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Fourth Edition

PHP and MySQL[®] Web Development

Developer's Library



PHP and MySQL® Web Development, Fourth Edition

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Introduction

WELCOME TO *PHP AND MySQL WEB DEVELOPMENT*. Within its pages, you will find distilled knowledge from our experiences using PHP and MySQL, two of the hottest web development tools around.

In this introduction, we cover

- Why you should read this book
- What you will be able to achieve using this book
- What PHP and MySQL are and why they're great
- What's changed in the latest versions of PHP and MySQL
- How this book is organized

Let's get started.

Why You Should Read This Book

This book will teach you how to create interactive websites from the simplest order form through to complex, secure e-commerce sites or interactive Web 2.0 sites. What's more, you'll learn how to do it using open source technologies.

This book is aimed at readers who already know at least the basics of HTML and have done some programming in a modern programming language before but have not necessarily programmed for the Internet or used a relational database. If you are a beginning programmer, you should still find this book useful, but digesting it might take a little longer. We've tried not to leave out any basic concepts, but we do cover them at speed. The typical readers of this book want to master PHP and MySQL for the purpose of building a large or commercial website. You might already be working in another web development language; if so, this book should get you up to speed quickly.

We wrote the first edition of this book because we were tired of finding PHP books that were basically function references. These books are useful, but they don't help when your boss or client has said, "Go build me a shopping cart." In this book, we have done our best to make every example useful. You can use many of the code samples directly in your website, and you can use many others with only minor modifications.

What You Will Learn from This Book

Reading this book will enable you to build real-world, dynamic websites. If you've built websites using plain HTML, you realize the limitations of this approach. Static content from a pure HTML website is just that—static. It stays the same unless you physically update it. Your users can't interact with the site in any meaningful fashion.

Using a language such as PHP and a database such as MySQL allows you to make your sites dynamic: to have them be customizable and contain real-time information.

We have deliberately focused this book on real-world applications, even in the introductory chapters. We begin by looking at a simple online ordering system and work our way through the various parts of PHP and MySQL.

We then discuss aspects of electronic commerce and security as they relate to building a real-world website and show you how to implement these aspects in PHP and MySQL.

In the final part of this book, we describe how to approach real-world projects and take you through the design, planning, and building of the following projects:

- User authentication and personalization
- Shopping carts
- Web-based email
- Mailing list managers
- Web forums
- PDF document generation
- Web services with XML and SOAP
- Web 2.0 application with Ajax

You should be able to use any of these projects as is, or you can modify them to suit your needs. We chose them because we believe they represent some of the most common web-based applications built by programmers. If your needs are different, this book should help you along the way to achieving your goals.

What Is PHP?

PHP is a server-side scripting language designed specifically for the Web. Within an HTML page, you can embed PHP code that will be executed each time the page is visited. Your PHP code is interpreted at the web server and generates HTML or other output that the visitor will see.

PHP was conceived in 1994 and was originally the work of one man, Rasmus Lerdorf. It was adopted by other talented people and has gone through four major rewrites to bring us the broad, mature product we see today. As of November 2007, it was installed on more than 21 million domains worldwide, and this number is growing rapidly. You can see the current number at <http://www.php.net/usage.php>.

PHP is an Open Source project, which means you have access to the source code and can use, alter, and redistribute it all without charge.

PHP originally stood for *Personal Home Page* but was changed in line with the GNU recursive naming convention (GNU = Gnu's Not Unix) and now stands for *PHP Hypertext Preprocessor*.

The current major version of PHP is 5. This version saw a complete rewrite of the underlying Zend engine and some major improvements to the language.

The home page for PHP is available at <http://www.php.net>.

The home page for Zend Technologies is <http://www.zend.com>.

What Is MySQL?

MySQL (pronounced *My-Ess-Que-Ell*) is a very fast, robust, *relational database management system (RDBMS)*. A database enables you to efficiently store, search, sort, and retrieve data. The MySQL server controls access to your data to ensure that multiple users can work with it concurrently, to provide fast access to it, and to ensure that only authorized users can obtain access. Hence, MySQL is a multiuser, multithreaded server. It uses *Structured Query Language (SQL)*, the standard database query language. MySQL has been publicly available since 1996 but has a development history going back to 1979. It is the world's most popular open source database and has won the Linux Journal Readers' Choice Award on a number of occasions.

MySQL is available under a dual licensing scheme. You can use it under an open source license (the GPL) free as long as you are willing to meet the terms of that license. If you want to distribute a non-GPL application including MySQL, you can buy a commercial license instead.

Why Use PHP and MySQL?

When setting out to build a website, you could use many different products. You need to choose the following:

- Hardware for the web server
- An operating system
- Web server software
- A database management system
- A programming or scripting language

Some of these choices are dependent on the others. For example, not all operating systems run on all hardware, not all web servers support all programming languages, and so on.

In this book, we do not pay much attention to hardware, operating systems, or web server software. We don't need to. One of the best features of both PHP and MySQL is that they work with any major operating system and many of the minor ones.

The majority of PHP code can be written to be portable between operating systems and web servers. There are some PHP functions that specifically relate to the filesystem that are operating system dependent, but these are clearly marked as such in the manual and in this book.

Whatever hardware, operating system, and web server you choose, we believe you should seriously consider using PHP and MySQL.

Some of PHP's Strengths

Some of PHP's main competitors are Perl, Microsoft ASP.NET, Ruby (on Rails or otherwise), JavaServer Pages (JSP), and ColdFusion.

In comparison to these products, PHP has many strengths, including the following:

- Performance
- Scalability
- Interfaces to many different database systems
- Built-in libraries for many common web tasks
- Low cost
- Ease of learning and use
- Strong object-oriented support
- Portability
- Flexibility of development approach
- Availability of source code
- Availability of support and documentation

A more detailed discussion of these strengths follows.

