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[◀ PREVIOUS](#)
[NEXT ▶](#)

Chapter 13. Including Files and Applets in JSP Pages

Topics in This Chapter

- Using `jsp:include` to include pages at request time
- Using `<%@ include ... %>` (the `include` directive) to include files at page translation time
- Understanding why `jsp:include` is usually better than the `include` directive
- Using `jsp:plugin` to include applets for the Java Plug-in

JSP has three main capabilities for including external pieces into a JSP document:

- **The `jsp:include` action.** The `jsp:include` action lets you include the output of a page at request time. Its main advantage is that it saves you from changing the main page when the included pages change. Its main disadvantage is that since it includes the *output* of the secondary page, not the secondary page's actual *code* as with the `include` directive, the included pages cannot use any JSP constructs that affect the main page as a whole. The advantages generally far outweigh the disadvantages, and you will almost certainly use it much more than the other inclusion mechanisms. Use of `jsp:include` is discussed in [Section 13.1](#).
- **The `include` directive.** This construct lets you insert JSP code into the main page before that main page is translated into a servlet. Its main advantage is that it is powerful: the included code can contain JSP constructs such as field definitions and content-type settings that affect the main page as a whole. Its main disadvantage is that it is hard to maintain: you have to update the main page whenever any of the included pages change. Use of the `include` directive is discussed in [Section 13.2](#).
- **The `jsp:plugin` action.** Although this book is primarily about server-side Java, client-side Java in the form of Web-embedded applets continues to play a role, especially within corporate intranets. The `jsp:plugin` element is used to insert applets that use the Java Plug-in into JSP pages. Its main advantage is that it saves you from writing long, tedious, and error-prone `OBJECT` and `EMBED` tags in your HTML. Its main disadvantage is that it applies to applets, and applets are relatively infrequently used. Use of `jsp:plugin` is discussed in [Section 13.4](#).

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[◀ PREVIOUS](#)
[NEXT ▶](#)