

EventTools for Web Site Administrators

1) Introduction

EventTools is a small online package to provide web-based access to tour and clinic information for NMRA regional and national conventions. It was originally created for the X2011West NMRA convention, and continues to evolve.

EventTools stores a single copy of information, including:

- Clinics
- General/Prototype Tours
- Layouts and Layout Tours
- Miscellaneous Events
- Operating Sessions and requests

From this, EventTools can create order forms, on-line shopping cart, calendars, schedules, printed masters, etc, with completely consistent information. As events sell out, get cancelled or modified, attendees can always be given the most up-to-date and consistent information.

This document is for a webmaster or programmer who is maintaining or adapting EventTools. For user level information, see the Event Tools User Guide, a separate document.

We strongly recommend providing your contention with two instances of EventTools. The first is a “test” one where the information is transient, and people can experiment with the tools without risk of damaging any real data.

The second is the “production” copy contains the real data that will be used for the Convention itself.

The EventTools main page (yours will differ in details):

X2011West Event Tools

Sample page for access to the X2011West tour and clinic tools.

	General Tours	Layout Tours	Other Events	Layouts	Clinics
Review Content	List	List		List	
Enter/Change Content	Enter/Change	Enter/Change	Enter/Change	Enter/Change	Enter/Change
Other Edits		Add Layouts To Tour	Add or remove tags	Quick Entry	Add or remove tags
Index Example	Index	Index	Index	Index	Index
Format Example	Formatted View	Formatted View	Formatted View	Formatted View	Formatted View
X2011west Test Pages (testeventtools only)	X2011west Page	X2011west Page		X2011west Page	X2011west Page
Other Displays	Interactive General/Proto Tour Calendar	Tour Maps (put tour number in URL) Interactive Layout Tour Calendar	Misc Events Grouped by Location Interactive Misc Events Calendar		Clinics Grouped by Location Interactive Clinics Calendar

General Displays	Index Advanced Section Tours
	All Advanced Section Tours
	Download Events Calendar
	Full Interactive Calendar

2) Technical Information for Webmasters

Briefly: Getting EventTools. PHP structure. HTML structure. Use of CSS.

2.1) Getting EventTools

EventTools is provided subject to the GNU Public License (GPL). It available¹ from an open-source project on GitHub at <https://github.com/bobjacobsen/EventTools>. We distribute it via Git so that it's easy to apply patches as the software evolves.

EventTools was written and is maintained by Bob Jacobsen. Please contact Bob directly if you want more information on using EventTools.

To download a copy of the current version use Git:

```
git clone https://github.com/bobjacobsen/EventTools.git
```

This will create an EventTools directory containing an 'eventtools' directory.

¹ EventTools was previously maintained as a project on SourceForge.net at <http://eventtools.sf.net> If you have a version from there, contact Bob Jacobsen for help updating it to the GitHub-hosted version. The version on SourceForge is no longer being maintained.

3) Installing EventTools

This section is a short checklist of operations to install and configure EventTools for basic operation.

- First, you need working PHP and MySQL. PhpMyAdmin will be used for the examples here. It's strongly recommended, but isn't required; if you don't have it, you'll have to figure out another way to administer your databases.
 - Get a copy of the code (see above).
 - Put a symbolic link to the 'eventtools' directory from the root level of your web server, e.g. `~/public_html/`, so that it can be accessed as, for example, <http://myhost/eventtools>. It is strongly recommended that you link it to just under the root level on the server, so that `/eventtools` URLs refer to it.
 - At this point, check that you can see the EventTools index page at <http://myhost/eventtools/index.php>
 - Create a MySQL database to store your data or pick an existing one. EventTools puts a common prefix on all its tables within that database, so it can coexist to some extent on a shared database, but a dedicated one is probably better.
 - Edit the checked-out `access.php` file to have your database access information:
- ```
$opts['hn'] = 'myhost'; // MySQL host name
$opts['un'] = 'mySqlName'; // MySQL user name
$opts['pw'] = 'lousyPassword1'; // MySQL password
$opts['db'] = 'myDB'; // database name to reference
$event_tools_db_prefix = 'event_2012_'; // prefix on all table names
```
- If you have installed Zen Cart and want it integrated with EventTools, make a temporary copy of these files:

- `define_db.sql`
- `define_views.sql`
- `load_defaults.sql` files

If you have not installed and won't be using Zen Cart, make temporary copies of these files:

- `define_zen_repl.sql`
- `define_db.sql`
- `define_views.sql`
- `load_defaults.sql`

Do a global search & replace in each of those to replace `'prefix_'` with the table prefix you selected above, e.g. `'event_2012_'`.

