

ASK-A-Muse: Checking for Site Availability

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Muse Reader James Asks:

I have the following situation. I need to run a .cfm page that has a redirect in it to another server that serves Joomla pages. I need to find a way to test and see if that server is down or not serving pages. If it is down or not serving pages, I want to stop the redirect to that server and send the user to a page on my server. Any suggestions?

This is fairly easily accomplished using CFHTTP. When the page loads you can hit your Joomla server with a CFHTTP call and a timeout value. You could, for example, use code like this:

```
<!--- if this timesouts or errors you
      will stay here on this server --->
<cftry>
<cfhttp url="http://www.myjoomlaserver.com" timeout="10"/>
<Cfcatch>
    <cflocation url="someFileOnYourServer.cfm"/>
</CFCATCH>
</cftry>
<!--- Else we'll send you on ahead. --->
<cflocation url="http://www.myjoomlaserver.com"/>
```

But you probably *don't* want to do this for the simple fact that it doubles the amount of traffic your Joomla server will experience. For every request to your page you will generate a "test" request as well as the request that you "forward". A better solution would be to create a scheduled task that checks the page every minute or 2 and sets an application variable like so:

```
<!--- Check to see if it's up and insure variable is set. --->

<cftry>
<cfhttp url="http://www.myjoomlaserver.com" timeout="10"/>
<cfif NOT application.isJoomlaUp>
    <cfset application.isJoomlaUp = true/>
</cfif>

<Cfcatch>
    <cfset application.isJoomlaUp = false/>
</CFCATCH>
</cftry>
```

Then of course in your main page you only need to check your application variable like so:

```
<!--- check the app variable. --->
<cfif application.isJoomlaUp>
    <!--- send user on --->
    <cflocation url="http://www.myjoomlaserver.com"/>
<cfelse>
```

```
<!-- Stay here -->  
<cflocation url="someFileOnYourServer.cfm"/>  
</cfif>
```

Of course this still affects traffic but potentially much less so. If you are concerned about stats another approach would be to create a page on the server that is *only* for your test request. I would suggest that it be a page that includes a selection from the database since that is one of the items that often "brings down" a server. And of course my readers also have additional suggestions.