

VO Html - draft

This paper is intended for developer (webmaster) that is:

- Intended to customise user interface on VO.
- Experience in HTML editing, on the source code level.
- Experience in FTP client application
- Experience with VO environment

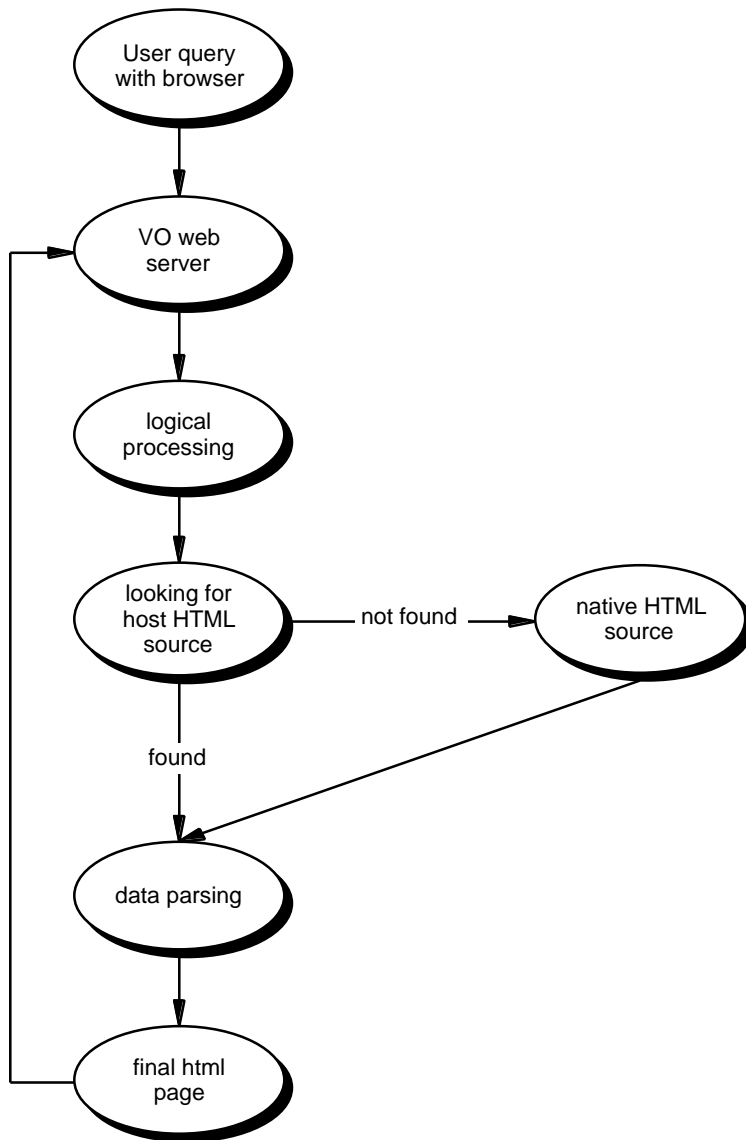
Afteroffice VO (refer as VO) user interface divided into 2 sections:

- the default user interface, native HTML.
- the customisable HTML

When user requests a page from the VO server via browser, VO processes the request and returns the result in HTML format. Each request will be related to an HTML file. Each domain (host) on VO may consist of a set of HTML files that is customising based on the native HTML.

When VO serve the HTML result, it will first look into the host's HTML resource directory for the particular HTML file. If the file doesn't exist, it will then restore the native HTML and proceed with data parsing. See diagram below:

HTML generation flow



Webmaster usually access the host HTML resource directory with an FTP account provided by AO. If you do not have the FTP access, email to support@afteroffice.com to obtain one.

A typical host HTML resource directory may look like the following:

mainBanner.htm
mainLogout.htm
mainScrn.htm
mainTitle.htm
mainTitleb.htm
mainTitleCustom.htm
mainTitles.htm
mainViewlog.htm
menuMailFrame.htm
menuMainFrame.htm
menuMainFrameb.htm
menuMainFrames.htm
msgHistory.htm
msgReq.htm
msgReqDone.htm

Each of the HTML files represents a query.

Each of the HTML contains some special tags that will be replaced with appropriate HTML or TEXT while VO parsing the entire file. These are special tags that VO will understand a process – not to be confused with the ordinary HTML tag.

The special tag usually looks like:

[ref]
[note]
[sfx]

Special tags embedded within HTML. You are allowed to change the HTML without much restriction, you can even delete the special tag if you prefer not to show the result.

The VO engine proceeds with the special tag based on user query. Tag that is recognised on an HTML file doesn't usually recognise on others. For example, we have [totalonline] in the "mainScrn.htm" HTML where we get the result of "number of users online". The same tag however, has no effect on "mailWrite.htm" file where the query wasn't designed to tell how many users online.

What query to which files.

To find out which query related to the HTML file, view source on the page that you are getting from VO, and look at the top of the HTML source file. You should be able to find a comment in the Header indicate which of source HTML file that VO is using.

Note that this indicator is not available on all hosts, only selected host (under user inface customisation development) will be enabled.

Some tips when editing the VO interface HTML

The VO HTML is extremely sensitive. The following is some rules to follow when you are trying to change those files using Graphical HTML Editor like MS Front page. We suggest to use GoLive 4.0 or later produced by Adobe.

- Make sure you have a backup copy of the native HTML files before you proceed with the changes.
- All numbers in HTML tag should not be quoted, eg: `` not ``
- All text in HTML tag should be quoted, eg: `` not ``
- [sfx] is the VO CGI suffix and should not be changed.
- [ref] is the user dynamic session ID.
- Many of the HTML form works well if you change from "POST" to "GET" or vice versa. However, you must have a good reason to change the submit method, and make sure you test it well after changing it.
- None of the host HTML resource file can be renamed. VO look for the file by its name.
- Obmit the file in the HTML resource directory means telling VO to use the native HTML.
- When you upload your HTML files into the host HTML resource directory and experience inconsistent behaviour, remove the file and let VO restore to the native HTML.
- External modules of VO (such as Bulletin and Storage) HTML source is not available for customisation.