FastTrack Data
From UKTrackdays

Introduction

Trackdays are a growing phenomenon. As our roads become more congested, speed cameras spring up everywhere and our cars and bikes become faster and more capable, a growing number of people are turning to trackdays to explore the limits of their cars or bikes and their own abilities.

We at UKTrackdays have seen a significant increase in the number of trackdays in the UK and the rest of Europe. In 2002 we listed nearly 900 events, and the thousands of weekly visitors to our website reinforces the view that many, many people have an interest.

There are a fair number of websites which list trackdays, but we have found that most are inaccurate or incomplete. We fully understand why – the task of gathering, sorting, verifying and storing this information is very time-consuming. Over the past two years we have developed methods of gathering this data which significantly reduce the time and effort required, and which increase the accuracy of that data.

Now we have developed a system which allows anyone to display this data on their own website with a few simple commands. Why spend time reinventing the wheel when you could use that time to develop the rest of your website?

Features

- Full access to all current events in our database
- Your web page can request exactly the data you want
- Data is formatted to blend seamlessly into your website
- Subscriber login allows you to control and monitor your account.

Benefits

- We maintain the data – a huge time-saver
- Updates to the database will be available for display on your site within minutes

How it Works

All trackday event data is maintained by ourselves. The data you see on our own website is the data you will be able to access.

You modify one or more of your web pages, and add some 'Javascript' code. Javascript is a very widely used web scripting language.

When your web page is displayed, the Javascript sends a request to our web servers. The request asks for some data from our database.

The data is retrieved from the database. We then apply a 'template'. This is a file you have previously uploaded to our system via your subscriber account. The template determines how the data will look when it appears on your site.

The formatted data is returned and displayed in your web page.

Requesting the Data you Want

The Javascript code can include 'parameters', which tell our systems which data you want to see. For instance, you can specify a range of dates, a circuit, car or bike dates, all the dates for a particular country or organiser, and so on.
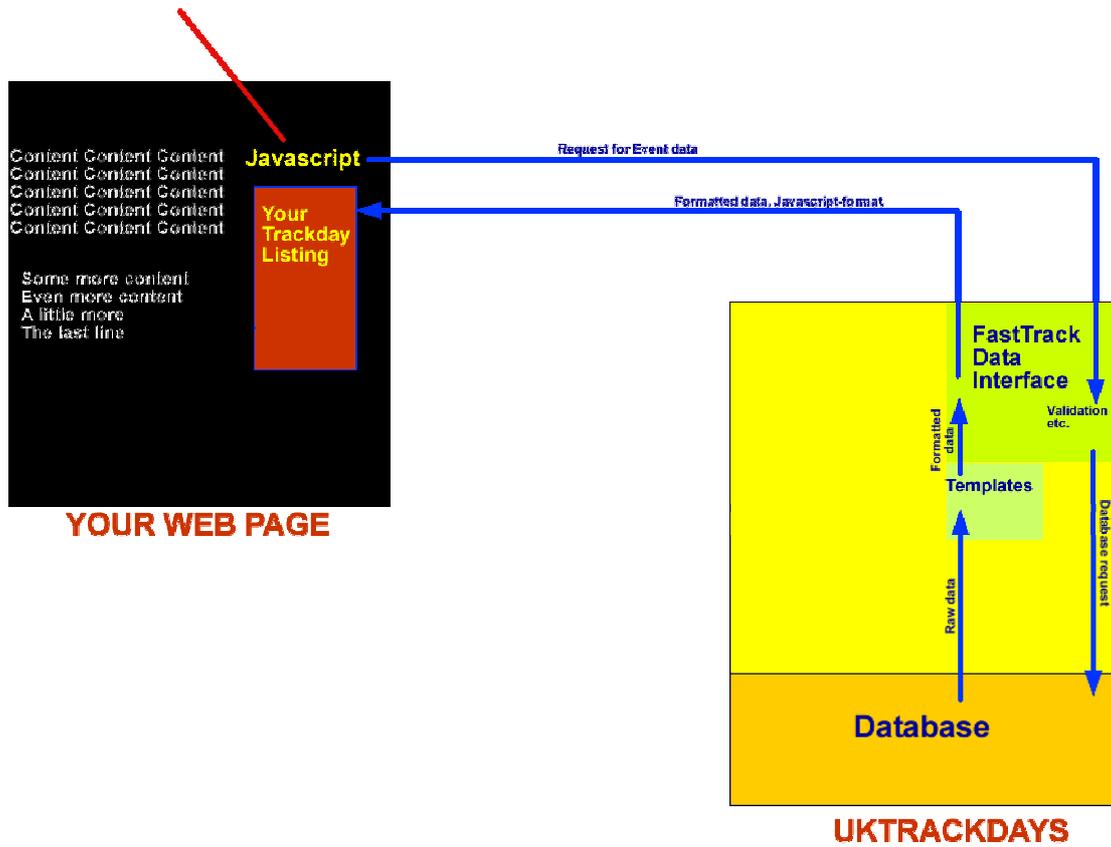
Templates

Templates are used to format raw data from the database, blending it into your web page.

Templates are written in HTML, the language used to build the vast majority of web pages. When you write your template you can include 'tokens'. When the template is applied to event data, each token is replaced with a piece of data for the trackday. For instance, the token {AMOUNT} may be replaced with the cost of each trackday place.

Templates make it very easy to alter the look of the trackday listings on your site. When you want to change a template you just log into your account – you can upload a new version or edit the existing version online. The changes take place immediately.

