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MAMP: Apache and Multiple Virtual Hosts

This is the first in a series of tutorials on ways to use MAMP for web development. I hope that you find it useful and feel free to suggest additional topics in the comments section.

With that said, most of us work on multiple projects and sites at the same time and we'd love to be able access and test each site separately rather than as subfolders of the default MAMP site. MAMP Pro is able to set this up for you nicely, but not everyone can afford the full version when starting out. I highly encourage everyone who is making a nice living while using MAMP for development to support them if you can by purchasing MAMP Pro.



For people using the free version of MAMP, despair not because Apache can do this for you too. With just a few edits you can have multiple sites running out of your docroot.

I'm not going to cover MAMP installation, since it's basically just a matter of downloading it and dragging it into your Applications folder. The instructions [here](#) are pretty straightforward. If you have any issues with your install check out the MAMP [forums](#).

In this tutorial, we'll setup two local sites, sitename1.local and sitename2.local.

Hostnames setup

Open terminal and edit your `/etc/hosts` file in vim by running this command:

```
$ sudo vim /etc/hosts
```

If you're not a vi/vim person you can run this instead

```
$ sudo /Applications/TextEdit.app/Contents/MacOS/TextEdit /etc/hosts
```

You need the sudo since you'll need to have elevated privileges to edit this file. Now edit the below line by adding sitename1.local and sitename2.local to the end of it.

```
127.0.0.1      localhost sitename1.local sitename2.local
```

Save the file and in a terminal make sure you can ping these domain names now.

```
$ ping sitename1.local
```

```
PING localhost (127.0.0.1): 56 data bytes
```

```
64 bytes from 127.0.0.1: icmp_seq=0 ttl=64 time=0.039 ms
```

```
64 bytes from 127.0.0.1: icmp_seq=1 ttl=64 time=0.041 ms
```

```
64 bytes from 127.0.0.1: icmp_seq=2 ttl=64 time=0.048 ms
```

```
64 bytes from 127.0.0.1: icmp_seq=3 ttl=64 time=0.044 ms
```

If you have any issues, be sure you didn't mistype anything. You can flush your dns cache too by running `$ dscacheutil -flushcache` from the terminal.

Apache config

Now is a good time to create the folders for each site in your htdocs folder (by default `/Applications/MAMP/htdocs`) as well.

```
$ cd /Applications/MAMP/htdocs
```

```
$ mkdir sitename1
```

```
$ mkdir sitename2
```

MAMP's apache config file is located in `/Applications/MAMP/conf/apache/httpd.conf`. Back this file up and then open it up to edit. Head all the way to the bottom of the file to `### Section 3: Virtual Hosts`.

Now, uncomment or add the `NameVirtualHost *` line to enable and edit it to include the default port for MAMP. This will enable name based virtual hosting:

```
NameVirtualHost *:8888
```

Virtual Host setup

For each site you add, you'll need to add a new section like the one's below:

```
DocumentRoot "/Applications/MAMP/htdocs/sitename1"
```

```
ServerName sitename1.local
```

```
Options Indexes FollowSymLinks
```

```
AllowOverride All
```

```
Order allow,deny
```

```
Allow from all
```

```
DocumentRoot "/Applications/MAMP/htdocs/sitename2"  
ServerName sitename2.local
```

```
Options Indexes FollowSymLinks  
AllowOverride All  
Order allow,deny  
Allow from all
```

This section will setup the virtual hosts' document root, the server name, optionally a custom port, the site's directory permissions and whether to allow .htaccess overrides or not.

I've enabled overrides since most host providers allow this and CMS' like WordPress setup custom .htaccess files. MAMP doesn't allow this option by default so we changed it in the example. This also help us to keep each site's .htaccess configuration separate from the others.

Save your new httpd.conf and close it. Now, put a test index.php file or if you have an existing site copy it into one of the folders, start Apache, and check for any errors in the log file. You can test your sites in a browser by going to the following urls:

<http://sitename1.local:8888>

-- and --

<http://sitename2.local:8888>

If your browser just downloads a file, you may have left Apache running when you edited the file. Restart apache and you should be fine.

That's it. It's a bit of work in the beginning but adding more sites is a quick and easy process. Just edit your hosts file and add another another section to your httpd.conf file. Oh yeah, be sure to backup this file since an upgrade of MAMP will overwrite it (that's for a future tutorial).

As always, comments are welcome. If you have any other MAMP techniques you'd like to share or articles you'd like to see just ask away.

-- Mike Q.

MAMP: Upgrades and Files to Backup

If you're like me, whenever you start MAMP you get that nice welcome webpage that gives you the status of your MAMP install. It also lets you know what the latest update to MAMP is. Keeping your MAMP installation up to date is important, but it's also tricky since your htdocs, databases, logs and custom apache, php and mysql configurations are stored in the /Applications/MAMP folder. If you just run an update, you'll certainly lose these files and be looking for them in your latest backup. You do have a backup of your system right?



In this post, I'm starting a list of files that I've found need to be backed up before an update and then restored afterwards. I will also typically use the excellent Apple Xcode utility FileMerge to compare my files to the new ones to see if there were any changes to the defaults that I would want to incorporate into my files before restoring them.

