#)) if you have additions or modifications, or submit a pull request on the [github](#) repository!

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

This is a non-exhaustive list of frequently (or infrequently) asked questions about the [Python Software Foundation](#) that I have been asked.

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1.1 What is the Python Software Foundation ?

This one is easy, given it's answered on the home page:

The Python Software Foundation (PSF) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation that holds the intellectual property rights behind the Python programming language. We manage the open source licensing for Python version 2.1 and later and own and protect the trademarks associated with Python. We also run the North American PyCon conference annually, support other Python conferences around the world, and fund Python related development with our grants program and by funding special projects.

—See [Python Software Foundation](#)

Now, that's fine and all - but the [Mission Statement](#) is actually a lot more interesting. Yeah, it's fine that we're a non-profit, and we hold some IP, but what's the **mission** of the organization other than that?

Once again, quoting:

The mission of the Python Software Foundation is to promote, protect, and advance the Python programming language, and to support and facilitate the growth of a diverse and international community of Python programmers.

—See [Mission Statement](#)

1.2 That's all fine, but what do you do?

Day to day, the Foundation's activities are pretty "quiet" - the PSF membership is amazingly low traffic unless a vote, or hot issue comes up. On the board level, we are constantly discussing various initiatives such as marketing, grants, outreach, etc. Most of the heavy lifting is left to individual committees such as the infrastructure team, trademarks committee, or the PyCon team.

Primarily, our focus is to find things we can **help** with - such as funding individual conferences, outreach programs or development efforts. The board meets once a month to discuss and vote on given resolutions, a list of which can be found on the [resolutions](#) page.

Our job is to raise funds and distribute those funds in a way that best continues to serve the community and the [Mission Statement](#). We're the marketing and legal arm, if you will, of Python-the-Language.

Every so often we arbitrate or get involved in legal issues involving the Python logo or other trademarks. Most trademark actions involved approving usage of the logo or other IP.

1.3 What is the relationship between PyCon US and the PSF?

The PSF funds, backs and takes on the risk for PyCon US (or PyCon North America if you will, since it will be in Montreal Canada in 2014/2015). This means that it is the one conference the PSF has an officer assigned to, controls the budget of and provides oversight of.

This means that the PSF assumes all losses and gains from the conference - it can really make or break the PSF as a whole should a bad year occur, or it can allow the PSF to greatly increase developer and other grants it issues in a good year. In many ways, it is the single biggest fundraiser the PSF has every year.

See also:

- [PyCon - Everybody Pays](#)
- [PyCon 2012 Sponsorship — Making the case for sponsorship.](#)

1.4 Has the PSF donated to causes outside of Python? To other languages ?

We have donated to other entities such as [OSUOSL](#) to assist them in their mission, and because they generously host and maintain our next generation infrastructure. Typically, we constrain grants and PSF funds to those fitting within the [Mission Statement](#).

[PyCon 2012](#) had a 5k “Fun run” - the proceeds of which were matched by PyCon and the PSF and distributed to various charities, such as Autism Speaks, the American Cancer Society, and the Epilepsy Foundation.

Normally however, our grants focus on the Python community - whether thats funding user groups, conferences, workshops, etc.

1.5 Does the PSF have any paid staff ?

Yes. Our administrator of several years (Pat Campbell), our treasurer/accountant Kurt Kaiser and more recently Ewa Jodlowska our official Event Coordinator are all paid positions. We feel that paying for these roles is both cost effective for the PSF and allows us to offload tasks that are not always best done via volunteer effort.

Aside from paid employees, there are some services we pay for, and some contractors that we use for internal operations.

1.6 How much money per year does it take to run the PSF ?

1.7 Has anyone donated to the foundation through a will ?

1.8 Are all your funds held in US dollars ?

Yes. All funds are held and managed in USD - no bitcoins, euros or other currencies are held by the PSF, though if issuing international payments, we will convert the funds into the proper local coin of the realm.

For Australia, we convert it into [drop bears](#).

1.9 How does the PSF get funding ?

The Foundation has three primary sources of income:

- The recently-introduced Associate Memberships (see the [Associate Membership Page](#) for more details)
- Donations from individuals and organizations with an interest in the language
- Profits from running the North American PyCon, a volunteer-run conference

We encourage and welcome donations of all kinds at the [Foundation’s donations page](#) - please feel free to visit right away! We accept both PayPal and credit card donations, and will be very grateful for any help you can offer.

1.10 Does Guido van Rossum have any connection with the foundation ?

Guido was the founding chairman of the PSF, but he isn't a big fan of bureaucracy and so ducked out of that role at the first available opportunity. Since we feel it would be unfortunate if it looked like the Foundation was nothing to do with Python's inventor we have persuaded him to (reluctantly) fill the figurehead role as the Foundation's President.

Given how many emails he gets asking for help we think this is remarkably forbearing of him.

1.11 Are there any metrics used to determine the success of the foundation ?

1.12 How does the PSF decide on new aims or goals ?

1.13 How far out has Python spread in the universe ?

(has NASA or another space agency used python in equipment out beyond Earth?)

We think it's pretty "far out" that people at NASA are big fans of Python. They use it for example at JPL to test many aspects of the Mars Space Lab during its design and construction. NASA Goddard are another big user, writing of the [Twisted project's](#) logo:

... we would be proud to display it (as we do the Python and wxPython logos)

—Steve Waterbury

However, as far as we know nobody is yet running a Python interpreter outside the Earth's atmosphere. We have a feeling it's only a matter of time.

Given quantum entanglement, though, who knows what's really going on out there?

See also:

- [Using Python to Create Robotic Simulations for Planetary Exploration \(PyCon 2010\)](#)
- [Keeping the Chandra satellite cool with Python and Xija \(PyCon 2012\)](#)
- [Greasing the Wheels of Exploration with Python \(PyCon 2011\)](#)
- [An Underwater Python - Tortuga the Python Powered Robot \(PyCon 2010\)](#)

1.14 Is there anything the PSF needs from its own community ?

1.15 Does the PSF want more members ?

Yes! There are various grades of membership you can apply for, so we'll start with the one that requires no formalities. To support the PSF, head over to the [Associate Membership Page](#) and join up there. A one-year associate membership currently costs \$99, and you can make a donation to the Foundation at the same time as you join up.

If you are an individual with an interest in furthering the development of the Python language or enarging the international Python community (the main aspects of the PSF's mission) then an existing member will have to nominate you.

This is not intended make the Foundation an exclusive club (which would not be in line with the mission) but to avoid frivolous applications. If you are at all active in the Python world you probably know someone who could propose you.

For companies interested in supporting the PSF's work in a more concrete fashion we offer sponsor memberships, with a varying fee scale depending on the size of your organization.

To find out more about nominated and sponsor membership visit [the Foundation's membership page](#)

1.16 Does the PSF ever get involved in books that are published about Python ?

1.17 What exactly can one apply for a PSF grant? What are some good examples?

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