Performance

PHP is very fast. Using a single inexpensive server, you can serve millions of hits per day. Benchmarks published by Zend Technologies (<http://www.zend.com>) show PHP outperforming its competition.

Scalability

PHP has what Rasmus Lerdorf frequently refers to as a “shared-nothing” architecture. This means that you can effectively and cheaply implement horizontal scaling with large numbers of commodity servers.

Database Integration

PHP has native connections available to many database systems. In addition to MySQL, you can directly connect to PostgreSQL, Oracle, dbm, FilePro, DB2, Hyperwave, Informix, InterBase, and Sybase databases, among others. PHP 5 also has a built-in SQL interface to a flat file, called SQLite.

Using the *Open Database Connectivity Standard (ODBC)*, you can connect to any database that provides an ODBC driver. This includes Microsoft products and many others.

In addition to native libraries, PHP comes with a database access abstraction layer called *PHP Database Objects (PDO)*, which allows consistent access and promotes secure coding practices.

Built-in Libraries

Because PHP was designed for use on the Web, it has many built-in functions for performing many useful web-related tasks. You can generate images on the fly, connect to web services and other network services, parse XML, send email, work with cookies, and generate PDF documents, all with just a few lines of code.

Cost

PHP is free. You can download the latest version at any time from <http://www.php.net> for no charge.

Ease of Learning PHP

The syntax of PHP is based on other programming languages, primarily C and Perl. If you already know C or Perl, or a C-like language such as C++ or Java, you will be productive using PHP almost immediately.

Object-Oriented Support

PHP version 5 has well-designed object-oriented features. If you learned to program in Java or C++, you will find the features (and generally the syntax) that you expect, such as inheritance, private and protected attributes and methods, abstract classes and methods, interfaces, constructors, and destructors. You will even find some less common features such as iterators. Some of this functionality was available in PHP versions 3 and 4, but the object-oriented support in version 5 is much more complete.

Portability

PHP is available for many different operating systems. You can write PHP code on free Unix-like operating systems such as Linux and FreeBSD, commercial Unix versions such as Solaris and IRIX, OS X, or on different versions of Microsoft Windows.

Well-written code will usually work without modification on a different system running PHP.

Flexibility of Development Approach

PHP allows you to implement simple tasks simply, and equally easily adapts to implementing large applications using a framework based on design patterns such as Model–View–Controller (MVC).

Source Code

You have access to PHP's source code. With PHP, unlike commercial, closed-source products, if you want to modify something or add to the language, you are free to do so.

You do not need to wait for the manufacturer to release patches. You also don't need to worry about the manufacturer going out of business or deciding to stop supporting a product.

Availability of Support and Documentation

Zend Technologies (www.zend.com), the company behind the engine that powers PHP, funds its PHP development by offering support and related software on a commercial basis.

The PHP documentation and community are mature and rich resources with a wealth of information to share.

What Is New in PHP 5?

You may have recently moved to PHP 5 from one of the PHP 4.x versions. As you would expect in a new major version, it has some significant changes. The Zend engine beneath PHP has been rewritten for this version. Major new features are as follows:

- Better object-oriented support built around a completely new object model (see Chapter 6, “Object-Oriented PHP”)
- Exceptions for scalable, maintainable error handling (see Chapter 7, “Error and Exception Handling”)
- SimpleXML for easy handling of XML data (see Chapter 33, “Connecting to Web Services with XML and SOAP”)

Other changes include moving some extensions out of the default PHP install and into the PECL library, improving streams support, and adding SQLite.

At the time of writing, PHP 5.2 was the current version, with PHP 5.3 on the near horizon. PHP 5.2 added a number of useful features including:

- The new input filtering extension for security purposes
- JSON extension for better JavaScript interoperability
- File upload progress tracking
- Better date and time handling
- Many upgraded client libraries, performance improvements (including better memory management in the Zend Engine), and bug fixes

Key Features of PHP 5.3

You may have heard about a new major release of PHP, called PHP 6. At the time of this writing, PHP 6 is not in the release candidate stage, and hosting providers won't be

installing it for mass use for quite some time. However, some of the key features planned in PHP 6 have been back-ported to PHP 5.3, which is a minor version release and closer to passing acceptance testing and thus installation by hosting providers (of course, if you are your own server's administrator, you can install any version you like). Some of the new features in PHP 5.3 are listed below; additional information also appears throughout this book as appropriate:

- The addition of namespaces; for more information see <http://www.php.net/language.namespaces>
- The addition of the `intl` extension for application internationalization; for more information see <http://www.php.net/manual/en/intro.intl.php>
- The addition of the `phar` extension for creating self-contained PHP application archives; for more information see <http://www.php.net/book.phar>
- The addition of the `fileinfo` extension for enhanced ability to work with files; for more information see <http://www.php.net/manual/en/book.fileinfo.php>
- The addition of the `sqlite3` extension for working with the SQLite Embeddable SQL Database Engine; for more information see <http://www.php.net/manual/en/class.sqlite3.php>
- The inclusion of support for the MySQLnd driver, a replacement for libmysql; for more information see http://forge.mysql.com/wiki/PHP_MYSQLND

While the list above contains some of the highly-touted features of PHP 5.3, the release also includes a significant number of bug fixes and maintenance performed on existing functionality, such as:

- Removing support for any version of Windows older than Windows 2000 (such as Windows 98 and NT4)
- Ensuring the PCRE, Reflection, and SPL extensions are always enabled
- Adding a few date and time functions for ease of date calculation and manipulation
- Improving the `crypt()`, `hash()`, and `md5()` functionality, as well as improving the OpenSSL extension
- Improving `php.ini` administration and handling, including better error reporting
- Continuing to fine-tune the Zend engine for better PHP runtime speed and memory usage

Some of MySQLs Strengths

MySQLs main competitors are PostgreSQL, Microsoft SQL Server, and Oracle. MySQL has many strengths, including the following:

- High performance
- Low cost

- Ease of configuration and learning
- Portability
- Availability of source code
- Availability of support

A more detailed discussion of these strengths follows.

