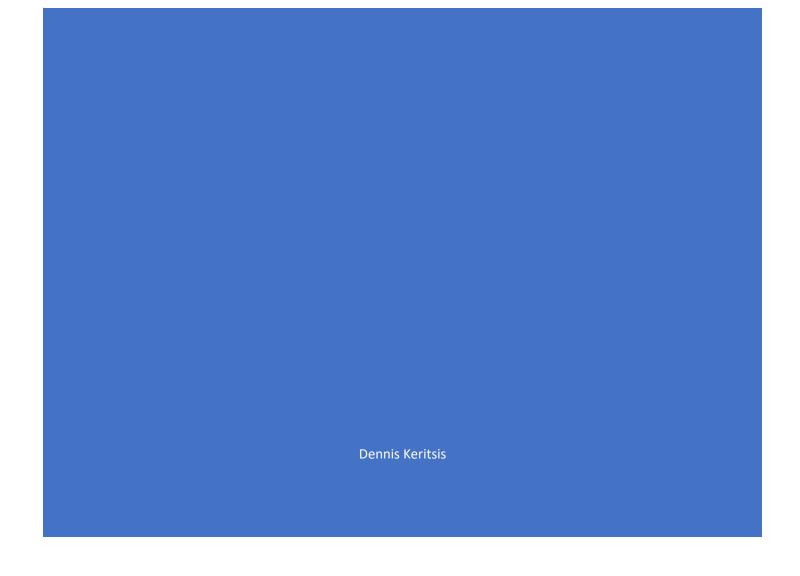


PRACTICAL FINAL



Problems

- A user can merely copy and paste the URL to the Welcome Page with: (http://192.168.74.131/Final/welcome.php). New cookie isn't generated upon login. This is related to Session Management.
- 2. Can just press Login button with no data. This is related to Session Management and improperly validating input.
- 3. Verbose messaging for incorrect username and password.
- 4. Verbose messaging for username already take for registration.
- 5. Password isn't hashed. We don't want to store the password itself. We want to compare it against a hash of the password.
- 6. Need unique usernames to prevent username enumeration, like email addresses.
- 7. Welcome Page doesn't outline the user logged in.
- 8. The Welcome Page does not have a session time out.
- 9. If the Welcome Page had a session time out, it doesn't outline for how long.

Fix of Proper Session Management (1)¹

Code Discussion(1)(a)²

- 10. For login.php code change, lines 6-8, 13-24, 28, 41-47, 50-51, 53-54, 57-60, 63-65, 67-69, 71-74, 80, and 103 were altered.
- 11. For welcome.php code change, lines 4-18 and 33-34 were altered.
- 12. HTTP is stateless and we want to use cookies to maintain that state. We want to generate a cookie once we have verified that the username and password is correct with "session_start();". Additionally, we want to use attributes within the cookie. Specifically, I choose to use "start_time", "expire_time", and "username". The attributes of "start_time" and "expire_time" are like what they sound like. See Login.php at II. 57-60. They are times to maintain a timer for the session after login.
- 13. As noted above, someone could just copy and page the URL to the welcome page and get in. We want to fix this by having the "header" function redirect the user if there isn't a proper "username" or if the username is merely empty.⁴ Additionally, I wanted to take the username and display it on the Welcome page. *See* Welcome.php at II. 7-10, 33-34.
- 14. I want to take the code to the next level by adding a session timer. *Compare* Welcome.php at II. 11-18 *with* Login.php at II. 57-60.

Security Implications (1)(b)

15. There is poor session management. Without any authentication, a user can merely copy and paste the URL to the Welcome Page with: (http://192.168.74.131/Final/welcome.php). See

¹ Pages of login.php and welcome.php are of primary concern in this section.

² All code changes can be found in the Appendices (A) through (D). Section (A) is the files overview. Section (B) is the login.php comparison. Section (C) is the register.php comparison. Section (D) is the welcome.php comparison.

³ Username was an attribute already in the cookie, but I am using it now in the welcome page.

⁴ This was pretty trivial since this was in the lab4c code.

- Section Problems at Example (1) *supra*. Essentially, authentication is totally useless. In the Final code, a cookie is created; however, the cookie isn't properly utilized.
- 16. Additionally, an individual could merely just login without entering a username and password since there was no session management. See Section Problems at Example (2). With a cookie being used to validate a username and lack of username, a cookie not properly set will redirect the user back to the login page.
- 17. With regards to social implications, it is important to notify *who* is logged in. By using the cookie, we are able to display who is logged in. Sometimes, if a computer is a shared computer, it is not always clear who is logged in. This notification will help users maintain their sessions. *See* Section Problems at Example (7).
- 18. Building future on social implications, many users stay logged in for an extended period of time. This can be problematic if the computer is shared. I set a timer for 1 minute to remedy this issue. *See* Section Problems at Examples (8-9).

