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How do I connect to this localhost from another computer on the same network?

I'm currently working on a project and I would like to test it out on two laptops at home where one laptop connects to the localhost on the other. I am using XAMPP. How do I do this?
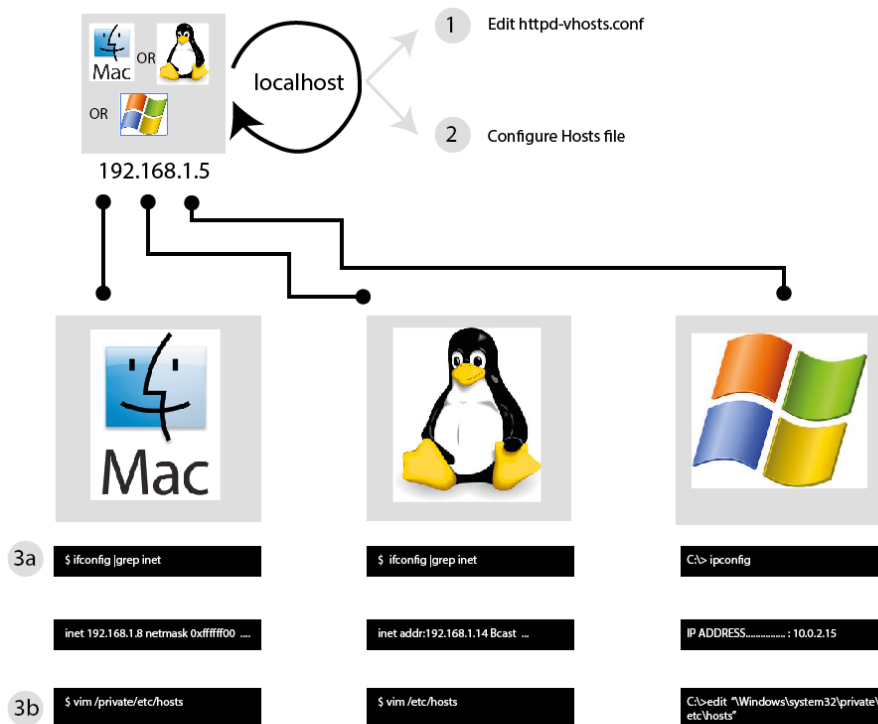
localhost

asked Mar 13 '12 at 10:27
user1219572
99   1   1   9

4 Answers

That's definitely possible. We'll take a general case with Apache here.

Let's say you're a big Symfony2 fan and you would like to access your symfony website at `http://symfony.local/` from 4 different computers (the main one hosting your website, as well as a Mac, a Windows and a Linux distro connected (wireless or not) to the main computer.

General Sketch:

1 **Set up a virtual host**:

You first need to set up a virtual host in your apache `httpd-vhosts.conf` file. On **XAMP**, you can find this file here: `C:\xampp\apache\conf\extra\httpd-vhosts.conf`. On **MAMP**, you can find this file here: `Applications/MAMP/conf/apache/extra/httpd-vhosts.conf`. This step prepares the Web server on your computer for handling `symfony.local` requests. You need to provide the name of the Virtual Host as well as the root/main folder of your website. To do this, add the following line at the end of that file. You need to change the `DocumentRoot` to wherever your main folder is. Here I have taken `/Applications/MAMP/htdocs/Symfony/` as the root of my website.

```
<VirtualHost *:80>
    DocumentRoot "/Applications/MAMP/htdocs/Symfony/"
    ServerName symfony.local
</VirtualHost>
```

2 **Configure your hosts file**:

For the client (your browser in that case) to understand what `symfony.local` really means, you need to edit the hosts file on your computer. Everytime you type an URL in your browser, your computer tries to understand what it means! `symfony.local` doesn't mean anything for a computer. So it will try to resolve the name `symfony.local` to an IP address. It will do this by first looking into the hosts file on your computer to see if he can match an IP address to what you typed in the address bar. If it can't, then it will ask **DNS servers**. The trick here is to append the following to your hosts file. On **MAC**, this file is in `/private/etc/hosts`; on **LINUX**, this file is in `/etc/hosts`; and on **WINDOWS**, this file is in `\Windows\system32\private\etc\hosts` (if you're using **WINDOWS 7**, this file is in `\Windows\system32\drivers\etc\hosts`).

```
##
# Host Database
# localhost is used to configure the loopback interface
##
#...
127.0.0.1           symfony.local
```

From now on, everytime you type symfony.local on this computer, your computer will use the loopback interface to connect to symfony.local. It will understand that you want to work on localhost (127.0.0.1).

3 **Access `symfony.local` from an other computer**:

We finally arrive to your main question which is:

> How can I now access my website through an other computer?

Well this is now easy! We just need to tell the other computers how they could find `symfony.local`! How do we do this?

3a **Get the IP address of the computer hosting the website**:

We first need to know the IP address on the computer that hosts the website (the one we've been working on since the very beginning). In the terminal, on **MAC** and **LINUX** type `ifconfig |grep inet`, on `WINDOWS` type `ipconfig`. Let's assume the IP address of this computer is **192.168.1.5**.

