
Chapter

8

User interfaces are typically the most volatile aspect of web applications during development, so it is crucial to create flexible and extensible interfaces. This chapter shows you how to achieve that flexibility and extensibility by including common content. First we discuss standard JSP mechanisms—JSP includes and JSTL imports—that you can use to include common content in a JSF application. Next, we explore the use of the Apache Tiles package—which lets you encapsulate layout in addition to content, among other handy features—with JSF.

Common Layouts

Many popular web sites, such as `nytimes.com`, `java.sun.com`, or `amazon.com`, use a common layout for their web pages. For example, all three of the web sites listed above use a header-menu-content layout, as depicted in Figure 8-1.

You can use HTML frames to achieve the layout shown in Figure 8-1, but frames are undesirable for several reasons. For example, frames make it hard for users to bookmark pages. Frames also generate separate requests, which can be problematic for web applications. Including content, which is the focus of this chapter, is generally preferred over frames.

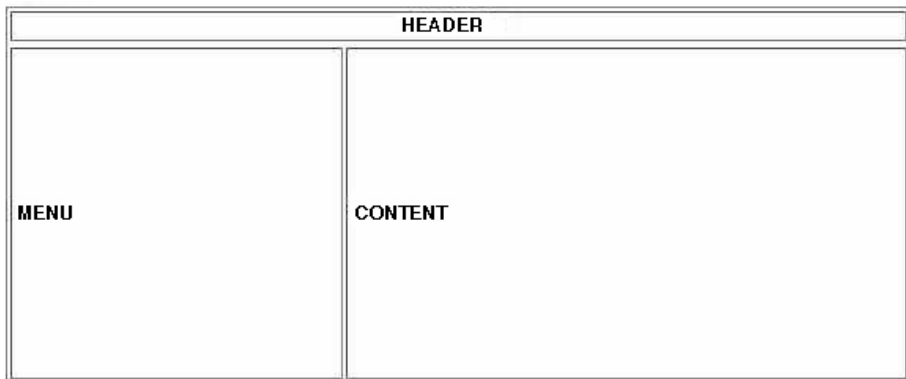


Figure 8-1 A typical web page layout

A Book Viewer and a Library

To illustrate implementing layouts, including common content, and using Tiles, we discuss two applications in this chapter: a book viewer and a library. Those applications are shown in Figure 8-2 and Figure 8-3, respectively.

The book viewer is intuitive. If you click a chapter link, that chapter is shown in the content region of the web page. The library is an extension of the book viewer that lets you view more than one book. You can select books from the menu at the top of the web page.

The book viewer addresses the following topics:

- “Monolithic JSF Pages” on page 320
- “Common Content Inclusion” on page 326
- “Looking at Tiles” on page 331
- “Parameterizing Tiles” on page 334
- “Extending Tiles” on page 335

The library illustrates these Tiles features:

- “Nested Tiles” on page 339
- “Tile Controllers” on page 341

Coverage of the book viewer begins in the next section, “The Book Viewer” on page 318. The library is discussed in “The Library” on page 339.



NOTE: For the examples in this chapter, we downloaded *Alice in Wonderland* and *Peter Pan* from the Project Gutenberg web site (<http://promo.net/pg/>), chopped them up into chapters, and converted them to HTML.



Figure 8-2 The book viewer



Figure 8-3 The library

The Book Viewer

The book viewer is rather limited in scope. It supports only a single book, which is a managed bean that we define in the faces configuration file. The name of that bean is `book`.

The book bean has these properties:

- `titleKey`
- `image`

- numChapters
- chapterKeys

The `titleKey` property represents a key in a resource bundle for the book's title. In the book viewer's properties file we have the key/value pair `titleKey=Alice in Wonderland`. When we display the book's title, we use the `titleKey` property, like this:

```
<h:outputText value="#{msgs[book.titleKey]}"/>
```

The `image` property is a string. The application interprets that string as a URL and loads it in the book viewer's header like this:

```
<h:graphicImage url="#{book.image}"/>
```

The `chapterKeys` property is a read-only list of keys, one for each chapter. The book viewer populates the book viewer's menu with corresponding values from a resource bundle:

```
<h:dataTable value="#{book.chapterKeys}" var="chapterKey">
  <h:commandLink>
    <h:outputText value="#{msgs[chapterKey]}"/>
    ...
  </h:commandLink>
</h:dataTable>
```

The `Book` class uses the `numChapters` property to compute the chapter keys.

The implementation of the `Book` class is rather mundane. You can see it in Listing 8-3 on page 324. Here is how we define an instance of the `Book` class in `faces-config.xml`:

```
<faces-config>
  <!-- The book -->
  <managed-bean>
    <managed-bean-name>book</managed-bean-name>
    <managed-bean-class>com.corejsf.Book</managed-bean-class>
    <managed-bean-scope>request</managed-bean-scope>

    <managed-property>
      <property-name>titleKey</property-name>
      <value>AliceInWonderland</value>
    </managed-property>

    <managed-property>
      <property-name>image</property-name>
      <value>cheshire.jpg</value>
    </managed-property>
  </managed-bean>
</faces-config>
```

```

    <managed-property>
      <property-name>numChapters</property-name>
      <property-class>java.lang.Integer</property-class>
      <value>12</value>
    </managed-property>
  </managed-bean>
</faces-config>

```

There are many ways to implement page layout. In this section, we look at three options: a monolithic JSF page, inclusion of common content, and Tiles.



NOTE: We do not set the book's chapterKeys property in faces-config.xml. This is because the Book class creates that list of chapter keys for us. All we have to do is define the numChapters property.

Monolithic JSF Pages

A monolithic JSF page is perhaps the quickest way to implement the book viewer, shown in Figure 8–2. For example, here is a naive implementation:

```

<!-- A panel grid, which resides in a form, for the entire page -->
<h:panelGrid columns="2" styleClass="book"
  columnClasses="menuColumn, chapterColumn">

  <!-- The header, containing an image, title, and horizontal rule -->
  <f:facet name="header">
    <h:panelGrid columns="1" styleClass="bookHeader">
      <h:graphicImage value="#{book.image}"/>
      <h:outputText value="#{msgs[book.titleKey]}" styleClass="bookTitle"/>
      <hr>
    </h:panelGrid>
  </f:facet>

  <!-- Column 1 of the panel grid: The menu, which consists of chapter links -->
  <h:dataTable value="#{book.chapterKeys}" var="chapterKey"
    styleClass="links" columnClasses="linksColumn">
    <h:column>
      <h:commandLink>
        <h:outputText value="#{msgs[chapterKey]}/>
        <f:param name="chapter" value="#{chapterKey}"/>
      </h:commandLink>
    </h:column>
  </h:dataTable>

  <!-- Column 2 of the panel grid: The chapter content -->
  <c:import url="${param.chapter}.html"/>
</h:panelGrid>

```

The book viewer is implemented with a panel grid with two columns. The header region is populated with an image, text, and HTML horizontal rule. Besides the header, the panel grid has only one row—the menu occupies the left column and the current chapter is displayed in the right column.

