

You

I am using apache unix with rewrite engine for a directory. It works most of the time. But lately I am getting the error: “Rewritten query string contains control characters or spaces”. What is the workaround for this?

Copilot

This error typically occurs when there are spaces or control characters in the query string, which Apache’s rewrite engine doesn’t handle well. Here are a few workarounds you can try:

1. **Use the B flag:** This flag ensures that special characters are properly encoded. For example:

```
RewriteRule ^(.*)$ index.php?/$1 [B,L]
```

2. **Replace spaces with +:** Instead of using %20 for spaces, use +. This can be done in your rewrite rule:

```
RewriteRule ^(.*) (.*)$ /$1+$2 [L,R=301]
```

3. **Add the BCTLS flags:** These flags can help manage spaces and control characters more effectively:

```
RewriteRule ^([^\?]*) index.php?route=$1 [BCTLS,L,QSA]
```

These solutions should help you avoid the “Rewritten query string contains control characters or spaces” error.

If you have any other questions or need further assistance, feel free to ask!

You

What do the BCTLS flags mean?

Copilot

Sure! Here’s a breakdown of the BCTLS flags used in Apache’s rewrite rules:

- **B (Escape backreferences):** This flag escapes non-alphanumeric characters in backreferences, ensuring that special characters are properly encoded.
- **C (Chain):** This flag chains the current rule with the next rule. If the current rule matches, the next rule is processed.
- **T (Type):** This flag forces the MIME type of the target file. For example, `T=text/html` sets the MIME type to HTML.
- **L (Last):** This flag stops the rewriting process here and prevents any further rules from being applied.
- **S (Skip):** This flag skips the next `n` rules if the current rule matches. For example, `S=2` skips the next two rules.

These flags can help you manage and control the behavior of your rewrite rules more effectively. If you have any more questions or need further assistance, feel free to ask!

You

What do the QSA flags mean ?

Copilot

The QSA flag stands for **Query String Append**. When you use this flag in a rewrite rule, it ensures that any existing query string from the original URL is appended to the new URL. Here’s a simple example to illustrate:

Without QSA:

`RewriteRule ^foo/(.*)$ /index.php?b=$1`

- Original URL: /foo/bar?q=blah
- Resulting URL: /index.php?b=bar (the original query string q=blah is lost)

With QSA:

`RewriteRule ^foo/(.*)$ /index.php?b=$1 [QSA]`

- Original URL: /foo/bar?q=blah
- Resulting URL: /index.php?b=bar&q=blah (the original query string q=blah is preserved and appended)

This flag is particularly useful when you want to ensure that query parameters are not discarded during the rewrite process.

If you have any more questions or need further assistance, feel free to ask!