Installing SuPHP on Debian Lenny 5.04 with Apache 2.2.9

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My daily duties as a sys admin today included installation and configuration of [SuPHP](#) .
SuPHP is an apache dynamic module for executing PHP scripts with the permissions of their owners. It consists basicly of twoparts Apache module (mod_suphp) and a setuid root binary (suphp). The suphp module is invoked by the mod_suphp module and instructsApache to change the user id (uid) of the process executing the PHP script.
SuPHP is not a standard Apache module so itâ€™s not 100% tested. Therefore from security point of view itâ€™s better not to use SuPHP.
So beware use it at your own risk! You better know what youâ€™re doing if youâ€™re installing this piece of soft.

The official SuPHP documentation is rather I would say archaic and itâ€™s completely out of date. Though according to the official documentation itâ€™s noted that suphp module wonâ€™t work with Apache 2.2.x, it actually works perfectly fine.
Iâ€™ve checked and I couldnâ€™t find any tutorials on installing suphp on Debian Lenny therefore I decided to write this tutorial to shed some light on it.
So enough talk letâ€™s approach to the installation and configuration of suphp;

1. Install the module itself from the debian package

debian-server# apt-get install libapache2-mod-suphp
Debian will enable the mod_suphp automatically after installation, though this kind of behaviour is pretty stupid, since it wonâ€™t disable mod_php5 which is enabled by default.

2 Therefore we need to disable mod_php5 from executing to enable suphp.

debian-server# a2dismod php5

3. Enable suphp globally for the Apache
Edit **/etc/apache2/apache2.conf** and put in the end of the configuration file

Enable SuPHP
suPHP_Engine on
suPHP_AddHandler application/x-httpd-php .php

In my case Iâ€™m not using Debianâ€™s default DocumentRoot website location for both my Apache and my VirtualHosts, therefore I need also to configure
suphp.conf

4. Edit /etc/suphp/suphp.conf and change;

;Path all scripts have to be in

docroot=/var/www/

to let's say:
;Path all scripts have to be in
docroot=/home/

5. Restart your Apache server

debian-server# /etc/init.d/apache2 restart

Now test if mod_suphp is working on your Apache. We will test it through a tiny php script;
Paste the script to letâ€™s say**suphp.php**

Now if suphp is working youâ€™ll see something like:
uid=1002(myuser) gid=1002(myuser) groups=1002(myuser)
instead of the default;
uid=33(www-data) gid=33(www-data) groups=32(www-data)

Now there are a few more drawbacks with SuPHP which I feel obliged to discuss.
On the first place suphp will excecute through php5-cgi and therefore the script execution
should be considered a way slower comparing to the default mod_php5.
I cannot precisely tell how much slower would be php script execution compared to mod_php5 but I
pressume at least 10 to 20% of the usual performance will be gone.
One of the possible ways to speed-up php execution in that case is to use mod_fastcgi.