In this scenario, we can attribute the three components of the AMP module as follows:

❑ Apache: This is your highly trained master of culinary arts, the chef. Whatever people ask for, she prepares it without complaint. She is quick, flexible, and able to prepare a multitude of different types of foods. Apache acts in much the same way as your HTTP server, parsing files and passing on the results.

❑ PHP: This is the waiter. He gets requests from the patron and carries them back to the kitchen with specific instructions about how the meal should be prepared.

❑ MySQL: This is your stockroom of ingredients (or in this case, information).

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**The PHP Processing Engine**

PHP is actually composed of function modules, a language core (named the Zend engine, now out as version 2.0), and a Web server interface. The interface allows PHP to communicate with the Web server machine-to-machine. The function modules give PHP its many valuable capabilities, although the Zend engine (the language core) does the hard work of analyzing, translating, and executing the incoming code (Zend does just a little bit more than that, but you get the idea). It's important to note that PHP is compiled at the moment it runs, on the server, therefore making your life much simpler by avoiding the need to precompile the code specifically for each type of machine you expect it to run on.