

Setting up PHP/MySQL on the EQ MIS Servers



Student Home Pages

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Setting up PHP/MySQL on the EQ MIS Servers

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This paper will run you through the basic tasks in setting up student MIS accounts to allow publishing of database-driven website applications on EQ server-based home pages, including:

- setting up home pages and databases as MIS Administrator
- administering home pages and databases as MIS Admin
- using MIS Tools to access home pages and *phpMyAdmin* as a student.
- editing HTML, CSS, PHP, Javascript, AJAX using a variety of free (and non-free) apps
- uploading files to EQ using Filezilla FTP client.
- MySQL config scripts
- accessing PHP error reports

If you have access to a reasonable internet link (probably at least 1500kbps ADSL) at your school, it is far easier to use the EQ web servers for student work rather than set something up yourself that you have to maintain. Even when the internet is slow at my school, access times to the EQ server is very workable. Once students are set up by your MIS Administrator, you can concentrate on just teaching.

The Student Home Web Site

Each EQ student may have a home page on the EQ server. Student idatt3 would have a web address of <http://www.uranganshs.eq.edu.au/home/idatt3>.

Student home pages are not necessarily enabled by default. Some schools may default to giving every student a site, others may set them up ad hoc, as I do. You will need your school MIS Administrator (me for USHS) to make sure your students have their sites set up. I recommend that students do not have sites by default, that you only give access to students with a real (educational) reason to have one, and lastly that you set permissions for the sites so that public access is limited at an appropriate level. The diagram shows where you tick to enable individuals “Personal Websites”. NB: Remember that these sites are not actually personal; other people will see them!

The screenshot shows the 'Managed Internet Service' interface. The user 'idattend (idatt3)' is selected. Under 'User privileges', 'Email Access' is checked, 'Email Address' is 'idatt3@eq.edu.au', and 'Personal Website' is checked. Other options like 'Internet Access' and 'Change Password' are unchecked. A 'SUBMIT' button is at the bottom.

The Student Database

This diagram shows the appropriate tab for the MIS Admin to set up databases for students.

NB. MIS accounts will not be searchable from this tab unless their respective Personal Websites are already activated, i.e. you cannot give someone a database until after you have given them a website. Makes sense, when you think about it.

Creation of an “account” will produce a page of connection strings for a range of scripting languages. You do not need to keep this or print it out and hand it to students as you will see later on in this paper. This is something I discovered by accidental clicking and always kept printouts (and

The screenshot shows the 'Managed Internet Service' interface with the 'MySQL Users' tab selected. The 'Create Database' section shows 'Urangan State High School' selected for the school and 'Last name' selected for the user. The 'Database Details' section shows 'idatt3' for the username, a masked password, and 'dbidatt32' for the database. The 'Allow multiple databases' checkbox is checked. A 'CREATE ACCOUNT' button is at the bottom.

subsequently lost them) up until now. In practice, you can give a student multiple databases, but you do not need to do this as the databases can have practically unlimited tables and you can organise them by using a prefix, eg mov_name, mov_director, rep_tech, rep_jobs, etc.

