Using Server Side Includes to Automate the LMS Web Site
Or
Never Change the Date on a Web Page You Update Ever Again!

Introduction

A Server Side Include (SSI) is a small command or set of commands placed in a web document that tell a web server to put specific information in a web page before it is sent to the user. This information isn’t in the web page until then. (NOTE: This presumes, of course, that the server where your web pages are located has been configured correctly by its server administrator to run the SSI’s properly.) There are different types of information and commands that can be added to a web page “on-the-fly.” One very easy and quick SSI that you can place on your web pages is the DATE INCLUDE.

Adding a DATE INCLUDE to a Web Page

It is very easy to insert the code for the DATE INCLUDE into a web page. The commands will cause the server to change the date each time you modify a web page and upload it to the server. The change will be reflected on the web page the user sees. To use a DATE INCLUDE in the LMS web pages, you should place the SSI commands in place of where you currently type the numerical date.

LMS Web Page Dates at Present:

The HTML code below is found at the bottom of the LMS web page template. As a web page is created, the page author changes the mailto: address to identify the contact person for that web page and changes the date to reflect when the page was last updated. For example:

```html
<TD VALIGN="TOP">
<font size="2" face="Arial">Comments? Questions?</font><br>
<font size="2" face="Arial">Please contact</font> <a href="mailto:webadmin@lms.kent.edu">webadmin@lms.kent.edu</a><br>
<!-- DATE THE PAGE EVERY TIME YOU MAKE A CHANGE TO IT!!! -->
<font size="2" face="Arial">Updated 4/25/00</font>
</TD>
</TR>
```

The information that appears at the bottom of the web page looks like this:

Comments? Questions?
Please contact webadmin@lms.kent.edu
Updated 4/25/00

Get the Same Effect Using SSI Commands:

Step 1: Delete the numerical date, in this case 4/25/00.

Step 2: Add the following two commands, with one space after the word, “Updated.”

```html
<!-#config timefmt="%x"-->
<!-#echo var="LAST_MODIFIED"-->
```

The first command, <!-#config timefmt="%x"-->, tells the server to show the date in the abbreviated format of mm/dd/yy. It must be placed first in order to show this specific date format.

The second command, <!-#echo var="LAST_MODIFIED"-->, instructs the server to insert the date that the page was last loaded onto the server. This is case-sensitive, so LAST_MODIFIED must be in all capital letters.

Your new date code should look like this:

```html
<!- DATE THE PAGE EVERY TIME YOU MAKE A CHANGE TO IT!!! -->
<font size="2" face="Arial">Updated  <!--#config timefmt="%x"--><!--#echo var="LAST_MODIFIED"--></font>
```

Step 3: Place the updated page on the server and reload the web page in a browser window. Examine the date for accuracy.