Section (2) Front End⁶

Verification of Input (2)(a)

Code Discussion (2)(a)(i)

- 19. Changes related to Verification of input can be found in II. 6-8, 13-24, 28, and 103 in login.php and II. 11-15 and 49 of register.php. In the older code, POST messages were merely sent. This allowed for messages that are blanks strings of usernames and password to be sent. The fix was simple in that we wanted to make sure that empty was not TRUE for both the username and password. Additionally, the trim() function was used to remove any blank spaces. Ultimately, if these factors check out, we would send an SQL message accordingly. See Login.php at II. 28-29.
- 20. Additionally, there was some registration quandaries that were fixed. We want username to be emails and to indeed be valid emails. *See* Register.php at II. 11-15, 19-32.

Security Implications (2)(a)(ii)

- 21. As noted in Section Problems at Example (2) *supra*., an individual can just login without a username and password. This frontend code adds another layer of protection. Also, the trim function may be helpful because hackers are always coming up with crafty ways to circumvent what code we are using. It is always good to keep our code tight and know exactly what is getting POST'ed.
- 22. Additionally, I made all the users register with an email. This helps to mitigate any username duplications (although the backend handles this). Moreover, this helps mitigate any username enumeration hackers might use since username would be longer. For example, if I just registered dkeritsi as my username this would be weaker than dkeritsis@gmail.com or <a href="mailto:dkeritsis@gmailto:dkeritsi

⁵ This can be remedied with proper front end develop and validation of username input as well.

⁶ Pages of register.php and login.php are of primary concern in this section.

- registration, I made sure that at least 15 characters were used in total for the email address. *See* Register.php at II. 21-23.
- 23. Although this code isn't showcase it, future code implementations could send a confirmation and registration associated with the email. Also, 2-factor authentication could be code-implemented in the future.

Verbose Messaging (2)(b)

Code Discussion (2)(a)(i)

24. Login.php at II. 41-47 and 66-70 showcase the mitigation of verbose messaging. Line 49 of Register.php deals with this verbose message, albeit obliquely, with using email addresses and noting they have been taken. The code is simple. At the login, merely do not say whether the username or the password is incorrect. Both on under the password and username boxes, I disclose: "The username or password is incorrect." These coupled messages appear whether an incorrect password is triggered or an incorrect username is triggered.

Security Implications (2)(a)(ii)

25. Verbose messaging can be used by hackers to enumerate usernames and passwords, along with the permutations. We want to give them the least amount of information as possible. Also, for username registration, we are using email. I will still note that the email is taken. A hacker could use verbose messaging to enumerate a database of users. However, by using email addresses, a brute for attack will take longer for reasons stated above given the permutations. Also, I set a limit of 12 characters for the email address.

Section (3) Cryptography⁷

Code Discussion (3)(a)

- 26. The code is simple. In Register.php at II. 93-94, we want to hash the password and store it accordingly. The first argument of \$password is just the password that is to be hashed accordingly. The second argument of PASSWORD_DEFAULT is just the supporting arguments. See https://www.php.net/manual/en/function.password-hash.php. As will be discussed later, SALT-ing is an option; however, it appears that in PHP 7.0 this option is deprecated. But it is "preferred to simply use the salt that is generated by default." Id. Salt-ing will be discussed under the same section. Ultimately, we store the hash of the password, not the password itself during registration.
- 27. For login.php the code is likewise simple. *See* Login.php at II. 54-55. We pull from the database the hash of password (i.e. the registered hash) and compare it again the password the user input. This is done with the "password_verify" function.

Math Discussion (3)(b)

⁷ Pages of register.php and login.php are of primary concern in this section.