The menu is composed of chapter links. By default, `Book.getChapterKeys()` returns a list of strings that looks like this:

```
chapter1
chapter2
...
chapterN
```

ChapterN represents the last chapter in the book. In the book viewer's resource bundle, we define values for those keys:

```
chapter1=Chapter 1
chapter2=Chapter 2
...
```

To create chapter links, we use `h:dataTable` to iterate over the book's chapter keys. For every chapter, we create a link whose text corresponds to the chapter key's value with this expression: `#{msgs[chapterKey]}`. So, for example, we wind up with "Chapter 1" ... "Chapter 12" displayed in the menu when the number of chapters is 12.

The right column is reserved for chapter content. That content is included with JSTL's `c:import` tag.

The directory structure for the book viewer is shown in Figure 8–4. The monolithic JSF version of the book viewer is shown in Listing 8–1 through Listing 8–5.



NOTE: Notice the `f:param` tag inside `h:commandLink`. The JSF framework turns that parameter into a request parameter—named `chapter`—when the link is activated. When the page is reloaded, that request parameter is used to load the chapter's content, like this:

```
<c:import url="{param.chapter}"/>
```

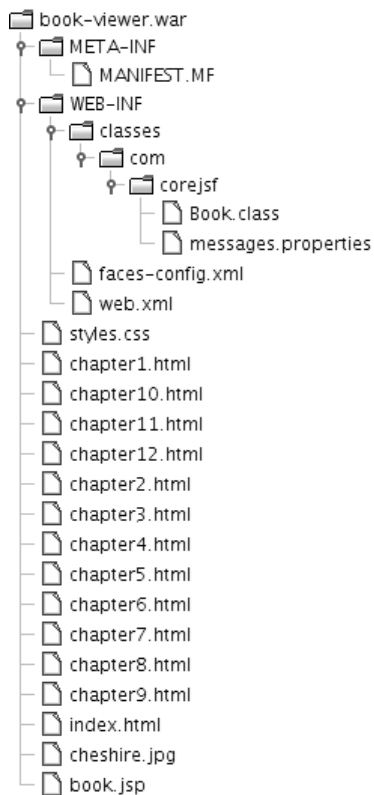


Figure 8-4 The directory structure of the book viewer

Listing 8-1 book-viewer/web/book.jsp

```
1. <html>
2.   <%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsp/jstl/core" prefix="c" %>
3.   <%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsf/core" prefix="f" %>
4.   <%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsf/html" prefix="h" %>
5.
6.   <f:view>
7.     <f:loadBundle basename="com.corejsf.messages" var="msgs"/>
8.     <head>
9.       <link href="styles.css" rel="stylesheet" type="text/css"/>
10.      <title><h:outputText value="#{msgs.bookWindowTitle}"/></title>
11.    </head>
12.
13.    <body>
14.      <h:form>
```


Listing 8-1 book-viewer/web/book.jsp (cont.)

```
15. <h:panelGrid columns="2" styleClass="book"
16.     columnClasses="menuColumn, chapterColumn">
17.     <f:facet name="header">
18.         <h:panelGrid columns="1" styleClass="bookHeader">
19.             <h:graphicImage value="#{book.image}"/>
20.             <h:outputText value="#{msgs[book.titleKey]}"
21.                 styleClass='bookTitle' />
22.         <hr />
23.     </h:panelGrid>
24. </f:facet>
25.
26.     <h:dataTable value="#{book.chapterKeys}" var="chapterKey"
27.         styleClass="links" columnClasses="linksColumn">
28.         <h:column>
29.             <h:commandLink>
30.                 <h:outputText value="#{msgs[chapterKey]}"/>
31.                 <f:param name="chapter" value="#{chapterKey}"/>
32.             </h:commandLink>
33.         </h:column>
34.     </h:dataTable>
35.
36.     <c:import url="{param.chapter}.html"/>
37. </h:panelGrid>
38. </h:form>
39. </body>
40. </f:view>
41. </html>
```

Listing 8-2 book-viewer/web/WEB-INF/faces-config.xml

```
1. <?xml version="1.0"?>
2. <faces-config xmlns="http://java.sun.com/xml/ns/javaee"
3.     xmlns:xsi="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema-instance"
4.     xsi:schemaLocation="http://java.sun.com/xml/ns/javaee
5.         http://java.sun.com/xml/ns/javaee/web-facesconfig_1_2.xsd"
6.     version="1.2">
7.     <managed-bean>
8.         <managed-bean-name>book</managed-bean-name>
9.         <managed-bean-class>com.corejsf.Book</managed-bean-class>
10.        <managed-bean-scope>request</managed-bean-scope>
11.
```

Listing 8–2 book-viewer/web/WEB-INF/faces-config.xml (cont.)

```
12.     <managed-property>
13.         <property-name>titleKey</property-name>
14.         <value>aliceInWonderland</value>
15.     </managed-property>
16.
17.     <managed-property>
18.         <property-name>image</property-name>
19.         <value>cheshire.jpg</value>
20.     </managed-property>
21.
22.     <managed-property>
23.         <property-name>numChapters</property-name>
24.         <property-class>java.lang.Integer</property-class>
25.         <value>12</value>
26.     </managed-property>
27. </managed-bean>
28. </faces-config>
```

Listing 8–3 book-viewer/src/java/com/corejsf/Book.java

```
1. package com.corejsf;
2.
3. import java.util.LinkedList;
4. import java.util.List;
5.
6. public class Book {
7.     private String titleKey;
8.     private String image;
9.     private int numChapters;
10.    private List<String> chapterKeys = null;
11.
12.    // PROPERTY: titleKey
13.    public void setTitleKey(String titleKey) { this.titleKey = titleKey; }
14.    public String getTitleKey() { return titleKey; }
15.
16.    // PROPERTY: image
17.    public void setImage(String image) { this.image = image; }
18.    public String getImage() { return image; }
19.
20.    // PROPERTY: numChapters
21.    public void setNumChapters(int numChapters) { this.numChapters = numChapters; }
22.    public int getNumChapters() { return numChapters; }
23.
```

Listing 8–3 book-viewer/src/java/com/corejsf/Book.java (cont.)

```
24. // PROPERTY: chapterKeys
25. public List<String> getChapterKeys() {
26.     if(chapterKeys == null) {
27.         chapterKeys = new LinkedList<String>();
28.         for(int i=1; i <= numChapters; ++i)
29.             chapterKeys.add("chapter" + i);
30.     }
31.     return chapterKeys;
32. }
33. }
```

Listing 8–4 book-viewer/src/java/com/corejsf/messages.properties

```
1. bookWindowTitle=Welcome to Alice in Wonderland
2. aliceInWonderland=Alice in Wonderland
3.
4. chapter1=Chapter 1
5. chapter2=Chapter 2
6. chapter3=Chapter 3
7. chapter4=Chapter 4
8. chapter5=Chapter 5
9. chapter6=Chapter 6
10. chapter7=Chapter 7
11. chapter8=Chapter 8
12. chapter9=Chapter 9
13. chapter10=Chapter 10
14. chapter11=Chapter 11
15. chapter12=Chapter 12
16. chapter13=Chapter 13
17. chapter14=Chapter 14
18. chapter15=Chapter 15
```

Listing 8–5 book-viewer/web/styles.css

```
1. .bookHeader {
2.     width: 100%;
3.     text-align: center;
4.     background-color: #eee;
5.     padding: 0 px;
6.     border: thin solid CornflowerBlue;
7. }
```

Listing 8–5 book-viewer/web/styles.css (cont.)

```
8. .bookTitle {
9.     text-align: center;
10.    font-style: italic;
11.    font-size: 1.3em;
12.    font-family: Helvetica;
13. }
14. .book {
15.     vertical-align: top;
16.     width: 100%;
17.     height: 100%;
18. }
19. .menuColumn {
20.     vertical-align: top;
21.     background-color: #eee;
22.     width: 100px;
23.     border: thin solid #777;
24. }
25. .chapterColumn {
26.     vertical-align: top;
27.     text-align: left;
28.     width: *;
29. }
```

Common Content Inclusion

A monolithic JSP page is a poor choice for the book viewer because the JSP page is difficult to modify. Also, realize that our monolithic JSP page represents two things: layout and content.