APACHE

- /Applications/MAMP/conf/apache/httpd.conf
- /Applications/MAMP/htdocs

PHP

- /Applications /MAMP/conf/php5.2/php.ini
- /Applications /MAMP/conf/php5.3/php.ini

PHP debugging files (if you've updated them to handle an issue in eclipse with seeing variables while debugging)

- /Applications/MAMP/bin/php5.2/lib/php/extensions/no-debug-non-zts-20060613/xdebug.so

- /Applications/MAMP/bin/php5.3/lib/php/extensions/no-debug-non-zts-20090626/xdebug.so

MYSQL

- /Applications/MAMP/db/mysql/ all files and subfolders
- /Applications/MAMP/bin/
 - checkMysql.sh
 - quickCheckMysqlUpgrade.sh
 - repairMysql.sh
 - startMysql.sh
 - stopMysql.sh
 - upgradeMysql.sh

PHPMYADMIN

- /Applications/MAMP/bin/phpMyAdmin/config.inc.php

MAMP Welcome Page

- /Applications/MAMP/bin/MAMP/index.php

As always, I welcome your feedback. If you have any extra files that need to be backed up let me know and I'll add them to the list.

--Mike Q.

MAMP: Changing the MySQL root Password

Here's a short article on how to quickly change the password for MySQL in MAMP. Even though it's just a local development copy of MySQL, if you ever access a public internet hotspot it's possible that other people on that network could access your copy of MySQL as well as any client databases you have running on it. If you still have the default password of root, then it would be trivial to access this data.

With that said, it's pretty easy to change the password so let's get started.

First ~~stop MySQL~~ make sure MySQL is running, open a terminal and run the following command:

```
$ /Applications/MAMP/Library/bin/mysqladmin -u root -p password  
newpassword
```

You'll be prompted for the current root password. This is the MySQL root password and in MAMP 1.9.x that password is *root*.

Now stop, MySQL and update the following scripts and files in MAMP with the new password.

- /Applications/MAMP/bin/
 - checkMysql.sh
 - quickCheckMysqlUpgrade.sh
 - repairMysql.sh
 - stopMysql.sh
 - upgradeMysql.sh
- /Applications/MAMP/bin/phpMyAdmin/config.inc.php
- /Applications/MAMP/bin/MAMP/index.php

Startup MySQL and check for any errors. As always, backup these files since they'll get overwritten with a MAMP upgrade.

That's it! I said it would be quick. Security doesn't always have to be hard. If we take the time to do the simple things it can save a lot of headaches later.

*Edited 4/22/2011: Updated to reflect that MySQL needs to be running to change the password and then shutdown afterwards. Thanks to Randy Ribaud for pointing this out.

MAMP: Securing your Data Files with FileVault.

So you have MAMP installed and you're happily coding and debugging your sites. Now your Mac is lost or stolen and you realize that while you've encrypted your home directory with FileVault, your sites and mysql databases are stored under /Applications/MAMP/htdocs and /Applications/MAMP/db/mysql. This is NOT good...



Before that happens, let's figure out how to move your MAMP htdocs, MySQL databases and all Apache, PHP and MySQL logfiles to a folder in your home directory to avoid this potential security risk.

Another benefit to this is easier upgrades between versions. Just backup your modified configuration files and upgrade. No need to worry about your data files being overwritten by an upgrade.

Setup

First, you need to have your home folder encrypted with FileVault. Next we'll be moving your MAMP data files to a folder in the root of your home directory. You can name this folder anything you want, but for our purposes it's called MAMP. Go ahead and create this folder /Users/<username>/MAMP.

NOTE: We are using MAMP 1.9.4. It should work with all 1.9.x versions and maybe earlier ones. If you have an older version let me know if this works for those versions too.

Moving Apache's htdocs and logs

MAMP's config tool will let you change the docroot through its interface even with the free version. Just open the preferences, go to the Apache tab and select your new docroot. You'll need to edit some other lines in the httpd.conf file to move any name-based virtual hosts and change the log folder.

MAMP's Apache config file is located under /Applications/MAMP/conf/apache/httpd.conf. Stop Apache if it's running, make a backup of the file just in case and then edit the original file. Once you've opened your httpd.conf we just need to change three lines (more if you're using name-based virtual hosts).

1. DocumentRoot (You can use the MAMP config tool for this also) # MAMP
DOCUMENT_ROOT !! Don't remove this line !!
2. DocumentRoot "/Applications/MAMP/htdocs"
3. -- to --
4. DocumentRoot "/Users//MAMP/htdocs"
5. Directory # This should be changed to whatever you set
DocumentRoot to.
6. #
- 7.
8. -- to --
9. /MAMP/htdocs">
10. Logs ErrorLog /Applications/MAMP/logs/apache_error_log
11. -- to --
12. ErrorLog /Users//MAMP/logs/apache_error_log
13. Name-based Virtual hosts (OPTIONAL). NameVirtualHost *
- 14.
15. DocumentRoot "/Applications/MAMP/htdocs/sitename1"
16. -- to --
17. DocumentRoot "/Users//MAMP/htdocs/sitename1"
- 18.
19. -- to --
20. /MAMP/htdocs/sitename1">

Save the file and exit. Now we can move our /Applications/MAMP/htdocs folder to /Users/<username>/MAMP/htdocs. Start up Apache and make sure it's all still working. If not, check out the apache_error_log. **NOTE:** your log may still be in the old folder if you have issues.