Performance

MySQL is undeniably fast. You can see the developers' benchmark page at <http://web.mysql.com/whymysql/benchmarks>. Many of these benchmarks show MySQL to be orders of magnitude faster than the competition. In 2002, *eWeek* published a benchmark comparing five databases powering a web application. The best result was a tie between MySQL and the much more expensive Oracle.

Low Cost

MySQL is available at no cost under an open source license or at low cost under a commercial license. You need a license if you want to redistribute MySQL as part of an application and do not want to license your application under an Open Source license. If you do not intend to distribute your application—typical for most web applications, or are working on free or open source Software, you do not need to buy a license.

Ease of Use

Most modern databases use SQL. If you have used another RDBMS, you should have no trouble adapting to this one. MySQL is also easier to set up than many similar products.

Portability

MySQL can be used on many different Unix systems as well as under Microsoft Windows.

Source Code

As with PHP, you can obtain and modify the source code for MySQL. This point is not important to most users most of the time, but it provides you with excellent peace of mind, ensuring future continuity and giving you options in an emergency.

Availability of Support

Not all open source products have a parent company offering support, training, consulting, and certification, but you can get all of these benefits from MySQL AB (www.mysql.com).

What Is New in MySQL 5?

Major changes introduced for MySQL 5 include

- Views
- Stored procedures (see Chapter 13, “Advanced MySQL Programming”)
- Basic trigger support
- Cursor support

Other changes include more ANSI standard compliance and speed improvements. If you are still using an early 4.x version or a 3.x version of the MySQL server, you should know that the following features were added to various versions from 4.0:

- Subquery support
- GIS types for storing geographical data
- Improved support for internationalization
- The transaction-safe storage engine InnoDB included as standard
- The MySQL query cache, which greatly improves the speed of repetitive queries as often run by web applications

This book was written using MySQL 5.1 (Beta Community Edition). This version also added support for

- Partitioning
- Row based replication
- Event scheduling
- Logging to tables
- Improvements to MySQL Cluster, information schema, backup processes, and many bug fixes

How Is This Book Organized?

This book is divided into five main parts:

Part I, “Using PHP,” provides an overview of the main parts of the PHP language with examples. Each example is a real-world example used in building an e-commerce site rather than “toy” code. We kick off this section with Chapter 1, “PHP Crash Course.” If you’ve already used PHP, you can whiz through this chapter. If you are new to PHP or new to programming, you might want to spend a little more time on it. Even if you are quite familiar with PHP but you are new to PHP 5, you will want to read Chapter 6, “Object-Oriented PHP,” because the object-oriented functionality has changed significantly.

Part II, “Using MySQL,” discusses the concepts and design involved in using relational database systems such as MySQL, using SQL, connecting your MySQL database to the world with PHP, and advanced MySQL topics, such as security and optimization.

Part III, “E-commerce and Security,” covers some of the general issues involved in developing a website using any language. The most important of these issues is security. We then discuss how you can use PHP and MySQL to authenticate your users and securely gather, transmit, and store data.

Part IV, “Advanced PHP Techniques,” offers detailed coverage of some of the major built-in functions in PHP. We have selected groups of functions that are likely to be useful when building a website. You will learn about interaction with the server, interaction with the network, image generation, date and time manipulation, and session variables.

Part V, “Building Practical PHP and MySQL Projects,” is our favorite section. It deals with practical real-world issues such as managing large projects and debugging, and provides sample projects that demonstrate the power and versatility of PHP and MySQL.

Finally

We hope you enjoy this book and enjoy learning about PHP and MySQL as much as we did when we first began using these products. They are really a pleasure to use. Soon, you’ll be able to join the many thousands of web developers who use these robust, powerful tools to easily build dynamic, real-time websites.

Accessing Your MySQL Database from the Web with PHP

PREVIOUSLY, IN OUR WORK WITH PHP, WE used a flat file to store and retrieve data. When we looked at this file in Chapter 2, “Storing and Retrieving Data,” we mentioned that relational database systems make a lot of these storage and retrieval tasks easier, safer, and more efficient in a web application. Now, having worked with MySQL to create a database, we can begin connecting this database to a web-based front end.

In this chapter, we explain how to access the Book-O-Rama database from the Web using PHP. You learn how to read from and write to the database and how to filter potentially troublesome input data.

Key topics covered in this chapter include

- How web database architectures work
- Querying a database from the Web using the basic steps
- Setting up a connection
- Getting information about available databases
- Choosing a database to use
- Querying the database
- Retrieving the query results
- Disconnecting from the database
- Putting new information in the database
- Using prepared statements
- Using other PHP-database interfaces
- Using a generic database interface: PEAR MDB2

How Web Database Architectures Work

In Chapter 8, “Designing Your Web Database,” we outlined how web database architectures work. Just to remind you, here are the steps:

1. A user’s web browser issues an HTTP request for a particular web page. For example, the user might have requested a search for all the books written by Michael Morgan at Book-O-Rama, using an HTML form. The search results page is called `results.php`.
2. The web server receives the request for `results.php`, retrieves the file, and passes it to the PHP engine for processing.
3. The PHP engine begins parsing the script. Inside the script is a command to connect to the database and execute a query (perform the search for books). PHP opens a connection to the MySQL server and sends on the appropriate query.
4. The MySQL server receives the database query, processes it, and sends the results—a list of books—back to the PHP engine.
5. The PHP engine finishes running the script. This usually involves formatting the query results nicely in HTML. It then returns the resulting HTML to the web server.
6. The web server passes the HTML back to the browser, where the user can see the list of books she requested.

