generate random string for div id

Asked 8 years, 2 months ago   Active 10 months ago   Viewed 128k times

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I want to display YouTube videos on my website, but I need to be able to add a unique `id` for each video that's going to be shared by users. So I put this together, and I have run into a little problem. I am trying to get the JavaScript to add a random string for the div `id` , but it's not working, showing the string:

```
<script type='text/javascript' src='jwplayer.js'></script>
<script type='text/javascript'>
function randomString(length) {
    var chars =
'0123456789ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXTZabcdefghiklmnopqrstuvwxyz'.split('');

    if (! length) {
        length = Math.floor(Math.random() * chars.length);
    }

    var str = '';
    for (var i = 0; i < length; i++) {
        str += chars[Math.floor(Math.random() * chars.length)];
    }
    return str;
}

var div = randomString(8);
</script>

<div id='div()'>This text will be replaced</div>

<script type='text/javascript'>
  jwplayer('div()').setup({
    'flashplayer': 'player.swf',
    'file': 'http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4AX0bi9GXXY',
    'controlbar': 'bottom',
    'width': '470',
    'height': '320'
  });
</script>
```

javascript

	edited Jan 9 '17 at 17:51		asked Jul 28 '11 at 14:42
	revelt		sarsar
	1,218 1 12 28		**506** 3 9 17

Perhaps this would be helpful stackoverflow.com/questions/105034/... – Maxx Jul 28 '11 at 14:45

I typically just create a global var and increment it :P – Joseph Marikle Jul 28 '11 at 14:48

Looks like the OP can generate a random string, but he can't get it into the id of the div. Until I get confirmation I wont post a solution. – Jamiec Jul 28 '11 at 14:49

@Jamiec yes that is my problem i cant get it into the divs ID – sarsar Jul 28 '11 at 14:50

9 Answers

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I really like this function:

```
function guidGenerator() {
    var S4 = function() {
        return (((1+Math.random())*0x10000)|0).toString(16).substring(1);
    };
    return (S4()+S4()+"-"+S4()+"-"+S4()+"-"+S4()+"-"+S4()+S4()+S4());
}
```

From [Create GUID / UUID in JavaScript?](#)

edited May 23 '17 at 12:34

Community ♦
1   1

answered Jul 28 '11 at 14:45

Joe
64.5k   15   112   135

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3   ... but not really the problem he is asking about :-) – Soren Jul 28 '11 at 15:14

143   But exactly what I've Googled for :=) – fnkr May 7 '13 at 14:25

5   Warning: It could create Guid starting with number. Can't use that directly as id. Id should start with _ or letter. :) – Chaitanya Chandurkar Nov 2 '15 at 2:01

     Will this guarantee a unique id? – jbyrd Dec 15 '16 at 12:44
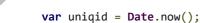
     @jbyrd, this will guarantee unique id, but it **can't guarantee correct HTMLElement id**. The id for element can't begin from number. stackoverflow.com/questions/6860853/... – Ihor Dec 28 '16 at 14:25
     ✎

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2018 edit: I think this answer has some interesting info, but for any practical applications you should use [Joe's answer instead](#).

A simple way to create a unique ID in JavaScript is to use the Date object:

```
var uniqid = Date.now();
```

That gives you the total milliseconds elapsed since January 1st 1970, ~~which is a unique value every time you call that~~.

The problem with that value now is that you cannot use it as an element's ID, since in HTML, IDs need to start with an alphabetical character. There is also the problem that two users doing an action at the exact same time might result in the same ID. We could lessen the probability of that, and fix our alphabetical character problem, by appending a random letter before the numerical part of the ID.

```
var randLetter = String.fromCharCode(65 + Math.floor(Math.random() * 26));
var uniqid = randLetter + Date.now();
```

This still has a chance, ~~however slim,~~ of colliding though. Your best bet for a unique id is to keep
a running count, increment it every time, and do all that in a single place, ie. on the server

4   Dates by themselves are not very random since two users doing the same operation at the same time can get the same date value. If you combine a date with a random number function, you will get something much more unique. – jfriend00 Jul 28 '11 at 15:06

Plus the `valueOf` representation is a number, which is not a valid html id (they have to start with an alpha character) – Jamiec Jul 28 '11 at 15:23 ✎