- 28. A hash is just a oneway function. During registration the following happens: database[row, column]=Hash_with_SALT(password). The most simple type of hash is a checksum. For instance, take the checksum of 18237, which is 1+8+2+3+7=21. The number 21 can <u>not</u> be reversed to get back 18,237. Additionally, this mapping of one way functions is a "non-injective surjective function" also known as "surjective, not a bijection." See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Injective_function. During this mapping, this leads the "collisions". Collisions are not a problem as long as hash functions are cryptographic (as opposed to non-cryptographic). Additionally, it is important to note that statistical methods may be used to determine what the mappings are. For example, the password love (an element in set X) will be hashed and mapped to some element in set Y. This is a very common password. Using statistical methods, a hacker may be able to determine what the password is (element in set X) based on frequency of elements in set Y.
- 29. To mitigate this, we want to use SALT. This uses a one time value in conjection with the hash. As such, the output would be able as follows: Hash(password, one-time-value). As such, Hash("love", one_time_value_1) != Hash("love", one_time_value_2) even though the same password of "love" is used.

Security Implications (3)(c)

- 30. PHP is handles SALT-ing with PASSWORD_DEFAULT. Moreover, PHP uses "new and stronger algorithms" as time goes on. This is helpful because many cryptographic hashes may become non-cryptographic as time goes on. As noted above, statistical methods can be used against a database with hashes if SALTing isn't use. However, once information entropy is added, it becomes must more difficult to determine the password.
- 31. On a more general note, we **never** want to store passwords. Someone could crack our database (or even a gray-hatter may do it) and they would have usernames and passwords. If someone got the username/hashed_password, they wouldn't be able to login because of the one-way nature of hash functions. The hashed_password essentially becomes useless to them.

Section (4) SQL injections

- 32. Q1. Why do MSQLI prepared statements close the door on SQL injections?
- 33. A1.
- 34. For mysql_prepare the first and second arguments are populated with \$link and \$sql. The \$sql is the variable the SELECT query to be sent. According to Adam: "The purpose of prepared statement is to not include data in your SQL statements." See https://www.php.net/manual/en/mysqli.prepare.php. Also, we should "[a]lways use prepared statements. They are cleaner to use...and not prone to SQL injections. Id. Zeebuck notes the same thing: "Obviously more code has been put into prepared statements today to allow it ot be used to prevent sql inejctions...." Id. The prepared statement works by "preventing a user from executing his own SQL code and damaging the integrity of a database." Essentially, the way the prepared statement works is it separates the "user input from the SQL commands." Id.

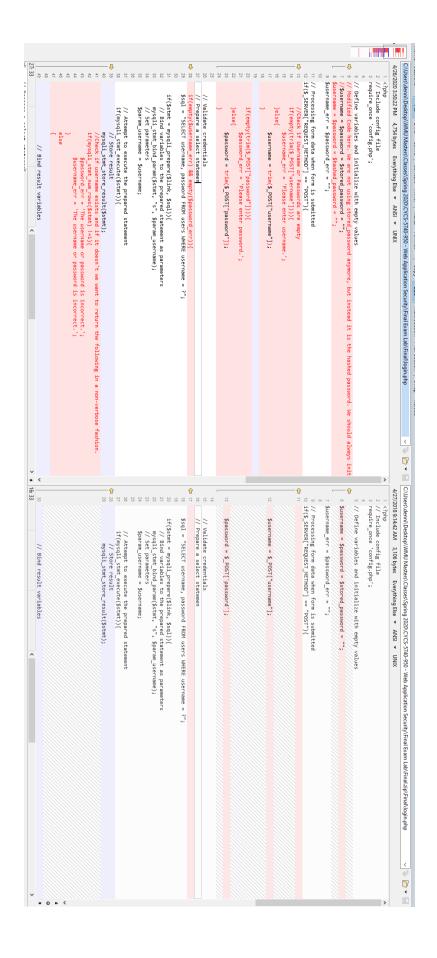
- 35. According to tecadmin, we can use the "PHP-MySQLi Driver." See https://tecadmin.net/prevent-sql-injection-in-php/. It outlines a number of steps: (i) use prepare, (ii) bind parameters, (iii) execute, (iv) result, and (v) fetch. It appears that our code is doing the same thing:
 - (i) (\$stmt = mysqli prepare(\$link, \$sql),
 - (ii) mysqli_stmt_bind_param(\$stmt, "s", \$param_username);,
 - (iii) mysqli_stmt_execute(\$stmt),
 - (iv) mysqli_stmt_bind_result(\$stmt, \$username, \$hashed_password), and
 - (v) mysqli_stmt_fetch(\$stmt);.
- 36. The last thing to do is the close the stmt connection.
- 37. It appears that the prepare statements are broken up into two stages: (i) prepare stage and (ii) blind and execute stage. See https://www.php.net/manual/en/mysqli.quickstart.prepared-statements.php. Purportedly the "blind" can be done with the mysqli_stmt_blind_param() function and this is the "only security feature to prevent SQL injection[.]" Id (emphasis added).
- 38. Q2. What approach to mysqli querying might you find in older, less secure applications?
- 39. A2. The older approach would be to use "MySQL" instead of "MySQLi". According to phppot.com, "MySQLi function mysqli_query() allows [sic] to enforce error prone queries and prevents bugs like SQL injections." See https://phppot.com/php/mysql-vs-mysqli-in-php/.
- 40. Using an older approach of MySQL, a user would simply take the \$sql string and say:
 - a. \$result = \$conn->query(\$sql);
- 41. See https://phppot.com/php/mysql-vs-mysqli-in-php/
- 42. However, just using a "MYSQLi Procedural" method might be vulnerable because it is important to use the mysqli_stmt_blind_param() approach. Put another way, using MySQLi will not by itself prevent SQL injections. The following may be deleterious:
 - a. \$result = mysqli_query(\$conn, \$sql);
- 43. See https://www.w3schools.com/php/php mysql select.asp