Layout is implemented with an `h:panelGrid` tag, and content is represented by various JSP tags, such as `h:graphicImage`, `h:outputText`, `h:commandLink`, and the book chapters. Realize that *with a monolithic JSP page, we cannot reuse content or layout*.

In the next section, we concentrate on including content. In “Looking at Tiles” on page 331, we discuss including layout.

Content Inclusion in JSP-Based Applications

Instead of cramming a bunch of code into a monolithic JSP page, as we did in Listing 8–1 on page 322, it is better to include common content so you can reuse that content in other JSP pages. With JSP, you have three choices for including content:

- `<%@ include file="header.jsp"% >`
- `<jsp:include page="header.jsp"/>`
- `<c:import url="header.jsp"/>`

The first choice listed above—the JSP include directive—includes the specified file before the enclosing JSF page is compiled to a servlet. However, the include directive suffers from an important limitation: If the included file’s content changes after the enclosing page was first processed, those changes are not reflected in the enclosing page. That means you must manually update the enclosing pages—whether the including pages changed or not—whenever included content changes.

The last two choices listed above include the content of a page at runtime and merge the included content with the including JSF page. Because the inclusion happens at runtime, changes to included pages are always reflected when the enclosing page is redisplayed. For that reason, `jsp:include` and `c:import` are usually preferred to the `include` directive.

The `c:import` tag works just like `jsp:include`, but it has more features—for example, `c:import` can import resources from another web application, whereas `jsp:include` cannot. Also, prior to JSP 2.0, you cannot use JSP expressions for `jsp:include` attributes, whereas you can with `c:import`. Remember that you must import the JSTL core tag library to use `c:import`.

Throughout this chapter, we use `c:import` for consistency. You can use either `jsp:include` or `c:import` to dynamically include content. If you do not need `c:import`’s extra features, then it is ever-so-slightly easier to use `jsp:include` because you do not need to import the JSTL core tag library.

JSF-Specific Considerations

Regardless of whether you include content with the `include` directive, `jsp:include`, or `c:import`, you must take into account two special considerations when you include content in a JavaServer Faces application:

1. You must wrap included JSF tags in an `f:subview` tag.
2. Included JSF tags cannot contain `f:view` tags.

The first rule applies to included content that contains JSF tags. For example, the book viewer should encapsulate header content in its own JSF page so that we can reuse that content:

```
<!-- this is header.jsp -->
<%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsf/core" prefix="f" %>
<%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsf/html" prefix="h" %>
```

```

<h:panelGrid columns="1" styleClass="header">
  <h:graphicImage value="books/book/cheshire.jpg"/>
  <h:outputText value="{msgs.bookTitle}" styleClass="bookTitle"/>
  ...
</h:panelGrid>

```

Now we can include that content from the original JSF page:

```

<!-- This is from the original JSF page -->
<f:view>
  ...
  <f:subview id="header">
    <c:import url="header.jsp"/>
  </f:subview>
  ...
</f:view>

```

You must assign an ID to each subview. The standard convention for including content is to name the subview after the imported JSF page.

JSF views, which are normally web pages, can contain an unlimited number of subviews. But there can be only one view. Because of that restriction, included JSF tags—which must be wrapped in a subview—cannot contain `f:view` tags.



CAUTION: The `book-viewer-include` application maps the Faces servlet to `*.faces`. That means you can start the application with this URL: `http://www.localhost:8080/book-viewer-include/book.faces`. The Faces servlet maps `books.faces` to `books.jsp`. However, you cannot use the `faces` suffix when you use `c:import`. If you use `c:import`, you must use the `jsp` suffix.

Content Inclusion in the Book Viewer

To include content in the book viewer, we split our monolithic JSF page into four files: the original JSF page, `/header.jsp`, `/menu.jsp`, and `/content.jsp`. We include the header, menu, and content in the original JSF page:

```

<h:panelGrid columns="2" styleClass="book"
  columnClasses="menuColumn, contentColumn">

  <f:facet name="header">
    <f:subview id="header">
      <c:import url="header.jsp"/>
    </f:subview>
  </f:facet>

  <f:subview id="menu">

```

```

    <c:import url="menu.jsp"/>
  </f:subview>

  <c:import url="content.jsp"/>
</h:panelGrid>
...

```

This code is much cleaner than the original JSF page listed in Listing 8–1, so it is easier to understand, maintain, and modify. But more important, we are now free to reuse the header, menu, and content for other views.

The directory structure for the book viewer with includes example is shown in Figure 8–5. Listing 8–6 through Listing 8–9 show the JSF pages for the book, its header, menu, and content.

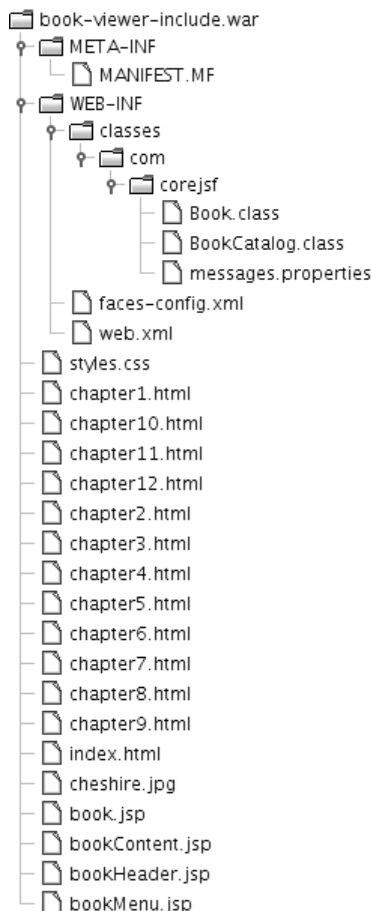


Figure 8–5 The directory structure of the book viewer with includes

Listing 8–6 book-viewer-include/web/book.jsp

```

1. <html>
2.   <%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsp/jstl/core" prefix="c" %>
3.   <%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsp/core" prefix="f" %>
4.   <%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsp/html" prefix="h" %>
5.
6.   <f:view>
7.     <f:loadBundle basename="com.corejsf.messages" var="msgs"/>
8.     <head>
9.       <link href="styles.css" rel="stylesheet" type="text/css"/>
10.      <title><h:outputText value="#{msgs.bookWindowTitle}"/></title>
11.    </head>
12.
13.    <body>
14.      <h:form>
15.        <h:panelGrid columns="2" styleClass="book"
16.          columnClasses="menuColumn, chapterColumn">
17.          <f:facet name="header">
18.            <f:subview id="header">
19.              <c:import url="/bookHeader.jsp"/>
20.            </f:subview>
21.          </f:facet>
22.
23.          <f:subview id="menu">
24.            <c:import url="/bookMenu.jsp"/>
25.          </f:subview>
26.
27.          <c:import url="/bookContent.jsp"/>
28.        </h:panelGrid>
29.      </h:form>
30.    </body>
31.  </f:view>
32. </html>

