Subject: Forum has been offline for a few days
Posted by AJM on Tue, 25 Jul 2006 17:20:58 GMT
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You may have noticed that the forums have been down for a few days. This was caused by the following problems:

My hosting company enabled phpsuexec on all their servers for "security reasons". This made my website "secure" by making it "inaccessible". For phpsuexec to work the following changes were necessary:

Remove any PHP directives from htaccess files and transfer them to a php.ini file instead.
Change the permissions of any file/directory from 777 to 755.
I made these changes and my website sprang into life.

Unfortunately the forum software refused to run. It fell over with a "500 Internal Server Error" caused by subdirectories which were invisible to me (using File Manager from the Control Panel) still having permissions of 777 with owner="nobody" instead of owner=username.

So I backed up the forum database, uninstalled the forum software, deleted all forum directories, reinstalled the software and reloaded the database. Everything seemed perfect until I started to browse through the messages in the forum. But guess what?

The forum software does not store messages in the database, it uses flat files in one of its subdirectories.

I accidentally deleted these flat files when I deleted the directories, so consequently all the message bodies in the forum were lost. My hosting company managed to restore them from an old backup, but unfortunately some of the latest messages could not be recovered. I have consequently deleted the empty message headers.

When I tried to create this message I kept getting a "Internal Server Error" which confused the hell out of me for a day and a half. I doubled checked all my file and folder permissions, I double checked all my htaccess files for rogue PHP directives, I de-installed and re-installed the forum software (again), and eventually I stumbled across the problem:

I cannot create a forum message which contains the word "htaccess" with a leading "." (dot)

WTF!!