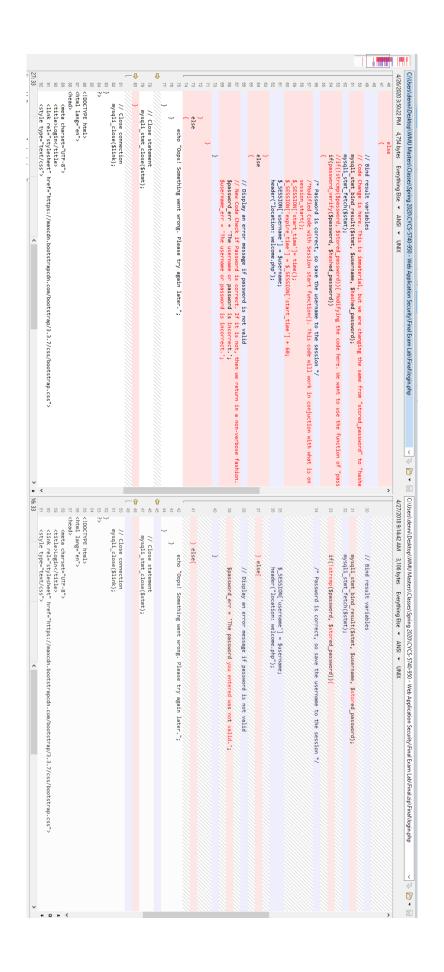
⁸ Another option is to use the PHP-PDO Driver.