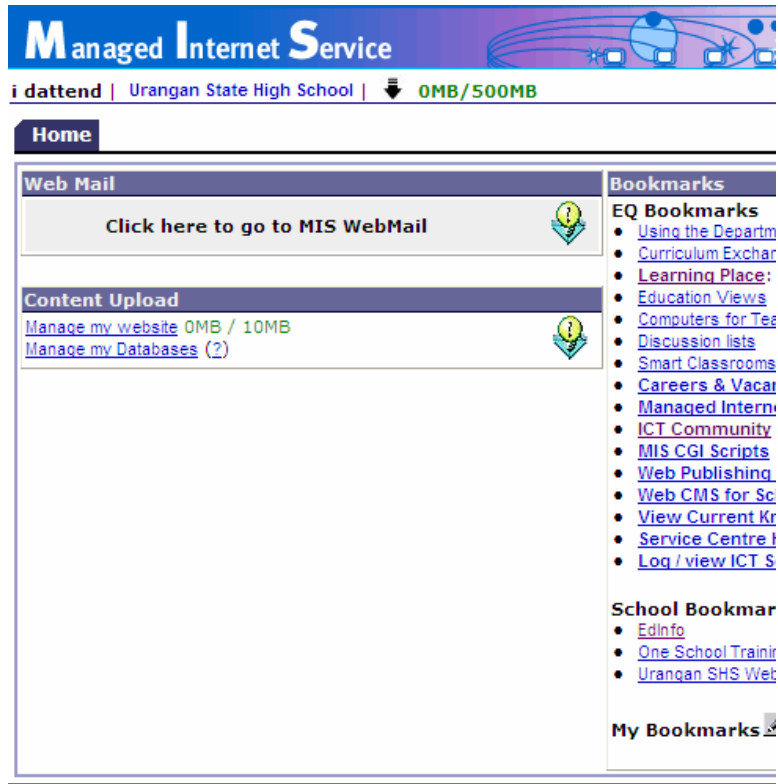
MIS Portal Tools – Student

Once your student has both a website and a database, their MIS Portal home page will look something like this diagram.

At my school I have set the default space size to 10MB. At your school it may be 5MB by default. This might be a bit small for an IPT student doing everything on-line.

The website link allows access to a basic on-line file manager as shown below. It has its uses, but as explained further below, I recommend that you have students use Filezilla to upload their files.

The database link gives access to PhpMyAdmin. This is also explained below.



PHP DB config scripts

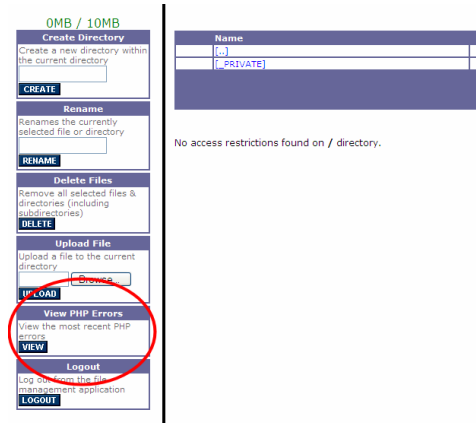
The (?) beside the database link is where your students can get their connection strings whenever they need them. That is why you do not need to keep a copy.

File Upload

The file management tool is self explanatory, but pretty useless except for the “View PHP Errors” tool. PHP code has to be run on the server to work and thus to be debugged.

PHP Errors

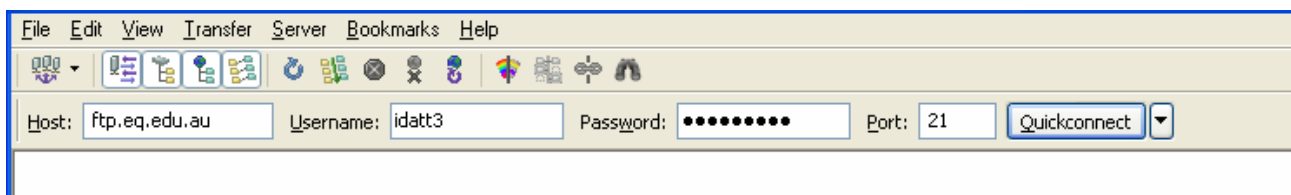
As the PHP config on EQ is has “display_errors” set to Off and you cannot change this, is can be difficult to debug some errors. This is where the “View PHP Errors” tool is a great help, as it lists the most recent PHP errors on that particular account’s web site.



FTP and Filezilla

The best reasons for using FTP, better than its easy simplicity, is that it will give students some idea of File Transport Protocol, which they might not otherwise get.

[Filezilla](#) is free and open-source. Once you have it installed somewhere, you can copy that folder anywhere and it will still work fine. No capillaries into the OS.



The Host is always <ftp.eq.edu.au>. The username and password are the standard MIS ones. A successful login provides a simple drag and drop interface so that students can very easily upload, and re-upload files. When debugging code, students will need to continually re-upload. Using the standard MIS tool for this will seriously disrupt the development process.

PhpMyAdmin

This PHP-based app is used to administer the MySQL DBMS. It is simple to learn and use, working in a very similar way to any other DBMS admin tool.

