Topic: Django Static Files

Speaker: Personal | Notebook: Understanding Django



You need to understand the following as these are important especially when you have static files like JS, CSS, IMG that are needed during development and production/deployment.

As per this article from Medium:

DEBUG

This is an important setting for the entire app. You want this to be False on production. If DEBUG = True then ./manage.py runserver will handle serving static files on its own. However, when DEBUG = False runserver will not do this for you, and that's where some complexity arises.

STATIC_URL

The static url is the url path where a client or browser can access static files. So with https://www.example.com as your url, if STATIC_URL = 'mystaticpath' and you had an image named test.jpg, you would access the image at https://www.example.com/mystaticpath/test.jpg.

STATIC_ROOT

This generates the directory where files static files are placed when you run ./manage.py collectstatic. For example, if your root folder was myawesomesite and STATIC_ROOT = os.path.join(BASE_DIR, 'placefileshere'), after running collectstatic a folder would have been generated in myawesomesite/placefileshere/ with staticfiles.json and also test.jpg from above located in it.

I do not believe STATIC_ROOT has any impact when DEBUG = True, as you don't need to run collectstatic in development.

STATICFILES_DIRS

This determines the locations where static files are being pulled from. For example:

```
STATICFILES_DIRS = [os.path.join(BASE_DIR, 'polls/files/')]
```

Any files in polls/files/ would be in and accessible as static files. The directory structure within it is maintained as well, so for example with

```
--polls
----files
-----img
-----test.jpg
```

So when you need to deploy especially in Heroku, you have to be clear with the purpose and difference of staticfiles.

This is VERY ENLIGHTENING TO KNOW:

Chances are you're using the django-heroku library and setting django_heroku.settings(locals()) as suggested in Configuring Django Apps for Heroku.

What I've discovered is that STATIC_URL and STATIC_ROOT are actually overwritten by heroku to STATIC_URL = '/static/' and STATIC_ROOT = os.path.join(BASE_DIR, 'staticfiles'). Even if you have a different STATIC_ROOT in your settings if you were to run heroku run python manage.py collectstatic, they will use staticfiles as the STATIC_ROOT.

To view the complete article, go here.

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