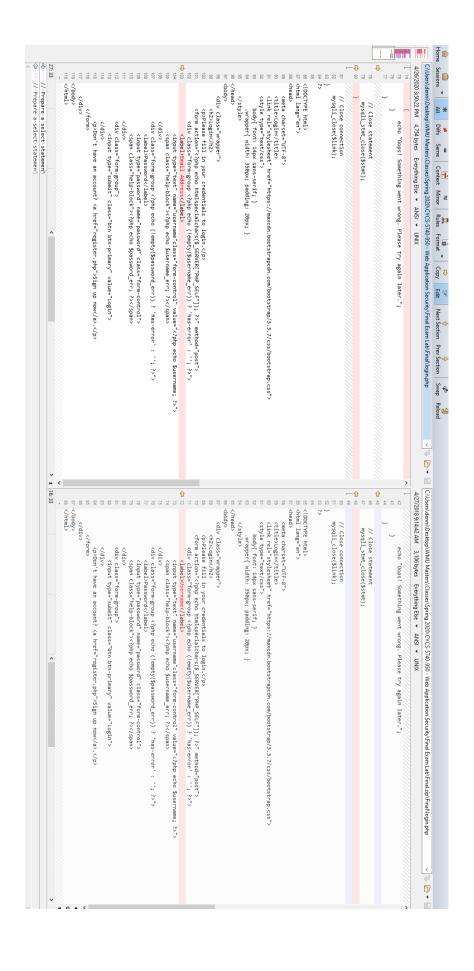
Appendix A Files Overview



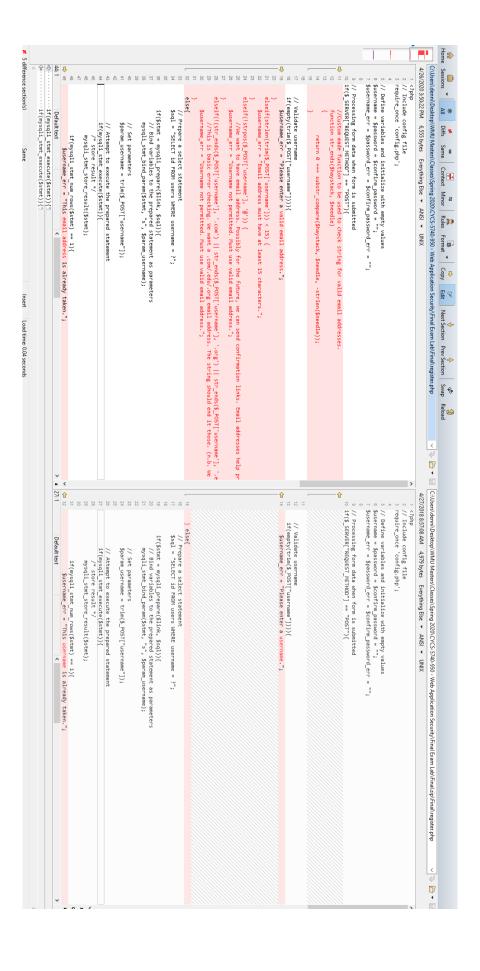
Appendix B Compare Login.php

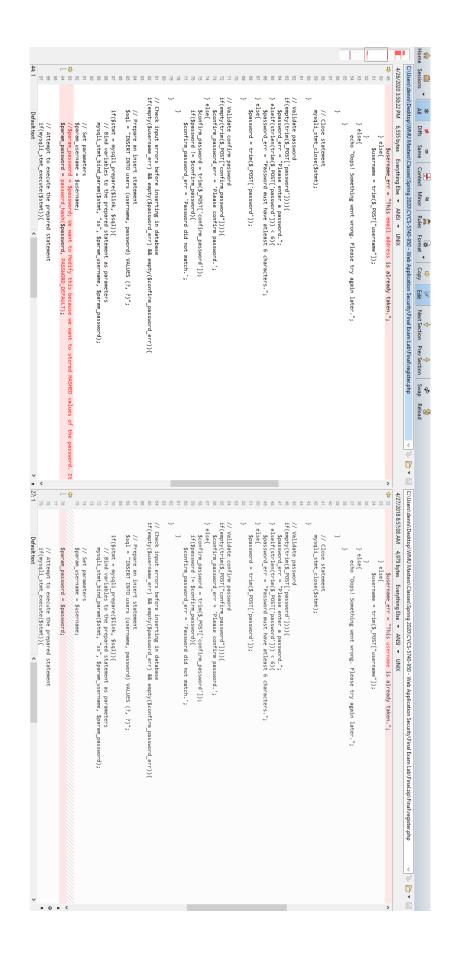


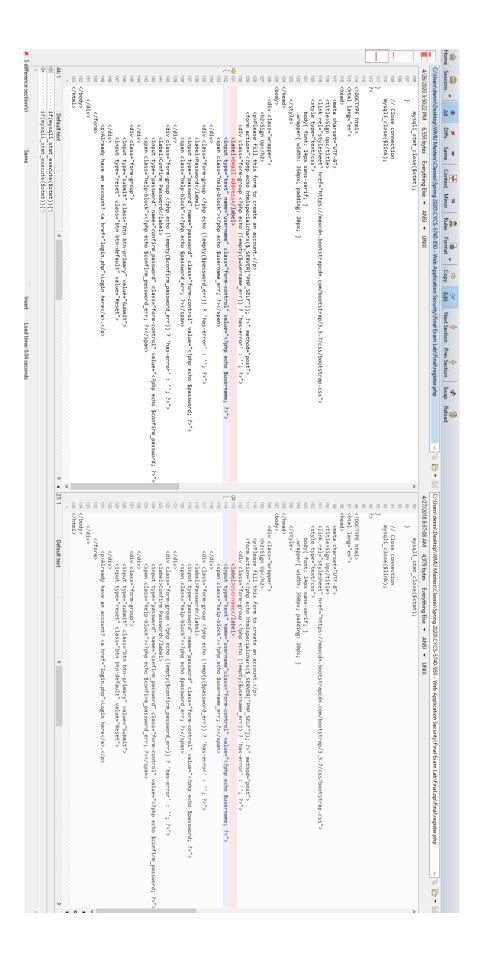




Appendix C Compare Register.php







Appendix D Compare Welcome.php