Moving PHP logs

There are two versions of PHP in a default install of MAMP. The php.ini files are located under /Applications/MAMP/conf/php5.2 and /Applications/MAMP/conf/php5.3. Backup these files, stop Apache and then open the originals and edit the following line:

```
; Log errors to specified file.  
error_log = "/Applications/MAMP/logs/php_error.log"  
-- to --
```

```
error_log = "/Users//MAMP/logs/php_error.log"
```

Save the files and startup Apache to make sure everything's still working.

Moving MySQL Databases and logs

MySQL is a bit more complicated to move, but is still quite doable. First off there's no custom my.cnf file by default, so you'll need to go to /Applications/MAMP/Library/share/mysql and pick an appropriate my-xxx.cnf as a starting point. Either my-medium.cnf or my-small.cnf should be fine. Copy the file you selected to /Applications/MAMP/db/mysql/my.cnf.

Now, open the file and add the following options. Since the default install doesn't have a my.cnf file, I only add the parameters that I want to override. I'm not a MySQL guru but anything set in this file should override the built-in defaults but not wipe out any options not specified.

```
# The MySQL server
```

```
[mysqld]
```

```
datadir=/Users//MAMP/mysql
```

```
log=/Users//MAMP/logs/mysql_log
```

Warning: Only enable the log line above when you need to trace a query, it will log all MySQL queries and can really slow down your dev machine. I found this out the hard way. Now you've been warned...

The line datadir is where you'll be moving your MySQL databases to and log is where the standard log files go. Make sure you create this folder in your home directory's MAMP folder. After you've stopped MySQL, grab everything from /Applications/MAMP/db/mysql/ except for my.cnf and move them to your /Users/<username>/MAMP/mysql/ folder.

There's one more MySQL file we need to edit in order to move the error logs to our home directory. This is the startMysql.sh file located in /Applications/MAMP/bin/. Change the startup line option for --log-error from

```
--log-error=/Applications/MAMP/logs/mysql_error_log
```

```
-- to --
```

```
--log-error=/Users//MAMP/logs/mysql_error_log
```

Startup MySQL and check for any errors. Once again, in the event of errors, you may need to check in both the new and old locations for the logs. You may even change the --log-error parameter back to the default to get log output while troubleshooting.

Another note on MySQL security, be sure to change the MAMP MySQL default password. There are a number of files you'll need to update with this info. You can take a look at [MAMP: Changing the MySQL root Password](#) for details.

Now, even though these files will have your plain text password and they'll be sitting unencrypted in /Applications/MAMP/... there's shouldn't be any threat to your data if your Mac is lost or stolen. This is because all of the data files are encrypted with FileVault which can't be mounted without your password (remember that FileVault is only as secure as your account password). So even though someone can try and start MySQL and even see the dbo password, they still won't have access to the data. Just be sure to not use that password anymore :-)

If you want to go further, you can move tmp and pid files too. As far as I know there's no real security risk here, but I could be wrong.

That's it. I'd love to hear your feedback as well as any other ways you've secured your local MAMP installation.

- Mike Q.

MAMP: Securing Your Files Continued

You've got your development environment all setup to run off your FileVault secured htdocs folder now. You open up your ftp client and start downloading a site to set it up for local development work. Then you start getting messages from your ftp client about overwriting an existing file. Would you like to continue?... huh?



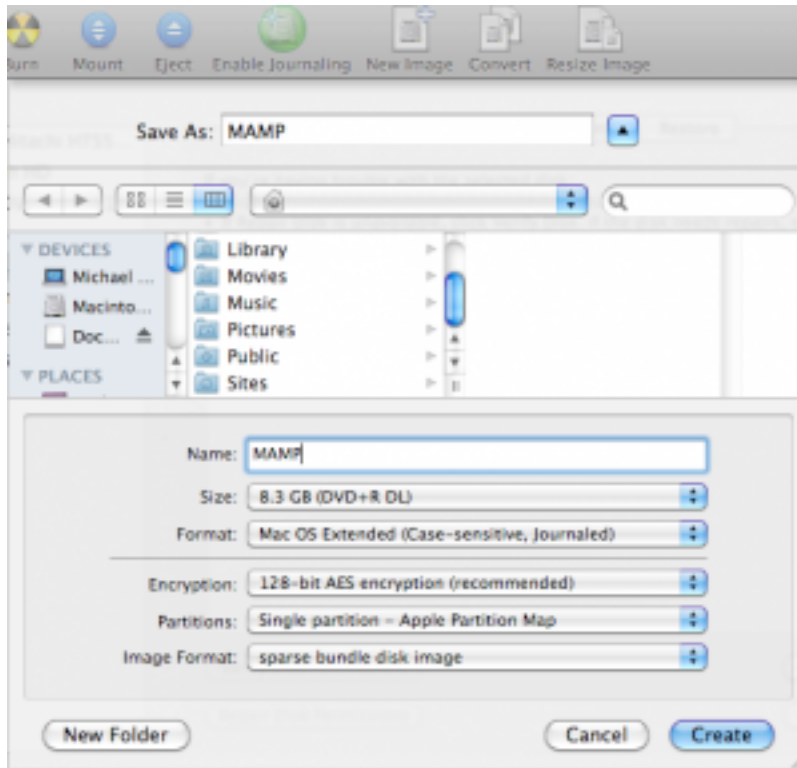
That's what happened to me with a client site that had a large number of product images. What was the problem, you ask? Well, the problem was that the files did have the same name, almost. A closer inspection revealed case differences in the filenames, 06.JPG vs 06.Jpg for example.

