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PHP SESSIONS AND COOKIES

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HIGH LEVEL SUMMARY

- The web is “stateless” - the browser does not maintain a connection to the server while you are looking at a page.
- So we need a way for servers to know “which browser is this?”
 - In the browser state is stored in “Cookies”
 - In the server state is stored in “Sessions”



PHP - SESSIONS

PHP - SESSIONS

- An alternative way to make data accessible across the various pages of an entire website is to use a PHP Session.
- A session creates a file in a temporary directory on the server where registered session variables and their values are stored.
- This data will be available to all pages on the site during that visit.

PHP - SESSIONS

Starting a PHP Session

- A PHP session is easily started by making a call to the `session_start()` function.
- This function first checks if a session is already started and if none is started then it starts one.
- It is recommended to put the call to `session_start()` at the beginning of the page.

PHP - SESSIONS

Creating a PHP Session

- A PHP session can be set by `$_SESSION["sessionname"]`.

```
<?php
// Start the session
session_start();
?>
```

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
<body>
```

```
<?php
// Set session variables
$_SESSION["favcolor"] = "green";
$_SESSION["favanimal"] = "cat";
echo "Session variables are set.";
?>
```

```
</body>
</html>
```

PHP - SESSIONS

Destroying a PHP Session

- A PHP session can be destroyed by session_destroy() function.
- This function does not need any argument and a single call can destroy all the session variables.
- If you want to destroy a single session variable then you can use unset() function to unset a session variable.

Here is the example to unset a single variable –

```
<?php
    unset($_SESSION['counter']);
?>
```

Here is the call which will destroy all the session variables –

```
<?php
    session_destroy();
?>
```



PHP - COOKIES

WEB COOKIES TO THE RESCUE

- Technically, cookies are arbitrary pieces of data chosen by the Web server and sent to the browser.
- The browser returns them unchanged to the server, introducing a state (memory of previous events) into otherwise stateless HTTP transactions.
- Without cookies, each retrieval of a Web page or component of a Web page is an isolated event, mostly unrelated to all other views of the pages of the same site.

COOKIES IN THE BROWSER

- Cookies are marked as to the web addresses, they come from - the browser only sends back cookies that were originally set by the same web server
- Cookies have an expiration date - some last for years - others are short-term and go away as soon as the browser is closed

TWO KINDS OF COOKIES

- Two kinds of cookies
 - Long-lived - who you are - account name last access time - you can close and reopen your browser and it is still there
 - Temporary - used to identify your session - it goes away when you close the browser

PHP - COOKIES

Setting cookies

- A PHP cookies can be set by setcookie() function.

Deleting cookies

- To delete a cookie, use the setcookie() function with an expiration date in the past.

Setting a cookie

```
<?php
$cookie_name = "user";
$cookie_value = "John Doe";
setcookie($cookie_name, $cookie_value, time() + (86400 * 30), "/"); // 86400 = 1 day
?>
```

Deleting a cookie

```
<?php
// set the expiration date to one hour ago
setcookie("user", "", time() - 3600);
?>
```