3   @Chris my answer was not factually incorrect, it just wasn't the best from answers here. I added some things. – Alex Turpin Jan 4 '13 at 17:40

5   Collide: `var arr = [Date.now(), Date.now()];` . Easy to reproduce on modern CPUs. – mostruash Mar 22 '16 at 11:50 ✎

2   This is a *very bad* solution to the problem of any type of Id-generation, in particular for the actual question being posed (hinting that the question is not read). It is pretty likely that you'll end up with the same id for two divs (one millisecond is a very long time). The answer from @jfriend00 is much better (in particular the "Another way to do it"). If you're out to get very-likely-not-globally-colliding ids, then a bunch of random alphanums are much better - or just go for GUIDs (UUIDs) like 'Joe' suggests. – stolsvik Jan 8 '17 at 0:08

Here is the reusable function to generate the random IDs :

67

```
function revisedRandId() {
    return Math.random().toString(36).replace(/[^a-z]+/g, '').substr(2, 10);
}
```

// It will not start with the any number digit so it will be supported by CSS3

edited Mar 7 '18 at 20:41   answered Aug 10 '16 at 11:53

bvmCoder
925 7 7

This could result in an empty string, which wouldn't be a valid ID. `var lengths = {}, total = 1000000; for(var i = 0; i < total; i++){ var newLength = revisedRandId().length; lengths[newLength] = (lengths[newLength] || 0) + 1; } lengths[0] / total` - it looks like it would give an invalid ID about 0.03% of the time, so not often, but definitely possible. – 1j01 May 25 '18 at 22:55 ✎

Why do you discard the first 2 digits? – Fábio Jun 11 '18 at 15:02

27

I think some folks here haven't really focused on your particular question. It looks like the problem you have is in putting the random number in the page and hooking the player up to it. There are a number of ways to do that. The simplest is with a small change to your existing code like this to document.write() the result into the page. I wouldn't normally recommend document.write(), but since your code is already inline and what you were trying do already was to put the div inline, this is the simplest way to do that. At the point where you have the random number, you just use this to put it and the div into the page:

```
var randomId = "x" + randomString(8);
document.write('<div id="' + randomId + '">This text will be replaced</div>');
```

```
jwplayer(randomId).setup({
```

And the whole block of code would look like this:

```html
<script type='text/javascript' src='jwplayer.js'></script>
<script type='text/javascript'>
function randomString(length) {
    var chars =
'0123456789ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZabcdefghiklmnopqrstuvwxyz'.split('');

    if (! length) {
        length = Math.floor(Math.random() * chars.length);
    }

    var str = '';
    for (var i = 0; i < length; i++) {
        str += chars[Math.floor(Math.random() * chars.length)];
    }
    return str;
}

var randomId = "x" + randomString(8);
document.write('<div id="' + randomId + '">This text will be replaced</div>');

    jwplayer(randomId).setup({
        'flashplayer': 'player.swf',
        'file': 'http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4AX0bi9GXXY',
        'controlbar': 'bottom',
        'width': '470',
        'height': '320'
    });
</script>
```

Another way to do it

I might add here at the end that generating a truly random number just to create a unique div ID is way overkill. You don't need a random number. You just need an ID that won't otherwise exist in the page. Frameworks like YUI have such a function and all they do is have a global variable that gets incremented each time the function is called and then combine that with a unique base string. It can look something like this:

```javascript
var generateID = (function() {
    var globalIdCounter = 0;
    return function(baseStr) {
        return(baseStr + globalIdCounter++);
    }
})();
```

And, then in practical use, you would do something like this:

```javascript
var randomId = generateID("myMovieContainer");  // "myMovieContainer1"
document.write('<div id="' + randomId + '">This text will be replaced</div>');
jwplayer(randomId).setup({
```

edited Dec 11 '18 at 2:41   answered Jul 28 '11 at 15:16

This answer's fine too, but I assume that inside that `jwplayer` code should be `div` not `'div()'` . – Jamiec Jul 28 '11 at 15:21 ✎

@jfriend00 Jamiec is right i need to be able to match the div id with the jw player code here `jwplayer('div').setup({` – sarsar Jul 28 '11 at 15:33