Wait a minute isn't HFS+ case-sensitive? Well, it is and it isn't, meaning that it depends on which you pick when formatting the volume. I just found out the hard way that FileVault formats your encrypted home directory volume as case-insensitive. Great!

All is not lost though, or I wouldn't have written this article ;-)

Here's what we'll do. We'll create a sparsebundle image, mount it, and put our MAMP files in it. Then we'll create a symbolic link called MAMP in the same place where our current MAMP folder was. That's it.

First, let's create the sparsebundle image called MAMP using the Disk Utility.



Enter your encryption password, etc... and save it. I use sparsebundles because I like the idea that they dynamically grow and you can compact them if you removed a bunch of files.

Now, mount the sparsebundle and copy all your files from the `/Users//MAMP` folder we created in the previous [article](#).

Once they've been copied, make sure MAMP isn't running and rename your existing MAMP folder to MAMP.bak (just in case). Open a terminal window, cd to `/Users//` and enter the following:

```
$ ln -s /Volumes/MAMP/ MAMP
```

We've just created a symbolic link called MAMP that points to our encrypted (and case-sensitive) volume. Verify that you still have your sparsebundle mounted and go ahead and startup MAMP.

Test your sites and and verify your case-sensitive filesystem by downloading that troublesome site again or just creating two files named the same with two different cases.

Indexing

There's one last item you'll run into if you like to do any spotlight searches of your source files. By default a sparsebundle volume doesn't get indexed by spotlight.

Simple enough to enable and there's no security issue as far as I can tell since the indexes are kept on the sparsebundle volume itself under the folder .Spotlight-V100.

Once again, open a terminal window and enter the following:

```
$ sudo mdutil -i on /Volumes/MAMP/
```

That's it. I hope this helps you out and I'd love to hear any feedback you may have.

- Mike

MAMP: PHP Debugging with XDebug, TextWrangler and MacGDBp



MAMP: One-click-solution for setting up your personal webserver

I was going to do a post on how to get eclipse and Xdebug working, but I really couldn't say it any better than Nick did [here](#). As a result, I'm going to cover how I set up Xdebug for my "lightweight" dev setup with [TextWrangler](#) and [MacGDBp](#) instead.



Now, when I'm coding websites the type of work typically falls into two types: light, quick front-end type edits to css and php or heavy deep coding where I need to see function calls, variables and so on. As a result, I use two different types of editors depending on the work. Currently my light work is handled with TextWrangler which is the free version of BBEdit. TextWrangler is great, it's lightweight, loads quickly and has a built-in diff tool as well as ftp/sftp access. One thing it doesn't have is a built-in debugger, though, and sometimes I'd like to be able to step through some code without having to load up eclipse (SLOOOOOW) or Netbeans (A bit less SLOOOOW).

I am going to assume that MAMP is already installed and working and that you have XDebug working as well. If not, you can follow Nick's tutorial above. Otherwise, here's a quick rundown of the steps for getting XDebug setup with MAMP.

1. Download the pre-compiled xdebug files from [ActiveState](#) for PHP.
2. Untar the file and grab the xdebug.so file from the version of PHP you are using. Current I use 5.3 so I grabbed that file.

3. Backup the xdebug.so file in the following MAMP folder / Applications/MAMP/bin/php5.3/lib/php/extensions/no-debug-non-zts-20090626/ and then copy over the ActiveState version. *Be sure you put the file is in the correct php version folder (e.g. 5.2 or 5.3).
4. Open the php.ini for the version of PHP you are using, mine is / Applications/MAMP/conf/php5.3/php.ini*UPDATE 6/19/2011: If you have MAMP PR, you should edit your php.ini from File > Edit Template > PHP5 php.ini or your changes will get overwritten on each restart. Thank to Andrew in the comments for pointing this out.
5. Comment out any lines for Zend debugging, profiling, etc... it will conflict with XDebug.
6. Create or edit the [xdebug] section to look like this (update the path for your installed path to xdebug.so). NOTE: Never, ever enable this on a production site!

[xdebug]

```
zend_extension="/Applications/MAMP/bin/php5.3/lib/php/
extensions/no-debug-non-zts-20090626/xdebug.so"
```

```
xdebug.profiler_output_dir = "/tmp/xdebug/"
```

```
xdebug.profiler_enable = 0n
```

```
xdebug.remote_enable=0n
```

```
xdebug.remote_autostart = 1
```

```
xdebug.remote_host="localhost"
```


```
xdebug.remote_port=9000
```

```
xdebug.remote_handler="dbgp"
```

```
xdebug.idekey=mylocaldebugger
```

1. Start (or restart) Apache and launch a test page with just the following code:

You should see the following items in the results, just do a search for xdebug.

