Tips for Using Java Applets

Background

There are tons of excellent physics applets out there that are useful for visualizing various things. Many of those applets are written in Java. Unfortunately, newer versions of Java have required tighter security settings. Overall this is probably a good thing, but it creates a hurdle to viewing and using most Java physics applets. The instructions below will help you create a security exception that is needed in order to view and use certain applets.

Creating a Security Exception

0. Make sure you have a Java Runtime Environment (JRE) installed and up to date. You can download this at [http://www.oracle.com/technetwork/java/javase/downloads/index.html](http://www.oracle.com/technetwork/java/javase/downloads/index.html)

1. Locate and open your Java Control Panel (on Windows/Linux this should be in your list of programs, on Mac this should be accessible from System Settings).

2. Click on the “Security” tab. Make sure that “Enable Java content in browser” is checked.

3. Still on the Security tab, click “Edit Site List”. (NOTE: You are going to create a security exception by entering a website in this field. You should be aware that this could potentially create a security vulnerability on your computer. If you are uncomfortable with this, you should stop now. Personally, I have never come across malicious programs hiding in physics applets, so I view the risk as small compared to the learning benefits to be gained.)

4. When the “Exception Site List” window opens up, click “Add”.

5. In the field that opens up, copy and paste the full URL to the applet you are trying to view. Then click “Ok”.

6. Close the Java Control Panel by clicking “Ok”.

7. Go back to the applet in your browser and reload it (you can do this either by reloading the browser, or by right-clicking on the applet).

That's it! Explore away! Unfortunately with the newer versions of Java you need to go through this process every time you encounter an applet that does not have a security certificate (and many do not).