

This readme file was last updated on *May 18th, 2010*

## **The Easy PHP Guestbook, Free Version, v0.6**



- An application written in PHP by Andrea Cabibbo
- Software official web page:  
[http://www.cellbiol.com/scripts/free\\_php\\_guestbook/free\\_php\\_guestbook.html](http://www.cellbiol.com/scripts/free_php_guestbook/free_php_guestbook.html)
- Support forum:  
[http://www.cellbiol.com/scripts/free\\_php\\_guestbook/guestbook/free\\_php\\_guestbook\\_test.html](http://www.cellbiol.com/scripts/free_php_guestbook/guestbook/free_php_guestbook_test.html)

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## 1) LICENCE

You can freely use and modify this code to set up one or more web guestbooks for yourself or your clients if you are a webmaster.

You may not redistribute this code in any way or produce derivative software with commercial purposes.

We very much appreciate the inclusion of this line in your guestbook html, however this is not strictly required if you made a donation to download the enhanced version:

`<a href="http://www.cellbiol.com/scripts/free_php_guestbook/free_php_guestbook.html">Powered by The Easy PHP Guestbook</a>`

This link is required for the free version to function properly.

Redistribution of the software is strictly forbidden and will be actively prosecuted by legal means.

## 2) DISCLAIMER

The use of the software is at your own risk. Make a backup of your important files before installing and using the software.

If you use the software to turn an existing html page into a guestbook, please make a backup of this page before proceeding.

## 3) NEW FEATURES

- "Configure guestbook" page now available in the admin section. All the important variables and configuration options can be now edited online in this page.
- Post deletion: the deletion of unwanted posts is now done by accessing an admin section through the form on the 'admin.html' file. The HTML for this form can also be placed on the guestbook page itself
- Post editing
- Post editing can now be performed from the admin section
- Better HTML 4 (transitional) compliance and usage of CSS for styling.
- Better security and posting control
- Captcha verification moved directly to the posting form
- Pagination: decide how many messages you want per page and let the guestbook build and update the pages automatically at any post. For example if you configure the software to have 10 posts per page (this is the default), when the 11th post is made a new page will be generated by the script, with the same header and footer (look and feel) of the main

guestbook page. You can set the number of posts per page by editing the \$posts\_per\_page variable in the configuration file (include/conf.php)

- Users can now choose to make their e-mail or message private. Private data are only visible by the owner of the guestbook and require the admin password to be accessed
- Moderation mode. In moderation mode messages need to be reviewed and approved by admin before being actually posted on the guestbook. When a new message is posted admin gets a notification e-mail with a link to login to the pending messages tab in the admin section, where pending messages can be approved or deleted (enhanced version only).

#### **4) HOW TO ACCESS THE ADMIN SECTION THAT ALLOWS TO CONFIGURE THE GUESTBOOK AND DELETING OR EDITING THE POSTS**

The default password for the administrator is "pass" (without quotes)

To access the admin section you can visit the admin.html file with your web browser. After the first login you can change the default password in the "configure guestbook" page. You can also place an admin login box in the guestbook html file for example, here is the code:

```
##### START ADMIN FORM HTML #####  
  
<form action="php_guestbook.php" method="post">  
Password: <input type="password" name="adpass"><br>  
<input type="hidden" name="task" value="show">  
<input type="submit" value="Go to admin section">  
  
##### END ADMIN FORM HTML #####
```

#### **5) CAPTCHAS**

The script now supports user verification by captchas, that is reading a code on an image. This prevents spam bots to post on your guestbook.

#### **6) PROTECTION OF THE ADMIN IDENTITY**

You can now set the protection for a particular name to be used on the board, for example 'admin' or your own selected username. Again, see the "configure guestbook" page in the admin section for details.

#### **7) REQUIREMENTS**

Tested with PHP 4.3 or higher, in a linux environment. Requires a version of PHP compiled with GD image library support, most PHP installations will have this. GD is required in particular for the

generation of the captcha image. The guestbook will work fine with no GD if image validation is turned off in the admin section.

We have no direct experience of windows servers but we know about several users who successfully installed the guestbook on a windows server environment without problems.

Should you experience any issue during the installation feel free to contact the developer.

## 8) INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS:

- upload files and set permissions
- login to admin.html and configure guestbook by using the web administration interface
- make a test post

- **UPLOAD FILES AND SET PERMISSIONS – if not using the provided template, add some html to your html guestbook page**

- Drop ALL the files and folders included in the distro IN THE SAME DIRECTORY (we will refer to this as the 'main' folder) where the html page you wish your visitors to comment on is located.

If you are building a guestbook ex-novo we suggest that you create a dedicated folder (we will refer to this as the 'main' folder) for the guestbook and drop all the files and folders in this 'main' folder.

Should you upload the files at “top level” in your web directory, mind that the distribution comes with a file called “index.html” whose sole purpose is to prevent access to the guestbook directory contents by visitors. So if the directory you upload to already contains a file called index.html, you can and probably should omit the upload of the index.html file in the distro, as this will overwrite your own index.html file (most likely your home page if you are at top level).

- Set the permissions of the **"posts" and main folders** to writable (**777**). If you then get a 505 error on login, try **755** instead.

(After the first post is made you should be able to set the "posts" folder permission back to 644 without problems. This is a good idea for better security).

- Set the permission of the **verify.png** file to **666** (read and write permission by all). This is the image captcha file the script must be able to write to.

