

Dreamweaver CS3 Forms



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Dreamweaver CS3 - Forms

Forms allow data collection. Forms have many different uses over the web. Web forms can be used to send e-mail (which is what we will be doing in class), post data to a text file on a web server, post data to a database, or retrieve data from a database.

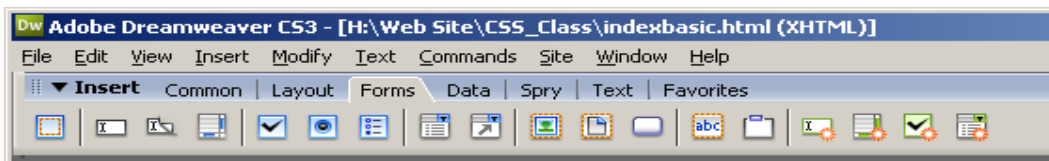
In order to process information from a form on the web you must have a **script** that the form points to. The form is created with an address on a server. The information is sent to the server and the server-side script processes the information and sends it to the recipient. These scripts are often freely available over the internet, but for today, we will be using the form mail script provided to us. In general, if you were using a script at home or your department hosts your site, the script must be located in the CGI-BIN folder on the web server.

Creating the Form

The first step in creating a form is to decide what information you need to collect from your user. Determine which type of field will best suit the type of information you are collecting and then create a layout of how you want your form to look.

In order for forms to work there has to be a way to allow the user to enter information or make choices. To create a form in Dreamweaver you have to start by inserting the form field.

Using the **Insert Bar** choose **Forms**.



A. | B. C. D. | E. F. G. | H. I. | J. K. L. | M. N. | Spry Validation

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| A. Form | H. List/Menu |
| B. Text Field | I. Jump Menu |
| C. Hidden Field | J. Image Field |
| D. Text Area | K. File Field |
| E. Checkbox | L. Button |
| F. Radio Button | M. Label |
| G. Radio Group | N. Fieldset |

The forms insert bar shows all the choices of form options, starting with the form itself (A). Open a new blank HTML document. With the cursor in the design area where you want the form to appear, click on the **form** icon (A). This creates a dotted red line in the design window. If you don't see this dotted line, go to the menu option **View > Visual Aids** and make sure **Invisible Elements** is selected. The total form must be **inside** this dotted red line area. Give your form a unique name. This is important for the scripts that process forms.

The **Action** field is where you put the address of the script that the form uses to process the information.

In the Gainesville Training Room we can use the address:

“<https://webapps.health.ufl.edu/cgi-bin/FormMail.pl>”

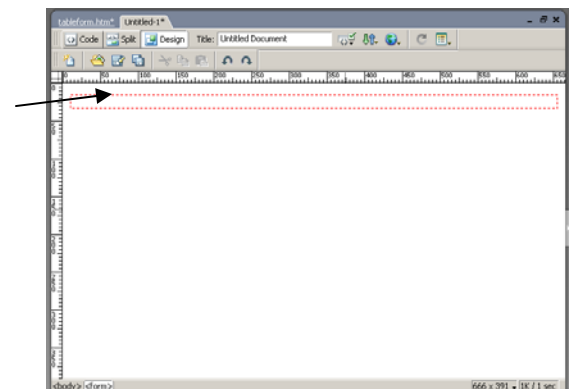
For your Form, you would have to contact your IT personnel or your web hosting service to determine what script you would use, the correct address and any reserved words for that particular script.

The next option that must be set is the **Method** which determines how the information will be transmitted. The options are **Post**, **Get** and **Default**. **Default** uses the Browsers setting which is usually **Get**. The **Get** option appends the information to the end of the URL. This method can not be used for long forms with a lot of information as there is a limit of 8192 characters in a URL. The **Post** method embeds the information in the HTTP request. *Be aware that this information is not encrypted.* Sensitive information should be sent over a secure connection to a secure server. For our class we will use the **Post** method.

Once you have created the form you can add form fields. You can not nest forms (have one form inside another) but you can have more than one form on a page.

Form Fields

All of the form fields must be within the form element which is designated by the red dotted line. Before creating a form field, make sure your cursor is within the red dotted line. Each form field needs to have a name (ID). Each specific type of form field will also have individual attributes that need to be set. These attributes can be set in the Property Inspector and will be discussed with the description of the individual fields.



