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DYNAMIC HTML

Lecturer

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HTML Forms

You have to think about how your visitors have the opportunity to respond to you. On the other hand, if you want to enable your visitors to interact with you and respond to your site, you might want to use HTML forms. With elements of HTML form you can add a guestbook, put a menu on your site, add password protection, create a survey, construct a catalog, develop an order form, and much more. Best of all, forms are easy to create.

The process of getting a form to actually work (deliver information to you) is a bit trickier, but once you learn to take advantage of the available resources you'll soon be creating and using forms like a pro.

Understand Form Elements

When you create a form with HTML you will use the **<form>** **</form>** element along with a combination of controls. As you would expect, the **<form>** element creates the form, whereas the controls determine what kind of information your visitors can send you. The kind of form you want to create will determine the types of controls you choose to include in it.

- HTML forms are used to pass data to a server.
- A form can contain input elements like text fields, checkboxes, radio-buttons, submit buttons and more. A form can also contain select lists, textarea, fieldset, legend, and label elements.

The **<form>** tag is used to create an HTML form:

```
<form>
.
.

Input elements
.
.

</form>
```

HTML Forms - The Input Element

The most important form element is the input element. It's used to select user information. An input element can vary in many ways, depending on the type of attribute. An input element can be type of text field, checkbox, password, radio button, submit button, and more.

The most used input types are described below.

Text Fields

<input type="text" /> defines a one-line input field that a user can enter text into:

```
<form>
First name: <input type="text" name="firstname" /><br />
Last name: <input type="text" name="lastname" />
</form>
```

How the HTML code above looks in a browser:

First name:
Last name:

The form itself is not visible. Also note that the default width of a text field is 20 characters.

Password Field

`<input type="password" />` defines a password field:

```
<form>
Password: <input type="password" name="pwd" />
</form>
```

How the HTML code above looks in a browser:

Password:

The characters in a password field are masked (shown as asterisks or circles).

Radio Buttons

`<input type="radio" />` defines a radio button. Radio buttons let a user select ONLY ONE of a limited number of choices:

```
<form>
<input type="radio" name="sex" value="male" /> Male<br />
<input type="radio" name="sex" value="female" /> Female
</form>
```

How the HTML code above looks in a browser:

☐ Male
☐ Female

Checkboxes

`<input type="checkbox" />` defines a checkbox. Checkboxes let a user select ONE or MORE options of a limited number of choices.

```
<form>
<input type="checkbox" name="vehicle" value="Bike" /> I have a bike<br />
<input type="checkbox" name="vehicle" value="Car" /> I have a car
</form>
```

How the HTML code above looks in a browser:

☐ I have a bike
☐ I have a car

Submit Button

`<input type="submit" />` defines a submit button.

A submit button is used to send form data to a server. The data is sent to the page specified in the form's action attribute (will learn how to use action later). The file defined in the action attribute usually does something with the received input:

```
<form>
Username: <input type="text" name="user" />
<input type="submit" value="Submit" />
</form>
```

How the HTML code above looks in a browser:

Username:

If you type some characters in the text field above, and click the "Submit" button, the browser will do nothing!

Note: there are a lot of things that you can do using forms. Here, you just had an idea how the forms work.

HTML Entities

Some characters are reserved in HTML.

It is not possible to use the less than (<) or greater than (>) signs in your text, because the browser will mix them with tags.

To actually display reserved characters, we must use character entities in the HTML source code.

A character entity looks like this:

```
&entity_name;

OR

& #entity_number;
```

To display a less than sign we must write: < or <

The advantage of using an entity name, instead of a number, is that the name is easier to remember. However, the disadvantage is that browsers may not support all entity names (the support for entity numbers is very good).

Non-breaking Space

A common character entity used in HTML is the non-breaking space ().

Browsers will always truncate spaces in HTML pages. If you write 10 spaces in your text, the browser will remove 9 of them, before displaying the page. To add spaces to your text, you can use the character entity.

HTML Useful Character Entities

Note: Entity names are case sensitive!

Result	Description	Entity Name	Entity Number
	non-breaking space	 	
<	less than	<	<
>	greater than	>	>
&	ampersand	&	&
¢	cent	¢	¢
£	pound	£	£
¥	yen	¥	¥
€	euro	€	€
§	section	§	§
©	copyright	©	©
®	registered trademark	®	®
™	trademark	™	™