

Solved: Escape an XML String in Flex

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I was recently asked to troubleshoot some legacy code where an HTTPService call was (sometimes) failing on the server side due to malformed XML payload in a String parameter. On the client side, the XML was being created as a String from user input, which opened the door for invalid characters to be injected directly into the markup.

Rather than refactor the process that generates the XML altogether, I set out to see if there was a simple approach to simply escape the special characters and keep the rest of the String intact. I started to explore functions like `HTMLEncode`, thinking I could find functionality similar to what I needed.

Ultimately, the solution was far simpler.

It turns out that casting an XML-formatted String to an instance of the `XML` class handles special characters and performs all of the necessary logic to escape any offenders. So by simply constructing an `XML` object from the source String, then calling `toString()` on the `XML` object, we can effectively sanitize the original String into valid markup that can be parsed as expected.

```
var result:String = XML(value).toString();
```

Nifty.