Form Field Accessibility Attributes

change the Accessibility preferences.' On the right side, there are three buttons: 'OK', 'Cancel', and 'Help'."/>

Input Tag Accessibility Attributes

ID:

Label:

Style: Wrap with label tag
 Attach label tag using 'for' attribute
 No label tag

Position: Before form item
 After form item

Access key: Tab Index:

If you don't want to enter this information when inserting objects, [change the Accessibility preferences.](#)

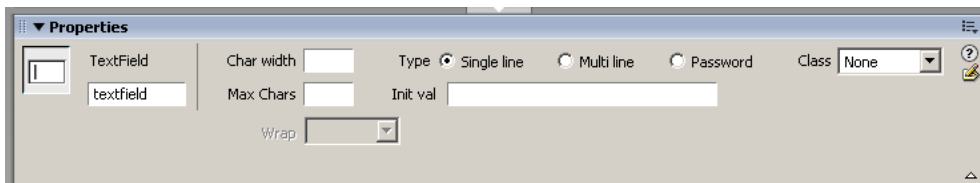
OK
Cancel
Help

In order to make form fields accessible to users with disabilities it is important to make sure each field has a label. The best practice is to attach the label tag with a "for" attribute. This label tag will make it easier for your users to select the form field and for screen readers to know what label goes with which form field. Using the "for" attribute allows the label to be physically apart from the field as in a different table cell. The other method of wrapping the label tag requires that the label and the form field be located together. Also many older screen readers do not understand the wrapped label tag.

Text Field

A **Text** field (B) will provide a text box in which the user can type alphanumeric information. The size of the text field can be set in the **Char Width**. That only limits the number of characters that show on screen. Use the **Max Chars** to limit the number of characters that can be entered in the text box. An **Init val** would set a default value. Choosing **Password** replaces the entered information with asterisks or bullets (this information is not encrypted however). The information entered creates the value of the text box.

With our script, using **realname** as the name (or ID) of a text field will make the name of the person submitting the form to show up in your email client when the email is delivered. And using **email** as the name of a text field will make the email address of the person submitting the form to show up in your email client when the email is delivered.

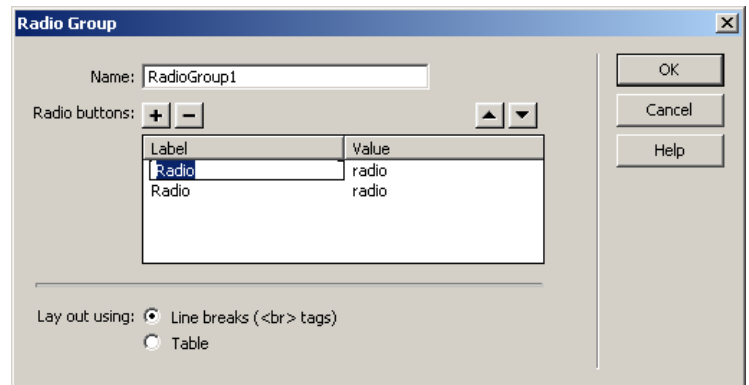


Checkbox

Checkboxes (E) allow the user to choose one or many choices in a group of options. Each checkbox requires a name and a value.

Radio Buttons

Radio buttons (F) differ from checkboxes in that if they are set up correctly the user can choose only one option out of the group of options. To make them work properly, each button in the group must have the same name. Then each individual button must have a unique checked value. The easiest way to set up a group of radio buttons is to use the **Radio Group** icon (G). This will open a dialog box that allows you to name all of the buttons at once and then add the individual labels and values. Type a **Label** and a **Value** for each radio button. If you have more than two, you need to click on the **+** to add more buttons. A radio group can be set up with line breaks or in a table. If you want your radio buttons on a single line, choose line breaks and then in the code view delete the `</br>` tags in between each radio button.

