

# Creating Forms in Dreamweaver

## Modified from the TRIO program at the University of Washington

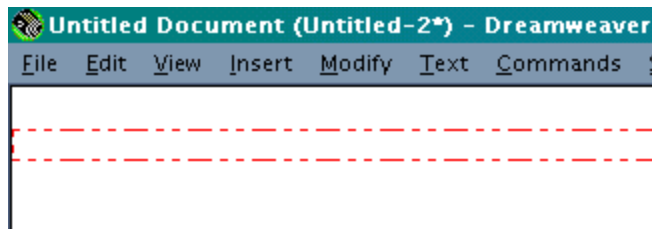
[URL: <http://depts.washington.edu/trio/train/howto/page/dreamweaver/forms/index.shtml>]

Forms allow users to interact with a Web page. They can be used to create surveys, collect information from users, or for many other purposes. Macromedia Dreamweaver 4 makes it easy to add forms and form objects to your pages. This page will help you create a simple form in Dreamweaver and send the results to your email address or using UNCG's Webmail utility program.

### Inserting the Form Field

In Dreamweaver 4, open a new or existing page. From the *Insert* menu choose *Form*.

This inserts a form field. Everything within the dotted lines is part of the form.



### Inserting Form Objects

#### Text Field

1. A text field is a form element that allows the user to input a single line of text. First, type inside of the form field "What is your name?" followed by a space. From the *Insert* menu, choose *Form Objects* and then *Text Field*. This will insert a box where users can type their name.
2. Make sure the field is selected and the *Property Inspector* is up since this is where the options will be selected.
3. Where it says *textfield*, type in the name of the field. After *Char Width*, enter the width of the field. After *Max Chars*, enter the maximum amount of characters you want the user to be able to enter. After *Type*, make sure *Single Line* is selected. After *Init Val*, enter the initial value that will be shown in the field.



### Multi Line Text Field

1. A multi line text field allows the user to input multiple lines of text. Hit <Enter> so that a new paragraph is created under the first entry. Make sure you are still within the form field.

2. Type "What is your address?" followed by a space. From the *Insert* menu, choose *Form* and then *Text Field*.

3. In the *Property Inspector*, after *Type*, select *Multi line*. Enter a name, *Char Width* and *Init Val*. After *Num Lines*, enter the height you'd like the text field to be. After *Wrap*, choose an option. These will change how text wraps within the box.



### Check Box

1. A check box allows the user to make multiple selections. Type "What is(are) your favorite color(s)?" followed by a space on the next line down. From the *Insert* menu, choose *Form Objects* and then *Check Box*.

2. After the box, type in the name of a color.

3. In the *Property Inspector*, enter a unique name for the box. After *Checked Value*, enter the name of the color that that box will select. After *Initial State*, select *Checked* if the box will be initially checked or *Unchecked* if the box will be initially unchecked (usually preferred).



4. Repeat adding the boxes, typing in color names and modifying the box properties until you are satisfied with the number of selectable colors. Remember

to keep the unique name the same on all of the colors' check boxes. The check boxes should have different names like color1, color2, color3, etc for certain types of data analysis.

### Radio Button

1. A radio button allows the user to choose only one option. Type "What is your gender?" followed by a space on the next line down. From the *Insert* menu, choose *Form Objects* and then *Radio Button*.
2. Right after the button, type "Male." Type another space, insert another button, another space and type "Female" right after it.
3. In the *Property Inspector*, enter a unique name and *Initial State* for the button. After *Checked Value*, enter the gender the button will specify.



4. Modify the properties for the other button. Remember to make the unique name the same.

### Drop-Down Menu

1. Next, you will insert a form element that will allow users to select an option from a drop-down menu. Type "What kind(s) of pet(s) do you have?" followed by a space on the next line down. From the *Insert* menu, choose *Form Objects* and then *List/Menu*.
2. Click the *List Values* button in the upper-right hand corner of the *Property Inspector*. The *List Values* dialog box comes up. In the *Item Label* column, specify names for the pets. In the *Value* column, specify their names again. Click the *Add* symbol to add more pets. When you are satisfied with the number of selectable pets, click *OK* to return to the *Property Inspector*.
3. Enter a name for the menu. After *Type*, choose *List*. After *Height*, enter a value for the height of the visible menu. After *Selections*, make sure the *Allow multiple* box is checked. After *Initially Selected* choose entries that you would like to be selected at default.



