

What is available to my freemarker for...



markskipper 65 posts since

Apr 7, 2009

Hi I built a widget plugin and Im keen to explore this way of using the applications' functionality.

I want your guidance on how to access information about the context from my freemarker files.

My question is in two parts:

a) For a widget in the home page of a socail group, how would I find the group name from within my widget's freemarker file?

Is this available from the context already or would my java class have to provide that information? If the latter, where do I get that information in my widget's Java code?

b) how, in general, do answer questions like this? I am guessing there is some place in the source where I can look for this information. Is there a document that describes this process? The notes on Freemarker I have seen are not specific to clearspace and most of the clearspace documentation is for template theme customisation, im not clear how much of this is the same in the cae of widget templates.

Hopefully I can avoid questions like this in future if you are able to give me good answers to a) and b) above.

Mark

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Todd West 15,918 posts since

Jul 14, 2008 1. Re: **What is available to my freemarker for a widget context** May 11, 2009 4:04 PM

Hey Mark,

a) For a widget in the home page of a social group, how would I find the group name from within my widget's freemarker file?

Is this available from the context already or would my java class have to provide that information? If the latter, where do I get that information in my widget's Java code?

The easiest way to do this (instead of messing around with freemarker statics and such) is to simply get it from your java code. In your widget, you will want to create a getter method for the social group:

```
public SocialGroup getCurrentSocialGroup() {  
    return currentSocialGroup; (this would be a global variable in your widget)  
}
```

Then in your loadProperties method you will set the social group appropriately:

```
if (widgetContext.getWidgetType() == WidgetType.SOCIALGROUP) {  
    SocialGroupWidgetContext socialGroupWidgetContext = (SocialGroupWidgetContext) widgetContext;  
    currentSocialGroup = socialGroupWidgetContext.getSocialGroup();  
}  
  
properties.put("currentSocialGroup", currentSocialGroup);
```

Then in your FTL you can reference the social group object like this:

```
`${socialGroup.name}`
```

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In FTL's that are mapped to java actions, any get methods automatically strip this when you use the variable. Otherwise the variable would be like this:

```
`${getSocialGroup().getName()}` // The first is much easier to read and is what you should use
```

b) how, in general, do answer questions like this? I am guessing there is some place in the source where I can look for this information. Is there a document that describes this process? The notes on Freemarker I have seen are not specific to clearspace and most of the clearspace documentation is for template theme customisation, im not clear how much of this is the same in the cae of widget templates.

Check out our developer community, we have tons of documentation around customizations:

<http://www.jivesoftware.com/jivespace/community/developer>

Thanks.

-Todd



[Aaron Johnson](#) 1,169 posts since

Jan 7, 2004 2. **Re: What is available to my freemarker for a widget context** May 11, 2009 11:28 PM

Is there a document that describes this process?

There's also a pretty good document on building widgets available here: http://www.jivesoftware.com/builds/docs/jive_sbs_employee/latest/developer/BuildingWidgets.html

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Would love your feedback on that if it helps at all.

Cheers,

AJ



[markskipper](#) 65 posts since

Apr 7, 2009 3. **Re: What is available to my freemarker for a widget context** May 12, 2009 4:21 AM

Would love your feedback on that if it helps at all.

Aaron

the document is cool, if it weren't for that I could never have figured out how to create my widget in the first place. My question above relates to two things: the relationship between freemarker and java -- which is not adequately covered in that document -- and the specifics of finding out what java classes and therefore properties are available to the freemarker code when the code belongs to a widget. Your introductory document does not address these things, nor do I think it should.

I must confess that I find replies on support tickets saying "please check out this document" annoying, and especially so when the document is one I have seen a dozen times already and does not provide the information I am looking for. It smacks of a polite RTFM which makes me look like someone who can't locate a good tutorial. Anyone who has actually written a widget for your app certainly deserves credit for having been able to find the tutorial.

I had a similar problem with the Advancedemail plugin, everyone kept pointing me "helpfully" to the one document that you have on it. Its apallingly badly written and provides almost no information. I suspect that sometimes its tiempting to point to a document when you don't know the answer yourself. This is not a helpful practice for supporting users who have

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a bundle of needs among which the answer to their question is only one. Another, in my opinion, is polite respect.