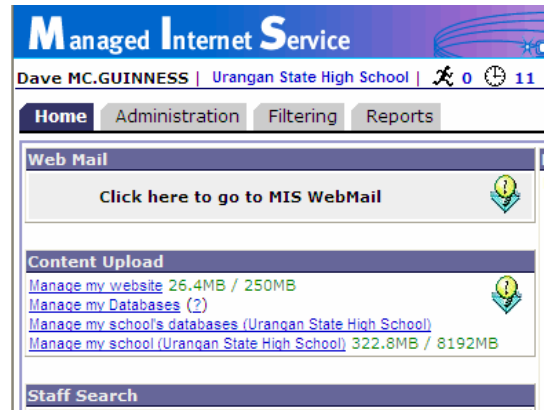
There is not really a useful way to define foreign keys, but then you do not really need to define them, as this aspect is better controlled by code anyway.



MIS Portal Tools – MIS Admin

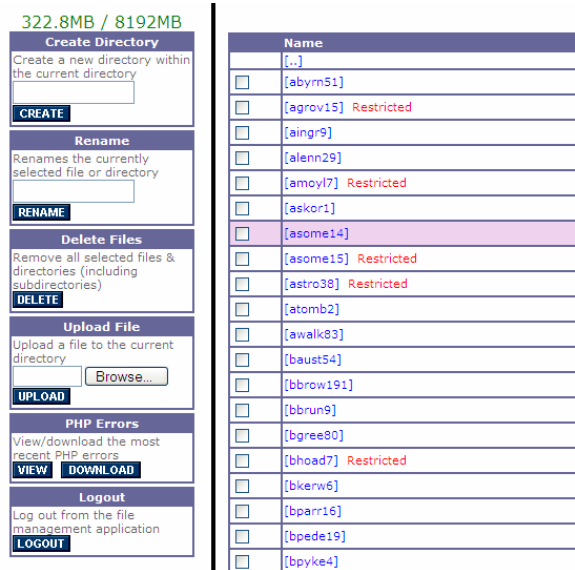
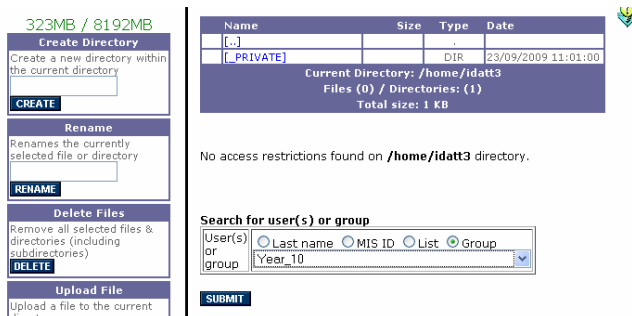
The MIS Admin gets a link to their own personal databases, plus any that are set up on the school account. There is no access to the individual student databases.

The link to “Manage my school” does allow the MIS Admin to the content of every student’s personal website.



Permissions

By entering any folder, the MIS Admin can set the level of access to a particular site, from something as limited as just students in that year level, up to full public access (not a great idea for some students). You really should consider the level of access in the light of how you personally might deal with public complaints about the contents of your students’ sites.



Web Editors

I would just like to make a quick recommendation on this one. I have been having a look at [MS Visual Web Developer Express Edition](#). It's a lot like Dreamweaver, but it is free. It's a big download, but I am finding it very good to use. It does not do PHP natively yet, but its code completion in Javascript(Jscript) is very good. I have not found a free product with good code completion for PHP, so there is no loss there.

Documentation

This plenty to look at in regard to MIS Documentation available on MIS, but you do not really need to go there. Everything you need is in this document. You should be able to figure out the rest as you go. Good luck!

Dave McGuinness

Web Links

McGoo Software	http://www.mcgoo.com.au
McGoo's MySQL_Query	http://www.eq.edu.au/dmcgu11/mysql_query
W3Schools	http://www.w3schools.com
MySQL	http://dev.mysql.com
PHP	http://www.php.net
Context	http://www.context.cx
Microsoft Visual Web Developer	http://www.microsoft.com/express/vwd
Dia	http://dia-installer.de/index_en.html