3b **Edit the hosts file on the computer you are trying to access the website from.**:

Again, on **MAC**, this file is in `/private/etc/hosts`; on **LINUX**, in `/etc/hosts`; and on **WINDOWS**, in `\Windows\system32\private\etc\hosts` (if you're using **WINDOWS 7**, this file is in `\Windows\system32\drivers\etc\hosts`).. The trick is now to use the IP address of the computer we are trying to access/talk to:

```
##
# Host Database
# localhost is used to configure the loopback interface
##
#...
192.168.1.5           symfony.local
```

4 **Finally enjoy the results in your browser**

You can now go into your browser and type `http://symfony.local` to beautifully see your website on different computers! Note that you can apply the same strategy if you are a OSX user to test your website on Internet Explorer via Virtual Box (if you don't want to use a Windows computer). This is beautifully explained in Crafting Your Windows / IE Test Environment on OSX.

You can also access your localhost from mobile devices

You might wonder how to access your localhost website from a mobile device. In some cases, you won't

be able to modify the hosts file (iPhone, iPad...) on your device (jailbreaking excluded).

Well, the solution then is to install a proxy server on the machine hosting the website and connect to that proxy from your iphone. It's actually very well explained in the following posts and is not that long to set up:

On a Mac, I would recommend: Testing a Mac OS X web site using a local hostname on a mobile device: Using SquidMan as a proxy. It's a 100% free solution. Some people can also use Charles as a proxy server but it's 50$.

On Linux, you can adapt the Mac OS way above by using Squid as a proxy server.

On Windows, you can do that using Fiddler. The solution is described in the following post: Monitoring iPhone traffic with Fiddler

	edited Oct 9 '13 at 4:17	answered Mar 15 '13 at 11:47
		Patt
		4,233 1 12 45

Nice reply. I followed the last part until I got to "Monitoring iPhone traffic with Fiddler". It points to Fiddler homepage. This should be the link: conceptdev.blogspot.com/2009/01/... – helpse Sep 14 '13 at 23:53

Thanks very much @helpse! I've updated the answer with your link. Cheers!!! – Patt Sep 15 '13 at 6:21

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it may be that your firewalls are preventing you from accessing the localhost's webserver.
Put the IP addresses of both of your computers' internet security antivirus network security as safe IP addresses if required.
How to find the IP address of your windows PC: Start > (Run) type in: cmd (Enter)
(This opens the black box command prompt)
type in ipconfig (Enter)
Let's say your Apache or IIS webserver is installed on your PC: 192.168.0.3
and you want to access your webserver with your laptop. (laptop's IP is 192.168.0.5)
On your PC you type in: http://localhost/ inside your Firefox or Internet Eplorer browser to access your data on your webserver.
On your laptop you type in http://192.168.0.3/ to access your webserver on your PC.

For all these things to work you need have installed a webserver correctly (e.g. IIS, Apache, XAMP, WAMP etc).

If it does not work, try to ping your PC from your laptop:
Open up command propmt on your laptop: Start > cmd (Enter)
ping 192.168.1.3 (Enter)
If the pinging fails, then firewalls are blocking your connection or your network cabling is faulty. Restart your modem or network switch and your machines.
Close programs such as chat programs that are using your ports.
You can also try a diffrent port number: http:192.168.0.3:80 or http:192.168.0.3:81 or any random number at the end

	edited Jan 2 '13 at 9:36	answered Jan 2 '13 at 9:27
		KarlosFontana
		56 5

Thank tou @KarlosFontana - you just answered my question too. I was having trouble connecting my iPhone to a server that I wrote on the desktop. The iPhone was connected to my PC's WiFi. Your last line answered my question :-) – Tommy Feb 6 '13 at 17:54

You cannot connect to `localhost` on another machine. `localhost` always refers to the local host machine. Crazy naming scheme, right?

If you want to connect to another machine on a network, you need to replace localhost with the network name (or IP address) of the machine in question.

	answered Mar 13 '12 at 10:34
	adelphus
	1,538 2 14

Can you push me in the right direction as to where to start? Really don't have a clue where to begin – user1219572 Mar 13 '12 at 10:35

You're working on this project, right? I'm assuming to test it, you use a browser (or a custom app) and connect to localhost/a/path/to/a/file. Well replace localhost with the name of the machine: someothermachine/a/path/to/a/file or use the IP address: 192.168.0.whatever/a/path/to/a/file. Or perhaps I'm misunderstanding the problem. – adelphus Mar 13 '12 at 10:40

Provided both machines are in the same workgroup, open `cmd.exe` on the machine you want to connect to, type `ipconfig` and note the IP at the `IPv4 Address` line.

Then, on the machine you want to connect with, use `http://` + `the IP of the target machine`.

That should do it.

answered Mar 13 '12 at 10:42
Codrin Eugeniu
1,103 3 7

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