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PHP is term that stands for Hypertext Preprocessor, with the letters PHP standing for Personal Home Page. PHP is actually a retronym. In 1994, the language was originally designed as a small set of binaries that are used in collecting basic website traffic data. Three years after, the parser was redone by 2 Israelis and the name was changed into its present acronym—this being determined that the term “hypertext preprocessor” was a more acceptable name in the current business world.

PHP is actually an open source language that is used primarily for server side applications and dynamic web content. Most web developers refer to PHP as a primary competitor of CGI-Perl, Macromedia’s ColdFusion, Sun’s Java (JSP), and Microsoft’s C#- Asp family.

PHP features a lot of open source libraries with core build. There are several extensions that help with the PHP interface, including IRC, windows API and a few compression formats. There are other extensions that enable PHP to generate file formats on the fly, like the popular extension that allows PHP to make Macromedia Flash movies.

PHP Use

PHP is a scripting language which is suited to server web development where PHP generally functions on the web server. Every PHP code requested in a file is executed by runtime to develop dynamic web pages or images on websites. It is also used for client GUI applications and command line scripting. PHP may be deployed on web servers, platforms and operation systems and can be utilized with relational database management systems. PHP is free of charge. They provide a complete source for PHP developers to create, personalize and extend based on their needs.

PHP acts a filter, taking information from a stream or file with text and PHP guidelines and outputting another data stream. Output is usually in HTML form. Since the development of PHP4, the PHP parser gathers input to develop byte code for processing Zend engine, providing improved performance on their predecessor.

Popularity

In the year 2000, PHP was greatly popularized with the release of its version 4. PHP Version 5 debuted in the year 2004 and is now considered as among the top programming languages used in server side scripting. Much of its popularity was due to its notorious looseness and ease of learning. Variables and arrays in PHP have the ability to hold on to any kind of object, syntax is pretty simple and variables don’t have to be declared. Unlike the Perl or C# languages which are more geared towards generalist programmers, a lot of PHP programmers know no other languages. This dismisses the tool as a lesser language, but its emerging popularity and the many efficient websites it has built seem to dispel this rumor.

PHP has always been criticized for what some people view as security flaws. Its lack of understandable error message, an incomplete set of functions, and a robust configuration file. Development continues today and with every successive build, PHP slowly addresses more and more of these issues through an open source community. More and more web developers are offering PHP development services to companies and businesses worldwide.

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