Now you have an existing MySQL database, so you can write the PHP code to perform the preceding steps. Begin with the search form. The code for this plain HTML form is shown in Listing 11.1.

Listing 11.1 `search.html`— **Book-O-Rama’s Database Search Page**

```
<html>
<head>
  <title>Book-O-Rama Catalog Search</title>
</head>

<body>
  <h1>Book-O-Rama Catalog Search</h1>

  <form action="results.php" method="post">
    Choose Search Type:<br />
    <select name="searchtype">
      <option value="author">Author</option>
      <option value="title">Title</option>
      <option value="isbn">ISBN</option>
    </select>
    <br />
    Enter Search Term:<br />
    <input name="searchterm" type="text" size="40"/>
    <br />
```

Listing 11.1 **Continued**

```

        <input type="submit" name="submit" value="Search" />
    </form>

</body>
</html>

```

This HTML form is reasonably straightforward. The output of this HTML is shown in Figure 11.1.

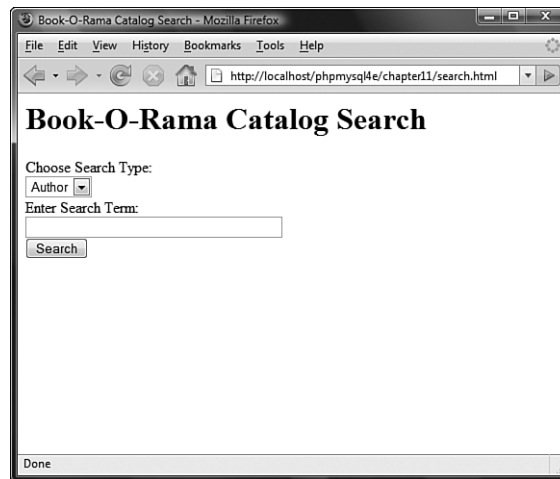


Figure 11.1 The search form is quite general, so you can search for a book by its title, author, or ISBN.

The script that will be called when the Search button is clicked is `results.php`. It is listed in full in Listing 11.2. Through the course of this chapter, we discuss what this script does and how it works.

Listing 11.2 `results.php`—**This Script Retrieves Search Results from the MySQL Database and Formats Them for Display**

```

<html>
<head>
    <title>Book-O-Rama Search Results</title>
</head>
<body>
<h1>Book-O-Rama Search Results</h1>
<?php
    // create short variable names
    $searchtype=$_POST['searchtype'];
    $searchterm=trim($_POST['searchterm']);

```

Listing 11.2 **Continued**

```

    if (!$searchtype || !$searchterm) {
        echo 'You have not entered search details. Please go back and try again.';
        exit;
    }

    if (!get_magic_quotes_gpc()){
        $searchtype = addslashes($searchtype);
        $searchterm = addslashes($searchterm);
    }

    @ $db = new mysqli('localhost', 'bookorama', 'bookoramal23', 'books');

    if (mysqli_connect_errno()) {
        echo 'Error: Could not connect to database. Please try again later.';
        exit;
    }

    $query = "select * from books where ".$searchtype." like '%".$searchterm.%'";
    $result = $db->query($query);

    $num_results = $result->num_rows;

    echo "<p>Number of books found: ".$num_results."</p>";

    for ($i=0; $i <$num_results; $i++) {
        $row = $result->fetch_assoc();
        echo "<p><strong>".($i+1)." Title: ";
        echo htmlspecialchars(stripslashes($row['title']));
        echo "</strong><br />Author: ";
        echo stripslashes($row['author']);
        echo "<br />ISBN: ";
        echo stripslashes($row['isbn']);
        echo "<br />Price: ";
        echo stripslashes($row['price']);
        echo "</p>";
    }

    $result->free();
    $db->close();

?>
</body>
</html>

```

Note that this script allows you to enter the MySQL wildcard characters % and _ (underscore). This capability can be useful for the user, but you can escape these characters if they will cause a problem for your application.

Figure 11.2 illustrates the results of using this script to perform a search.

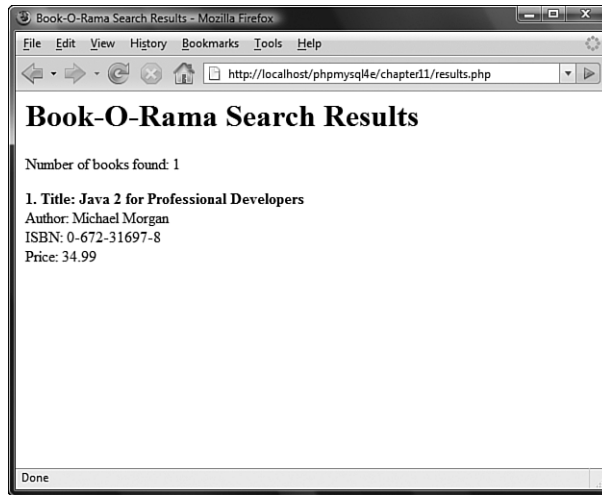


Figure 11.2 The results of searching the database for books about Java are presented in a web page using the `results.php` script.

Querying a Database from the Web

In any script used to access a database from the Web, you follow some basic steps:

1. Check and filter data coming from the user.
2. Set up a connection to the appropriate database.
3. Query the database.
4. Retrieve the results.
5. Present the results back to the user.