## Button

1. A button allows the user to submit his/her choices or reset the form. On the next line down, from the *Insert* menu choose *Form Objects* and then *Button*.
2. Enter a name for the button in the *Property Inspector*. After *Label*, enter the text that will appear on the button. After *Action*, make sure *Submit form* is selected.

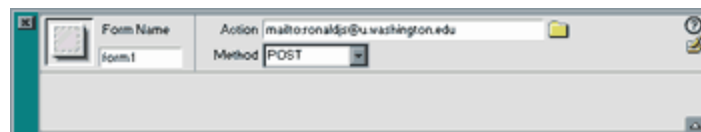


3. If you want to, you can insert another button now. This time, make sure the *Action* is *Reset form* and it will allow the user to reset all the selections they made to the defaults.

## Modifying Form Properties

Collecting all of this information from a user is useless if there is no way for you to see it. In this section you will learn how to send it to a specified email address.

1. Click on the outline of the form and notice the change in the *Property Inspector*.
2. Enter a name for the form. After *Action*, enter "mailto:your email address." After *Method*, make sure *POST* is selected.



If you stop now and someone returns the form to you filled out, it will come back as a document that is very hard to read. To get it in plain text, make the following change.

3. Right-click somewhere within the form that has no formatting, near the very top or very bottom. On the menu that comes up, you should be able to select *Edit Tag <form>*. Enter the attribute *enctype="text/plain"* somewhere within the form tag.

```
Edit Tag: <form method="post"
          action="mailto:ronaldjs@u.washington.
          edu" name="form1"
          enctype="text/plain">
```

## Using the Webmail utility

This web mail utility is a local (UNCG) installation of a freely available CGI script created by Meng Weng Wong at U Penn. This utility allows you to send the contents of any form as an email message to a specified recipient.

### To use this utility:

#### Step 1

Create an HTML form by typing HTML code in a text editor or by using a forms-capable HTML editor such as Microsoft Front Page.

#### Step 2

Store the HTML form a *departmental* web space on UNCG's UNIX web server (<http://www.uncg.edu>). CGI will not work in personal (*~username*) accounts on <http://www.uncg.edu>.

#### Step 3

Point your "FORM" tag to the to the **webmail.cgi** script as shown here:

```
<FORM METHOD="POST"
ACTION="http://wwwcgi.uncg.edu:8000/irc/cgi/scripts/webmail.cgi">
```

The "ACTION=" specification tells the web server to process your form using this web mail utility.

#### Step 4

Supply a **to** field. The **to** field specifies the email address of the person who is to receive the form contents via email. It is *highly recommend* that the **to** field be a **hidden** form element. This will prevent people from changing the destination of the form contents. A properly structured hidden **to** field tag would look similar to this:

```
<INPUT TYPE="hidden" NAME="to" VALUE="jldoe@uncg.edu">
```

This means that the contents of all completed forms will be mailed to **jldoe@uncg.edu**.

*In order to insert a Hidden Field in Dreamweaver, place your cursor somewhere on the page (maybe in the last row of a table) and select **INSERT > FORM OBJECTS > Hidden Field**. You can then define the properties of the Hidden Field.*

## Step 5

If desired, take advantage of any of the "special" INPUT field names that are recognized by this script. These special fields (see below) must be lowercase--for example, "to" will work to specify the email recipient, but "TO" will not.

**Caution!** If you use the special field names for anything other than their specified purpose, your form will not work properly.

Many of these special names should be HIDDEN input in your form. HIDDEN fields have values which are set for the form field in a hidden HTML tag which the person viewing the form does not see. These are in contrast to the typical user-completed fields which ask the form user to fill in a response.

