

Tomasz Borowski programmer at Selleo t.borowski@selleo.com

Generating beautiful PDF files wkhtmltopdf and PDFKit in action





What is the problem

Generating PDF files may be a problem in web applications:

- tool is not based on HTML tags
- tool does not interpret css definitions
- tool interpret only few css definitions
- output PDF document looks just awful
- ...
- tool is excellent but... it is not free :)



Solution

Use wkhtmltopdf utility



A SaaS software product for tests generation, sales & management. The platform allows the client to efficiently generate, distribute and administer HRM-related tests and surveys to their corporate customers.



Our Mission



Together with our customers, we create meaningful web applications to make a distinctive difference in the way people learn, work, do business and relax.



Our favourite quotes



"We need a process that allows us to develop the 20 percent of the code that deliver 80 percent of the value."

- Mary & Tom Poppendieck in Lean Software Development

Why Selleo?



Over the years, we have established a number of longlasting partnerships with clients from Europe and America, serving them both on- and off-site, very often on multiple projects.



We have gained rich experience developing a wide variety of applications in diverse business domains.



Clients praise us for our readiness to meet challenges, adaptability and determination to solve their problems. They say we are friendly, open and loyal. Talk to them.



In time, we have managed to master a broad spectrum of skills to deliver a comprehensive set of services under one mof



We go beyond solid engineering skills. We strengthen our clients with web business insights as well as creative design. Our experience has led us to believe technology and artwork are servants to our clients' business goals.



While delivering a number of nearshore / offshore projects, we have developed a sound, process-based approach to fit your software product as well as your project implementation strategy.



Why this tool

Several reasons to use wkhtmltopdf

- It is based on Webkit engine
- It interprets JavaScript, which may be used to deliver some content
- It has number of useful options for PDF generation process
- It outputs nice looking PDFs!
- ...
- It is free (under GNU General Public License v3)

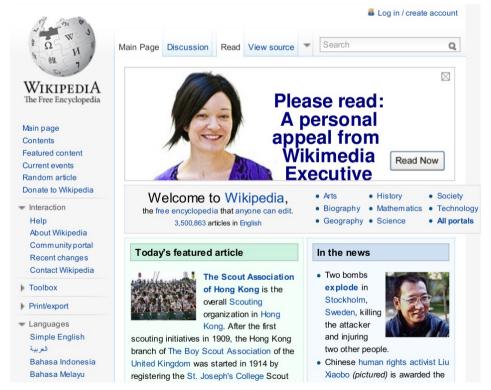


Simple Examples

wkhtmltopdf http://cnn.com cnn_page.pdf

wkhtmltopdf http://en.wikipedia.org wiki_page.pdf







What If I need more

wkhtmltopdf allows you to generate pdf:

- from multiple resources
- with customized headers and footers (ex. with page numbers)
- with automatically generated table of contents
- in grayscale, economic way ready to print
- In custom size, zoom, orientation, with custom margins and...

much more :)





Ruby on Rails usage

You can use wkhtmltopdf through PDFKit gem!

- customize default PDF settings in initializer
- use middleware to get PDF view of any page in application
- save PDF on server or render to browser



Ruby on Rails usage: installation

```
PDFKit:
gem install pdfkit

wkhtmltopdf:
# download: http://code.google.com/p/wkhtmltopdf/downloads/list
xz -d wkhtmltopdf-xxx.tar.lzma
tar -xf wkhtmltopdf-xxx.tar
sudo mv wkhtmltopdf-xxx /usr/local/bin/wkhtmltopdf
```



Ruby on Rails: usage

You can use wkhtmltopdf through PDFKit gem!

- customize default PDF settings in initializer
- use middleware to get PDF view of any page in application
- save PDF on server or render to browser

```
kit = PDFKit.new(html, :page_size => 'Letter')
pdf = kit.to_pdf # Get an inline PDF
file = kit.to_file('/path/to/pdf') # Save the PDF to a file
```



Ruby on Rails: config

You can customize default settings of PDFKit

```
# config/initializers/pdfkit.rb

PDFKit.configure do |config|
  config.wkhtmltopdf = '/path/to/wkhtmltopdf'
  config.default_options = {
    :page_size => 'Legal',
    :print_media_type => true
  }
end
```



Ruby on Rails: middleware

You can create PDF view of any page of your application. It will be accessible by using .pdf format, ex. /path/to/index.pdf

All pages:

```
# in application.rb
require 'pdfkit'
config.middleware.use PDFKit::Middleware
```



Ruby on Rails: middleware

Certain action example:

```
# in environment.rb

Mime::Type.register "application/pdf", :pdf
# in action

respond_to do |format|
        format.html # index.html.erb
        format.pdf { render :text =>
PDFKit.new( post_url(@post) ).to_pdf }
end
```



Sources

- wkhtmltopdf homepage http://code.google.com/p/wkhtmltopdf/
- wkhtmltopdf manual http://madalgo.au.dk/~jakobt/wkhtmltopdf-0.10.0_beta4-doc.html
- PDFKit homepage https://github.com/jdpace/PDFKit

