

XAMPP Tutorial: How to Use XAMPP to Run Your Own Web Server

SEPTEMBER 18, 2013 BY KASIA MIKOLUK

XAMPP stands for Cross-Platform (X), Apache (A), MySQL (M), PHP (P) and Perl (P). It is a simple, lightweight Apache distribution that makes it extremely easy for developers to create a local web server for testing purposes. Everything you need to set up a web server – server application (Apache), database (MySQL), and scripting language (PHP) – is included in a simple extractable file. XAMPP is also cross-platform, which means it works equally well on Linux, Mac and Windows. Since most actual web server deployments use the same components as XAMPP, it makes transitioning from a local test server to a live server is extremely easy as well. Web development using XAMPP is especially beginner friendly, as this popular **PHP and MySQL for beginners course** will teach you.

What's Included in XAMPP?

XAMPP has four primary components. These are:

- 1. Apache:** Apache is the actual web server application that processes and delivers web content to a computer. Apache is the most popular web server online, powering nearly 54% of all websites.
- 2. MySQL:** Every web application, howsoever simple or complicated, requires a database for storing collected data. MySQL, which is open source, is the world's most popular database management system. It powers everything from hobbyist websites to professional platforms like WordPress. You can learn how to master PHP with this **free MySQL database for beginners course**.
- 3. PHP:** PHP stands for Hypertext Preprocessor. It is a server-side scripting language that powers some of the most popular websites in the world, including WordPress and Facebook. It is open source, relatively easy to learn, and works perfectly with MySQL, making it a popular choice for web developers.
- 4. Perl:** Perl is a high-level, dynamic programming language used extensively in network programming, system admin, etc. Although less popular for web development purposes, Perl has a lot of niche applications.

Different versions of XAMPP may have additional components such as phpMyAdmin, OpenSSL, etc. to create full-fledged web servers.

How to Install XAMPP?

[**Note:** For the purpose of this XAMPP tutorial, we'll assume that you're using a Windows PC, although these instructions work equally well for Mac computers. Linux users, however, should refer to the official XAMPP Linux installation guide.]

Head over to XAMPP for Windows homepage on ApacheFriends.org. Here, you will find multiple versions of XAMPP.

In this tutorial, we will install **XAMPP Windows 1.8.2** which includes:

Component	Description	Version
Apache	Default web server application	2.4.4
MySQL	Database management system	5.5.32
PHP	Server-side, general purpose programming language	5.4.19
phpMyAdmin	Admin tool for working with MySQL	4.0.4
OpenSSL	An open-source implementation of two popular security protocols – SSL and TLS	0.9.8
XAMPP Control Panel	A simple control panel for working with different XAMPP components	3.2.1
Webalizer	An analytics tool that generates user logs and usage metrics.	2.23-04
Mercury Mail Transport System	A simple, open-source mail server	4.62

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
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FileZilla FTP Server	A FTP (File Transfer Protocol) server to make file transfers smoother	0.9.41
Tomcat	A freeware Java servlet for serving Java applications	7.0.42
Strawberry Perl	A popular distribution of Perl for Windows	5.16.3.1

Unless you are running a live web server, you won't need anything beyond Apache, MySQL and PHP, although it is a good practice to install all other components as well.

You also have the option of installing a smaller 'XAMPP Portable Lite' version, which only includes essential Apache, MySQL, PHP and phpMyAdmin components.

Downloading XAMPP

XAMPP is available in three file formats:

- .EXE – Self-executable file; easiest to install.
- .7z – 7zip file. Favored by purists, although it requires working with more complicated .bat files to install.
- .ZIP – Compressed zip file. Like .7z, installing through .ZIP files is considerably more difficult than using .EXE

Since .EXE is the easiest to install, we will use this file format for this tutorial.

You can download the XAMPP installer from Sourceforge here (102MB).

Installing XAMPP

Follow these steps for installing XAMPP:

Step 1: Disable your anti-virus as it can cause some XAMPP components to behave erratically.

Step 2: Disable User Account Control (UAC). UAC limits write permissions to XAMPP's default installation directory (c:/Program Files/xampp), forcing you to install in a separate directory. You can learn how to disable UAC here. (Optional)

Step 3: Start the installation process by double-clicking on the XAMPP installer. Click 'Next' after the splash screen.

Step 4: Here, you can select the components you want to install. Choose the default selection and click 'Next'.

Step 5: Choose the folder you want to install XAMPP in. This folder will hold all your web application files, so make sure to select a drive that has plenty of space.

Step 6: The next screen is a promo for BitNami, an app store for server software. Deselect the 'Learn more about BitNami for XAMPP' checkbox, unless you actually enjoy receiving promo mails!

Step 7: Setup is now ready to install XAMPP. Click Next and wait for the installer to unpack and install selected components. This may take a few minutes. You may be asked to approve Firewall access to certain components (such as Apache) during the installation process.

Step 8: Installation is now complete! Select the 'Do you want to start the Control Panel now?' checkbox to open the XAMPP control panel.

Understanding XAMPP Control Panel

The XAMPP control panel gives you complete control over all installed XAMPP components. You can use the CP to start/stop different modules, launch the Unix shell, open Windows explorer and see all operations running in the background.

Here is a quick overview of the Control Panel. For now, you only need to know how to start and stop an Apache server.

Testing Your XAMPP Installation

Follow these steps to test your XAMPP installation by launching the Apache web server and creating a simple PHP file.

Step 1: In the XAMPP control panel, click on 'Start' under 'Actions' for the Apache module. This instructs XAMPP to start the Apache webserver.

Step 2: Open your web browser and type in: **http://localhost** or 127.0.0.1

Step 3: Select your language from the splash screen.

Step 4: You should see the following screen. This means you've successfully installed XAMPP on your computer.

Step 5: We will now test whether XAMPP has installed PHP successfully. To do this, fire up Notepad and type the following into a new document:

```
<?php

echo 'Hello world';

?>
```

Save this file as 'test.php' in c:\xampp\htdocs\ (or whichever directory you installed XAMPP in).

Step 6: Navigate to localhost/test.php. You should see the "Hello World" message:

Congratulations! You have now successfully installed XAMPP and even written your very first PHP program. You can now use your local Apache webserver to create and test complex PHP web apps, fiddle around with MySQL and even learn how actual web servers work with Tomcat, FileZilla, OpenSSL, and more. You can get started right away by **learning LAMP development from the ground up in this course**. Take this course for a more comprehensive take on **programming with PHP and MySQL**.

As always, we'd love to hear your thoughts and opinions on web development using XAMPP in the comments below!

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