

## Re: Accessing web with a C program

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*Source:* [http://coding.derkeiler.com/Archive/C\\_CPP/comp.lang.c/2007-02/msg02366.html](http://coding.derkeiler.com/Archive/C_CPP/comp.lang.c/2007-02/msg02366.html)

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- *From:* Keith Thompson <kst-u@xxxxxxx>
  - *Date:* Thu, 15 Feb 2007 12:43:52 -0800
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richard@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx (Richard Tobin) writes:

In article <45d46812.180010404@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>, Richard Bos <rlb@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

Again: it is not `fopen()` which supports this in the first place. `fopen()` gives you what it gets from the OS. To suggest that the C library `_should_` bypass the OS and support HTTP (how!?) when the OS only gives you NFS as normal files is, IMO, rather weird.

It would be bizarre for the OS (in the sense of the unix kernel) to provide support for arbitrary protocols such as HTTP, since there's no need for them to be implemented at that level. It would not make much sense for it to be part of C either. But it would be perfectly reasonable for a library to provide it, and for it to use the `fopen()` function to do it. Obviously it would need various support functions, because these protocols have many options that can't reasonably be accessed through standard C functions, but it would be very useful if existing programs that `fopen()` a file for reading were to suddenly start working with, say, HTTP URIs.

Probably the most reasonable way to do this, on most systems, is to provide a filesystem that's actually implemented on top of an http interface, mapping URLs to file names somehow (the mapping could be trivial or not). Some systems already provide hooks to support this kind of thing. The details of implementing this kind of thing are, of course, off-topic, but no more so than implementing a filesystem that provides access to a local hard drive. Once it's done, `fopen()` and friends will Just Work.

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We must do something. This is something. Therefore, we must do this.