Whether a field is typically hidden, user-specified or could be either is indicated next to the field names listed below. Remember, not to use these names for your regular form fields:

**to** example: jldoe@uncg.edu [**hidden**]

As explained in **Step 4** this is the email address to which the form contents will be sent. It is strongly recommended that this field be TYPE=HIDDEN as shown in **Step 4**. This is the only required field.

**from** example: tduser@uncg.edu [**user-completed**]

This specifies the email address of the person submitting the form. The email address entered in this field will show up as the from address on the email.

**name** example: Tony D. User [**user-completed**]

This is the name associated with the email address of the person submitting the form.

**subject** example: Workshop Registration Request [**hidden or user-completed**]

When you receive email from your form, the subject line will be *Webmail:* plus whatever is in the subject field on the form.

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**body [most likely a user-completed text area]**

This may be used as the name of a text area where the body of the mail message is entered. Other text areas may be used in the form as well, so this special name is not particularly important.

**cc example: sldoe [hidden]**

Specifies an email address for carbon-copies. This field will not work if it doesn't contain an @. It is *strongly recommended* that you specify this as a hidden field.

**mailto\_comment [hidden]**

Contents of this field will be added verbatim to the mail header after "X-Mailto Comment: ". This line is primarily useful for mail filtering with filter-enabled mail systems (not Pine). Simeon users can use a the subject line to do filtering instead, so UNCG users will typically not need this field..

**first\_line example: This is a new workshop registration request: [hidden]**

The contents of this variable will be placed at the very top of the message body and left unindented. A blank line will always follow this line.

**continue\_url example: http://www.uncg.edu/ [hidden]**

The page indicating the mail has been successfully sent will invite the user to visit this URL. Use of this field requires use of **continue\_text**.

Example: <INPUT TYPE=HIDDEN NAME="continue\_url"  
VALUE="http://www.uncg.edu">

**continue\_text example: Go to the UNCG Home Page. [hidden]**

This is the description for the **continue\_url** link.

Example: <INPUT TYPE=HIDDEN NAME="continue\_text" VALUE="Go to the UNCG Home Page">

**leading\_spaces [hidden]**

Specifies whether or not you want form results to have leading spaces in the mail message. Inclusion of leading space is the default. If you *do not* want leading spaces, put a hidden tag in your form with the following structure:

<INPUT TYPE="hidden" NAME="leading\_spaces" VALUE="false">

Note: the leading\_spaces field is case insensitive

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**separator** example: ":" [hidden]

In the email message which results from your form, you will see the names of your form fields paired with the user's response to those fields. By default, the field names will be separated from the responses with "=". You may use the **separator** variable to specify an alternative symbol. The HTML structure would be:

```
<INPUT TYPE="hidden" NAME="separator" VALUE=":">
```

**sort\_order** [hidden]

This determines the order in which your form fields are displayed in the email message. If you do not set a sort order, the fields arrive as they appear in your form. The script offers five possibilities:

(1) alphabetical (2) alphabetical, case-insensitive (3) reverse alphabetical (4) reverse alphabetical, case-insensitive (5) none - fields are ordered more or less as seen in your form. (default)

**required\_fields** [hidden]

Fields that must be completed for the form to process. If these fields are incomplete, the script will return an error message indicating which fields are still incomplete. Specify the required field by putting them in a HIDDEN field as follows:

```
example: <INPUT TYPE=HIDDEN NAME="required_fields " VALUE="age, gender,
hometown, answer1">
```

Substitute your own field names in the "VALUE=" section of the tag.

Note: By default the required fields error is generated if no "to" value is specified on a form. Avoid this problem by setting the "to" value in a hidden field which the form user cannot alter.

**body\_bgcolor, body\_background, body\_link, body\_vlink, body\_text** [hidden]

These field names allow you to set colors on the HTML form that is returned to the user's browser when the form is submitted. These variables will go into a <BODY> tag in the response, so specify them in as you would normally in HTML documents. For example:

```
<INPUT TYPE=HIDDEN NAME="body_bgcolor" VALUE="#FFFFFF">
<INPUT TYPE=HIDDEN NAME="body_link" VALUE="#807380">
```

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