

<?PHP What is PHP?>

Self-referentially short for PHP: Hypertext Preprocessor, an open source, server-side, HTML embedded scripting language used to create dynamic Web pages.

In an HTML document, PHP script (similar syntax to that of Perl or C) is enclosed within special PHP tags. Because PHP is embedded within tags, the author can jump between HTML and PHP (similar to ASP and Cold Fusion) instead of having to rely on heavy amounts of code to output HTML. And, because PHP is executed on the server, the client cannot view the PHP code.

PHP can perform any task that any CGI program can do, but its strength lies in its compatibility with many types of databases. Also, PHP can talk across networks using IMAP, SNMP, NNTP, POP3, or HTTP.

PHP was created sometime in 1994 by Rasmus Lerdorf. During mid 1997, PHP development entered the hands of other contributors. Two of them, Zeev Suraski and Andi Gutmans, rewrote the parser from scratch to create PHP version 3 (PHP3).

Why PHP?

- ▶ PHP was created with the internet in mind
- ▶ PHP is widely available for development and deployment
- ▶ PHP has a wide variety of functions built in for security, database access and for publishing
- ▶ PHP is available for a wide variety of platforms and is portable
- ▶ PHP accepts modules which are available
- ▶ There is a huge, growing community for PHP

PHP was created with the internet in mind

PHP, originally called Personal Home Page, has evolved from the start as a web oriented language.

Today PHP includes over 400 functions, many of which are aimed at the web.

Here are three examples good for websites:

- 1) You can strip all code from form entries by adding the letter (s) to a command.
- 2) You can determine if a request for a php page comes from an authorized source and if not redirect or act appropriately.
- 3) Using the `phpinfo()` function you can instantly generate a list of all webserver server features including MySQL database server

As PHP processes your code you don't have to worry about people seeing your code. If you include info such as your database password in include files for database access, then you rename your include file as `.php` and then people can't ask the server for the include file to steal the password. Or you can have the server associate `.inc` files with the PHP module/executable

PHP has a wide variety of functions built in/available for security, database access and for publishing

PHP has libraries for PDF publishing, PNG publishing and is great for mixing in with html. PHP is also used for generating XML and Flash animations.

PHP has built in support fordatabases.

PHP uses reference counting to return memory to the system when it's no longer needed, and copy on write ensures memory isn't wasted when values are copied between variables.

You can do object oriented programming using the class() function to build your own classes.

The PEAR repository.....next page

PEAR

PEAR, the PHP Extension and Application Repository (originally, PHP Extension and Add-on Repository) is PHP's version of foundation classes, and may grow in the future to be one of the key ways to distribute both PHP and C-based PHP extensions among developers.

PEAR was born in discussions held in the PHP Developers' Meeting (PDM) held in January 2000 in Tel Aviv. It was created by Stig S. Bakken, and is dedicated to his first-born daughter, Malin Bakken.

Since early 2000, PEAR has grown to be a big, significant project with a large number of developers working on implementing common, reusable functionality for the benefit of the entire PHP community. PEAR today includes a wide variety of infrastructure foundation classes for database access, content caching, mathematical calculations, eCommerce and much more.

PHP is available for a wide variety of platforms and it's code is portable

Due to this people with inexpensive computers can develop code that needs virtually no changes in order to function on a Unix like machine.

Supported platforms for PHP include:

Unix-like

AmigaOS

Mac OS X

Novell Netware

OS/2

RISC OS

SGI IRIX 6.5.x

AS/400

Windows 98/Me and Windows NT/2000/XP.

Sometimes PHP is a good bridge between systems, even for not necessarily web stuff.

3 ways PHP can be deployed

PHP can be used with all leading web servers, including Apache, Microsoft IIS and the Netscape/iPlanet servers.

PHP can run scripts from the command line, much like Perl, awk, or the Unix shell. You might use the command line scripts for system administration tasks, such as backing up and log parsing.

Using PHP-GTK (<http://gtk.php.net>), you can write full blown, cross platform GUI applications in PHP.

Protocols used by PHP

PHP can communicate using the following protocols:

HTTP and HTTPS

FTP and FTPS

PHP input/output streams

Compression streams

...OR...

Write your own wrapper using PHP script and `stream_register_wrapper` to register a wrapper implemented as a PHP class.

There is a huge, growing community for PHP

PHP accepts modules which are available from members of the PHP community.

Scripts, tutorials, newsgroups, wikis and applications abound as people that were previously pointlessly divided by their operating systems are now able to work together.

Many cross tool projects are on the go. Just two examples of this are advanced online content management systems (PHPNuke), and PHP pages that produce PDF invoices from a database (FPDF).

Because many projects are done on their own, while designed to interface with other programs, a lot of programs are now appearing as modules to other projects. Also a lot of projects are designed with modular add-ons in mind and therefore are easy to build modules for.