

Debug Messages

This page is still a work in progress, it is more a place we put up a bunch of info pulled from old internal documentation. It still needs to be organized into a more usable format, until then just bear with us.

Turn on Debug Display

These are instructions for using the **Show Debug Messages** addon to display debug messages.

1. In the admin at **Addons > Manage Addons** install and enable the **Show Debug Messages** addon. There are other addons that also allow doing things with debug messages, but this is the one that displays them to the page. You could also create a custom addon that handles debug messages a certain way suited for certain circumstances, for instance if you needed to e-mail the debug messages.
2. In the URL, put **index.php?debug=type+list** to turn on debug output for those filter types. This allows us to do step #1 on a live site and not worry about all users seeing the output. For the type list, enter all types you want to show, with + between each one. See the [List of Common Debug Types](#), the most common one is to use **index.php?debug=stats**.
3. When you are done, be sure to disable the debug addon, as any debugging addon will add a small amount of overhead to each page load.

List of Common Debug Types

This is a list of the most commonly used or useful debug types.

- **all** - *[SPECIAL]*: shows all debug output. There is not actually any debug messages that use "all" as the keyword (or at least that is not the intent).
- **stats** - Most common & useful type, it shows statistic geared messages. We've placed debug messages at common bottlenecks as well, since each debug message has the time it allows looking for where slow-downs occur. *[SPECIAL]*: This will also display a table of DB queries used in the software, along with execution time for each query.
- **sql** - show sql messages and errors.
- **cart** - show output from the geoCart class and from other areas related to the cart operations.
- **site_class** - show output from site class. (possibly not used much)
- **sendmail** - show output from sending e-mail.
- **index** - show output from index page. (possibly not used much)
- **cache** - messages relating to cache.

Debug Message Syntax

In the code, use the following:

Debug message : just a general message.

```
trigger_error('DEBUG TYPE_1 TYPE_2: Insert debug message here.');
```

Error message : if something is wrong, for instance an SQL query error.

```
trigger_error('ERROR TYPE_1 TYPE_2: Insert error message here.');
```

Explanation of parts:

DEBUG or ERROR: First word in message needs to be either DEBUG or ERROR, depending on if this is just a general message or if it is reporting something that has gone wrong.

Debug types: AKA debug "keywords": A list of "debug types" this message applied so, separated by spaces, all upper case. Must be A-Z and underscore "_" any other characters can cause the message to not be handled as a Geo debug message.

: After the list of debug types, is a colon ":" which signifies the start of the actual debug message.

Message: Everything after the first colon ":" is treated as the debug message.

Future debug types: If you want to create a special debug type (so that it can get its own color or whatever) all you have to do is start using a unique type, like YOUR_UNIQUE_TYPE, then in the URL (if using show debug messages addon) put debug=your_unique_type to see that message.

Troubleshooting

The thing about addons is that things are not initialized until that functionality is actually used. This can be a problem if you are trying to get debug messages to be logged on a page where no core events are ever triggered. Now consider that the **errorhandle** core event¹⁾ is never "fired" until AFTER the addons are initialized, in order to prevent a chicken and egg type of scenario. Combine these 2 facts, and that means that any page load when there is no core events fired for the entire page load, none of the debug messages will ever get sent through the errorhandle core event.

If you think this might be happening, the "fix" is to force a core event to be triggered on every page load. To do so, in **app_top.common.php** near the bottom, add (or un-comment if in Geo version 4.1.*):

```
/**
 * If experiencing a problem where addons are not being called for error
 * handling, un-comment the following line to "force" a triggered event,
 * which
 * will force addons to be loaded, and thus allow error handle core events
 * to be called on page loads that never trigger an addon even otherwise.
 */
geoAddon::triggerUpdate('forceInit');
```

The most common places you might need this are when processing a "signal" from a payment gateway, in calls to either of the **transaction_process.php** or the **recurring_process.php** files. It could also happen in any other type of "minimal" page load such as AJAX calls and the like.

Design Ideas

The idea behind having addons doing error handling, is that we can easily create a new addon that (for instance) only displays SQL errors, or only displays debug messages, etc. Or the addon can do different things with the information, for instance one addon could display the debug messages on the page, another could log them to a file (Debug Logger Addon), and another could e-mail the messages. If there are no addons that use `errorhandle`, then the performance hit for using `trigger_error` is insignificant.

1)

The crux of any debugging addon that logs or displays debug messages created by the system.

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