can selectively suspend execution of a script and inspect the various objects and variables to ensure that the values are as you expect them to be. Since you’re already using TDD techniques (you are, aren’t you?), you’ll know what the expected output of your script should be. If your tests are failing, you can step through the script using Venkman, and by using breakpoints in conjunction with the Local Variables window, you should be able to quickly diagnose the source of any errors.

Not only is the Local Variables window a powerful debugging tool, but it’s also a great learning tool. With it you can inspect the properties of any object or variable that’s available to the JavaScript interpreter. Consider the XMLHttpRequest object, which is well documented. You know it has publicly accessible properties such as `responseText`, `responseXML`, and `status`. But what if you didn’t know that? Is there a way to find out? Figure 7-25 shows two views of an XMLHttpRequest object. The one on the left shows the object right after it has been created and none of its properties has been set. The one on the right shows the object’s properties after a successful request has been made.

![Figure 7-25. The XMLHttpRequest object immediately following object creation (left) and immediately following a successful request (right)](image)

This example works well for the XMLHttpRequest object, which is well documented, but how about something that’s not particularly well documented or the documentation is not easily accessible?

Consider a table row DOM object. We've mentioned that all DOM elements have properties such as `firstChild`, but what else is there? You can use Venkman and the Local Variables window to take a look. Figure 7-26 shows the Local Variables window and some of the properties available on a table row object. Did you know that it has properties named `offsetHeight`, `offsetLeft`, `parentNode`, and `previousSibling`? If so, congratulations. If not, now you know—and you may be able to put that knowledge to good use later. You may not know the meaning of all these properties, but if you know they exist and know their names, you can perform a Web search to learn more about them.