Understanding JSESSIONID

JSESSIONID is a ID generated by Servlet container like Tomcat or Jetty and used for session management in J2EE web application for http protocol.   
The ID is sent to the client either within a cookie (default) or as part of the URL (called URLrewriting, used only if cookies are disabled on the browser).  
  
  
**Why a ID?**  
  
*F5 white paper extract follows,*  
  
HTTP (HyperText Transfer Protocol) was designed to support a stateless, requestresponse model of transferring data from a server to a client. Its first version, 1.0, supported a purely 1:1 request to connection ratio (that is, one request-response pair was supported per connection).   
  
Its second version, 1.1, expanded that ratio to be N:1—that is, many requests per connection. This was done in order to address the growing complexity of web pages, including of the many objects and elements that need to be transferred from the server to the client.   
  
Unfortunately, HTTP was not designed to be an application transport protocol. It was designed to transfer documents. Despite the fact that both documents and application protocols are generally text-based, the resemblance ends there. Applications require some way to maintain their state, while documents do not. Applications are built on logical flows and processes, both of which require that the application know where the user is during this time, and that requires state.   
  
HTTP is stateless, so it seems obvious that HTTP would not be appropriate for delivering applications. But it has become the de facto application transport protocol of the web. In what is certainly one of the most widely accepted, useful hacks in technical history, HTTP was given the means by which state could be tracked throughout the use of an application. That “hack” is where sessions and cookies come into play.   
  
Sessions are the way in which web and application servers maintain state.   
  
  
**How JSESSIONID works?**  
  
When the first request (that demands a creation of session) arrives on a J2EE server, the server creates HTTPSession object and sends the sessionID to the browser. The browser then send the same sessionId for every subsequent requests.  
Thus the stateless protocol becomes a stateful one.