Merlin

Content Presentation Framework
18th September 2011

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Merlin: An advanced content presentation framework.

Merlin is a new content presentation framework. This CPF is a hybrid between application frameworks, templating systems and content management systems. Merlin doesn't care about how you go through business logic, or even where you get your data from, instead merlin only cares about one thing; how you control the access and presentation of your data.

Introduction

There are hundreds of content management systems in the wild today. All offer advanced display of content based on a page structure themed with a so-called template. For many applications, this is sufficient, although it limits the development of pages to code changes in one way or another (usually HTML/CSS). Desktop applications are usually built using the idea of widgets or views, which have increasingly influencing the interface and framework designs of web applications. Merlin is no exception here. A rich hierarchical library of widgets is provided for both usage and development using one simple user interface.

Most current CMS solutions take a very basic approach to URL rewriting. URL structures have far-reaching effects for both user experience *and* search engine optimisation. Merlin has a URI management system (UMS) which can drive dynamic data-based URI structure matching based on simple rules manageable within the administration control panel for the Merlin application.

Application

Your application can be written how you like, merlin doesn't care. All you need to do is to provide the expected data through the Merlin Content Provider interface. This interface is the gateway between your application and the user. The content provider interface gives merlin all it needs to construct widgets, pages and even the URI's to manipulate your application state or simply to locate different parts of a merlin enabled webpage.

Widgets

Widgets are the building blocks of an application. Widgets are designed using the Merlin Presentation Editor. There are two types of widgets: Composite and atomic. Atomic widgets are the base of all Merlin interfaces, they are images, form elements, text snippets and links, they can also be programmed through the Merlin API. These can be provided via a content provider or hardcoded within the presentation editor. Those widgets that use the provider interfaces can use advanced queries to select the correct data to display. Composite widgets are constructed from other widgets and inherit any parameters that the containing widgets require unless overridden.

Pages

Pages are a subset of widgets with specialist parameters to provide global settings and presentation rules.