<p>This program makes use of the Zend Scripting Language Engine: Zend Engine v2.3.0, Copyright (c) 1998-2010 Zend Technologies with XCache v1.3.1, Copyright (c) 2005-2010, by mOo with Xdebug v2.1.0, Copyright (c) 2002-2010, by Derick Rethans</p>	<p>Powered By</p> 
---	---

xdebug

xdebug support	enabled
Version	2.1.0

Supported protocols	Revision
DBGp - Common DeBuGger Protocol	\$Revision: 1.145 \$

Directive	Local Value	Master Value
xdebug.auto_trace	Off	Off
xdebug.collect_assignments	Off	Off
xdebug.collect_includes	On	On
xdebug.collect_params	0	0
xdebug.collect_return	Off	Off
xdebug.collect_vars	Off	Off
xdebug.default_enable	On	On
xdebug.dump.COOKIE	<i>no value</i>	<i>no value</i>
xdebug.dump.ENV	<i>no value</i>	<i>no value</i>
xdebug.dump.FILES	<i>no value</i>	<i>no value</i>
xdebug.dump.GET	<i>no value</i>	<i>no value</i>
xdebug.dump.POST	<i>no value</i>	<i>no value</i>
xdebug.dump.REQUEST	<i>no value</i>	<i>no value</i>
xdebug.dump.SERVER	<i>no value</i>	<i>no value</i>
xdebug.dump.SESSION	<i>no value</i>	<i>no value</i>

If you're having any trouble, you can checkout the Xdebug setup instructions

That's it!

What do you think? Do you find it useful to have a lightweight debugging environment or do you prefer using a heavy client like eclipse and Netbeans?

- Mike Q.

TextWrangler: A Few of My Favorite Things



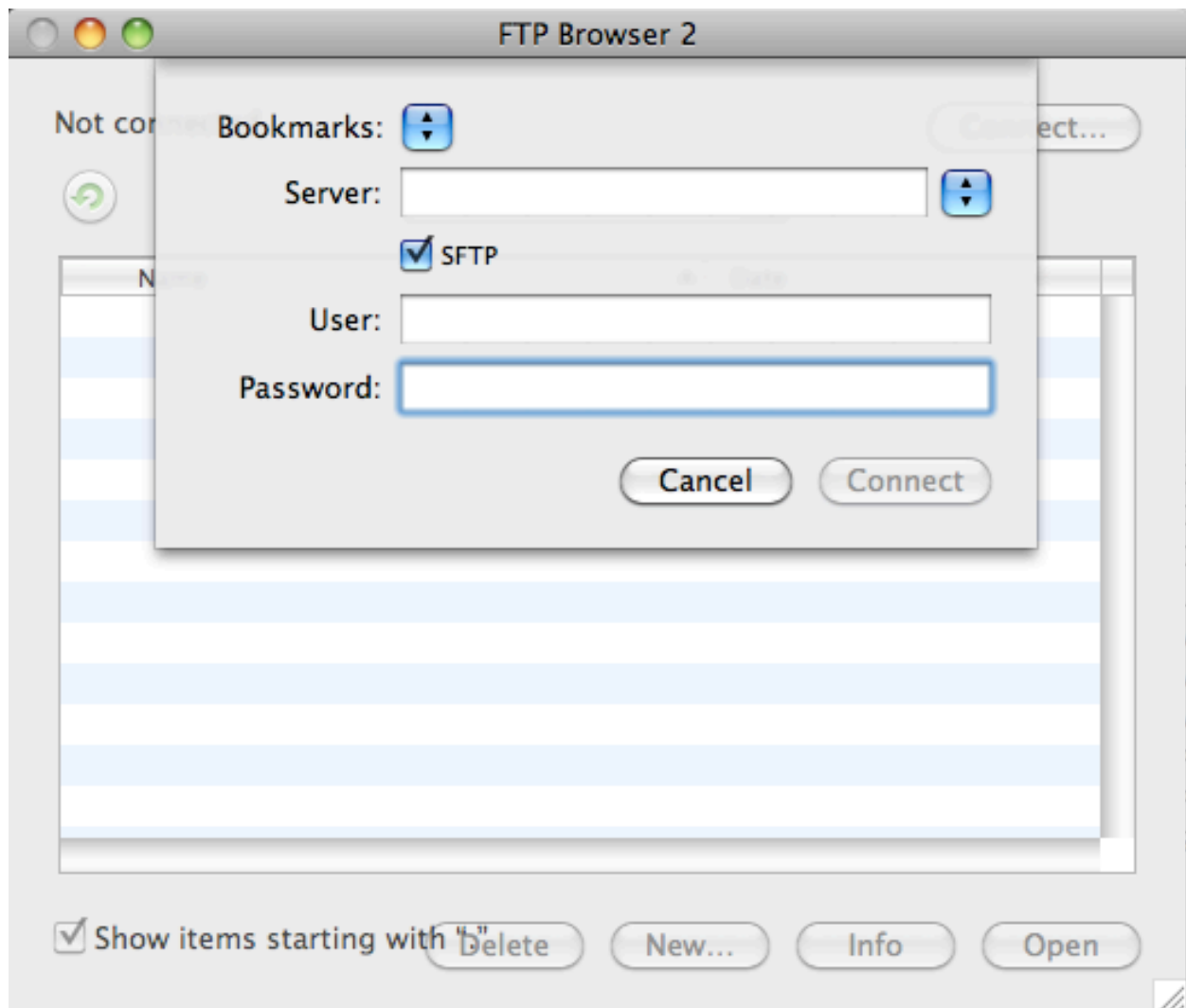
In my last post, I mentioned that I've been using TextWrangler for my lightweight web development needs. I'd like to share with you some of the features I love about this free editor. This isn't a review of TextWrangler, but just an overview of some of the nice features I've come to rely on day-in and day-out.