You can upload as many templates as you wish. A parameter in the Javascript tells our system which template to use. If you have 99 web pages and want a different-looking trackday listing on each page you can do it!

Javascript at the point where you want to display the trackday listing

YOUR WEB PAGE

Request for Event data

Formatted data, Javascript-format

FastTrack Data Interface

Validation etc.

Formatted data

Templates

Database request

Raw data

Database

UKTRACKDAYS

16 April 2003

Packages

Introduction

We have devised a range of packages to suit most users. All packages come with exactly the same features (with the exception of Organiser – this is restricted to events run by that Organiser only). The difference lies in the volume of data which can be accessed.

There are two main cost elements involved in supplying you with event data:
- The time taken to compile the listings
- The cost of buying network capacity, or 'bandwidth'

Our pricing structure reflects the facts that it takes time to compile and verify this data, and that bandwidth must be paid for,

How we calculate Bandwidth

Bandwidth is simply a measure of the volume of data transmitted from our database to your website.

For instance:
- A single listing, once formatted for display on your website, may be 1kilobyte in size
- The 'header' and 'footer' parts of the finished display may be another 2 kilobytes
- The request to our database 'show me all bike trackdays in March' may return 20 events
- The bandwidth used would be 22kB (kilobytes)

Now, if your site received 100 visitors per day, each visitor looked at your 'Events' page 3 times and that page listed 20 events, you would use 6600 kB of bandwidth per day, or 200,750 kB per month. This is 196 megabytes (mB) per month.

By using this sort of calculation you can easily determine which package is best for you.

Organiser

Suitable for Trackday organiser sites receiving up to 500 unique visitors per day.

The monthly bandwidth allowance is 250mB. The organiser can retrieve his own listings only.

Light User

Suitable for sites displaying events from a variety of trackday organisers.

The monthly bandwidth allowance is 500mB. Listings can be retrieved from all organizers.

Intermediate User

Suitable for sites displaying events from a variety of trackdays, but with a large number of site visitors.

The monthly bandwidth allowance is 5gB (i.e. 5120mB). Listings can be retrieved from all organisers.

Heavy User

Suitable for very heavily trafficked sites displaying events from a variety of trackdays.

The monthly bandwidth allowance is 14gB (i.e. 14,336mB). Listings can be retrieved from all organisers.

Nonprofit/Noncommercial User

Available only to those operating personal, hobby, charity or other non-commercial sites.

The monthly bandwidth allowance is 500mB. Listings can be retrieved from all organizers.

Not sure which package is for you?
Get in touch – we'll be happy to advise.

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Support Services

Online Help
Once registered and approved, you have full access to online documentation.

Code Generator
We also provide a code-generator utility – simply select the parameters for your site and it'll write the code for you. All you need to do is cut-and-paste it into your web page.

Sample Templates
When we activate your account, we provide a set of sample templates which you can use as a basis for your own.

Site Development Service
Don't want to modify your website yourself? Web developers Goldseal Computer Solutions will do it for you at 50% of their normal hourly rate.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Q. You say that trackday data can be integrated 'seamlessly' into my site. How can you be sure of that?
A. The Template system gives you complete control over how the data is formatted. Templates are written in HTML, so you can write very simple or very sophisticated templates, using any HTML tags which your browser is capable of displaying.

Q. How fast is the system?
A. I hope you have taken a look at our site at http://www.uktrackdays.co.uk. We think data is retrieved quickly, and you can expect the same performance.

Q. How current is the data?
A. When we or an Organiser add an event to the database, the data is available on our own site immediately. Our systems then distribute the data to our Fastrack Data servers and the data is available to you within minutes

Q. I'm a trackday Organiser. What use is this system to me?
A. It allows you to enter data once (into the UKTrackdays system via your Organiser account) and display it both on your own site and the UKTrackdays site. It simply means that you don't have to edit your own website when you make a change to your calendar..

Q. Will Javascript work for me?
A. The vast majority of web users use Internet Explorer, Netscape Navigator or Opera web browsers. We use simple 'document.writeln' commands in our Javascript output, which will work on all the above.

Q. Can I obtain your data any other way?
A. We are working on other options (such as SQL scripts, CSV files, PHP interfaces), which will be announced soon.

Q. How can I use the data?
A. Our online documentation tells you how what 'tokens' to use in your templates to display items of data (date, venue, price, description etc.). You mustn't alter the data in any way (for instance, by changing descriptions or prices). The templates allow you link back to pages on your own site, to the system is very flexible.

Q. Are there any other conditions?
A. We will provide a range of 'Powerered by UKTrackdays' graphical and text links for links back to our site. We will also ask you to include a disclaimer, the wording of which will be made available when signing up.

Q. How do I know how much bandwidth I am using?
A. Initially we will warn you if you are likely to reach your limit. Very soon we will give you the ability to monitor usage for yourself.

Q. I run a website for my own amusement. I want to use your listings but I'm an Amazon associate and I make a few pounds in referral fees. Do I still qualify as a Nonprofit/Noncommercial User?
A. This is a grey area. We will audit your site when you apply and if, in our opinion, your site is not overtly commercial we will probably approve your application. For example, 'buy this book' links to sites like Amazon are probably OK, banner ads are not. Your site must also contain some relevant content. If it just contains links you will not be approved. We will re-audit your site at intervals.

Q. Won't all these free sites slow down my paid account?
A. No. We limit the number of free accounts to ensure no such problems occur.

Prices

Organiser
£80 per year

Light User
£120 per year

Intermediate User
£360 per year

Heavy User
£900 per year

Nonprofit/Noncommercial User
Free of charge

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