```

Listing 8–7 book-viewer-include/web/bookHeader.jsp

```

1. <%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsp/core" prefix="f" %>
2. <%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsp/html" prefix="h" %>
3.
4. <h:panelGrid columns="1" styleClass="bookHeader">
5.   <h:graphicImage value="#{book.image}"/>
6.   <h:outputText value="#{msgs[book.titleKey]}" styleClass="bookTitle"/>
7.   <hr>
8. </h:panelGrid>

```


Listing 8–8 book-viewer-include/web/bookMenu.jsp

```
1. <%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsp/core" prefix="f" %>
2. <%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsp/html" prefix="h" %>
3.
4. <h:dataTable value="#{book.chapterKeys}" var="chapterKey"
5.     styleClass="links" columnClasses="linksColumn">
6.     <h:column>
7.         <h:commandLink>
8.             <h:outputText value="#{msgs[chapterKey]}/>
9.             <f:param name="chapter" value="#{chapterKey}"/>
10.        </h:commandLink>
11.    </h:column>
12. </h:dataTable>
```

Listing 8–9 book-viewer-include/web/bookContent.jsp

```
1. <%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsp/jstl/core" prefix="c" %>
2.
3. <c:import url="${param.chapter}.html"/>
```

Looking at Tiles

We have seen how to encapsulate and include content and how that strategy increases flexibility—it is much easier to reuse content if you include it rather than mixing it all in one file. Now that you can create user interfaces with pluggable content, you may be satisfied with that level of flexibility and reuse—but wait, there’s more.

In addition to *encapsulating content*, you can use Tiles to *encapsulate layout*. For the application shown in Figure 8–2 on page 317, encapsulating layout means making the layout code—the `h:panelGrid` and its contents listed in Listing 8–6 on page 330—available for reuse. As it stands in Listing 8–6, that layout code can only be used by the JSF page shown in Figure 8–2. If you implement JSF pages with identical layouts, you must *replicate that layout code for every page*.

With Tiles, you define a single layout that can be reused by multiple *tiles*, which are nothing more mysterious than imported JSP pages. *Tiles lets you implement layout code once and reuse it among many pages*.

But reusing layout is just the beginning of the Tiles bag of tricks. You can do more:

- Nest tiles
- Extend tiles

- Restrict tiles to users of a particular role
- Attach controllers (Java objects) to tiles that are invoked just before their tile is displayed

Those are the core features that Tiles offers in the pursuit of the ultimate flexibility in crafting web-based user interfaces.

Installing Tiles

To use Tiles, you need the standalone Tiles JAR file. That JAR file can be found in the source code for this book.

Once you have the Tiles JAR file, follow these steps to install Tiles in your application:

1. Copy the Tiles JAR file to your application's `WEB-INF/lib` directory.
2. Add the Tiles servlet to your deployment descriptor (`web.xml`). Use the `load-on-startup` element to ensure that the Tiles servlet is loaded when your application starts.

Your deployment descriptor should look similar to the following:

```
<?xml version="1.0"?>

<web-app xmlns="http://java.sun.com/xml/ns/j2ee"
  xmlns:xsi="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema-instance"
  xsi:schemaLocation="http://java.sun.com/xml/ns/j2ee
    http://java.sun.com/xml/ns/j2ee/web-app_2_4.xsd"
  version="2.4">
  ...
  <servlet>
    <servlet-name>Faces Servlet</servlet-name>
    <servlet-class>javax.faces.webapp.FacesServlet</servlet-class>
    <load-on-startup>1</load-on-startup>
  </servlet>

  <servlet>
    <servlet-name>Tiles Servlet</servlet-name>
    <servlet-class>org.apache.tiles.servlets.TilesServlet</servlet-class>
    <load-on-startup>2</load-on-startup>
  </servlet>
  ...
</web-app>
```

Using Tiles with the Book Viewer

Using Tiles with JSF is a three-step process:

1. Use `tiles:insert` to insert a tile definition in a JSF page.
2. Define the tile in your Tiles configuration file.
3. Implement the tile's layout.

For the book viewer, we start in `book.jsp`, where we insert a tile named `book`:

```
...
<%@ taglib uri="http://jakarta.apache.org/tiles" prefix="tiles" %>
...
<h:form>
  <tiles:insert definition="book" flush="false"/>
</h:form>
...
```

We define the `book` tile in `/WEB-INF/tiles.xml`:

```
<definition name="book" path="/headerMenuContentLayout.jsp">
  <put name="header" value="/bookHeader.jsp"/>
  <put name="menu" value="/bookMenu.jsp"/>
  <put name="content" value="/bookContent.jsp"/>
</definition>
```

The previous snippet of XML defines a tile. The tile's layout is specified with the definition element's `path` attribute. The tile attributes, specified with `put` elements, are used by the layout. That layout looks like this:

```
<!-- this is /headerMenuContentLayout.jsp -->

<%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsf/html" prefix="h"%>
<%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsf/core" prefix="f"%>
<%@ taglib uri="http://jakarta.apache.org/tiles" prefix="tiles" %>

<h:panelGrid columns="2" styleClass="gridClass"
  headerClass="headerClass"
  columnClasses="menuClass, contentClass">

  <f:facet name="header">
    <f:subview id="header">
      <tiles:insert attribute="header" flush="false"/>
    </f:subview>
  </f:facet>

  <f:subview id="menu">
    <tiles:insert attribute="menu" flush="false"/>
  </f:subview>
```

```
<f:subview id="content">
  <tiles:insert attribute="content" flush="false"/>
</f:subview>
</h:panelGrid>
```

The `tiles:insert` tag dynamically includes content. That content is the value of the attribute tag of `tiles:insert`. For example, the preceding code inserts the header attribute. That attribute's value is `/bookHeader.jsp`, so `tiles:insert` dynamically includes that file.

Notice that we specified a `flush="false"` attribute for the `tiles:insert` tag. That is necessary for most modern servlet containers because those containers disallow buffer flushing inside custom tags. If your servlet container throws an exception stating that you cannot flush from a custom tag, then you know you have forgotten to specify that attribute, which is true by default.

What have we gained by using Tiles in this example? *We have encapsulated layout so that we can reuse it in other tiles, instead of replicating that layout code from one JSP page to another.* For example, you could reuse the book viewer's layout, implemented in `/headerMenuContentLayout.jsp`, for other pages in the application that have the same layout.

Parameterizing Tiles

There is one flaw to the layout listed in the previous section: It hardcodes CSS classes, namely `gridClass`, `headerClass`, `menuClass`, and `contentClass`. This means that every web page using the header-menu-content layout will have the same look and feel. It would be better if we could parameterize the CSS class names. That way, other tiles with a header-menu-content layout could define their own look and feel.

