

Tutorial: Generating scripted-signatures (Version 2)

Preview

Tutorial: Generating scripted-signatures (Version 2)d

Before the show starts:

Thats the second try.I think it became a lot better. This was possible due to some really good feedback and suggestions i got. So keep this up!. If you have any questions about this tut or you have any ideas how to improve it let me know. Improvements can never be a bad thing.

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Full source files of this tutorial you will need: [download](#)

(be sure to keep the given structure intact when you upload the files to your webspace)
[when you unzipped the source, uploaded it, and made everything correct you should get an output according to the one you see below)

This tutorial is for those of you, who want a scripted signature that uses a non-MAL custom font.
An example how it can look like:



1. Starting notes

The script we will make during this tutorial is neither the best, nor the last answer on how to create a scripted signature. There are more advanced scripts out there, which do more than just the basic things provided by this tutorial. Nevertheless you will be able to make a working, customizable scripted signature that can easily be upgraded with more functions.

For more advanced script try taking a look at the „Signature Scripters“ Club (<http://myanimelist.net/clubs.php?cid=5076>).

If something is unclear, or you just don't know how to do a certain step feel free to post below.

Suggestions and criticisms are also welcome.

2. What you will need to successfully pass this tutorial:

- a good, working webpace that meets the following requirements: (i can recommend 000webhost.com – it meets all requirements)
 - supports php 4 and above
 - phpconfig() should look like this:
 - allow_url_fopen: On
 - file_uploads: On
 - safe_mode: Off
 - GD support: enabled
 - FreeType Version 2.x
 - GIF/JPG/PNG Read Support enabled
 - Note: you can check if your wehost allows this by generating a simple php file. Name the file as you wish e.g. info.php. Content of the file: `<?php phpinfo(); ?>`Upload the file to your webhost, and acces it through a browser. Your done.
- a workable ftp-client (e.g. filezilla or any other ftp-client you like)
- some enthusiasm to start with (thats the most important thing ^^)

Plusses to have on your side: basic knowledge of webdesign and or php-programming (this is not a 'need to have'); basic knowledge of ftp-clients or how to upload files on a webserver and how to alter chmod of files

So, if your still here, then you are seriously interested in how to script your own flashy signature. Thats good! Lets start then.

First of all, you will need a signature graphic that you like.
So go on and choose one. Come back to this tutorial if you have done so.

3. Changes in this versioint

Your reading the second version of this tutorial and as a matter of fact there have been some minor and also some major changes. First of all, there is no longer only one big file holding the script but three slightly smaller files. But don't worry if anything, the script has become easier to handle, the aim still is to keep it clear, simple and easy to handle. All changes will be marked red.
The scripts know exists of the following files

- **sig.php:** this is the core file - you should not touch it unless you now what you are doing. For the script to work you won't have to change anything in here.
- **settings.php:** we're setting up the script in here. Your MAL-Username and some other settings regarding what should be parsed (manga or anime list or both of them) ought to be set here.
- **image_output.php:** the final signature-image will be defined in here. All changes regarding appearances of the image and/or text are done in this file.

Attention: For easier and faster access for those who already read the first version of this tutorial all changes i made are marked **red**. So if you see a red part be aware that this has changed of wasn't

even supported in the last version.

One last point to mention. Because this post is kinda big, and will (if everything goes as planned) become even bigger, i will split it up in more parts. So..this post holds all information you need to start with. The second post holds the actual tutorial and the thirds posts will be dealing with FAQ's and Bonuses such as advanced image and text handling using php.

Now head on to post 2 to start with the actual tutorial. Have Fun!!!

4. Setting up the script

I will take you step by step through the setup process.

To start with, download the zip file from the link above and extract it. Here's the link once more:

[download](#)

Fire up your ftp-client and upload all the files to your webspace. It is very important that you keep the given file-structures intact.

This done, set the following chmods:

- 777: signature folder
- 755: sig.php; settings.php; image_output.php and sig.png(if you generate it)

(Note:with a standard ftp-client you can change a files/folders chmod like that: right click on a file or folder, choose 'chmod' in the appearing contextmenu.The rest should be self-explanatory)

Open a browser of your choice and open the url: 'yoursite.com/signature/sig_creator.php'

If your host matches all requirements, and you have done everything right, you should see something like this:



Congratulations!! You have taken the first steps in creating a custom signature...

Before we start with creating your own personalized sig, we have to do some more homework. Let's get started....

5. Vital source-code parts in detail

The following part is located in the file „image_output.php“.

Be aware that the file „sig.php“ should never ever be changed unless you really know what you do. Otherwise the whole script is likely to break.

If you open the spoiler-tag you will see some source-code of the sig-script we're using right now. Cause it is vital for you to understand this part of the script to generate your own custom sigs, i will explain it in detail.

```
$image = imagecreatefrompng("your_pic.png");  
$font = 'Capture_it';  
$colour = imagecolorexact($blub,0,0,0);
```

```
imagefttext($image,14,0,118,48,$colour,$font,$titles[0][0]);
imagefttext($image,12,0,170,60,$colour,$font,$status[0][0]);
imagefttext($image,14,0,222,72,$colour,$font,$dates[0][0]);
imagepng ($image)
```

