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A PHP Framework is a basic platform that allows us to develop web applications. In other words, it provides structure. By using a PHP Framework, you will end up saving loads of time, stopping the need to produce repetitive code, and you'll be able to build applications rapidly (RAD). Without a PHP Framework in place, it gets much more difficult to produce applications since you'll have to repeatedly code a lot of PHP. You'll also have to execute the connection between your database and whatever application you develop from scratch. Meanwhile, using a PHP Framework makes it easier for you to ensure this connection.

PHP operates on the Model View Controller (MVC) fundamentals. MVC is an architectural pattern featured in various popular programming languages which breaks apart your domain logic from your user interface. The domain logic is the function that handles information exchange between your database and your user interface. Therefore you're able to modify the domain logic and most importantly for designers, the user interface separately. This removes a lot of confusion and simplifies the entire developmental process. When we refer to MVC we generally perceive it as this: The M stands for the raw data, the V (view/user interface) represents what's actually being viewed, and C (controller) is in fact the domain logic as seen above. Once you're able to make sense of how MVC works, then PHP Frameworks become much more clear and easier to use.

When selecting a framework ensure:

Database support

Database support is very important. For example, CodeIgniter supports MySQL, Oracle, and SQLite, while the Kohana framework doesn't support Oracle or SQLite. Depending on which database you prefer to use or choose for your project at hand, you will also need to consider whether your database server supports this database type.

Community Support

Your framework should have a strong community, not just in terms of size but also in activity and helpfulness. Even if it's a small community, as long as you're able to find support, then that's a plus point.

Documentation Support

You should also be weary of frameworks that don't have any documentation and absolutely no user guide. Make sure that your PHP Framework has good documentation that's kept up-to-date, and that the user guide is relatively easy to follow.

Model View Controller Architecture

Your framework should also use the Model View Controller architecture. If you haven't, take a quick look above at the previous section and see why. Most of the good frameworks you'll find also offer libraries, plug-ins, helpers, and extensions. It's good to find a framework that has at least two of these options.

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