These are the steps we followed in the script `results.php`, so now let's go through each of them in turn.

Checking and Filtering Input Data

You begin the script by stripping any whitespace that the user might have inadvertently entered at the beginning or end of his search term. You do this by applying the function `trim()` to the value of `$_POST['searchterm']` when giving it a shorter name:

```
$searchterm=trim($_POST['searchterm']);
```

The next step is to verify that the user has entered a search term and selected a search type. Note that you check whether the user entered a search term after trimming whitespace from the ends of `$searchterm`. If you arrange these lines in the opposite order, you could encounter situations in which a user's search term is not empty and therefore does not create an error message; instead, it is all whitespace, so it is deleted by `trim()`:

```
if (!$searchtype || !$searchterm) {
    echo "You have not entered search details. Please go back and try again.";
    exit;
}
```

You check the `$searchtype` variable, even though in this case it's coming from an HTML `SELECT`. You might ask why you should bother checking data that has to be filled in. It's important to remember that there might be more than one interface to your database. For example, Amazon has many affiliates who use its search interface. Also, it's sensible to screen data in case of any security problems that can arise because of users coming from different points of entry.

When you plan to use any data input by a user, you need to filter it appropriately for any control characters. As you might remember, in Chapter 4, "String Manipulation and Regular Expressions," we described the functions `addslashes()`, `stripslashes()`, and `get_magic_quotes_gpc()`. You need to escape data when submitting any user input to a database such as MySQL.

In this case, you check the value of the `get_magic_quotes_gpc()` function. It tells you whether quoting is being done automatically. If it is not, you use `addslashes()` to escape the data:

```
if (!get_magic_quotes_gpc()) {
    $searchtype = addslashes($searchtype);
    $searchterm = addslashes($searchterm);
}
```

You also use `stripslashes()` on the data coming back from the database. If the magic quotes feature is turned on, the data will have slashes in it when it comes back from the database, so you need to take them out.

Here you use the function `htmlspecialchars()` to encode characters that have special meanings in HTML. The current test data does not include any ampersands (&), less than (<), greater than (>), or double quotation mark (") symbols, but many fine book titles contain an ampersand. By using this function, you can eliminate future errors.

Setting Up a Connection

The PHP library for connecting to MySQL is called `mysqli` (the *i* stands for improved). When using the `mysqli` library in PHP, you can use either an object-oriented or procedural syntax.

You use the following line in the script to connect to the MySQL server:

```
@ $db = new mysqli('localhost', 'bookorama', 'bookorama123', 'books');
```

This line instantiates the `mysqli` class and creates a connection to host `localhost` with username `bookorama`, and password `bookorama123`. The connection is set up to use the database called `books`.

Using this object-oriented approach, you can now invoke methods on this object to access the database. If you prefer a procedural approach, `mysqli` allows for this, too. To connect in a procedural fashion, you use

```
@ $db = mysqli_connect('localhost', 'bookorama', 'bookorama123', 'books');
```

This function returns a resource rather than an object. This resource represents the connection to the database, and if you are using the procedural approach, you will need to pass this resource in to all the other `mysqli` functions. This is very similar to the way the file-handling functions, such as `fopen()`, work.

Most of the `mysqli` functions have an object-oriented interface and a procedural interface. Generally, the differences are that the procedural version function names start with `mysqli_` and require you to pass in the resource handle you obtained from `mysqli_connect()`. Database connections are an exception to this rule because they can be made by the `mysqli` object's constructor.

The result of your attempt at connection is worth checking because none of the rest of code will work without a valid database connection. You do this using the following code:

```
if (mysqli_connect_errno()) {  
    echo 'Error: Could not connect to database. Please try again later.';  
    exit;  
}
```

(This code is the same for the object-oriented and procedural versions.) The `mysqli_connect_errno()` function returns an error number on error, or zero on success.

Note that when you connect to the database, you begin the line of code with the error suppression operator, `@`. This way, you can handle any errors gracefully. (This could also be done with exceptions, which we have not used in this simple example.)

Bear in mind that there is a limit to the number of MySQL connections that can exist at the same time. The MySQL parameter `max_connections` determines what this limit is. The purpose of this parameter and the related Apache parameter `MaxClients` is to tell the server to reject new connection requests instead of allowing machine resources to be completely used up at busy times or when software has crashed.

You can alter both of these parameters from their default values by editing the configuration files. To set `MaxClients` in Apache, edit the `httpd.conf` file on your system. To set `max_connections` for MySQL, edit the file `my.conf`.

Choosing a Database to Use

Remember that when you are using MySQL from a command-line interface, you need to tell it which database you plan to use with a command such as

```
use books;
```

You also need to do this when connecting from the Web. The database to use is specified as a parameter to the `mysqli` constructor or the `mysqli_connect()` function. If you want to change the default database, you can do so with the `mysqli_select_db()` function. It can be accessed as either

```
$db->select_db($dbname)
```

or as

```
mysqli_select_db($db_resource, $db_name)
```

Here, you can see the similarity between the functions that we described before: The procedural version begins with `mysqli_` and requires the extra database handle parameter.

Querying the Database

To actually perform the query, you can use the `mysqli_query()` function. Before doing this, however, it's a good idea to set up the query you want to run:

```
$query = "select * from books where ".$searchtype." like '%" . $searchterm . "%'";
```

In this case, you search for the user-input value (`$searchterm`) in the field the user specified (`$searchtype`). Notice the use of `like` for matching rather than `equal`: it's usually a good idea to be more tolerant in a database search.