File Diffs

The coolest feature I recently discovered was that I could diff files right in the editor. Up until now I'd been using FileMerge from the XCode Developer Tools, which works well but after upgrading an OSCMax site 7 versions, the back and forth got a bit tedious. To access this feature, all you need to do is have both files open in the editor. Make sure the file drawer is open and select them both. Right-click and you'll see an option to compare the files. Select it and you'll get a side-by-side comparison of the files along with the differences listed on the bottom. Pretty cool stuff!

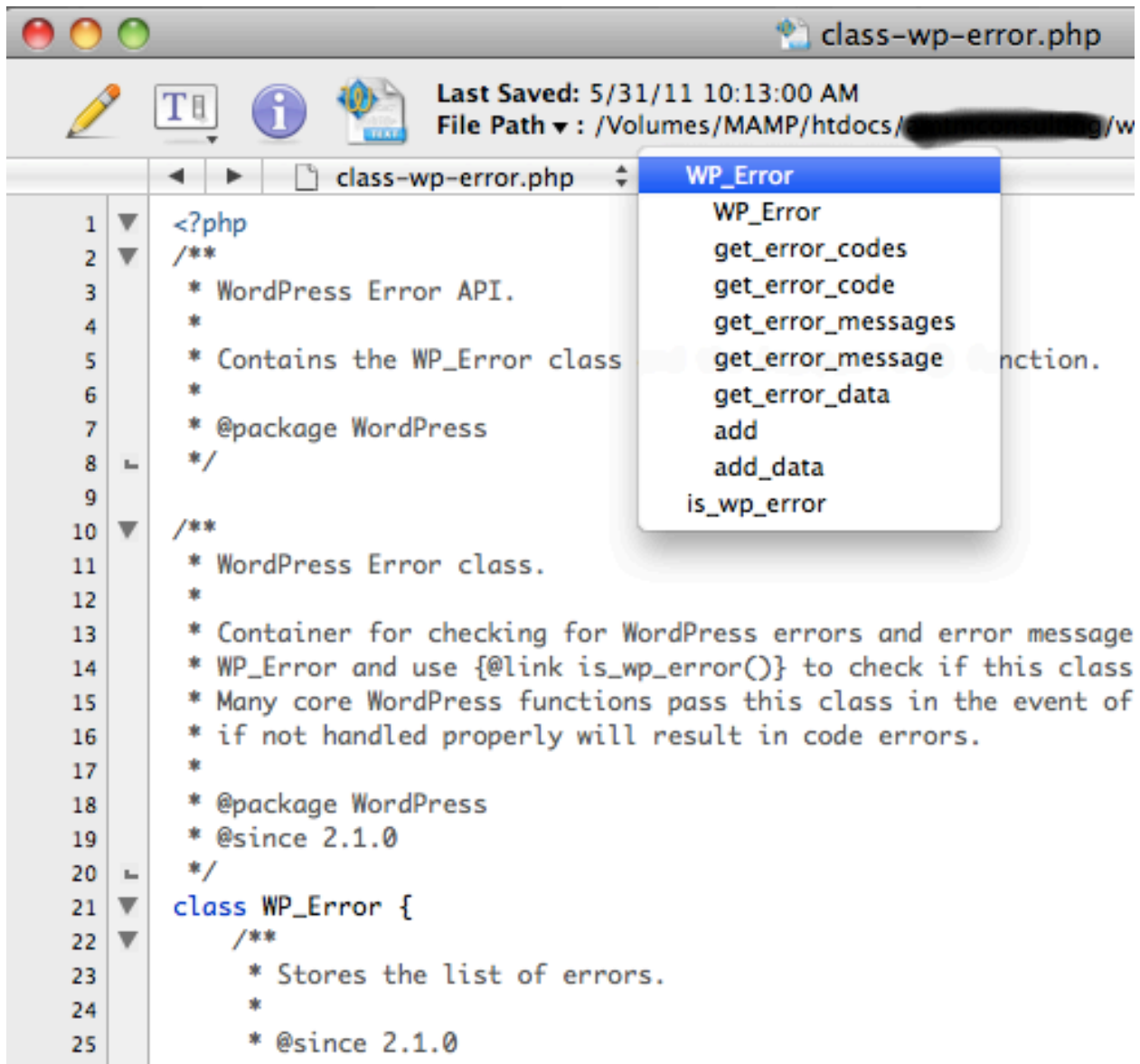
```
TextWrangler File Edit Text View Search Window # Help
checkout_process.php
Last Saved: 6/7/11 6:10:45 PM
File Path: /Volumes/MAMP/htdocs/.../checkout_process.php
271 // LINE ADDED: MOD - QT Pro "products_quantity" => $order->products[$i]['qty'],
272 // "products_stock_attributes" =>
273 // "products_stock_attributes";
274 tep_db::perform(TABLE_ORDERS_PRODUCTS, $sql_data_array);
275 $order_products_id = tep_db::insert_id();
276
277 //-----Insert customer chosen option to order-----
278 $attributes_exist = "0";
279 $products_ordered_attributes = "";
280 if (isset($order->products[$i]['attributes'])) {
281 $attributes_exist = "1";
282 for ($j=0, $n2=sizeof($order->products[$i]['attributes']); $j<$n2; $j++) {
283 if (DOWNLOAD_ENABLED == "true") {
284 $attributes_query = "select popt.products_options_name,
285 popt.products_options_values_name, po.options_values_price,
286 po.price_prefix, pad.products_attributes_maxdays,
287 pad.products_attributes_maxcount, pad.products_attributes_filename
288 from " . TABLE_PRODUCTS_OPTIONS . " popt, " .
289 TABLE_PRODUCTS_OPTIONS_VALUES . " povol, " .
290 TABLE_PRODUCTS_ATTRIBUTES . " pa
291 left join " . TABLE_PRODUCTS_ATTRIBUTES_DOWNLOAD .
292 " pad
293 on
294 pa.products_attributes_id=pod.
295 products_attributes_id
296 where pa.products_id = '" .
297 $order->products[$i]['id'] . "'
298 and pa.options_id = '" .
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324
325
326 // LINE ADDED: MOD - QT Pro "products_stock_attributes" =>
327 // "products_stock_attributes";
328 tep_db::perform(TABLE_ORDERS_PRODUCTS, $sql_data_array);
329 $order_products_id = tep_db::insert_id();
330
331 // BOF - MOD: CREDIT CLASS Gift Voucher Contribution
332 $order_total_modules->update_credit_account($i, $insert_id);
333 // EOF - MOD: CREDIT CLASS Gift Voucher Contribution
334
335 //-----Insert customer chosen option to order-----
336 $attributes_exist = "0";
337 $products_ordered_attributes = "";
338 if (isset($order->products[$i]['attributes'])) {
339 $attributes_exist = "1";
340 for ($j=0, $n2=sizeof($order->products[$i]['attributes']); $j<$n2; $j++) {
341 if (DOWNLOAD_ENABLED == "true") {
342 $attributes_query = "select popt.products_options_name,
343 popt.products_options_values_name, po.options_values_price,
344 po.price_prefix, pad.products_attributes_maxdays,
345 pad.products_attributes_maxcount, pad.products_attributes_filename
346 from " . TABLE_PRODUCTS_OPTIONS . " popt, " .
347 TABLE_PRODUCTS_OPTIONS_VALUES . " povol, " .
348 TABLE_PRODUCTS_ATTRIBUTES . " pa
349 left join " . TABLE_PRODUCTS_ATTRIBUTES_DOWNLOAD .
350 " pad
351 on
352 pa.products_attributes_id=pod.