- Set the permission of **the include/conf.php** file to **666** (read and write permission by all) otherwise you will be unable to edit the guestbook configuration

- Edit the **html guestbook file** as described below and then grant **666** permission to this file:

### Permissions summary:

“posts” folder → 777 or 755

main folder → 777 or 755

“verify.png” → 666

“include/conf.php” → 666

“guestbook.html” → 666 (your own guestbook file might have a different name if you choose not to use the provided guestbook.html sample file)

- You can customize the provided guestbook.html file to create your guestbook (strongly recommended) or add the following code to your html page in the suitable position.

Messages will go between the comments-start and comments-end lines

so wherever you put this line:

```
<!-- COMMENTS-START -->
```

this is where the posts will be written. At each post all the lines between the comments-start and comments-end are deleted entirely and replaced with the posts, taken from the flat file database and formatted according to the posts template (you can edit the posts template by logging in admin and then going to the configuration section). So everything you will include manually between the comments-start and comments-end lines is bound to be erased at the next post. **Never put any of your own code or stuff between the comments-start and comments-end lines as it will be erased at the next post.**

### **## HTML TO BE ADDED TO THE PAGE YOU WISH TO TURN IN A GUESTBOOK ##**

Place this in the <HEAD> tag of your guestbook page:

```
<meta http-equiv="pragma" content="no-cache">
<meta http-equiv="expires" content="Tue, 26-Oct-1965 12:00:00">
<meta http-equiv="expires" content="NOW">
<meta http-equiv="last modified" content="NOW">
<link rel="StyleSheet" href="styles/posts.css" type="text/css">
<!-- JQUERY FOR AJAX FORM VALIDATION-->
<script type="text/javascript" src="javascript/jquery-1.4.2.min.js"></script>
<script type="text/javascript">
$(document).ready(function() {
$('.warning').remove();
$.get("token.php", function(txt) {
$(".secure").append('<input type="hidden" name="ts" value="'+txt+'" />');
});
});
</script>
```

This code incorporates a security solution for avoiding spam bots. It will link the jquery library in your code. A copy of this library is included in the "javascript" folder of this distribution. JQuery is then used right after, see code above.

The author of this security solution is Jack Borne. Source:

[http://docs.jquery.com/Tutorials:Safer\\_Contact\\_Forms\\_Without\\_CAPTCHAs](http://docs.jquery.com/Tutorials:Safer_Contact_Forms_Without_CAPTCHAs)

At this time we use this along with the captchas, however this might well replace the captcha entirely, we are working on this.



- The `php_guestbook.php` file and all the other php files should have at least 644 permission (read by all, write by owner - usually the default for php files, you should not need to edit those permissions at all actually)

- **CONFIGURE GUESTBOOK**

Login to the admin section (visit `admin.html`) with the default administrator password "pass" (without quotes), go to the "configure guestbook" page and edit the essential variables at the top.

The other variables can be changed at any time. Each time you modify the guestbook configuration the guestbook pages are rebuilt according to the new settings.

- **MAKE A TEST POST**

## 9) GEO-IP SETUP

When used in conjunction with the GeoIP database kindly provided for free by Software77.net with a GPL licence, the guestbook can become location aware based on the poster's IP address. The GeoIP database file is NOT included in this guestbook software distribution and it is not part of it. Our software merely offers a way to access the Software77.net GeoIP file is so desired by the webmaster.

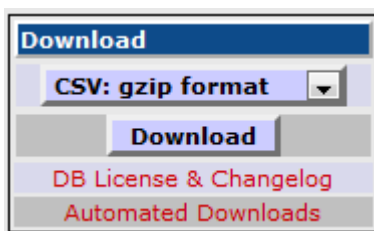
We would like to thank software77.net for providing such a useful resource for free. Pay a visit to their web site and consider using their professional hosting resources for your projects.

In order to have this working, you have to go to:

<http://www.software77.net/geo-ip>

and download the county-IP listing in CSV format.

This is what the download box looks like on the software77.net web site at the time of this writing:



You should download the CSV file in zip format, unzip it, and drop a copy in the `INCLUDE` folder of the guestbook distribution. After unzipping, the file should be called `IpToCountry.csv`, you might want to check this out.

We will also provide an opportunity to download the file from cellbiol.com, however this will not necessarily be the very last update of the file, that you can only get from Software77.net.

This will allow you to ban entire countries from posting. At times, this could be useful as an additional tool of spam control, although we don't like to restrict posting more than strictly necessary to keep the guestbook "clean". To ban a country, you should add it's two letters iso country code to the banned countries list in the admin/configuration web interface:



**GeoIp Setup, requires a database  
readme file or web site for details**

Geoip database file detected: **yes**

**Enable GeoIp lookup**

**Banned country codes list**  
see iso country codes in a  
popup window

`"UA", "RU"`

This is an example in which Ukraine and Russia are banned from posting. Please understand that this is just an example, the actual countries to ban, if any, are up to you. The nice advantage of activating the GeoIp is that you will get information on the poster's country in the e-mail message you get on each post. So now together with the name, email, message, date and time, IP address of the poster, you also get the country, if his IP can be mapped with the GeoIp database.

## **10) SUPPORT AND CONTACT INFO**

If you have problems feel free to post here:

[http://www.cellbiol.com/scripts/free\\_php\\_guestbook/free\\_php\\_guestbook.html](http://www.cellbiol.com/scripts/free_php_guestbook/free_php_guestbook.html)

## **11) UPGRADING FROM AN OLDER VERSION**

Please **MAKE A BACKUP** of your guestbook folder before upgrading the software so that if something goes wrong you will not lose anything.

To upgrade, the best is to make a fresh installation from the new zip file. Then, from the old version, copy the contents of the posts folder (the messages database and log file) in the new posts folder and make a new post. All the old messages should be back in your new guestbook, provided all the permissions were set correctly.

Feel free to use the forum for support.