Tip

Remember that *the query you send to MySQL does not need a semicolon at the end of it*, unlike a query you type into the MySQL monitor.

You can now run the query:

```
$result = $db->query($query);
```

Or, if you want to use the procedural interface, you use

```
$result = mysqli_query($db, $query);
```

You pass in the query you want to run and, in the procedural interface, the database link (again, in this case `$db`).

The object-oriented version returns a result object; the procedural version returns a result resource. (This is similar to the way the connection functions work.) Either way,

you store the result in a variable (`$result`) for later use. This function returns `false` on failure.

Retrieving the Query Results

A large variety of functions is available to break the results out of the result object or identifier in different ways. The result object or identifier is the key to accessing the rows returned by the query.

In this example, you counted the number of rows returned and also used the `mysqli_fetch_assoc()` function.

When you use the object-oriented approach, the number of rows returned is stored in the `num_rows` member of the result object, and you can access it as follows:

```
$num_results = $result->num_rows;
```

When you use a procedural approach, the function `mysqli_num_rows()` gives you the number of rows returned by the query. You should pass it the result identifier, like this:

```
$num_results = mysqli_num_rows($result);
```

It's useful to know this if you plan to process or display the results, because you now know how many there are and can loop through them:

```
for ($i=0; $i <$num_results; $i++) {  
    // process results  
}
```

In each iteration of this loop, you call `$result->fetch_assoc()` (or `mysqli_fetch_assoc()`). The loop does not execute if no rows are returned. This is a function that takes each row from the resultset and returns the row as an array, with each key an attribute name and each value the corresponding value in the array:

```
$row = $result->fetch_assoc();
```

Or you can use a procedural approach:

```
$row = mysqli_fetch_assoc($result);
```

Given the array `$row`, you can go through each field and display it appropriately, as shown in this example:

```
echo "<br />ISBN: ";  
echo stripslashes($row['isbn']);
```

As previously mentioned, you call `stripslashes()` to tidy up the value before displaying it.

Several variations can be used to get results from a result identifier. Instead of an array with named keys, you can retrieve the results in an enumerated array with `mysqli_fetch_row()`, as follows:

```
$row = $result->fetch_row($result);
```

or

```
$row = mysqli_fetch_row($result);
```

The attribute values are listed in each of the array values `$row[0]`, `$row[1]`, and so on. (The `mysqli_fetch_array()` function allows you to fetch a row as either or both kinds of array.)

You could also fetch a row into an object with the `mysqli_fetch_object()` function:

```
$row = $result->fetch_object();
```

or

```
$row = mysqli_fetch_object($result);
```

You can then access each of the attributes via `$row->title`, `$row->author`, and so on.

Disconnecting from the Database

You can free up your resultset by calling either

```
$result->free();
```

or

```
mysqli_free_result($result);
```

You can then use

```
$db->close();
```

or

```
mysqli_close($db);
```

to close a database connection. Using this command isn't strictly necessary because the connection will be closed when a script finishes execution anyway.

Putting New Information in the Database

Inserting new items into the database is remarkably similar to getting items out of the database. You follow the same basic steps: make a connection, send a query, and check the results. In this case, the query you send is an `INSERT` rather than a `SELECT`.

Although this process is similar, looking at an example can sometimes be useful. In Figure 11.3, you can see a basic HTML form for putting new books into the database.

The HTML for this page is shown in Listing 11.3.

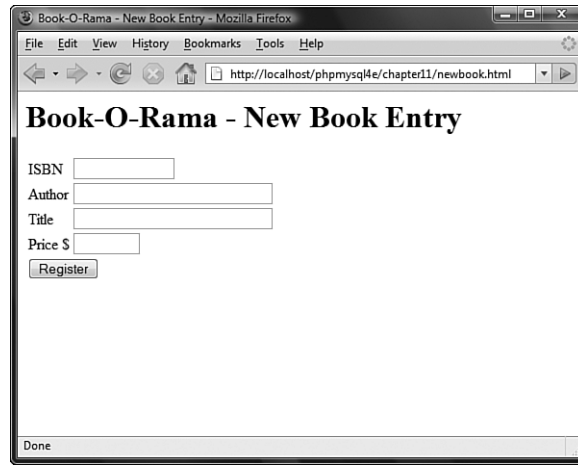


Figure 11.3 This interface for putting new books into the database could be used by Book-O-Rama's staff.

Listing 11.3 newbook.html— HTML for the Book Entry Page

```
<html>
<head>
  <title>Book-O-Rama - New Book Entry</title>
</head>

<body>
  <h1>Book-O-Rama - New Book Entry</h1>

  <form action="insert_book.php" method="post">
    <table border="0">
      <tr>
        <td>ISBN</td>
        <td><input type="text" name="isbn" maxlength="13" size="13"></td>
      </tr>
      <tr>
        <td>Author</td>
        <td><input type="text" name="author" maxlength="30" size="30"></td>
      </tr>
      <tr>
        <td>Title</td>
        <td><input type="text" name="title" maxlength="60" size="30"></td>
      </tr>
      <tr>
        <td>Price $</td>
        <td><input type="text" name="price" maxlength="7" size="7"></td>
```

Listing 11.3 **Continued**

```

        </tr>
        <tr>
            <td colspan="2"><input type="submit" value="Register"></td>
        </tr>
    </table>
</form>
</body>
</html>

```

The results of this form are passed along to `insert_book.php`, a script that takes the details, performs some minor validations, and attempts to write the data into the database. The code for this script is shown in Listing 11.4.

