

September 14, 2008

Warning: Chuck is Starting to Like JQuery

Well I have started hacking on my "next generation LMS" this weekend - I hope to have an early prototype in hand in time for a Monday meeting with the Med school folks. I settled on a framework for the prototype - promise you won't laugh. JQuery, JSON, PHP, and MySql - yes - I know - so boring. But I can get help from other developers.

And I realized with MySql and the built in PHP5/Apache server on my Apple Laptop - I was nuts to do anything else. I really will miss database portability - for a few minutes :).

So the first part of the weekend is to do some JQuery to build the menu system (isn't it fun to make really basic stuff at the beginning of a project?). My first reaction to JQuery was "yuck!" - I had seen Prototype in Ruby and loved it - because it did the few things I needed.

When I first saw JQuery, it was like "Where is the simple stuff?" JQuery was a freaking DOM Operating system and all I wanted was a few utility things. And worse - the JQuery documentation does not give simple examples for simple things - the JQ community assumes you are a battle-scarred Javascript guru when you walk in the door.

While the JQ syntax is obtuse, it is far better than the code these gurus wrote previously. For me - I never wrote that complex code - I am just a dummy - I don't want to learn the nasty way for IE5 and then re-learn the easy JQ way. I just want it easy!

But with a cool mentor like Noah - I get over my mental blocks and get the simple stuff figured out - and once you get the simple stuff working - JQ is a wondrous place. If you wonder how wide the document is, start in Google - look at this page:

<http://www.howtcreate.co.uk/tutorials/javascript/browserwindow>

Oh yea - who is your Javascript daddy? You need to write case statements within case statements withing case statements. If you are patient and keep googling, you will find this page:

<http://plugins.jquery.com/node/1089>

A 4K download to find the document width - Better than me writing all the case statements - since the dimensions plugin documentation was not set up for dummies like me - it showed me how to do a million amazing things but not the simple thing I wanted - so I got bored with trying to figure that out - I kept Googling...

And finally I came to this:

```
alert( $(document).width() );
```

Uh - this is right there in JQuery 1.2

I can now make my menu dock on the left! Yay!

Note to self: Don't assume JQuery cannot do something - just keep looking - someone will have blogged a simple JQuery code solution.

The more dummies like me who use JQuery - the more simple examples we will have. Coming up - the simplest JSON / JSONB example you ever saw - I call it the "Missing JQuery tutorial"..

Posted by csev at September 14, 2008 09:49 AM