Have MySQL run all of those files into your database in that order; if you have phpMyAdmin that's recommended. You should get:

```
MySQL returned an empty result set (i.e. zero rows).
```

except for the last, which should give “n rows affected” (with n small)

- At this point, you should be able to display a blank list of layouts without any error messages via [http://myhost/foo/eventtools/edit\\_layouts\\_all.php](http://myhost/foo/eventtools/edit_layouts_all.php)

EventTools itself is now up. The next steps are to customize it by editing options in the access.php file, and then to integrate it into your own web pages.

### **3.1) Configuring the access.php File**

The access.php file is the central configuration file for EventTools. It contains the necessary information to access the underlying MySQL database. It also contains the variable definitions that control presentation and selection of EventTools data. The master copy from GitHub is heavily commented, and we recommend that you work through it line-by-line when you first install EventTools. A few specific parts are described more in this section.

Note that because access.php contains access control information, it is very important that it never be publicly available. In particular, don't commit it to your local Git repository!

#### **3.1.1) Event Components**

EventTools supports a number of different kind of events: Tours (of several types), clinics, general events, and operating sessions. If your convention doesn't have all of those, you can suppress them by setting the relevant “\$event\_tools\_option\_\*” value “FALSE” in the access.php file. A small operating weekend will generally only have “layouts” and “sessions” set TRUE:

```
$event_tools_option_general_tours = FALSE;
$event_tools_option_layout_tours = FALSE;
$event_tools_option_other_events = FALSE;
$event_tools_option_layouts = TRUE;
$event_tools_option_clinics = FALSE;
$event_tools_option_op_sessions = TRUE;
```

#### **3.1.2) Free-form vs Constrained Entry**

A number of fields can either have free-form contents, or have only specific allowed variables. You select this in the “constraints” section of the EventTools access.php file at the level of individual variables. For example, setting:

```
$event_tools_constrain_scale = FALSE;
```

allows you to enter arbitrary text in the “Scale” field of the layout entries. “HO”, “N and N30”, “unknown”, “1:87”, and “some mixed stuff” would all be acceptable values. This allows a lot of flexibility, but makes it harder to create powerful search and selection capabilities because there will be all

On the other hand, setting:

```
$event_tools_constrain_scale = TRUE;
```

configures EventTools to only allow specific values in the “Scale” field. When this is set TRUE:

- You pick from a selection list when entering, instead of having a place to enter free-form text
- A constraint table contains the acceptable values

- A default set of acceptable values is loaded
- An enter/edit page for the list of acceptable values is provided to make it easy to define convention-specific values

Note that the value is directly stored in the MySQL row, regardless of whether the field is free-form or constrained. This means that changing a constraint row doesn't change any of the places where the value has already been entered; they'll still have the old text.

### **3.1.3)Access and Authentication**

The EventTools database tables can only be modified via the edit\_\* files, i.e. the myPhpEdit pages. Some sensitive information (layout owner phone and email, etc) can also be seen through the list\_\* pages, and some of the administrative tools (the mapping tools, etc).

If `$eventtools_require_authentication = TRUE`, a simple table-based access check will be done via the users table before allowing access to the change forms or forms with sensitive information. Generally, people use the email address of administrators as their user IDs, but you can use whatever convention you wish.

This is not a high-security access control mechanism, and it's not intended to be one. For more stringent requirements, it should be possible to replace the mechanism in the secure.php file without changes elsewhere, see below.

All myPhpEdit modifications are logged to a “changelog” table in the database automatically by myPhpEdit. If the access.php file includes `$eventtools_require_user = TRUE`, the user will be prompted on first access to a page for their user ID to be put in that logging. EventTools can also email copies of changes for audit & backup, including putting a custom value at the start of the email to make sorting and filtering easier. All these options are configured by this block in access.php:

```
// to get new and changed entries logged & reported via email, uncomment these
lines
$opts['logtable'] = $event_tools_db_prefix.'eventtools_changelog';
$event_tools_notify_email_address = 'rgj1927@pacbell.net';
$event_tools_notify_email_prefix = $event_tools_event_name;
```

### **3.1.4)Email setup**

Several pages can email information to the webmaster, attendees and hosts. The configuration of this can be tricky, as services like AOL and Yahoo are not particularly interested in trusting email from your site.

There are several settings in access.php that control this.

