Why I Hate The Apache Web Server

- Lessons learned from IRC

- Rich Bowen

Note: Opinions expressed are those of our users, as expressed on IRC. The goal of this talk is to make people aware of things which those "outside" see as problems, but which we tend to be so used to that we don't see at all. If I get carried away, feel free to throw fruit.

ASBURY COLLEGE

Why do I hate thee? Let me count the reasons.

- Fragile

- Confusing

- Missing stuff that EVERYONE asks for

Fragile

- Breaks easily. Small changes have big results

```
Options +Indexes Includes MultiViews
Options  Indexes Includes Multiviews
```

The first of these forbids Indexes.
The second one permits them.

Huh?

Disclaimer

- "But that's not supported syntax!"

- Then it should throw an error and break, not do something utterly unexpected

- Unfortunately, several major Linux distros ship with this broken-but-almost-looks-right configuration, or variants thereof

Example 2

- Vhosts ... wow, don't get me started

```
# My IP address is 192.168.1.200
    NameVirtualHost *:80
    <VirtualHost 192.168.1.200:80>
    ...
    </VirtualHost>
```

That vhost is silently ignored.

Yeah. That's intuitive.

Discussion

- "But the docs say not to do that!"

- Yes, I know. I wrote that line in the docs. It's still really irritating.

Another ...

Require Valid-user

- Unlike every other Apache config setting, "Require" is case sensitive, so that's not valid

- valid_user would be nice too

- Oh, and "Require User" and "Require Group" don't work either.

ASBURY COLLEGE

Missing (asked daily on IRC)

- Can I set a variable and use it later?

- Can I have an if/else syntax?

- Can I please reload my configuration file without restarting my server?

- How do I make ServerTokens return "Bob's Handy Dandy HTTP Server"? (Yes, this is silly, but it would sure shut a lot of people up finally.)

What else?

- mod_imap

- How many of you have actually used that module?

- How many of you who are not committers know what it does?

- Why is it on by default?

- Come on folks. Netscape added client-side image maps in 1995!

And while we're on the topic

- mod_cern_meta?

- Who even knows what this module does?

- For the record, yes, I do. But I doubt any of you have ever used it.

CONFUSING

```
NumServers ServerLimit ThreadLimit
ThreadsPerChild StartThreads StartServers
MaxSpareThreads MinSpareServers
MaxSpareServers MinSpareThreads MaxClients
MaxThreadsPerChild MaxRequestsPerChild
MaxRequestsPerThread ThreadStackSize
```

- Oh sweet God make it stop

What's that directive called?

- RLimitMem, RLimitCPU, RLimitNProc

- I have to look these up every time

- Of course, since they don't seem to do what the docs say, maybe that's not a bad thing.

Am I running out of time yet?

- Why do I have to set up two separate vhosts for http://example.com/ and https://example.com/ when they're the same website?

- Why are dynamic vhosts so darned hard?

- Why doesn't the default configuration file match the "security tips" document?

mod_rewrite

- I probably don't need to say anything more than just "mod_rewrite". But I will.

- "Voodoo" and "… flexibility of sendmail"

- The docs practically scream "GO AWAY!"
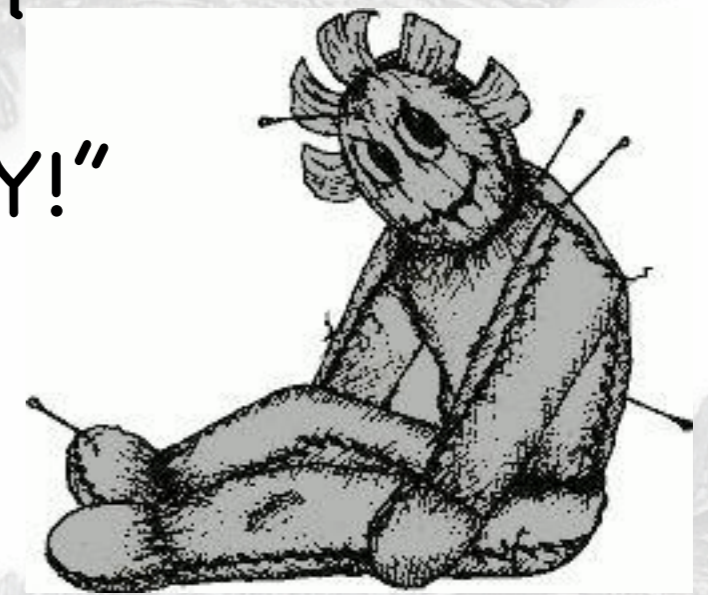
RewriteMap

- Nice, but have you ever found an actual useful example?

- Oh, and the example script for generating db map files doesn't actually work. (Note: Paul fixed this 2 weeks ago. See httxt2dbd)

How about this?

- If I want these two aliases to work, I have to:

```
Alias /foo/bar /path/bar
Alias /foo   /path/other
```

But if I want two Locations to work, I have to do it the other way around:

```
<Location /foo>
</Location>

<Location /foo/bar>
</Location>
```

But wait! There's more!

- Why does the env option in CustomLog use =! instead of != like everyone else in the world?

- Why isn't there a simple "log out" method for Basic authentication? We've only been asking for it since 1993.

- What's up with the 2 G file limit?

Who's Al?

Allow from Al

- Apache should just magically know what I mean and do the right thing.

ASBURY COLLEGE

Oh, yeah, one more thing

- Yes, I want a pony