



Expanding Blue Chameleon : Front-Office Development Documentation



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Chapter 3

Developing your Front-Office with Blue Chameleon

3.1 What a Front-Office (FO) is

In the previous, the developed add-on was aimed to be used in the Back-office. Now, it is possible to develop an add-on through which your clients may for example check products, order them... In other words, a Front-Office.

A Front-Office, which will be used *outside* your Shop environment, has several differences with a 'regular' add-on :

- the library constituting the Front-Office does not need to be registered, just compiled and uploaded ;
- no menu element needs to be set ;
- the Front-Office may entail 'static' HTML pages, as a whole, or as headers, footers... ;
- nonetheless, the database used for the Front-Office remains the same as the one used for your Shop.

Simply put, any page for your Front-Office might be composed in two different ways : either entirely static (as `.html`) or 'dynamic' (as `.php`). This all depends on whether you want to want database operations to be performed right on this page or not.

In the following, the compiled library containing your Front-Office scripts will be called (for instance) `MyFO`.

3.1.1 Static pages

They contain only HTML language. When fully composed, this page is uploaded unto your *PublisherHome* and will then be accessible through

[http://www1.inc.lu/IncShop/IncModelShop/\[YourShopName\]/Welcome.html](http://www1.inc.lu/IncShop/IncModelShop/[YourShopName]/Welcome.html)

As a matter of fact, it is the same root as your Back-Office login page :

```
http://www1.inc.lu/IncShop/IncModelShop/[YourShopName]/osslogin.htm)
```

Links on this static page could point to other static HTML pages - also to be put in the *PublisherHome* - and linked to as, for instance :

```
...
<a href="AboutUs.html">About us</a>
...
```

Images can be uploaded in the *PublisherHome*, unto the `/images` directory :

```
...

...
```

Linking to pages calling `.php` scripts (*dynamic* pages) can be done as explained below.

3.1.1.1 Dynamic pages

In the following, upon click on the uploaded image `images.jpg`, your `ShowItems.php` script belonging to your Front-Office library `MyFO` is called with some parameter, thus displaying a dynamic page :

```
...
<a href="/Scripts/sql.exe?SqlDB=[YourShopName]&Sql=MyFO:ShowItems.php&IdCat=25">
  
</a>
...
```

3.2 How a FO page can be ideally structured

While the composing of any page of a Front-Office is free, some time-saving guidelines can nonetheless be used : each page can ideally be made of three elements (Fig.3.1) :

- a Header, containing a banner and clickable menu elements ; also possibly a side menu ;
- Contents, varying from page to page ;
- a Footer, containing for instance a copyright line.

Of these, only the Header and Footer are constant from page to page, thus constituting `Header.php` and `Footer.php` scripts.



This example makes use of "dynamic" (.phs) header and footer ; if they do not contain OSL code, they can also well be written as Header.html and Footer.html files. Nevertheless, the dynamic choice is better, as :

- it does not matter if a .phs script only contains html code ;
- it allows the potential inclusion of OSL code - if needed in the future - without changing anything in the other scripts ;
- header and footer files are uploaded through the MyFO library altogether with the other scripts, which saves the further upload to PublisherHome.

`http://www1.inc.lu/[...] &Sql=Welcome.phs :`

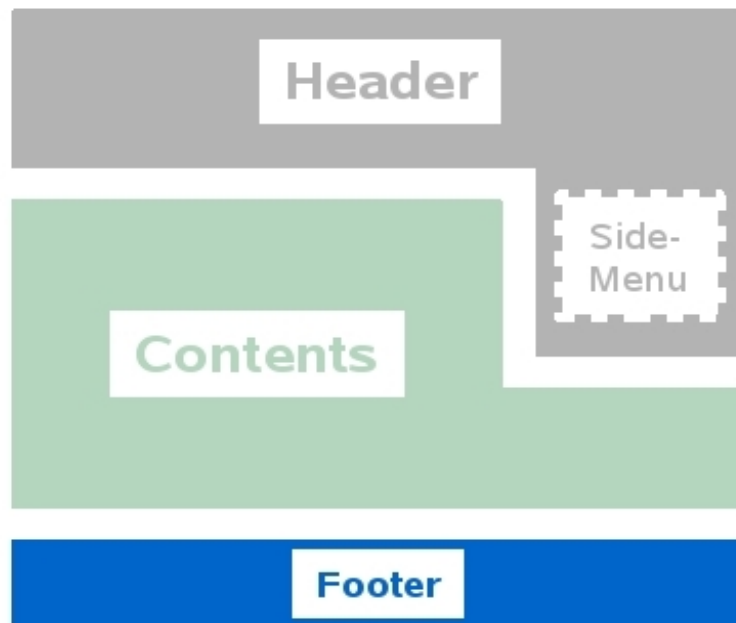


Figure 3.1: An example of how any Front-Office page can be built.

The general outline of this example `Welcome.phs` script is then shown at Code 24.

Code 24 An all-purpose template for a Front-Office `Welcome.phs` page.

```
«INCLUDE
MyFO:Header.phs;_Title="Welcome;Bienvenue;Willkommen";_SideMenu="MyFO:SideMenuProducts.phs"»

<H1>Hello and welcome. Here you will find info about...</H1>

«INCLUDE MyFO:Footer.phs»
```

3.3 Header and footer structure

The particular structure of these depend on how you want your page to be laid out. Nonetheless, the following provides some useful ideas.

3.3.1 A Front-Office Header

Code 25 shows a basic structure of a `Header.phs` file to be included as shown in the previous code.

Code 25 An example of a `Header.phs` script.

```
<!DOCTYPE ...>
<html>
  <head>
    ...
    <link rel="stylesheet" href="/css/MyFO.css"/>    ...
    <title><=@languageitem(_Title)></title>
    ...
  </head>
  <body>
    <a href="/Scripts/sql.exe?SqlDB=[YourShopName]&Sql=MyFO:Home.phs">
      
    </a>
    ...
    <IF @exists("_SideMenu")==1>
      <div class="menu_side">
        <INCLUDE <_SideMenu>>
      </div>
    <ENDIF >
    <!--begin contents-->
```

There :

- usual HTML opening/closing tags are used, leaving the `<html>` and `<body>` environments open ;
- a stylesheet `MyFO.css` (as previously uploaded to the `/css` directory of the *PublisherHome*) is called, giving the page its background color, class attributes,... ;
- the page is given a title, as an interpreted multilingual string (2.3.3), received as argument `_Title` when `Header.phs` was called ;
- a banner image is displayed, as a click-link to the `Home.phs` script. Next, several menu elements can be implemented, such as click-links to for instance *Product*, *Register*,... pages ;

- a test is performed whether a `_SideMenu` variable had been passed as an argument during call to `Header.phs`. If yes, it is the name of the script to display (for instance `SideMenuProduct.phs`). The style given there in the `div` is featured in `MyFO.css`.

Then, the contents themselves are left to be written in the script calling this `Header.phs`. After those contents, a call to `Footer.phs` will close all previously opened tags, wherever in `Header.phs` or in the contents.

3.3.2 A Front-Office Footer

Code 26 shows an example of a `Footer.phs` file.

Code 26 This example `Footer.phs` closes tags opened in `Header.phs` (Code 25).

```
<!--end contents-->
<HR>
<center>©2010 Company, Ltd - All Rights Reserved.</center>
</body>
</html>
```

3.4 Blue Chameleon's available Front-Office scripts

3.5 Client's interface

3.6 Advanced FO developing

3.6.1 Is a client connected ?