- `$event_tools_registrar_email_address` – this is the default value for “from:” and “reply-to:” fields in sent emails
- `$event_tools_registrar_email_prefix` – this is provided as a prefix on the subject line to make it easier to filter out EventTools emails in your incoming mailbox

AOL (and to some extent Yahoo) are likely to reject email that they think don't come from the sending domain. E.g. if your email address is @gmail.com, but gmail.com doesn't resolve to the IP address you're sending from, AOL won't accept your mail. The solution is to create an email address on your

host machine and put that in the “From:” field, and put the registrar's real email in the “Reply-to” field.

## 3.2) Web pages

EventTools provides complete a complete web interface to enter and administer your event data. The entry point for this is the index.php page in the EventTools directory.

- Pages with names like edit\*.php are the phpMyEdit add/change/delete pages.
- Pages with names like list\*.php are comprehensive dumps of content, useful for checking.

EventTools also provides access to the data for inclusion in your own formatted pages, e.g. for display to the user. For examples of how that's done (which may also be useful when checking your data entry):

- Pages with names like format\* display various forms of formatted output tables, with only minimal actual formatting. These serve as examples of how to get the data for your own pages.
- Pages with names like index\*.php are minimal-size indexes, suitable for finding a specific entry in the longer formatted pages.

It's not intended that any of those pages will be available to convention attendees directly. Rather, the index\* and format\* pages will provide examples for creating main-site pages.

### 3.2.1) URL Queries

URL queries are used to select entries, and control the ordering of the EventTools output. For example, appending “?presenter=Bill” to an EventTools URL will, by default, display only clinics with “Bill” as part of the presenter name. Appending “?order=date” will order the display by start date and time. See the “samples.php” file for examples, and the “parser.php” file for structure and a list of available query terms.

| Select Term                                                                                  | Clinics | Misc Event | General Tour | Layout Tour | Layouts |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|------------|--------------|-------------|---------|
| changed<br>For user at the convention, indicates the entry changed after close-out date      | Y       | Y          | Y            | Y           | Y       |
| tag<br>Indicates that a tag is attached to this event or clinic, e.g. tag=DCC                | Y       | Y          |              |             |         |
| date<br>Day on which this occurs, e.g. ?date=07-12                                           | Y       | Y          | Y            | Y           | Y       |
| number                                                                                       | Y       | Y          | Y            | Y           | Y       |
| id                                                                                           | Y       | Y          | Y            | Y           | Y       |
| layoutid<br>Allows you to reference the ID of the layout, without confusion with the ID of a |         |            |              | Y           | Y       |

| Select Term                                                                                                               | Clinics | Misc Event | General Tour | Layout Tour | Layouts |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|------------|--------------|-------------|---------|
| layout tour                                                                                                               |         |            |              |             |         |
| name<br>Matches any string in the name                                                                                    | Y       | Y          | Y            | Y           | Y       |
| layoutname<br>Matches any substring in the layout name                                                                    |         |            |              | Y           | Y       |
| owner<br>Matches any substring in the first or last name of layout owner                                                  |         |            |              |             | Y       |
| access<br>Matches any substring in the accessibility code                                                                 |         |            |              | Y           | Y       |
| presenter<br>Matches any substring in the first or last name of clinic presenter                                          | Y       |            |              |             |         |
| scale<br>Matches any of one or more scale strings, e.g. scale=HO,N<br>Matching is text matching, so ?scale=N matches Nn3  |         |            |              | Y           | Y       |
| gauge<br>Matches any of one or more gauge strings, e.g. gauge=HO,N<br>Matching is text matching, so ?gauge=n3 matches n35 |         |            |              | Y           | Y       |
| prototype                                                                                                                 |         |            |              | Y           | Y       |
| layout<br>Matches in layout name                                                                                          |         |            |              | Y           | Y       |
| match<br>Generic text search through (most) fields                                                                        | Y       | Y          | Y            | Y           | Y       |
| status<br>Greater than or equal check on status field                                                                     | Y       | Y          | Y            | Y           | Y       |
| type<br>Used to check for leading G or P in the tour type, hence general or prototype tour                                |         |            | Y            |             |         |
| where<br>Allows providing a MySQL “where” clause for inclusion in the query                                               | Y       | Y          | Y            | Y           | Y       |

| Select Term                      | Clinics | Misc Event | General Tour | Layout Tour | Layouts |
|----------------------------------|---------|------------|--------------|-------------|---------|
| control<br>Layout control system |         |            |              | Y           | Y       |
| era                              |         |            |              |             | Y       |
| class                            |         |            |              |             | Y       |
| theme                            |         |            |              |             | Y       |
| scenery                          |         |            |              |             | Y       |
| size                             |         |            |              |             | Y       |

