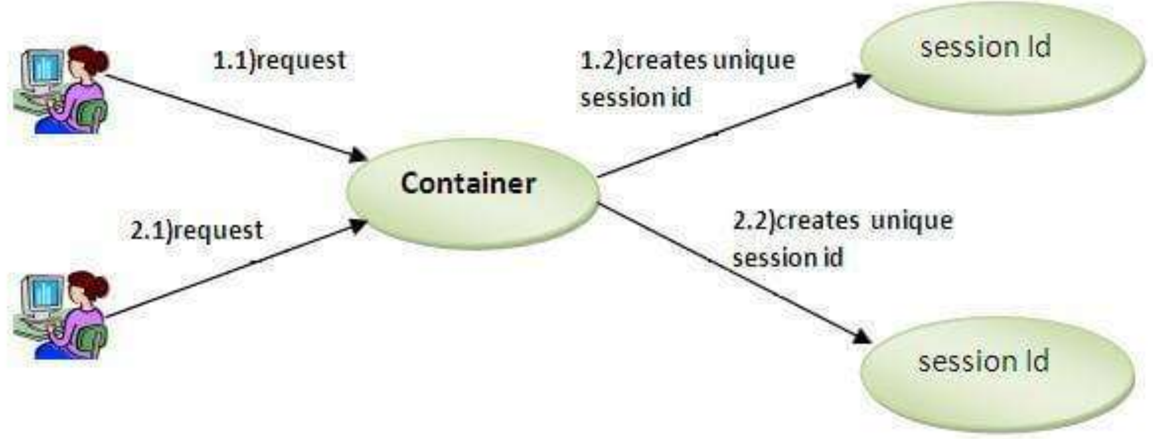
PHP Session

PHP session is used to store and pass information from one page to another temporarily (until user close the website).

PHP session technique is widely used in shopping websites where we need to store and pass cart information e.g. username, product code, product name, product price etc from one page to another.

PHP session creates unique user id for each browser to recognize the user and avoid conflict between multiple browsers.



Why Session?

Although you can store data using cookies but it has some security issues. Since cookies are stored on user's computer it is possible for an attacker to easily modify a cookie content to insert potentially harmful data in your application that might break your application.

Also every time the browser requests a URL to the server, all the cookie data for a website is automatically sent to the server within the request. It means if you have stored 5 cookies on user's system, each having 4KB in size, the browser needs to upload 20KB of data each time the user views a page, which can affect your site's performance.

You can solve both of these issues by using the PHP session.

- A PHP session stores data on the server rather than user's computer.
- In a session based environment, every user is identified through a unique number called session identifier or SID.
- This unique session ID is used to link each user with their own information on the server like emails, posts, etc.

How to create session?

- PHP session_start() function is used to start the session.
- It starts a new or resumes existing session. It returns existing session if session is created already. If session is not available, it creates and returns new session.
- Example:

```
session_start();
```

$_SESSION:

- PHP $_SESSION is an associative array that contains all session variables.
- It is used to set and get session variable values.
- Example: Store information

```
$_SESSION["user"] = "RVM";
```

- Example: Get information

```
echo $_SESSION["user"];
```

PHP Session Example:

File: session1.php

```
<?php
session_start();
?>
<html>
<body>
<?php
$_SESSION["user"] = "RVM";
echo "Session information are set successfully.<br/>";
?>
<a href="session2.php">Visit next page</a>
</body>
</html>
```

File: session2.php

```
<?php
session_start();
?>
<html>
<body>
<?php
echo "User is: ".$_SESSION["user"];
?>
</body>
</html>
```

PHP Session Counter Example

File: sessioncounter.php

```
<?php
  session_start();
  if (!isset($_SESSION['counter'])) {
    $_SESSION['counter'] = 1;
  } else {
    $_SESSION['counter']++;
  }
  echo ("Page Views: ".$_SESSION['counter']);
?>
```

PHP Destroying Session

- PHP session_destroy() function is used to destroy all session variables completely.

  File: session3.php

  ```
  <?php
  session_start();
  session_destroy();
  ?>
  ```

- This function does not need any argument and a single call can destroy all the session variables.
- If you want to destroy a single session variable then you can use unset() function to unset a session variable.

  ```
  <?php
    unset($_SESSION['counter']);
  ?>
  ```