I understand you are keen to get people to give feedback on the documents you preare and it would be very cool if we added our feelings and suggestions as comments to them so you could respnd by improving them. But if that's not what's happening, maybe its time to start to think about how the oveall workflow for users and support is working from our point of view. When we're fire-fighting with the app and deadlines are approaching, perhaps we just want the answer and not to spend as much time as I have just spent writing this, to comment on your documents.

Thanks for your thoughtful and helpful answers to my other questions. I'm really glad you guys are out there and I don't have to rely on searching your documents to get everything done.

Mark



[Todd West](#) 15,918 posts since

Jul 14, 2008 4. **Re: What is available to my freemarker for a widget context** May 12, 2009 6:30 AM

Hey Mark,

Thanks for all of the feedback, this is really good stuff. I just wanted to touch on a few points here myself.

I must confess that I find replies on support tickets saying "please check out this document" annoying, and especially so when the document is one I have seen a dozen times already and does not provide the information I am looking for. It smacks of a polite RTFM which makes me look like someone who can't locate a good tutorial. Anyone who has actually written a widget for your app certainly deserves credit for having been able to find the tutorial.

I general (and I am definitely generalizing here) these support tickets are very likely dealing with customizations or complex functionality outside of the scope of normal application

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operations and usage. As much as I would love to be able to be a dedicated customizations and consulting resource unfortunately this is just not currently possible and as noted here this is not covered by the support contract (sorry for more link spam):

<http://www.jivesoftware.com/services/support>

Issues not covered by support:

- Feature enhancements
- Debugging code not written by Jive Software
- Custom development
- HTML authoring
- Training
- Integrating Jive into other web applications

Even given that case, we tend to try to help out as much as we can because we know what its like to be in your position (sometimes thrown into something you've never used before) and have deadlines that need to be met.

I understand you are keen to get people to give feedback on the documents you preare and it would be very cool if we added our feelings and suggestions as comments to them so you could respnd by improving them. But if that's not what's happening, maybe its time to start to think about how the oveall workflow for users and support is working from our point of view.

This is among some of the features that would we love to have in the Supportal in the future. The ability for users to quickly rate the usefulness of a document and provide quick feedback for us so we know which documents need to be improved as well as which are getting utilized the most so we can add on to them.

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Thanks again for your feedback and good luck with your custom development! Once you get into it and have a handle on things, its a blast to see what you can do.

-Todd



[markskipper](#) 65 posts since

Apr 7, 2009 5. **Re: What is available to my freemarker for a widget context** May 13, 2009 12:14 AM

First of all, thanks Todd, for your detailed and careful answer to my question about locating group names. I guess you guys are getting glimpses of smoe work we are doing here. Your code snippets are very helpful as they enable me to know what I amlooking for. Thanks for pointing out the conditions of the licence. I am aware that in these days, its unusual to get something as useful as technical assistance "for free" or at lesat "into the bargain", and its tempting to imagine that one is entitled to what one has always been receiving.

Secondly, Aaron, please don't be offended. Part of my irritation with "link spam" is the frustrating experience I had truing to configure the advanced email plugging when I was referred to DOC-1985 more times than I wished to be. The html (!) file you referredme to looks to be the same as <http://www.jivesoftware.com/jivespace/docs/DOC-3301> which I used to build my widget in the first place, but i have not compared the two side by side to see if that link provides more information, maybe the answers I sought were there in fact?

Thirdly, I guess the "was this answer helpful" question would give some feedback but I guess the question you realy want to get an answer to is "to what extent does this document/discussion postenable you to address your original problem?". The problem is that sometiemns the question I post is not necessarily the issue I am facing. My satisfaction with the reply is likley to be based on my progress with my main issue, not my judgement of how well it answers the stated question, and all you guys are likley to get is that, because we "users" dont always describe our real issues in detail. So be aware of that when you design your feedback mechanism, what ever form that will take. You can't beat a human-relationship for getting feedback, that has a cost in terms of time and effort and the answees you get will be qualitative not quantitative. This might not be what the support manager is looking for, but if you want to improve the "quality" of your documentation, I suspect its just what yuo are looking for.

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Good luck and thanks to you both for coming quickly to my aid

Mark