The presentation sequence of the results can be controlled with an “order” term in the URL query. These include:

| Ordering Term      | Database Field(s)                             |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| ?order=status      | status_code                                   |
| ?order=lstatus     | layout_status_code                            |
| ?order=name        | name                                          |
| ?order=number      | number                                        |
| ?order=date        | start_date                                    |
| ?order=time        | start_date                                    |
| ?order=price       | tour_price                                    |
| ?order=presenter   | clinic_presenter                              |
| ?order=clinic_room | clinic_location_code                          |
| ?order=misc_room   | misc_location_code                            |
| ?order=city        | layout_city                                   |
| ?order=owner       | layout_owner_firstname, layout_owner_lastname |
| ?order=lastname    | layout_owner_lastname                         |
| ?order=layoutname  | layout_name                                   |

### 3.2.2)HTML tables

The formatted output of EventTools is HTML tables. Each element (table, tr, td and span for content) is given a specific class name so that it can be located by JavaScript or CSS.

### 3.2.3)CSS

All formatting is done via CSS. EventTools itself does only minimal formatting. Instead, EventTools



puts each HTML element into a named class, so that CSS can directly format it.

For more information, see the separate “EventTools and CSS” document.

## 4) Updating EventTools

EventTools is maintained in git. This makes it easy to update the code and documentation so that it stays current with the most recent version. Doing

```
git pull
```

will update the code with any changes since the last update, and give you a list of changed files. Your own local changes will be preserved.

Sometimes, the code requires changes to the MySQL table layout, such as different sizes for columns or new columns or tables. The “update\_table.sql” file is maintained to handle these. Please read its comments after each update, and execute the file in your MySQL server if needed. Remember to take backups, and that in general you'll have to update the “prefix” strings to be what you're using on your local installation. It may also tell you to run the “define\_views.sql” file afterwards, in which case you should do that after editing the prefix strings.

### 4.1) Contributing your changes

We welcome improvements to EventTools!

If you have modifications, or even documentation improvements, that you'd like to contribute back to the effort, please contact Bob Jacobsen. Git and GitHub makes it easy to do this.

## 5) Technical Information on EventTools Structure

This section discusses the internal structure of EventTools. It will help if you have to modify it or install it in a unique environment.

EventTools depends on several other open-source products:

- MySQL (part of the usual LAMP stack on a web server) – the database access in EventTools is coded in PHP for mysql. No attempt has been made to write database-independent code.
- PHP – At least version 5.3 is required (large parts of EventTools might work with older versions, but EventTools uses the calendar handling in 5.3 when working with schedules)
- phpMyEdit (<http://www.phpmyedit.org/>) is used to create the web forms to add/edit database data.
- Git – The master development copy of EventTools is kept in an Git repository. If you want a copy of EventTools, you obtain it as Git clone so that you can easily merge updates in the future.

### 5.1) PHP source code structure

All PHP source code files are individually included by the top-level PHP web page, so that any needed directory structure can be added as part of creating the web pages.

The “access.php” page must be included first in every case. It provides all necessary PHP customization, including the MySQL access data, database names, and various global options. It should be the only file you need to change to move EventTools from one location to another.

## 5.2) MySQL Use

EventTools prefixes each of its MySQL table names with a specific prefix made of two parts. One is specified in the access.php file, so that you can have multiple instances of EventTools (“test\_”, “prod\_” in a single database. The second is “eventtools\_” to separate the EventTools tables from others. A typical table name is “test\_eventtools\_clinics”.

“Events” are held in four tables:

- \_clinics
- \_layout\_tours
- \_general\_tours
- \_misc\_event\_tours

The first few elements in each row are common, which allows common processing:

- id – a small int, used for e.g. links. Unique, internal primary key
- number – small string (e.g. “L123”; yes, we know that's not a number, but that's what people always call it)
- name – also a title for the clinics
- start\_date - “2011-07-03 13:00:00” (standard MySQL format)
- end\_date – ditto
- description – used in summaries, etc
- status\_code – keyed to the \_tour\_status\_values table

## 5.3) Data Structure

EventTools either needs to have Zen Cart installed in the same MySQL database, or have it's own copy of certain customer tables loaded. The “define\_zen\_repl.sql” file will install these if you're not using Zen Cart.

The “define\_db.sql” file will configure the MySQL tables for an EventTools instance. That needs to be followed by “define\_views.sql” to create the cross-table views. (You should also run “define\_views.sql” after any updates to table structure so that the views pick them up the changes)

Note that define\_db.sql has to give the complete table names, including the prefix, you should do a bulk edit from “test\_eventtools\_” if you want to use another prefix, then update the access.php file.

