



EXPERT DEVELOPER



Avinash • Mar 17, 2011 • 8

Last Modified Header vs Expire Header vs eTag

Web Development

What is Last Modified Header?

The Last Modified header field indicates the date and time at which the origin server believes your file was last modified.

Last-Modified = "Last-Modified" ":" HTTP-date

For example:

Last-Modified: Tue, 15 Nov 1994 12:45:26 GMT

What is Expire Header?

When any user comes for the first time at that time your browser will make a number of HTTP requests to download all the contents. With Expire Headers you can make those contents cacheable for a certain (defined) time, so for next it will load the content from the cache instead of making the request to server content.

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Expire header should be applied to all static components including CSS, js, Flash files.

```
1 <FilesMatch "\.(ico|pdf|flv|jpg|jpeg|png|gif|js|css|swf)$">
2     # Set Expire Date to 15 Apr 2011
3     Header set Expires "Thu, 15 Apr 2010 20:00:00 GMT"
4     # You can set Fixed time also
5     ExpiresActive On
6     ExpiresDefault A300          # 5 Min
7     ExpiresDefault A2700         # 45 Min
8     ExpiresDefault A3600         # 1 Hour
9     ExpiresDefault A54000        # 15 Hour
10    ExpiresDefault A86400         # 1 Day
11    ExpiresDefault A518400        # 6 Days
12    ExpiresDefault A604800        # 1 Week
13    ExpiresDefault A1814400       # 3 Week
14    ExpiresDefault A2419200       # 1 Month
15    ExpiresDefault A26611200      # 11 Month
16    ExpiresDefault A29030400      # 1 year , Never Expire
17    # You can use any of the time limit based on your content refresh time.
18</FilesMatch>
```

Be sure that you should not catch the content for more that one year, as its violets the RFC guidelines for Catching the content in browser.

What is eTag?

Have you ever looked at Browser Response Header? You will see one thing which is eTag, Then What is this eTag?

eTag is the Entity Tags, an Unique identifier associated with the each resource of the site.

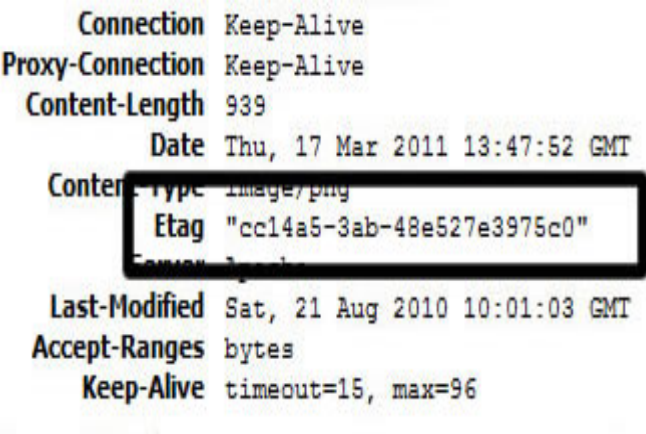


To turn of the eTag you can use below code in .htaccess fie.

```
1FileETag None
```

When ever your browser make the request to the any resource, first it will check the eTag and if-match header to check the resource is modified or not since last it was cache.

You can see the Browser Response headers using Firebug Net Panel, Please have a look at the below image for the reference.



Conclusion:

From my point of view you should do below to make the proper caching.



Guest

Boiss



E-Tag is, as far as i know, better than last modified, because it rely on the MD5 of the file rather than the last modification date. so you wont redownload the file if it was the same file re-uploaded to the server but without keeping the original modif date.

0

Reply

April 5, 2011 11:30 pm



Guest

Ac



I'm sorry but I have to point our that you are Wrong.
<http://httpd.apache.org/docs/2.2/mod/core.html#FileETag>

0

Reply

October 23, 2011 7:41 am



Author

Avinash



Can you please elaborate about your concern???

0

Reply

October 24, 2011 9:34 am



Guest

krnl



excerpt: "...In Apache 1.3.22 and earlier, the ETag value was always formed from the file's inode, size, and last-modified time (mtime) ..."

So his argument of unmodified files is invalid.

0

Reply

November 17, 2011 10:44 pm



Guest

Travelgrove Labs



Hi, Thanks for the post. However I do believe this does not make any sense: "If you have used the Expire Header then you should disable the Last Modified Header, This is because, some browsers are blocking the Last Modified Header if Expire Header is available." - So I should disable Last-Modified 'cause it will be blocked in some browsers if Expire header is present? And so what? It will be ignored by some browsers and that's it, other browsers still might require it... also I have read that in newest versions (FF4+, IE8/9) caching won't work properly w/o the... [Read more »](#)

0

Reply

May 8, 2012 1:57 am



Guest

Janet



<http://stackoverflow.com/questions/824152/what-takes-precedence-the-etag-or-last-modified-http-header>

Boiss is right.
Regarding how frequent the changes are, depends on the type of E-tag: strong or weak.

0

Reply

July 4, 2012 4:59 am



ETAGs vs Expire Headers | Geek Ride



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Reply

August 24, 2012 12:49 am



Guest

Sam



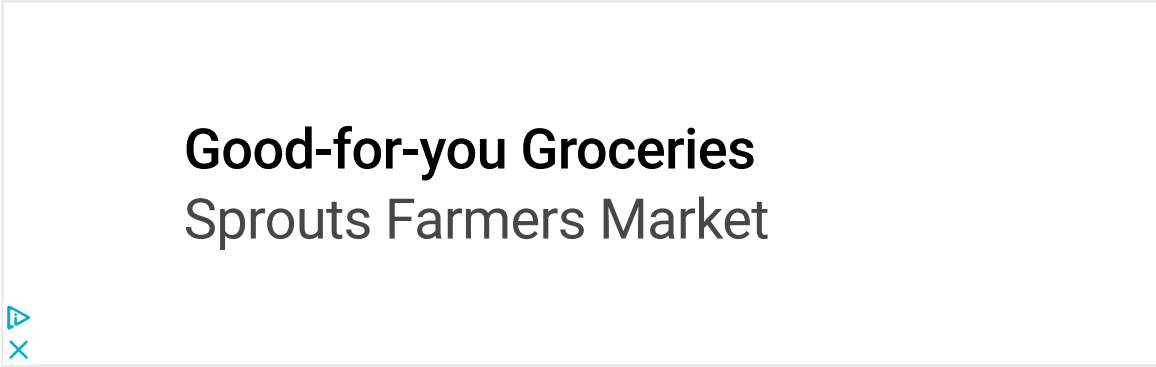
Hi, How to enable caching for image files like .img or .png files alone?? If I set like
response.setDateHeader("Expires", System.currentTimeMillis() + 604800000L); then the response will intimate the broser about this expiry for all the files right.. so how to limi it to image files alone.. Please explain

0

Reply

April 12, 2013 9:32 pm

Use the expire header by setting the far expiration date.



If you have used the Expire Header then you should disable the Last Modified Header, This is because, some browsers are blocking the Last Modified Header if Expire Header is available.

If you have used the Expire Header then you should disable the eTag , reason is same as for Last Modified.

Let me know your suggestion by commenting here.

Tags: [#caching_using_apache_module](#), [#eTag](#), [#eTag_vs_last_modified](#), [#Expire Header](#), [#expire_header_vs_eTag](#), [#how_to_disable_eTag](#), [#Last_modified_Header](#), [#last_modified_vs_expire_hedaer](#), [#server_side_caching](#), [#turn_off_eTag](#)

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Avinash

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