Yeah, I had no idea what the jwplayer code was doing or how it worked. I didn't know that was part of the question. Anyway, I looked that up on the web and modified my code so that the div with the random number ID is now passed to the jwplayer setup too. FYI, since CSS IDs are technically not allowed to start with a digit, I also put a letter at the beginning. – jfriend00 Jul 28 '11 at 15:44 ✎

I added a somewhat simpler way to do this at the end of my answer. A random number is not actually needed in this case, just a monotomically increasing number combined with a unique base string. – jfriend00 Jul 28 '11 at 17:04

If you need uniqueness across files, a random ID might be warranted. – aleclarson Feb 19 '15 at 16:21

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I also needed a random id, I went with using base64 encoding:

```
btoa(Math.random()).substring(0,12)
```

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Pick however many characters you want, the result is usually at least 24 characters.

answered Sep 21 '17 at 6:38

Staale
18.1k   20   62   82

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Based on [HTML 4](#), the id should start from letter:

> ID and NAME tokens must begin with a letter ([A-Za-z]) and may be followed by any number of letters, digits ([0-9]), hyphens ("-"), underscores ("_"), colons (":"), and periods (".").

So, one of the solutions could be (alphanumeric):

```
var length = 9;
var prefix = 'my-awesome-prefix-'; // To be 100% sure id starts with letter

// Convert it to base 36 (numbers + letters), and grab the first 9 characters
// after the decimal.
var id = prefix + Math.random().toString(36).substr(2, length);
```

Another solution - generate string with letters only:

```
var length = 9;
var id = Math.random().toString(36).replace(/[^a-z]+/g, '').substr(0, length);
```

answered Jun 28 '16 at 21:48

Ihor
822   8   13

4

```
/**
 * Generates a random string
 *
 * @param int length_
 * @return string
 */
function randomString(length_) {

    var chars =
'0123456789ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZabcdefghiklmnopqrstuvwxyz'.split('');
    if (typeof length_ !== "number") {
        length_ = Math.floor(Math.random() * chars.length_);
    }
    var str = '';
    for (var i = 0; i < length_; i++) {
        str += chars[Math.floor(Math.random() * chars.length)];
    }
    return str;
}
```

edited Dec 11 '18 at 2:41   answered Feb 2 '15 at 7:51

jfriend00   dude
472k 61   630   667   **2,972** 4   30   63

2

I would suggest that you start with some sort of placeholder, you may have this already, but its somewhere to append the div.

```
<div id="placeholder"></div>
```

Now, the idea is to dynamically create a new div, with your random id:

```
var rndId = randomString(8);
var div = document.createElement('div');
div.id = rndId
div.innerHTML = "Whatever you want the content of your div to be";
```

this can be apended to your placeholder as follows:

```
document.getElementById('placeholder').appendChild(div);
```

You can then use that in your jwplayer code:

```
jwplayer(rndId).setup(...);
```

Live example: http://jsfiddle.net/pNYZp/

Sidenote: Im pretty sure id's must start with an alpha character (ie, no numbers) - you might want to change your implementation of randomstring to enforce this rule. (ref)

edited Jul 28 '11 at 15:08   answered Jul 28 '11 at 15:03

                                    Jamiec

@sarsar - I dont follow your question! I just added that part to show you you can re-use the `rndId`
variable in your code to do with setting up jwplayer. – Jamiec Jul 28 '11 at 15:13

for that jwplayer code i need to place the same id for the div inside this code as well – sarsar Jul 28 '11
at 15:30

@sarsar - thats exactly what I demonstrated above. `rndId` contains the randomly generated code. –
Jamiec Jul 28 '11 at 15:33

First. Assign an id to your div. Like this:

0

```
<div id="uniqueid">This text will be replaced</div>
```

After that, add inside your `<script>` tag following code:

```
Document.getElementById("uniqueid").id = randomString(8);
```

answered Jul 28 '11 at 14:49

vsushkov
2,380 1   16   28

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6   `randomString(8)` is not defined anywhere. – David Apr 18 '15 at 17:15

2   @David randomString is defined by the person who asked the question. See the original question above.
     – vsushkov Feb 18 '16 at 19:28