Next, we look at how we can do that. First, we add three attributes to the book tile:

```
<definition name="book" path="/headerMenuContentLayout.jsp">
  <put name="headerClass" value="headerClass"/>
  <put name="menuClass" value="menuClass"/>
  <put name="contentClass" value="contentClass"/>

  <put name="header" value="/bookHeader.jsp"/>
  <put name="menu" value="/bookMenu.jsp"/>
  <put name="content" value="/bookContent.jsp"/>
</definition>
```

Then we use those attributes in the layout:

```
<%-- this is an excerpt of /headerMenuContentLayout.jsp --%>
...
<tiles:importAttribute scope="request"/>

<h:panelGrid columns="2" styleClass="{gridClass}"
  headerClass="{headerClass}"
  columnClasses="{menuClass}, {contentClass}"
  ...
</h:panelGrid>
```

Tile attributes, such as `headerClass`, `menuClass`, etc., in the preceding code, exist in *tiles scope*, which is inaccessible to JSF. To make our attributes accessible to the layout JSF page listed above, we use the `tiles:importAttribute` tag. That tag imports all tile attributes to the scope you specify with the `scope` attribute. In the preceding code, we imported them to request scope.

Now we can specify different CSS classes for other tiles:

```
<definition name="anotherTile" path="/headerMenuContentLayout.jsp">
  <put name="headerClass" value="aDifferentHeaderClass"/>
  ...
</definition>
```



NOTE: The `tiles:importAttribute` tag also lets you import one attribute at a time—for example: `<tiles:importAttribute name="headerClass" scope="..."/>`.

Extending Tiles

In “Parameterizing Tiles” on page 334 we defined a tile that looked like this:

```
<definition name="book" path="/headerMenuContentLayout.jsp">
  <put name="headerClass" value="headerClass"/>
  <put name="menuClass" value="menuClass"/>
  <put name="contentClass" value="contentClass"/>

  <put name="header" value="/bookHeader.jsp"/>
  <put name="menu" value="/bookMenu.jsp"/>
  <put name="content" value="/bookContent.jsp"/>
</definition>
```

There are two distinct types of attributes in that tile: CSS classes and included content. Although the latter is specific to the book tile, the former can be used by tiles that represent something other than books. Because of that generality, we split the book tile into two:

```
<definition name="header-menu-content" path="/headerMenuContentLayout.jsp">
  <put name="headerClass" value="headerClass"/>
  <put name="menuClass" value="menuClass"/>
  <put name="contentClass" value="contentClass"/>
</definition>

<definition name="book" extends="header-menu-content">
  <put name="header" value="/bookHeader.jsp"/>
  <put name="menu" value="/bookMenu.jsp"/>
  <put name="content" value="/bookContent.jsp"/>
</definition>
```

Now the book tile *extends* the header-menu-content tile. When you extend a tile, you inherit its layout and attributes, much the same as Java subclasses inherit methods and variables from their base classes. Because we have split the original tile in two, the CSS class attributes are available for reuse by other tiles that extend the header-menu-content tile.



NOTE: Here is one more thing to consider about Tiles. Imagine the book viewer has been a huge success and Project Gutenberg has commissioned you to implement a library that can display all 6,000+ of their books. You define more than 6,000 tiles that reuse the same layout—one tile for each book—and present your finished product to the folks at Gutenberg. They think it's great, but they want you to add a footer to the bottom of every page. Since you have used Tiles, you only need to change the single layout used by all your tiles. Imagine the difficulty you would encounter making that change if you had replicated the layout code more than 6,000 times!

Figure 8–6 shows the directory structure for the “tileized” version of the book viewer. That directory structure is the same as the previous version of the book viewer, except that we have added a layout—`headerMenuContentLayout.jsp`—and the tiles definition file, `/WEB-INF/tiles.xml`.

Listing 8–10 through Listing 8–12 show the Tiles definition file, the book layout, and the JSF page that displays *Alice in Wonderland*. We left out the listings of the other files in the application because they are unchanged from the application discussed in “Content Inclusion in JSP-Based Applications” on page 326.

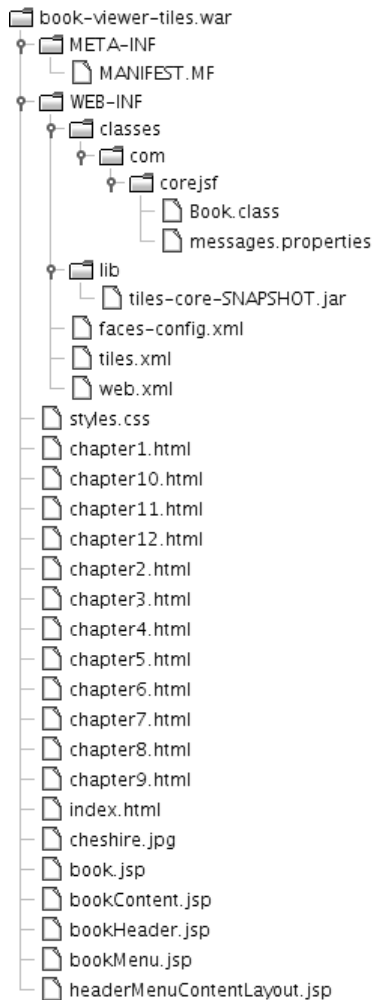


Figure 8-6 Book viewer with extended tile directory structure

Listing 8–10 book-viewer-tiles/web/WEB-INF/tiles.xml

```
1. <!DOCTYPE tiles-definitions PUBLIC
2.   "-//Apache Software Foundation//DTD Tiles Configuration//EN"
3.   "http://jakarta.apache.org/struts/dtds/tiles-config.dtd">
4.
5. <tiles-definitions>
6.   <definition name="book" path="/headerMenuContentLayout.jsp">
7.     <put name="gridClass"       value="headerMenuContent"/>
8.     <put name="headerClass"    value="header"/>
9.     <put name="menuColumnClass" value="menuColumn"/>
10.    <put name="contentColumnClass" value="contentColumn"/>
11.
12.    <put name="header" value="/bookHeader.jsp"/>
13.    <put name="menu" value="/bookMenu.jsp"/>
14.    <put name="content" value="/bookContent.jsp"/>
15.  </definition>
16. </tiles-definitions>
```

Listing 8–11 book-viewer-tiles/web/headerMenuContentLayout.jsp

```
1. <%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsf/core" prefix="f" %>
2. <%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsf/html" prefix="h" %>
3. <%@ taglib uri="http://jakarta.apache.org/tiles" prefix="tiles" %>
4.
5. <tiles:importAttribute scope="request"/>
6.
7. <h:panelGrid columns="2" styleClass="{gridClass}"
8.   headerClass="{headerClass}"
9.   columnClasses="{menuColumnClass}, {contentColumnClass}">
10.  <f:facet name="header">
11.    <f:subview id="header">
12.      <tiles:insert attribute="header" flush="false"/>
13.    </f:subview>
14.  </f:facet>
15.
16.  <f:subview id="menu">
17.    <tiles:insert attribute="menu" flush="false"/>
18.  </f:subview>
19.
20.  <f:subview id="content">
21.    <tiles:insert attribute="content" flush="false"/>
22.  </f:subview>
23. </h:panelGrid>
```

Listing 8-12 book-viewer-tiles/web/book.jsp

```
1. <html>
2.   <%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsp/jstl/core" prefix="c" %>
3.   <%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsp/jstl/core" prefix="f" %>
4.   <%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsp/html" prefix="h" %>
5.   <%@ taglib uri="http://jakarta.apache.org/tiles" prefix="tiles" %>
6.
7.   <f:view>
8.     <f:loadBundle basename="com.corejsf.messages" var="msgs"/>
9.     <head>
10.       <link href="styles.css" rel="stylesheet" type="text/css"/>
11.       <title><h:outputText value="#{msgs.bookWindowTitle}"/></title>
12.     </head>
13.
14.     <body>
15.       <f:subview id="book">
16.         <h:form>
17.           <tiles:insert definition="book" flush="false"/>
18.         </h:form>
19.       </f:subview>
20.     </body>
21.   </f:view>
22. </html>
```

The Library

In this section, we turn the book viewer into a library, as shown in Figure 8-7.

The library application shown in Figure 8-7 contains a menu at the top of the page that lets you select a book, either *Alice in Wonderland* or *Peter Pan*. The rest of the application works like the book viewer we have discussed throughout this chapter.

The library employs two Tiles techniques that are of interest to us: nesting tiles and using tile controllers.

Nested Tiles

The library shown in Figure 8-7 contains a book viewer. So does the library tile:

```
<definition name="book">
  ...
</definition>

<definition name="library" path="/libraryLayout.jsp"
  controllerClass="com.corejsf.LibraryTileController">
```

```

<put name="header" value="/bookSelector.jsp"/>
<put name="book" value="book"/>
</definition>

```

Notice the value for the book attribute—it is a tile, not a JSP page. Using a tile name instead of a JSP page lets you nest tiles, as we did by nesting the book tile in the library.

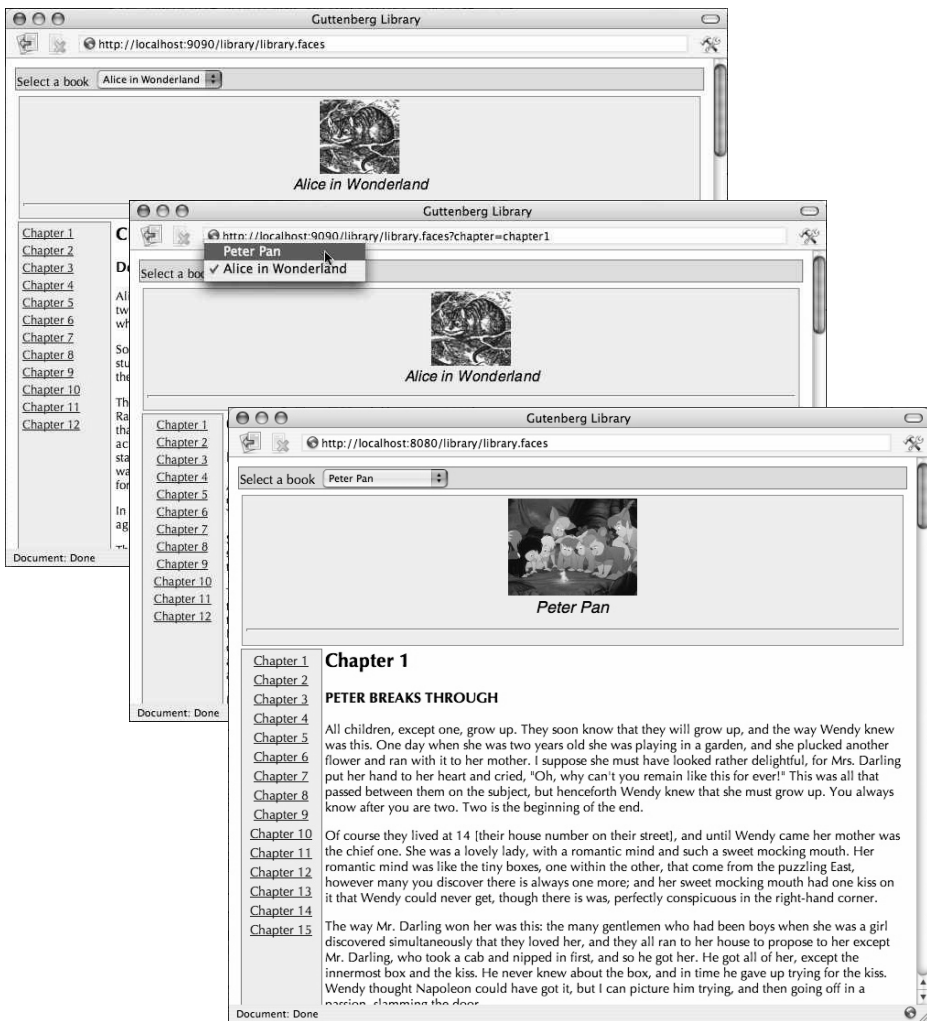


Figure 8-7 Library implemented with JSF and tiles

Tile Controllers

In our book viewer application, we had one managed bean named `book` (see “The Book Viewer” on page 318 for more information about the `book` bean). The library, on the other hand, must be aware of more than one book.

In this section—with a sleight of hand—we show you how to support multiple books without having to change the book viewer. The book viewer will continue to manipulate a `book` bean, but that bean will no longer be a managed bean. Instead, it will be the book that was last selected in the library’s pull-down menu at the top of the page.

We accomplish that sleight of hand with a Tiles controller. Tiles lets you attach a Java object, called a *tile controller*, to a tile. That object’s class must implement the `org.apache.struts.tiles.Controller` interface, which defines a `perform` method. Tiles invokes that method just before it loads the controller’s associated tile. Tile controllers have access to their tile’s context, which lets the controller access the tile’s attributes or create new attributes.

We attach a controller to the `library` tile. The controller looks for a `library` attribute in session scope. If the `library` is not there, the controller creates a `library` and stores it in session scope. The controller then consults the `library`’s `selectedBook` property to see if a book has been selected. If so, the controller sets the value of the `book` session attribute to the selected book. If there is no selected book, the controller sets the `book` attribute to that for *Peter Pan*. Subsequently, when the `library` tile is loaded, the book viewer accesses the selected book. The controller is listed in Listing 8–20 on page 348.

Figure 8–8 shows the directory structure for the library application. For brevity, we left out the book HTML files.

The files shown in Figure 8–8 are shown in Listing 8–13 through Listing 8–28, with the exception of the HTML files. As you look through those listings, note the effort required to add a new book. All you have to do is modify the constructor in `Library.java`—see Listing 8–19 on page 346—to create your book and add it to the book map.

You could even implement the `Library` class so that it reads XML book definitions. That way, you could add books without any programming. Digesting XML is an easy task with Tiles’s distant cousin, the Apache Commons Digester. See <http://jakarta.apache.org/commons/digester/> for more information about the Digester.

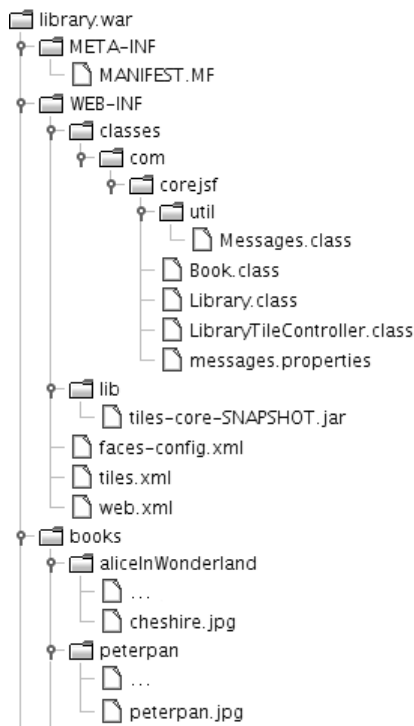


Figure 8-8 Library directory structure

Listing 8-13 library/web/library.jsp

```

1. <html>
2.   <%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsp/core" prefix="f" %>
3.   <%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsp/html" prefix="h" %>
4.   <%@ taglib uri="http://jakarta.apache.org/tiles" prefix="tiles" %>
5.
6.   <f:view>
7.     <f:loadBundle basename="com.corejsf.messages" var="msgs"/>
8.     <head>
9.       <link href="styles.css" rel="stylesheet" type="text/css"/>
10.      <title><h:outputText value="#{msgs.libraryWindowTitle}"/></title>
11.    </head>
12.

```

Listing 8-13 library/web/library.jsp (cont.)

```
13.     <body>
14.         <f:subview id="library">
15.             <h:form>
16.                 <tiles:insert definition="library" flush="false"/>
17.             </h:form>
18.         </f:subview>
19.     </body>
20. </f:view>
21. </html>
```

Listing 8-14 library/web/WEB-INF/tiles.xml

```
1. <?xml version="1.0" encoding="ISO-8859-1" ?>
2.
3. <!DOCTYPE tiles-definitions PUBLIC
4.     "-//Apache Software Foundation//DTD Tiles Configuration 1.1//EN"
5.     "http://struts.apache.org/dtds/tiles-config_1_1.dtd">
6.
7. <tiles-definitions>
8.     <definition name="menu-header-content" path="/headerMenuContentLayout.jsp">
9.         <put name="gridClass" value="headerMenuContent"/>
10.        <put name="headerClass" value="header"/>
11.        <put name="menuColumnClass" value="menuColumn"/>
12.        <put name="contentColumnClass" value="contentColumn"/>
13.    </definition>
14.
15.    <definition name="book" extends="menu-header-content">
16.        <put name="header" value="/bookHeader.jsp"/>
17.        <put name="menu" value="/bookMenu.jsp"/>
18.        <put name="content" value="/bookContent.jsp"/>
19.    </definition>
20.
21.    <definition name="library" path="/libraryLayout.jsp"
22.        controllerClass="com.corejsf.LibraryTileController">
23.        <put name="header" value="/bookSelector.jsp"/>
24.        <put name="book" value="book"/>
25.    </definition>
26. </tiles-definitions>
```


Listing 8-17 library/src/java/com/corejsf/Library.java (cont.)

```
11. private String book = null;
12. private String selectedBook = null;
13.
14. public Library() {
15.     Book peterpan = new Book();
16.     Book aliceInWonderland = new Book();
17.
18.     initialBook = peterpan;
19.
20.     aliceInWonderland.setDirectory("books/aliceInWonderland");
21.     aliceInWonderland.setTitleKey("aliceInWonderland");
22.     aliceInWonderland.setImage("books/aliceInWonderland/cheshire.jpg");
23.     aliceInWonderland.setNumChapters(12);
24.
25.     peterpan.setDirectory("books/peterpan");
26.     peterpan.setTitleKey("peterpan");
27.     peterpan.setImage("books/peterpan/peterpan.jpg");
28.     peterpan.setNumChapters(15);
29.
30.     bookMap.put("aliceInWonderland", aliceInWonderland);
31.     bookMap.put("peterpan", peterpan);
32. }
33. public void setBook(String book) { this.book = book; }
34. public String getBook() { return book; }
35.
36. public Map<String,Book> getBooks() {
37.     return bookMap;
38. }
39. public void bookSelected(ValueChangeEvent e) {
40.     selectedBook = (String) e.getNewValue();
41. }
42. public Book getSelectedBook() {
43.     return selectedBook != null ? bookMap.get(selectedBook) : initialBook;
44. }
45. public List getBookItems() {
46.     if(bookItems == null) {
47.         bookItems = new LinkedList();
48.         Iterator<Book> it = bookMap.values().iterator();
49.         while(it.hasNext()) {
50.             Book book = it.next();
51.             bookItems.add(new SelectItem(book.getTitleKey(),
52.                                         getBookTitle(book.getTitleKey())));
53.         }
54.     }
55.     return bookItems;
```


Listing 8–19 library/src/java/com/corejsf/Library.java (cont.)

```
20.     aliceInWonderland.setDirectory("books/aliceInWonderland");
21.     aliceInWonderland.setTitleKey("aliceInWonderland");
22.     aliceInWonderland.setImage("books/aliceInWonderland/cheshire.jpg");
23.     aliceInWonderland.setNumChapters(12);
24.
25.     peterpan.setDirectory("books/peterpan");
26.     peterpan.setTitleKey("peterpan");
27.     peterpan.setImage("books/peterpan/peterpan.jpg");
28.     peterpan.setNumChapters(15);
29.
30.     bookMap.put("aliceInWonderland", aliceInWonderland);
31.     bookMap.put("peterpan", peterpan);
32. }
33. public void setBook(String book) { this.book = book; }
34. public String getBook() { return book; }
35.
36. public Map<String,Book> getBooks() {
37.     return bookMap;
38. }
39. public void bookSelected(ValueChangeEvent e) {
40.     selectedBook = (String) e.getNewValue();
41. }
42. public Book getSelectedBook() {
43.     return selectedBook != null ? bookMap.get(selectedBook) : initialBook;
44. }
45. public List getBookItems() {
46.     if(bookItems == null) {
47.         bookItems = new LinkedList();
48.         Iterator<Book> it = bookMap.values().iterator();
49.         while(it.hasNext()) {
50.             Book book = it.next();
51.             bookItems.add(new SelectItem(book.getTitleKey(),
52.                                         getBookTitle(book.getTitleKey())));
53.         }
54.     }
55.     return bookItems;
56. }
57. private String getBookTitle(String key) {
58.     return com.corejsf.util.Messages.
59.         getString("com.corejsf.messages", key, null);
60. }
61. }
```

Listing 8–20 library/src/java/com/corejsf/LibraryTileController.java

```
1. package com.corejsf;
2.
3. import java.io.IOException;
4. import javax.servlet.ServletContext;
5. import javax.servlet.ServletException;
6. import javax.servlet.http.HttpServletRequest;
7. import javax.servlet.http.HttpServletResponse;
8. import javax.servlet.http.HttpSession;
9. import org.apache.tiles.ComponentContext;
10. import org.apache.tiles.Controller;
11.
12. public class LibraryTileController implements Controller {
13.     public void execute(ComponentContext tilesContext,
14.         HttpServletRequest request,
15.         HttpServletResponse response,
16.         ServletContext context)
17.         throws IOException, ServletException {
18.         HttpSession session = request.getSession();
19.
20.         String chapter = (String) request.getParameter("chapter");
21.         session.setAttribute("chapter", chapter == null || "".equals(chapter) ?
22.             "chapter1" : chapter);
23.
24.         Library library = (Library) session.getAttribute("library");
25.
26.         if(library == null) {
27.             library = new Library();
28.             session.setAttribute("library", library);
29.         }
30.
31.         Book selectedBook = library.getSelectedBook();
32.         if(selectedBook != null) {
33.             session.setAttribute("book", selectedBook);
34.         }
35.     }
36.     public void perform(ComponentContext tilesContext,
37.         HttpServletRequest request,
38.         HttpServletResponse response,
39.         ServletContext context)
40.         throws IOException, ServletException {
41.         HttpSession session = request.getSession();
42.         execute(tilesContext, request, response, context);
43.     }
44. }
```

