Chapter XI

Server-Side Technologies

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Introduction

When this book went out for review, one of the reviewers was insightful enough to recommend that I include some information on server-side technologies. As I thought about the scholar’s comments, I came to a few conclusions about the importance of server-side technologies and their use within the Web portfolio. For the most part, you can create a simple Web portfolio by using only client-side tools. Client-side tools and technologies include Macromedia Dreamweaver, Adobe audition, Macromedia Fireworks, HTML, and JavaScript. But the reviewer made a good point in stating that ignoring server-side technologies seemed inappropriate. With this in mind, and with the help and research and writing contributions of my colleague and friend David Power, we provide a basic overview of PHP, ASP, ASP.net, CGI & Perl, and ColdFusion. These backend technologies have database driven components.
which may or may not be needed in today’s Web portfolio. But as content grows in quantity, quality, and resolution, they need for large-scale database management even on personal Web portfolio levels becomes more evident. In the future, the integration of server-side technologies will surely become a large part of personal Web portfolio activities.

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**PHP**

PHP is an open source scripting language that allows development of dynamic content Web sites. PHP creates interactive Web sites that process user submitted information and then generates content (Whitehead & Desamero, 2001). One main feature of PHP is its ability to work with numerous databases including MySQL. Databases used with PHP will provide users and authors data manipulation features that are not enabled in purely HTML Web pages. In the Web portfolio scenario, large numbers of content such as photographs, paintings, or papers can be cataloged in databases and then records can be easily updated, added, and deleted. PHP works seamlessly with HTML. PHP can generate HTML code for a page, or PHP code can be inserted into HTML code. This ease of integration with HTML allows you to enhance existing Web pages by adding PHP code into the HTML page code. PHP requires no special development tools (just a text editor) and works well with Macromedia Dreamweaver (Whitehead & Desamero, 2001). PHP is most likely a good choice to explore if you want to integrate database driven and dynamic in serving and collecting content and data to the user.

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**Active Server Pages (ASP)**

ASP is Microsoft’s server-side technology for dynamically-generated Web pages that is marketed as an adjunct to Internet Information Server (IIS). ASP has gone through four major iterations, ASP 1.0 (distributed with IIS 3.0), ASP 2.0 (distributed with IIS 4.0), ASP 3.0 (distributed with IIS 5.0), and ASP.NET (part of the Microsoft .NET platform). The pre-.NET versions are currently referred to as “classic” ASP. In the latest classic ASP, ASP 3.0, there are six built-in objects that are available to the programmer, Application,