

How to serve all existing static files directly with NGINX, but proxy the rest to a backend server.

Asked 15 years, 11 months ago Modified 8 years, 9 months ago Viewed 151k times



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```
location / {
    proxy_set_header X-Real-IP $remote_addr;
    proxy_set_header Host $host;
    proxy_set_header X-Forwarded-For $proxy_add_x_forwarded_for;

    if (-f $request_filename) {
        access_log off;
        expires 30d;
        break;
    }

    if (!-f $request_filename) {
        proxy_pass http://127.0.0.1:8080; # backend server listening
        break;
    }
}
```

Above will serve all existing files directly using Nginx (e.g. Nginx just displays PHP source code), otherwise forward a request to Apache. I need to exclude *.php files from the rule so that requests for *.php are also passed to Apache and processed.

I want Nginx to handle all static files and Apache to process all dynamic stuff.

EDIT: There is white list approach, but it is not very elegant, See all those extensions, I don't want this.

```
location ~* ^.+.(jpg|jpeg|gif|png|ico|css|zip|tgz|gz|rar|bz2|doc|xls|exe|pdf|ppt|txt|tar|mid|midi|wav|bmp)
{
    access_log off;
    expires 30d;
}
location / {
    proxy_set_header X-Real-IP $remote_addr;
    proxy_set_header Host $host;
    proxy_set_header X-Forwarded-For $proxy_add_x_forwarded_for;
    proxy_pass http://127.0.0.1:8080;
}
```

EDIT 2: On newer versions of Nginx use `try_files` instead

http://wiki.nginx.org/HttpCoreModule#try_files

nginx

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edited Jul 4, 2016 at 7:50

asked May 15, 2009 at 14:24



m0meni

16.5k ● 18 ● 87 ● 148



fmalina

6,310 ● 4 ● 39 ● 47

Just to clear things: above code will serve a static file if it exists on the disk, if the file does not exist the request is passed to Apache. This works most of the time as all URLs in my applications use `mod_rewrite` (or routing) and do not really exist on the disk. Only the direct access to `*.php` filename is exception and needs to be parsed by Apache. – [fmalina](#) May 15, 2009 at 14:33

3 Answers

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Use [try_files](#) and named location block ('@apachesite'). This will remove unnecessary regex match and if block. More efficient.

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```
location / {
    root /path/to/root/of/static/files;
    try_files $uri $uri/ @apachesite;

    expires max;
    access_log off;
}

location @apachesite {
    proxy_set_header X-Real-IP $remote_addr;
    proxy_set_header Host $host;
    proxy_set_header X-Forwarded-For $proxy_add_x_forwarded_for;
    proxy_pass http://127.0.0.1:8080;
}
```

Update: The assumption of this config is that there doesn't exist any php script under `/path/to/root/of/static/files`. This is common in most modern php frameworks. In case your legacy php projects have both php scripts and static files mixed in the same folder, you may have to whitelist all of the file types you want nginx to serve.

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edited Sep 28, 2015 at 18:37

answered Mar 17, 2013 at 23:27



Chuan Ma

9,924 ● 2 ● 48 ● 37

i'm using wordpress, so should i need to put upload folder on nginx server ? – [Chameron](#) Jul 24, 2015 at 2:07

7 My problem with this solution: nginx doesn't use the other location (the proxy) and tries to show the directory listing. So it throws a 403 because the directory listing is not activated. **Edit:** Ok if you remove `$uri/` then it works. – [ChristophLSA](#) Aug 24, 2015 at 17:29 ✎

1 This would proxy `/example` to apache but allow `/example.php` to be downloaded. – [Terence Johnson](#) Sep 9, 2015 at 13:16

- 1 @TerenceJohnson It's not safe to put your php files under the static file folder. Note that I set `root /path/to/root/of/*static*/files;` .php files should be put in a different folder, not directly accessible from internet. – [Chuan Ma](#) Sep 25, 2015 at 18:14
- 2 I know that's the way things should be, but if someone is putting Nginx in front of any of the many common off-the-shelf PHP applications that have everything under the web root and rely on .htaccess files, they shouldn't copy and paste your configuration. – [Terence Johnson](#) Sep 25, 2015 at 21:51

Try this:

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```
location / {
    root /path/to/root;
    expires 30d;
    access_log off;
}

location ~* ^.*\.php$ {
    if (!-f $request_filename) {
        return 404;
    }
    proxy_set_header X-Real-IP $remote_addr;
    proxy_set_header Host $host;
    proxy_set_header X-Forwarded-For $proxy_add_x_forwarded_for;
    proxy_pass http://127.0.0.1:8080;
}
```

Hopefully it works. Regular expressions have higher priority than plain strings, so all requests ending in `.php` should be forwarded to Apache if only a corresponding `.php` file exists. Rest will be handled as static files. The actual algorithm of evaluating location is [here](#).

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answered May 16, 2009 at 21:02



Jasiu

2,724 ● 3 ● 27 ● 27

If you use `mod_rewrite` to hide the extension of your scripts, or if you just like pretty URLs that end in `/`, then you might want to approach this from the other direction. Tell nginx to let anything with a non-static extension to go through to apache. For example:

```
location ~* ^.+\.
(jpg|jpeg|gif|png|ico|css|zip|tgz|gz|rar|bz2|pdf|txt|tar|wav|bmp|rtf|js|flv|swf|html|htm
{
    root /path/to/static-content;
}

location ~* ^!.+\.
(jpg|jpeg|gif|png|ico|css|zip|tgz|gz|rar|bz2|pdf|txt|tar|wav|bmp|rtf|js|flv|swf|html|htm
{
    if (!-f $request_filename) {
        return 404;
    }
}
```

```
proxy_set_header X-Real-IP $remote_addr;  
proxy_set_header Host $host;  
proxy_set_header X-Forwarded-For $proxy_add_x_forwarded_for;  
proxy_pass http://127.0.0.1:8080;  
}
```

I found the first part of this snippet over at: <http://code.google.com/p/scalr/wiki/NginxStatic>

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answered Feb 13, 2012 at 19:37



lo_fye

6,860 ● 5 ● 34 ● 49

This worked great, although i still get errors for minified files (e.g. site.min.css and main.min.js etc). How would I catch those in a location regex? @lo_fye – [Garth](#) Dec 20, 2017 at 13:22

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