**PHP**

**PHP** is a [server-side scripting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Server-side_scripting) language designed for [web development](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_development) but also used as a [general-purpose programming language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General-purpose_programming_language). PHP is now installed on more than 244 million [websites](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Website) and 2.1 million [web servers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_server).

PHP code is [interpreted](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interpreter_(computing)) by a web server with a PHP processor module, which generates the resulting web page: PHP commands can be embedded directly into an [HTML](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HTML) source document rather than calling an external file to process data. It has also evolved to include a [command-line interface](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Command-line_interface) capability and can be used in [standalone](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_software) [graphical applications](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graphical_user_interface).

The PHP interpreter only executes PHP code within its [delimiters](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delimiter). Anything outside its delimiters is not processed by PHP (although non-PHP text is still subject to [control structures](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Control_structure) described in PHP code). The most common delimiters are <?php to open and ?> to close PHP sections. <script language="php"> and </script> delimiters are also available, as are the shortened forms <? or<?= (which is used to echo back a [string](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/String_(computer_science)) or [variable](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Variable_(programming))) and ?> as well as [ASP](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Active_Server_Pages)-style short forms <% or <%= and %>. While short delimiters are used, they make script files less portable as support for them can be disabled in the [PHP configuration](http://wiki.php.net/rfc/shortags), and they are therefore discouraged. The purpose of all these delimiters is to separate PHP code from non-PHP code, including HTML.

PHP is a server scripting language, and is a powerful tool for making dynamic and interactive Web pages quickly.

PHP is a widely-used, free, and efficient alternative to competitors such as Microsoft's ASP.

What is PHP?

* PHP is an acronym for "PHP Hypertext Preprocessor"
* PHP is a widely-used, open source scripting language
* PHP scripts are executed on the server
* PHP costs nothing, it is free to download and use

What is a PHP File?

* PHP files can contain text, HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and PHP code
* PHP code are executed on the server, and the result is returned to the browser as plain HTML
* PHP files have extension ".php"

What Can PHP Do?

* PHP can generate dynamic page content
* PHP can create, open, read, write, and close files on the server
* PHP can collect form data
* PHP can send and receive cookies
* PHP can add, delete, modify data in your database
* PHP can restrict users to access some pages on your website
* PHP can encrypt data

With PHP you are not limited to output HTML. You can output images, PDF files, and even Flash movies. You can also output any text, such as XHTML and XML.

Why PHP?

* PHP runs on various platforms (Windows, Linux, UNIX, Mac OS X, etc.)
* PHP is compatible with almost all servers used today (Apache, IIS, etc.)
* PHP supports a wide range of databases
* PHP is free. Download it from the official PHP resource: [www.php.net](http://www.php.net/)
* PHP is easy to learn and runs efficiently on the server side
* A PHP script can be placed anywhere in the document.
* A PHP script starts with **<?php** and ends with **?>**: