



1 Introduction

If you want to use Rails on Windows, then one approach is to download and install each piece of software separately. You will need to download and install each of Ruby, RubyGems and Rails; and optionally download and install MySQL, Mongrel and Apache. However, it is lot easier to use a software bundle that contains these pieces of software. One such bundle is *Instant Rails*.

I've used Instant Rails 2.0. This includes the following software:

- Ruby 1.8.6,
- RubyGems 1.0.1,
- Rails 2.0.2,
- MySQL 5.0.27,
- Mongrel 1.1.2,
- Apache 1.3.33
- phpMyAdmin 2.10.0.2.

2 Downloading and installing Instant Rails

The Instant Rails bundle can be downloaded from <http://instantrails.rubyforge.org/>.

If you read the notes on the Download page, you will see that it suggests you do not use the built-in Windows feature for unzipping the files of the bundle. Instead, it suggests you use *7-Zip*. This program can be downloaded from <http://www.7-zip.org/>. I downloaded the .exe file that is available for 32-bit Windows.

7-Zip can be installed by double-clicking the file `7z457.exe`. It installed 7-Zip into `C:\Program Files\7-Zip`.

Having installed 7-Zip, use it to extract the files of the Instant Rails bundle. To do this, go into Windows Explorer and right-click on the file `InstantRails-2.0-win.zip`. From the menu, choose *7-Zip* and then choose *Extract files* Alter the contents of the *Extract to:* box to something like `C:\instantrails` and click on *OK*.

After it has extracted the files, I suggest you establish an icon for Instant Rails on the desktop. You can do this by going into Windows Explorer and finding the file `InstantRails.exe` that is in the `C:\instantrails` directory. Right-click on this and choose *Send To* followed by *Desktop (create shortcut)*.

3 Starting Instant Rails

To start Instant Rails, double-click the Instant Rails icon that you put on the desktop. When you first start Instant Rails, it will ask you to confirm that it is OK to regenerate the configuration files. Click on *OK*. It will now attempt to start both the Apache web server and the MySQL server. You may get a query from your firewall software asking you to confirm you want these to be accessible.

It should now show a new window. Two traffic-lights at the top of the window should indicate that it has started the Apache web server and the MySQL server.

If you click on the Apache/MySQL buttons, you will get a menu enabling you to start/restart these servers.

To the left of the Apache button, there is another button that has the Instant Rails logo. Clicking this button reveals a drop-down menu with the following options:

- Help
- Log Files
- Configure
- Rails Applications
- Restart Servers
- Stop Servers and Exit

4 Creating a new Rails application

If you choose *Rails Applications*, another drop-down menu is displayed. It contains:

- Manage Rails Applications
- Open Ruby Console Window
- Open Windows Explorer

Choosing *Manage Rails Applications* shows a window that is titled *Rails Applications*.

This window includes a list of Rails applications that have been installed. Instant Rails comes with two Rails applications already installed: these are *cookbook* and *typo-2.6.0*. There is a button labelled *Create new Rails application*. If you click this button, Instant Rails will open a console window in a directory called `rails_apps`.

If you type the command:

```
dir
```

in this console window, you will see that this directory already has subdirectories for `cookbook` and `typo-2.6.0`. You can now type the commands necessary to create your Rails application starting with a command like:

```
rails -d mysql contacts
```

in order to create a first stab at the files needed for a new Rails application called `contacts` (in a new subdirectory called `contacts`).

Details about creating a simple Rails application are given in the document *Rails HOW-TO: A simple Rails apps: phones*. This document is available at <http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/rails/howtos>.

5 Accessing your Rails application from the web

When you have finished creating your Rails application, return to the Rails Applications window. If you now click on *Refresh List*, your application will appear in the list of Rails applications. If you check the box next to the name of your application (e.g., `contacts`), and then click *Start with Mongrel* a new console window appears in which it indicates that it has started up Mongrel (on port 3000).

Whilst it is starting up Mongrel, you may get a query from your firewall software asking you to confirm you want Mongrel to be accessible.

You can now access your web application by using a browser to visit:

```
http://localhost:3000/
```

If you go to this URL, you will get a standard start-page that is provided for each Rails application: it is the contents of the file

```
../rails_apps/contacts/public/index.html
```

On my first access to a page like:

```
http://localhost:3000/phones
```

I get a pop-up window moaning that The procedure entry point `mysql_stmt_row_tell` could not be located in the dynamic link library `LIBMYSQL.dll`. I click on *OK*. This occurs twice.