The “load\_defaults.sql” file will load defaults contents. This includes some items absolutely needed (a default empty layout value so that scheduling always has something to key on; a bootstrap account; etc)

and also defaults for clinic location codes, handicapped access codes, and event status codes.

The “load\_db.sql” file will load a preliminary set of content for testing purposes. You shouldn't do this on your production database.

## 5.4) Security

Only minimal PHP header access security is provided via the security.php file and calls. Most format\* pages are unrestricted. The list\* pages, which may contain private contact information, have access restricted to a class of users. The edit\* pages, which allow read and write to all information, are restricted to a (smaller) class of users.

Security is provided by the secure.php file, invoked at the top of pages to be secured. It in turn uses WWW-Authenticate and the \$\_SERVER['PHP\_AUTH\_USER'] mechanism to identify the user name, which it checks against the (prefix)\_eventtools\_users table in MySQL. **This does not work for some host configurations!**<sup>2</sup>

The access.php tools has paired options that control that default secure.php file:

- event\_tools\_require\_user\_id – the user has to provide a user ID (email address) for logging purposes, but it's not verified
- event\_tools\_require\_user\_authenticate – the user has to provide a user ID (email address) and password which is checked against the (prefix)\_eventtools\_users table; access is only granted if there is a matching row

EventTools itself does not provide an edit page for the (prefix)\_eventtools\_users table. Maybe someday, but for now, use admin-level tools like phpMyEdit to add and modify entries in that table.

Passwords must be all lower case in the database; they're converted during the match (an early committee member demanded this).

The user\_email\_log\_skip database field controls whether logging emails are sent when this user changes entries: True (1) omits sending messages.

## 6) Zen Cart Interface

The X2011west convention used Zen Cart for its online store. This section describes the interface between EventTools and Zen Cart. Most people who use EventTools for operating events don't need an online store, and don't install Zen Cart.

We decided early on not to mix database tables between Zen Cart and Event Tools. Although their tables live in the same MySQL database, we're accessing them separately with the two separate applications.

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<sup>2</sup> In particular, it's known to not work with default server configurations that use external authentication, e.g. GoDaddy servers. Much work is needed in this area. If the user fields seem stuck on empty (“”), you'll have to turn off authentication in the access.php file via setting all of \$event\_tools\_require\_user\_id, \$event\_tools\_require\_user\_authenticate, \$event\_tools\_require\_customer\_id and \$event\_tools\_require\_customer\_authenticate to FALSE.

## **6.1) Loading Zen Cart from EventTools**

See the EventTools-ZenCart manual, which includes items like:

- Category matching e.g. Layout Tours as category
- Conversion routine using Easy Populate:
- Use of event status codes, add-to-cart links:

## **6.2) Accessing Zen Cart for Attendee (Customer) Contact Information**

The OPSIG organizers wanted to cross-check operating session requests with attendee name and address. This was done by a read-only view into the Zen Cart tables from the EventTools tables. If you are not using Zen Cart, the `define_zen_repl.sql` file will define substitute tables to hold attendee information such as name, address, etc. Alternately, if you have that information in another table, the view can be redefined to access it from there.

## **7) Special Cases & Lessons Learned**

The X2011west organization encountered a number of special cases. Many of them were built into EventTools, and become not-so-special. This section describes how the remaining cases were handled manually.

- NASG Banquet, NASG Welcome Get Together, X2011west Nonquet: These are scheduled items, for which tickets are sold. That makes them like general tours. At the same time, the organizers wanted them to appear in the general schedule, which makes them Misc Events.
- Jelly-Belly tours: These are purchased general tours, but the ticket holder is allowed to get zero-cost tickets to bring along their children.
- Modeling with the Masters: Formally clinics, these require advance purchase, with only certain scales available for certain clinics.
- Missing data handling – A lot of effort went into various ways to color the “list” forms, provide insertions for missing data, etc. Committee members kept asking for more and more support in this area, but in the end it was all a waste of time: If data is missing, the thing to do is to have the responsible person get it and enter it. If that can't be done, the Committee needs to accept that and display empty fields or, at most, suppress display of that item
- Entry forms, esp the email form for layout owners: There are tools for emailing layout owners, clinic organizers, etc a link that allows them to update their own information. This didn't really work.
- Use of prod & test databases – strongly recommended! If you have a large committee, allowing them to play in a test instance can be very important training. Make sure that the URLs are different, and the page headings are different, to limit confusion.
- Zero price (default is -1 for “no data) and self-scheduled (no times, soft times) tours (2011-0707 00:00:00 is a blank time) – requires more work.