

# 23 – Packages

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<https://atticlectures.net/scipro/python-2026/>

# Module name collisions

- Module names in different projects can easily collide (e.g. solver, io)

```
import io linsolver.py
```

Which io-module should be imported?

- the projects io-module
  - Python's io module
  - some other projects io-module
  - ...
- Especially critical, if many Python projects are installed on the system (e.g. Conda)

## Packages

- Each project should create a “**package**” (a **namespace**) with a unique name
- Each module of the project should be placed in this package
- Modules within a package can be accessed with the dot-notation:

```
import PACKAGENAME.MODULENAME
```

```
import linsolver.io
```

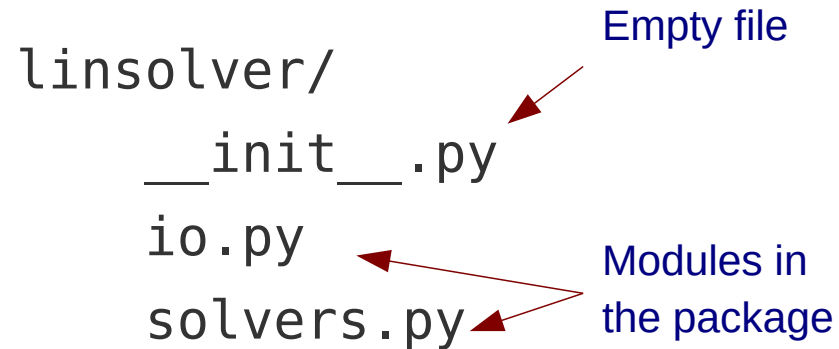
io module in the linsolver package

```
import numpy.linalg as linalg
```

linalg module in the numpy package

# Defining packages

- Packages are simple **directories** in the file system
- In order to indicate that a directory is a package, it must contain an (evtl. empty) file **\_\_init\_\_.py**

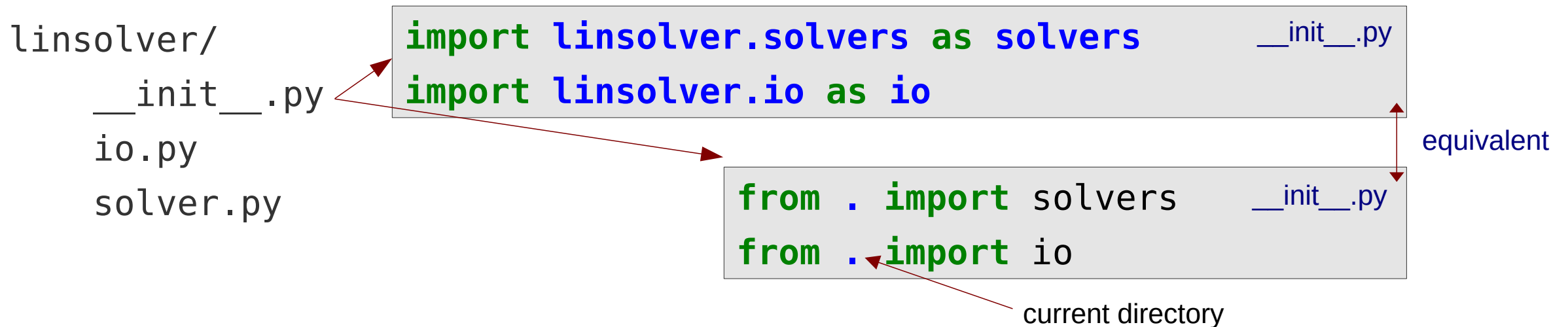


```
import linsolver.solvers  
import linsolver.io  
...  
aa, bb = linsolver.io.read_input()  
xx = linsolver.solvers.solve(aa, bb)
```

← Using the modules of the linsolver package

# Package initialization

- The `__init__.py` file may also contain Python code (**package initialization**)
- The content of `__init__.py` is executed when the package is imported
- It is often used provide direct access to the quantities / modules which should be accessible from outside



```
import linsolver
...
aa, bb = linsolver.io.read_input()
xx = linsolver.solvers.solve(aa, bb)
```

Using the modules of the linsolver package

# Hiding internal structure of packages

- It is a good practice to **hide** the **internal structure** of a package
- `__init__.py` can be used to export all functionality without exposing internal structure

linsolver/

`__init__.py` →

`io.py`

`solvers.py`

```
from .solvers import solve
from .io import read_input
```

`__init__.py`

Importing selected entities from various modules into the packages name space

```
import linsolver
```

```
...
```

```
aa, bb = linsolver.read_input()
```

```
xx = linsolver.solve(aa, bb)
```

← Using the (public) functionality of the linsolver package without knowing how it is split up into various modules

# Hiding module internals

- A module should only export functions / objects which should be invoked from outside
- **Implementational details** (e.g. helper routines, internal constants, etc.) should be **hidden / private**.

```
_TOLERANCE = 1e-12           Internally used constant (private)

def solve(aa, bb):           Public routine (public)
    ...
    _eliminate(aa, pp)
    _make_back_substitute(pp, bb)

def _eliminate(aa, pp):     Internal helper routine (private)
    ...

def _substitute_back(pp, bb): Internal helper routine (private)
    ...
```

# Public / private entities

- Whether an entity should be accessed from outside is **indicated** by its **name**.
- If its name **starts with** a letter [**a-zA-Z**], the entity is considered to be a **public** entity
- If its name **starts with** a **single underscore** (**\_**), the entity is considered to be a **private** entity.
- Private entities should only be accessed from within the scope (module, object) where they are defined.

## Note

- The public / private naming rule above is **only** a **convention** and is not enforced by the language.
- Theoretically, one can also access “private” entities from outside.

### **Stick to the public / private naming convention!**

Make sure, you mark only the necessary entities in your module public and make everything else private (**hiding implementation details**)

Public entities should be always documented via their doc-strings