Listing 11.4 `insert_book.php`— **This Script Writes New Books into the Database**

```

<html>
<head>
    <title>Book-O-Rama Book Entry Results</title>
</head>
<body>
<h1>Book-O-Rama Book Entry Results</h1>
<?php
    // create short variable names
    $isbn=$_POST['isbn'];
    $author=$_POST['author'];
    $title=$_POST['title'];
    $price=$_POST['price'];

    if (!$isbn || !$author || !$title || !$price) {
        echo "You have not entered all the required details.<br />"
            . "Please go back and try again.";
        exit;
    }

    if (!get_magic_quotes_gpc()) {
        $isbn = addslashes($isbn);
        $author = addslashes($author);
        $title = addslashes($title);
        $price = doubleval($price);
    }

    @ $db = new mysqli('localhost', 'bookorama', 'bookorama123', 'books');

    if (mysqli_connect_errno()) {
        echo "Error: Could not connect to database. Please try again later.";
        exit;
    }

```

Listing 11.4 **Continued**

```
$query = "insert into books values
        ('".$isbn."', '".$author."', '".$title."', '".$price."')";
$result = $db->query($query);

if ($result) {
    echo $db->affected_rows." book inserted into database.";
} else {
    echo "An error has occurred. The item was not added.";
}

$db->close();
?>
</body>
</html>
```

The results of successfully inserting a book are shown in Figure 11.4.

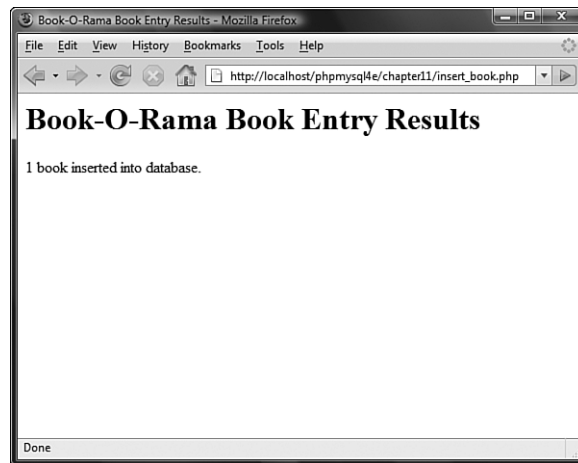


Figure 11.4 The script completes successfully and reports that the book has been added to the database.

If you look at the code for `insert_book.php`, you can see that much of it is similar to the script you wrote to retrieve data from the database. You check that all the form fields were filled in, and you format them correctly for insertion into the database (if required) with `addslashes()`:

```
if (!get_magic_quotes_gpc()) {
    $isbn = addslashes($isbn);
```

```

    $author = addslashes($author);
    $title = addslashes($title);
    $price = doubleval($price);
}

```

Because the price is stored in the database as a float, you don't want to put slashes into it. You can achieve the same effect of filtering out any odd characters on this numerical field by calling `doubleval()`, which we discussed in Chapter 1, "PHP Crash Course." This also takes care of any currency symbols that the user might have typed into the form.

Again, you connect to the database by instantiating the `mysqli` object and setting up a query to send to the database. In this case, the query is an SQL `INSERT`:

```

$query = "insert into books values
        ('".$isbn."', '".$author."', '".$title."', '".$price."')";
$result = $db->query($query);

```

This query is executed on the database by calling `$db->query()` (or `mysqli_query()` if you want to do things procedurally).

One significant difference between using `INSERT` and `SELECT` is in the use of `mysqli_affected_rows()`. This is a function in the procedural version or a class member variable in the object-oriented version:

```

echo $db->affected_rows." book inserted into database.";

```

In the previous script, you used `mysqli_num_rows()` to determine how many rows were returned by a `SELECT`. When you write queries that change the database, such as `INSERTS`, `DELETES`, and `UPDATES`, you should use `mysqli_affected_rows()` instead.

We've now covered the basics of using MySQL databases from PHP.

Using Prepared Statements

The `mysqli` library supports the use of prepared statements. They are useful for speeding up execution when you are performing large numbers of the same query with different data. They also protect against SQL injection-style attacks.

The basic concept of a prepared statement is that you send a template of the query you want to execute to MySQL and then send the data separately. You can send multiple lots of the same data to the same prepared statement; this capability is particularly useful for bulk inserts.

You could use prepared statements in the `insert_book.php` script, as follows:

```

$query = "insert into books values(?, ?, ?, ?)";
$stmt = $db->prepare($query);
$stmt->bind_param("sssd", $isbn, $author, $title, $price);
$stmt->execute();
echo $stmt->affected_rows.' book inserted into database.';
$stmt->close();

```

Let's consider this code line by line.

When you set up the query, instead of substituting in the variables as done previously, you put in question marks for each piece of data. You should not put any quotation marks or other delimiters around these question marks.

The second line is a call to `$db->prepare()`, which is called `mysqli_stmt_prepare()` in the procedural version. This line constructs a statement object or resource that you will then use to do the actual processing.

The statement object has a method called `bind_param()`. (In the procedural version, it is called `mysqli_stmt_bind_param()`.) The purpose of `bind_param()` is to tell PHP which variables should be substituted for the question marks. The first parameter is a format string, not unlike the format string used in `printf()`. The value you are passing here ("sssd") means that the four parameters are a string, a string, a string, and a double, respectively. Other possible characters in the format string are `i` for integer and `b` for blob. After this parameter, you should list the same number of variables as you have question marks in your statement. They will be substituted in this order.

The call to `$stmt->execute()` (`mysqli_stmt_execute()` in the procedural version) actually runs the query. You can then access the number of affected rows and close the statement.

So how is this prepared statement useful? The clever thing is that you can change the values of the four bound variables and re-execute the statement without having to reprepare. This capability is useful for looping through bulk inserts.

