IT Services for the
Faculty of Environment and Technology

Viewing PHP Error Messages

Introduction

When building a web enabled application using PHP, MySQL and Apache, it will usually take more than one attempt to create a working system.

During the debug phase of any development it is useful to be able to view error messages. The generation of error messages and warnings is turned off on the main FET web server, as it would be on a production web server in most companies.

There are 2 ways to view any error messages generated by PHP in FET, one is to test the code on a development server with generation of error messages turned on and the second is to view the Apache web server error log in (almost) real time.

Development Server

The development server in FET is, http://webdev.cems.uwe.ac.uk. So instead of viewing your web page at,

http://www.cems.uwe.ac.uk/~my-username/myfile.php

You would point your browser at the development server, by changing www to webdev in the URL,

http://webdev.cems.uwe.ac.uk/~my-username/myfile.php

NB Replace my-username with your username and myfile.php with the pathname.

Viewing the Apache Error Log File

Open one browser tab to view the PHP page you are testing and in another browser tab open the following page,

http://www.cems.uwe.ac.uk/phplogs/index.php

This page shows the latest errors from the Apache error log. There is more information on the page (and some useful debugging tips) if you click on the 'More information' link. The page must be refreshed to keep showing the latest error messages.

A useful technique to use is to reload the page you are testing and then refresh the error log web page to see the errors generated by your PHP page.

NB The Apache error log will also display error messages from other scripting languages, e.g. Perl, Python and Ruby.