Creating A Simple Calendar in PHP

By Gareth Downes-Powell

In this tutorial, we're going to look at creating calendars in PHP. In this first part of the series we build a simple calendar for display purposes, looking at the techniques involved. In the second part we'll build a more advanced calendar that can display events for each day for example and has customised styling.

As well as being useful, calendars use a number of different programming techniques, which can be utilised in many other areas. We'll also look at the best ways to work with times and dates, and how to find the number of days in a month, or what weekday a date fall on for example.

The most important command when building calendars is the PHP **date()** command, so let's look at this first.

The PHP Date() Command

Overview

The PHP `date()` command is incredibly useful, due to the different data that it can return. Although we'll look at some of the functions here, for a full overview of the command its well worth checking out the command in the online PHP manual at http://www.php.net/manual/en/function.date.php

The format for the `date()` command is:

```
date($dateFormat, (optional timestamp))
```

$dateFormat contains a string containing tokens which tell the date command which information to return. **Optional timestamp** is a UNIX timestamp which represents the date that you want to work with; if it's not given then the date command will automatically work with the current date. As well as working with dates, the `date()` command can also work with times.

As an example of how the `date()` command is used, we'll look at a few examples:

```
<?php echo date("m/d/Y"); ?>
```

This returns the current date in the format `mm/dd/yyyy` e.g. `10/12/2003`

```
<?php echo date("l, jS F Y"); ?>
```

This returns the date in the format `Sunday, 12`th` October 2003` for example

```
<?php echo date("G:i"); ?>
```

This returns the time in the format `19:06` for example

```
<?php echo date("h:i a"); ?>
```

This returns the time in the format `7:06 am`

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