

Introduction

Me personally? I am a Flash freak, I prefer Flash to anything else for the front-end development stuff. The trouble is you can't always go Flash; there are a lot of situations where HTML is your only choice. In those situations AJAX is the next best thing after the sliced bread.

In this article, as it follows from the title, we will build an AJAX-driven image gallery. Users would be able to pick from a list of gallery albums and load the album's thumbnails. Selecting a thumbnail would display the corresponding image. All the albums along with the images will be physically stored on the web server. Using PHP as the server-side language our AJAX application will read and display the content of the folders on the fly thus eliminating the need of creating and maintaining the gallery database.

Of course (as you would expect from AJAX) there will be no page refreshes as the whole point here is to create a cool, desktop-like experience (right?).



I have many times created and used similar applications in Flash. This and the following articles is an attempt to a certain extent mimic Flash behavior.

Setting up the Folder Structure

No database, -you say, so what's that catch? We need to create some kind of a structure, and in this case it would be the folder structure on the server.

We achieve the goal by setting up the directories in a particular manner. Once you understand the principle you can deviate from the described order, but for now just follow along.

You can create this folder tree on your existing web site or a local virtual directory. In my example folder "Photo" is the web site root directory which can be accessed through <http://localhost/photo>.

The gallery (represented by the **albums** folder in web site root directory) may contain an unlimited number of albums each of which is a separate folder inside the **albums** folder.

Our AJAX application will read and display the content of the folders on the fly.

Naming Conventions

Each album folder will contain another folder (labelled **th**) with the thumbnails for the images inside that album. All the thumbnails in the folders are named using the following convention: "th_" + (the name of the full image).

The names of the images will be displayed in the heading at the top of the viewer, keep that in mind and name them accordingly.

Thanks for your interest in the "Building AJAX/PHP image gallery - Part I" article by Alex July. To purchase the full article [click here](#)