

Chapter 10. Overview of JSP Technology

Topics in This Chapter

- Understanding the need for JSP
- Evaluating the benefits of JSP
- Comparing JSP to other technologies
- Avoiding JSP misconceptions
- Installing JSP pages
- Surveying JSP syntax

JavaServer Pages (JSP) technology enables you to mix regular, static HTML with dynamically generated content. You simply write the regular HTML in the normal manner, using familiar Web-page-building tools. You then enclose the code for the dynamic parts in special tags, most of which start with `<%` and end with `%>`.

For example, [Listing 10.1](#) ([Figure 10-1](#)) presents a very small JSP page that uses a request parameter to display the title of a book. Notice that the listing is mostly standard HTML; the dynamic code consists entirely of the half line shown in bold in the listing.

Listing 10.1 OrderConfirmation.jsp

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.0 Transitional//EN">
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<TITLE>Order Confirmation</TITLE>
<LINK REL=STYLESHEET
      HREF="JSP-Styles.css"
      TYPE="text/css">
</HEAD>
<BODY>
<H2>Order Confirmation</H2>
Thanks for ordering <I><%= request.getParameter("title") %></I>!
</BODY></HTML>
```

Figure 10-1. Result of OrderConfirmation.jsp.



You can think of servlets as Java code with HTML inside; you can think of JSP as HTML with Java code inside. Now, neither servlets nor JSP pages are restricted to using HTML, but they usually do, and this over-simplified description is a common way to view the technologies.

Now, despite the large apparent differences between JSP pages and servlets, behind the scenes they are the same thing. JSP pages are translated into servlets, the servlets are compiled, and at request time it is the compiled servlets that execute. So, writing JSP pages is really just another way of writing servlets.

Even though servlets and JSP pages are equivalent behind the scenes, they are not equally useful in all situations. Separating the static HTML from the dynamic content provides a number of benefits over servlets alone, and the approach used in JavaServer Pages offers several advantages over competing technologies. This chapter explains the reasons for using JSP, discusses its benefits, dispels some misconceptions, shows you how to install and execute JSP pages, and summarizes the JSP syntax discussed in the rest of the book.

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