Using Gopher with the World-Wide-Web

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Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) is now a common document format viewable with a World Wide Web (WWW) Browser. Gopher hierarchies are fast to navigate and let you associate abstracts, alternate views, and other meta information with any type of document. This paper looks at combining the strengths of Gopher and WWW to create a better, more integrated information system. We'll look at how to publish HTML documents from Gopher servers, point Gopher links at documents on WWW servers, and customize the appearance of your Gopher server using HTML.

Introduction

In the past year we've seen an explosive growth in the number of World Wide Web (WWW) software clients that use the HyperText Markup Language (HTML).

Most of these WWW client programs have rudimentary Gopher support. However, most of these clients do not support the Gopher+ protocol. To remedy this the University of Minnesota Gopher Team made many modifications to the Unix Gopher server to support direct HTML and HyperText Transport Protocol (HTTP) access. Many of these modifications were refined over time with the help of the Internet community.[1]

The modifications fall into three broad areas:

- Storage of HTML Documents.
- Internal Changes to support Uniform Resource Locators.
- Automatic HTML generation for Gopher Directories

The World Wide Web

A review of the basic syntax and terms used in the World Wide Web (WWW) will be helpful in understanding the changes to the Gopher software. The three definitions that you must know about are URLs, HTML, and HTTP.

2.1 Uniform Resource Locators

The "Uniform Resource Locator" (URL) was first used by WWW software to describe the servers it could connect to in a uniform way. It has since become popular outside WWW software as a simple, standard way to locate resources. URLs are now internet standards. The Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) has codified the URL standard in RFC 1630.

A Gopher item can be represented in URL form as