Listing 8–21 library/src/java/com/corejsf/Book.java

```
1. package com.corejsf;
2.
3. import java.util.LinkedList;
4. import java.util.List;
5.
6. public class Book {
7.     private String titleKey;
8.     private String image;
9.     private String directory;
10.    private int numChapters;
11.    private List<String> chapterKeys = null;
12.
13.    // PROPERTY: titleKey
14.    public void setTitleKey(String titleKey) { this.titleKey = titleKey; }
15.    public String getTitleKey() { return titleKey; }
16.
17.    // PROPERTY: image
18.    public void setImage(String image) { this.image = image; }
19.    public String getImage() { return image; }
20.
21.    // PROPERTY: numChapters
22.    public void setNumChapters(int numChapters) { this.numChapters = numChapters;}
23.    public int getNumChapters() { return numChapters; }
24.
25.    // PROPERTY: directory
26.    public void setDirectory(String directory) { this.directory = directory;}
27.    public String getDirectory() { return directory; }
28.
29.    // PROPERTY: chapterKeys
30.    public List<String> getChapterKeys() {
31.        if(chapterKeys == null) {
32.            chapterKeys = new LinkedList<String>();
33.            for(int i=1; i <= numChapters; ++i)
34.                chapterKeys.add("chapter" + i);
35.        }
36.        return chapterKeys;
37.    }
38. }
```

Listing 8–22 library/web/bookHeader.jsp

```
1. <%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsf/core" prefix="f" %>
2. <%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsf/html" prefix="h" %>
3.
4. <h:panelGrid columns="1" styleClass="bookHeader">
5.     <h:graphicImage value="#{book.image}"/>
6.     <h:outputText value="#{msgs[book.titleKey]}" styleClass="bookTitle"/>
7.     <hr>
8. </h:panelGrid>
```

Listing 8–23 library/web/bookMenu.jsp

```
1. <%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsf/core" prefix="f" %>
2. <%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsf/html" prefix="h" %>
3.
4. <h:dataTable value="#{book.chapterKeys}" var="chapterKey"
5.     styleClass="links" columnClasses="linksColumn">
6.     <h:column>
7.         <h:commandLink>
8.             <h:outputText value="#{msgs[chapterKey]}/>
9.             <f:param name="chapter" value="#{chapterKey}"/>
10.        </h:commandLink>
11.    </h:column>
12. </h:dataTable>
```

Listing 8–24 library/web/bookContent.jsp

```
1. <%@ taglib uri="http://java.sun.com/jsp/jstl/core" prefix="c" %>
2.
3. <c:import url="${book.directory}/${chapter}.html"/>
```

Listing 8–25 library/web/styles.css

```
1. .library {
2.     vertical-align: top;
3.     width: 100%;
4.     height: 100%;
5. }
6. .libraryHeader {
7.     width: 100%;
8.     text-align: left;
```

Listing 8–25 library/web/styles.css (cont.)

```
 9. vertical-align: top;
10. background-color: #ddd;
11. font-weight: lighter;
12. border: thin solid #777;
13. }
14. .bookHeader {
15.   width: 100%;
16.   text-align: center;
17.   background-color: #eee;
18.   border: thin solid CornflowerBlue;
19. }
20. .bookTitle {
21.   text-align: center;
22.   font-style: italic;
23.   font-size: 1.3em;
24.   font-family: Helvetica;
25. }
26. .menuColumn {
27.   vertical-align: top;
28.   background-color: #eee;
29.   border: thin solid #777;
30. }
31. .chapterColumn {
32.   vertical-align: top;
33.   text-align: left;
34.   width: *;
35.   padding: 3px;
36. }
37. .contentColumn {
38.   vertical-align: top;
39.   text-align: left;
40.   width: *;
41. }
42. .links {
43.   width: 85px;
44.   vertical-align: top;
45.   text-align: center;
46. }
47. .linksColumn {
48.   vertical-align: top;
49.   text-align: center;
50. }
```

Listing 8-26 library/web/WEB-INF/faces-config.xml

```
51. <?xml version="1.0"?>
52. <faces-config xmlns="http://java.sun.com/xml/ns/javaee"
53.     xmlns:xsi="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema-instance"
54.     xsi:schemaLocation="http://java.sun.com/xml/ns/javaee
55.         http://java.sun.com/xml/ns/javaee/web-facesconfig_1_2.xsd"
56.     version="1.2">
57. </faces-config>
```

Listing 8-27 library/web/WEB-INF/web.xml

```
1. <?xml version="1.0"?>
2. <web-app xmlns="http://java.sun.com/xml/ns/javaee"
3.     xmlns:xsi="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema-instance"
4.     xsi:schemaLocation="http://java.sun.com/xml/ns/javaee
5.         http://java.sun.com/xml/ns/javaee/web-app_2_5.xsd"
6.     version="2.5">
7.     <servlet>
8.         <servlet-name>Tiles Servlet</servlet-name>
9.         <servlet-class>org.apache.tiles.servlets.TilesServlet</servlet-class>
10.        <init-param>
11.            <param-name>definitions-config</param-name>
12.            <param-value>/WEB-INF/tiles.xml</param-value>
13.        </init-param>
14.        <load-on-startup>2</load-on-startup>
15.    </servlet>
16.
17.    <servlet>
18.        <servlet-name>Faces Servlet</servlet-name>
19.        <servlet-class>javax.faces.webapp.FacesServlet</servlet-class>
20.        <load-on-startup>1</load-on-startup>
21.    </servlet>
22.
23.    <servlet-mapping>
24.        <servlet-name>Faces Servlet</servlet-name>
25.        <url-pattern>*.faces</url-pattern>
26.    </servlet-mapping>
27.
28.    <welcome-file-list>
29.        <welcome-file>index.html</welcome-file>
30.    </welcome-file-list>
31. </web-app>
```

Listing 8–28 library/src/java/com/corejsf/messages.properties

1. libraryWindowTitle=Gutenberg Library
 2. aliceInWonderland=Alice in Wonderland
 3. peterpan=Peter Pan
 4. selectABookPrompt=Select a book
 - 5.
 6. chapter1=Chapter 1
 7. chapter2=Chapter 2
 8. chapter3=Chapter 3
 9. chapter4=Chapter 4
 10. chapter5=Chapter 5
 11. chapter6=Chapter 6
 12. chapter7=Chapter 7
 13. chapter8=Chapter 8
 14. chapter9=Chapter 9
 15. chapter10=Chapter 10
 16. chapter11=Chapter 11
 17. chapter12=Chapter 12
 18. chapter13=Chapter 13
 19. chapter14=Chapter 14
 20. chapter15=Chapter 15
-