As well as binding parameters, you can bind results. For `SELECT` type queries, you can use `$stmt->bind_result()` (or `mysqli_stmt_bind_result()`) to provide a list of variables that you would like the result columns to be filled into. Each time you call `$stmt->fetch()` (or `mysqli_stmt_fetch()`), column values from the next row in the resultset are filled into these bound variables. For example, in the book search script you looked at earlier, you could use

```
$stmt->bind_result($isbn, $author, $title, $price);
```

to bind these four variables to the four columns that will be returned from the query. After calling

```
$stmt->execute();
```

you can call

```
$stmt->fetch();
```

in the loop. Each time this is called, it fetches the next result row into the four bound variables.

You can also use `mysqli_stmt_bind_param()` and `mysqli_stmt_bind_result()` in the same script.

Using Other PHP-Database Interfaces

PHP supports libraries for connecting to a large number of databases, including Oracle, Microsoft SQL Server, and PostgreSQL.

In general, the principles of connecting to and querying any of these databases are much the same. The individual function names vary, and different databases have slightly different functionality, but if you can connect to MySQL, you should be able to easily adapt your knowledge to any of the others.

If you want to use a database that doesn't have a specific library available in PHP, you can use the generic ODBC functions. ODBC, which stands for Open Database Connectivity, is a standard for connections to databases. It has the most limited functionality of any of the function sets, for fairly obvious reasons. If you have to be compatible with everything, you can't exploit the special features of anything.

In addition to the libraries that come with PHP, available database abstraction classes such as MDB2 allow you to use the same function names for each type of database.

Using a Generic Database Interface: PEAR MDB2

Let's look at a brief example using the PEAR MDB2 abstraction layer. This is one of the most widely used of all the PEAR components. Instructions for installing the MDB2 abstraction layer can be found in the "PEAR Installation" section in Appendix A, "Installing PHP and MySQL."

For comparative purposes, let's look at how you could write the search results script differently using MDB2.

Listing 11.5 results_generic.php—Retrieves Search Results from the MySQL Database and Formats Them for Display

```
<html>
<head>
  <title>Book-O-Rama Search Results</title>
</head>
<body>
<h1>Book-O-Rama Search Results</h1>
<?php
  // create short variable names
  $searchtype=$_POST['searchtype'];
  $searchterm=trim($_POST['searchterm']);

  if (!$searchtype || !$searchterm) {
    echo "You have not entered search details. Please go back and try again.";
    exit;
  }

  if (!get_magic_quotes_gpc()) {
    $searchtype = addslashes($searchtype);
```

Listing 11.5 **Continued**

```
$searchterm = addslashes($searchterm);
}

// set up for using PEAR MDB2
require_once('MDB2.php');
$user = 'bookorama';
$pass = 'bookoramal23';
$host = 'localhost';
$db_name = 'books';

// set up universal connection string or DSN
$dsn = "mysqli://".$user.":".$pass."@".$host."/".$db_name;

// connect to database
$db = &MDB2::connect($dsn);

// check if connection worked
if (MDB2::isError($db)) {
    echo $db->getMessage();
    exit;
}

// perform query
$query = "select * from books where ".$searchtype." like '%" . $searchterm . "%'";

$result = $db->query($query);

// check that result was ok
if (MDB2::isError($result)) {
    echo $db->getMessage();
    exit;
}

// get number of returned rows
$num_results = $result->numRows();

// display each returned row
for ($i=0; $i < $num_results; $i++) {
    $row = $result->fetchRow(MDB2_FETCHMODE_ASSOC);
    echo "<p><strong>".($i+1).". Title: ";
    echo htmlspecialchars(stripslashes($row['title']));
    echo "</strong><br />Author: ";
    echo stripslashes($row['author']);
    echo "<br />ISBN: ";
    echo stripslashes($row['isbn']);
}
```

Listing 11.5 **Continued**

```

        echo "<br />Price: ";
        echo stripslashes($row['price']);
        echo "</p>";
    }

    // disconnect from database
    $db->disconnect();
?>
</body>
</html>

```

Let's examine what you do differently in this script.

To connect to the database, you use the line

```
$db = MDB2::connect($dsn);
```

This function accepts a universal connection string that contains all the parameters necessary to connect to the database. You can see this if you look at the format of the connection string:

```
$dsn = "mysql://".$user.":".$pass."@".$host."/". $db_name;
```

After this, you check to see whether the connection was unsuccessful using the `isError()` method and, if so, print the error message and exit:

```

if (MDB2::isError($db)) {
    echo $db->getMessage();
    exit;
}

```

Assuming everything has gone well, you then set up a query and execute it as follows:

```
$result = $db->query($query);
```

You can check the number of rows returned:

```
$num_results = $result->numRows();
```

You retrieve each row as follows:

```
$row = $result->fetchRow(DB_FETCHMODE_ASSOC);
```

The generic method `fetchRow()` can fetch a row in many formats; the parameter `MDB2_FETCHMODE_ASSOC` tells it that you would like the row returned as an associative array.

After outputting the returned rows, you finish by closing the database connection:

```
$db->disconnect();
```

As you can see, this generic example is similar to the first script.

The advantages of using MDB2 are that you need to remember only one set of database functions and that the code will require minimal changes if you decide to change the database software.

Because this is a MySQL book, we use the MySQL native libraries for extra speed and flexibility. You might want to use the MDB2 package in your projects because sometimes the use of an abstraction layer can be extremely helpful.

Further Reading

For more information on connecting MySQL and PHP together, you can read the appropriate sections of the PHP and MySQL manuals.

For more information on ODBC, visit <http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/O/ODBC.html>.

Next

In the next chapter, we go into more detail about MySQL administration and discuss how to optimize databases.

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