Setting the Context Root Directory and Request URL of a Webapp

A server could run many web applications. A webapp is also called a web context. The context root (or document base directory) refers to the base directory of a webapp. They are a few ways to configure a context root and its request URL of a webapp:

(RECOMMENDED) Create a directory under <CATALINA\_HOME>\webapps for your webapp. A context will be created with request URL set to the name of the directory. For example, if you create a directory called "hello" under Tomcat's "webapps". This application can be accessed by web users via URL http://host:port/hello.

To change the request URL of the webapp, create a "context.xml" configuration file, as follows, and place it under "ContextRoot\META-INF":

<Context path="/yourURLPath" />

Alternatively, you can write a <Context> element in <CATALINA\_HOME>\conf\server.xml, under the <Host> element. You can specify both the URL and the base directory. For example,

......

......

<Context path="/ws" docBase="d:/workshop" reloadable="true">

</Context>

</Host>

</Engine>

</Service>

</Server>

In the above example, we define a web context with URL "/ws", with context root (docBase or document base directory) at "d:\workshop". This application can be accessed via URL http://host:port/ws.

Take note that:

The configuration creates a mapping from the "URL Path" issued by the web users to the "document base directory" in the server's file system, where you store your webapp resources.

Place the <Context> element before the ending tag of the <Host> element.

Use Unix-style forward slash '/' as the directory separator in the configuration file, instead of Window-style back slash '\'.

The attribute reloadable="true" asks Tomcat to monitor your servlets for changes, and automatically reload the servlets if changes is detected. This is handy for a development system, but inefficient in a production system.

Write a configuration file with a <Context> element and place it under Tomcat's "conf\Catalina\localhost". For example, suppose we wish to create a webapp with URL "hello" in base directory "d:\myproject\myHello", create the following file "hello.xml":

<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>

<Context docBase="D:\myproject\myHello" path="/hello" />