353 products_attributes_id
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```

TextWrangler has its own built-in FTP/SFTP client. From the file menu, just select Open from FTP/SFTP server. You can even bookmark your sites and even save the password securely. Unlike FileZilla which saves the password in plaintext in an xml file in your home directory, TextWrangler stores the password securely in your keychain. Yeah!



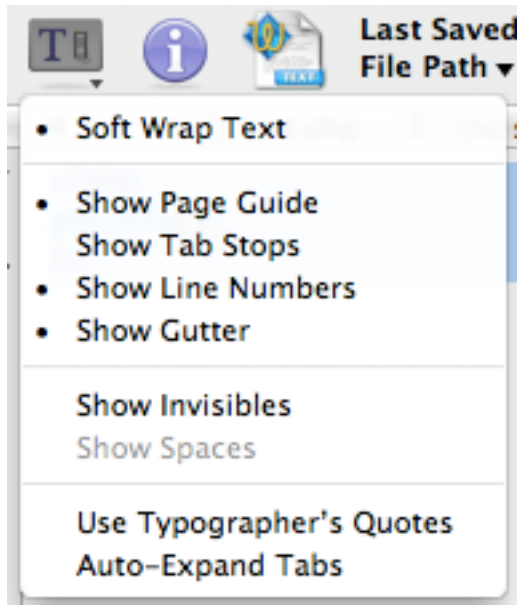
Functions Dropdown

If you have functions in your php, javascript, etc.. file. You'll be able to jump directly to functions in the file from drop down shown in the screenshot.



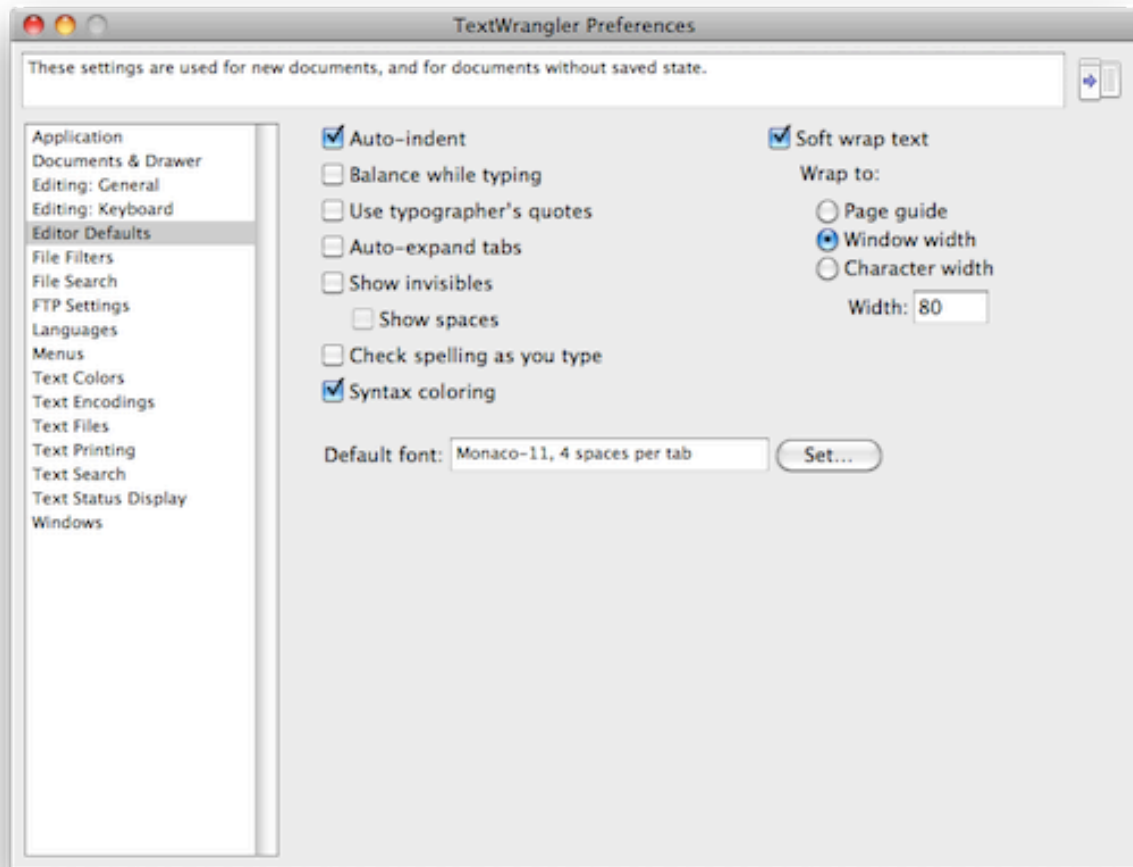
Text Options Button

I love being able to adjust the text options from the button on the menu bar, rather than having to edit the preferences each time. You can set line numbering, soft wrap, show invisibles etc... It's really nice to have quick access to these functions.



Soft Wrap Options

A nice additional feature of the soft wrap, is in the preferences under Editor Defaults. This is where you can configure it to be the page width, a specific character count or using a page guide. Nice!



As the song goes, "These are a few of my favorite things." Have you used TextWrangler? How about BBEdit? If so, what are your favorite features? I'm really thinking about upgrading to BBEdit in the near future. I'd really love to have type ahead.

- Mike Q.

WordPress: WP-Cron and Basic Authentication



While building an e-commerce solution for a client on WordPress using WP e-Commerce, I ran into an issue with inventory control. My initial searches on the getshopped.org forums showed there was a bug in earlier versions where the table `wpsc_claimed_stock` wasn't being cleared of "abandoned" carts items.

The way that WP e-Commerce maintains inventory for items that have been added to carts but haven't been purchased is to add them to the `wpsc_claimed_stock` table. This way if you have 10 items in stock and a person adds 10 to their cart, all future shoppers that try to add this item to their cart will get an "out of stock" message. Even though this is the case, your inventory view in the admin tool will still show 10 items in stock. This is done to avoid a race to checkout where some shoppers would try to checkout and find that an item they added to their cart is now out of stock.

This is all well and good but how do you keep from having all your inventory "claimed" by shopping carts that haven't checked out and are weeks old. This is where we get to WordPress' wp-cron and the issues that I ran into with not fully understanding how it works.

While testing a new WP e-Commerce site on a staging server, I was adding items, etc... and not always checking out or removing the items from the cart. Eventually, the items on the site were going out of stock, yet the admin tool still had stock showing. I did some digging on the WP e-Commerce forums and found this thread: [How long does stock stay in the cart?](#). It explains that there's a function in the WP e-Commerce `misc.function.php` file called `wpsc_clear_stock_claims`. In this particular thread, the bug was that the function wasn't being added to wp-cron and the fix was to add the following line to the file:

```
add_action('wpsc_hourly_cron_tasks', 'wpsc_clear_stock_claims');
```

This particular fix was included in version 3.7.6.7 and my version was newer, so now I'm left wondering if maybe wp-cron is broken.



I did some more googling and found an interesting article about wp-cron. [Experiments with WP Cron](#) explains how wp-cron works and is excellent reading if you find yourself thinking wp-cron is just like *nix cron (hint: it isn't). I installed the plugin that the author wrote and saw that the cron job "wpse_hourly_cron_tasks" is scheduled to run but just isn't working.

I continued through the article and find a mention of issues with wp-cron and basic authentication. Ahah!, my test site for this client was using basic authentication too. The problem in a nutshell was that wp-cron.php isn't accessible to WordPress without authentication. I temporarily disabled the password protection and accessed the site. I then checked the wpse_claimed_stock table and there it was, all cleaned up, leaving behind just the inventory of items purchased but not processed.

I reenabled password protection and then applied the author's fix, which he detailed [here](#) and all was right with inventory again. I also added exclusions for the async-upload.php and upload.php files in order to allow for uploading of images and other files.

```
# Exclude the following files from authentication
```

```
Satisfy Any  
Order allow,deny  
Allow from all  
Deny from none
```

Another day, another thing learned and a new valuable online resource to add to my RSS reader! It keeps it exciting and interesting to say the least. I hope this helps anyone having a similar issue and be sure to checkout Simon Wheatley's [site](#) for more great tips.

- Mike Q.