- `$image = imagecreatefrompng("your_pic.png");`
 - replace „your_pic.png“ with the picture you want to pimp (must be in the same directory as your the final php file)
- `$font = 'Capture_it.ttf';` (**ATTENTION: fonts have to specified CASE-SENSITIVE**)
 - [*define the font you want to use. The font file must be in the same directory as the final php file. You can use any font you want (even .otf fonts), as long as you have the corresponding file, that defines the font. E.b. For 'Capture_it' you need to have the file „Capture_it.ttf“ uploaded and in the same directory as your final-php file) find free fonts here: <http://www.dafont.com/>
- `$colour = imagecolorexact($image,0,0,0);`
 - the three numbers behind \$image define the colour of the font used on the signature
 - find more information here:
<http://www.php.net/manual/en/function.imagecolorexact.php>
- `imagefttext($image,14,0,118,48,$colour,$font,$titles[0][0]);`
 - `$titles[0][0]` outputs the very first anime title of your rss-feed
 - `$titles[0][1]` outputs the second anime title of your rss-feed and so on
 - **new:** you can now choose between manga and anime output (manga is, of course only available if you specified the script to parse your recent manga updates in the settings.php file; read point 5 how to do this)
 - `$titles[1][0]` outputs the very first manga title
 - `$titles[1][1]` outputs the second manga title and so on
 - find more information here: <http://www.php.net/imagefttext>
- `imagefttext($image,12,0,170,60,$colour,$font,$status[0][0]);`
 - `$status[0][0]` outputs the very first episodes info of your rss-feed
 - `$status[0][1]` outputs the second episodes info of your rss-feed and s
 - **new:** along with the titles, also the status information can now output manga information; see above how to achieve this its the same as with titles
 - be sure to set the same numbers of \$titles and \$status, otherwise you will get a messed up output
- `imagefttext($image,12,0,170,60,$colour,$font,[color=#ff0000]$dates[0][0]);`
 - this version supports the output of dates by default
 - settings are exactly the same as for \$titles and \$status be aware that you have to activate the parsing of dates in the 'settings.php' file
- `imagepng ($image);`

- simply creates the final image; this will just output the picture, but doesn't save it. You can however, use the output for your signature (but i wouldn't recommend it, cause this has some disadvantages; however if you use it like this, with the bbcode below you won't have to use a cronjob for auto updates); bbcode would look something like [img.]http://yoursite.com/sig_creator.php[/img.].
- If you want the pic to be saved you will have to replace 'imagepng(\$club)'(if you change it like this, you will need a cronjob[information on this comes later] for auto updates of your sig)
 - replace 'imagepng(\$image)' with:
`imagepng($image, „sig.png“)`
`imagedestroy($image)`

6. Creating your own customized signature

I guess right now, you have chosen, the gfx you want to use as a signature. If not, do so now and come back when your done with that.

As before, i will take you step by step through the whole process.

Due to the fact, that we have to change the source code, you will have to open the file 'image_output.php' in any texteditor you like.

Next you have to find the part that looks like this:

- `//generate the image`
`$image = imagecreatefrompng("your_pic.png");`

Now: replace ("your_pic.png") with the name of the sig-gfx you'd like to use e.g. if the png you want to use is called „flashy.png“ you would have to change ("your_pic.png") to ("flashy.png").
 [easy isn't it ^^]

Now: replace ("your_pic.png") with the name of the sig-gfx you'd like to use e.g. if the png you want to use is called „flashy.png“ you would have to change ("your_pic.png") to ("flashy.png").
 [easy isn't it ^^]

For now, leave the rest as it is. Save the file and upload the changed 'settings.php' and your sig-gfx to your webspace.

For information on how to change the font or how to make more than one anime title appear on your sig read point 4.

If you're satisfied with the outcome there is merely one thing left. Open the file 'settings.php' in any texteditor you like. Find the following line:

- `//variables`
`$user = "shiteiru"; //Mal-Username`
 - replace shiteiru with your own mal nickname...thats all

Save the file.

You may notice, that there are some other settings that can be changed by you and will influence the appearance of your signature. All you need to know to make successful working changes is explained in detail behind every line. If you still have problems understanding what some things mean or how to adjust them ask.

Once again. Upload the file 'settings.php' to your webspace. Browse to 'yoursite.com/signature/sig.php'.

If you get an error like „The Image „your-image“ cannot be displayed because it contains errors“ don't start to panic. Instead open the following url: 'yoursite.com/signature/sig.png'

If you get an output everything worked fine.

If you have chosen to save the png-output of the sig-creation process, and you want to use this saved png-file instead of the raw 'php-site' as your sig you have to do one more thing. (read under point 4 how to save the png-output)

That is to automate the update of your signature. Read under point 6: cronjob, how to achieve this.

7. More Information on how to setup the serverside directories and how to automate the sig-generating process

- for further information on chmod look here: <http://www.freebsd.org/cgi/man.cgi?query=chmod&sektion=1>
- **cronjob:** if you want the script to automatically update your signature, you will need a cronjob. A cronjob is a long running process that executes commands at specific dates and times. You can setup your own cronjob but that isn't easy and isn't really needed, cause there are some free cronjob provider out there who already did the scripting for you and offer you easily configurable cronjobs. Find such a provider here (cronjobs.org) or here (cronjob.de[recommended for german users]).
If you want to setup a cronjob all by yourself from scratch look here for further information: http://www.aota.net/Script_Installation_Tips/cronhelp.php3
(but be warned that this is absolutely not suited for scripting beginners)

8. Possible errors and how to handle them

Error: The Image „your-image“ cannot be displayed because it contains errors

Solution: That's not really a problem. The output png should have been compiled correctly.

Error: There is no output png saved.

Solution: Upload a file with the same name you defined for your output png. E.g. if you named it 'sig.png' upload a file 'sig.png' and start the script once more. Make sure the files chmod is set to 755.

Error: There is a png output, but no information appears on it.

Solution: Check if your hoster allows 'allow_url_fopen'. Must be set to 'on'. You can check this in the phpinfo.

Error: I get a weird looking php error.

Solution: Make sure the files 'sig.php', 'settings.php' and 'image_output.php' have their chmod set to 755 and the folders chmod is set to 777 or 757