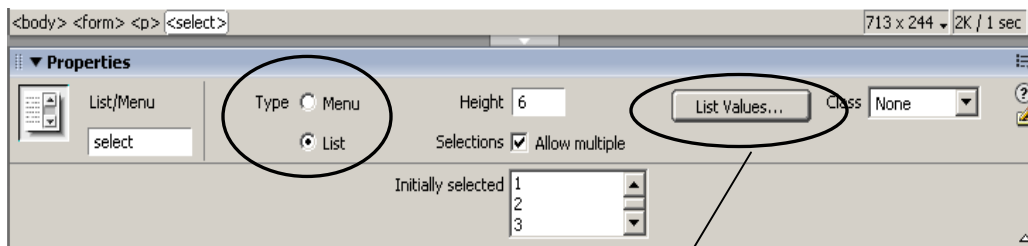


List/Menu

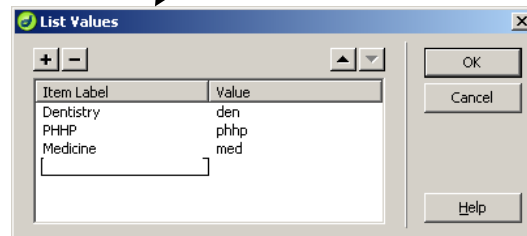
If you want to have users choose from a list of items use the **List/Menu** field (H). This field gives you two **Type** choices.

A **Menu** creates a drop down menu from which the user is allowed to choose only one item. This displays in the form as just one line with a scroll bar.

A **List** allows you to set the number of lines (**Height**) you want showing in your form. A List also allows for multiple selections. The user makes the first choice by clicking and then holds down the Ctrl key and clicks to make additional choices.

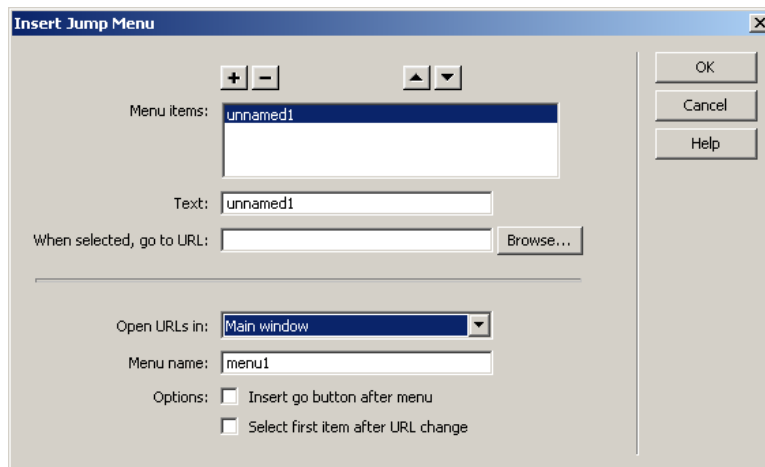


To add items to the list or menu, click on **List Values** to open the list dialog box. Add items using the **Tab** key. Each item needs a label that shows on the form and a value that gets reported. To set a default, select one choice in the properties inspector in the **Initially selected** box. Use Ctrl+Click to remove a default value.



Jump Menu

A jump menu (I) is a pop up menu with URL links that allows the user to choose an option and be linked to that page. This menu does not have to be in a form, it can be used anywhere in a web page. When you choose the Jump menu option a dialog box opens.



This gives places to enter the text for the menu item and the URL link address for that item. Type the name of the site in the Text area. Then type in the URL. To add more options, choose the **+** button. Give the menu a name and decide if you want the link to activate by choosing the item or if you want to have a **Go** button. If you want to use the Go button, you may have to go into the code and remove the onChange function. (if it is in the code for the jump menu, remove `onChange="MM_jumpMenu('parent',this,0)"` . You can also set a default item for this list.

Image Field

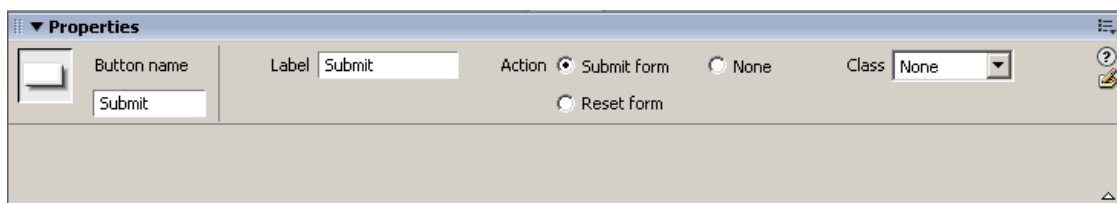
An image field (J) allows you to use an image as a button. You can insert an image and attach a behavior to it.

File Field

A file field (K) allows the user to choose and upload a file. A file field is like a text box, but it also has a Browse button that will allow navigation to the file. This property can not be used with the email script we are using in class.

Button

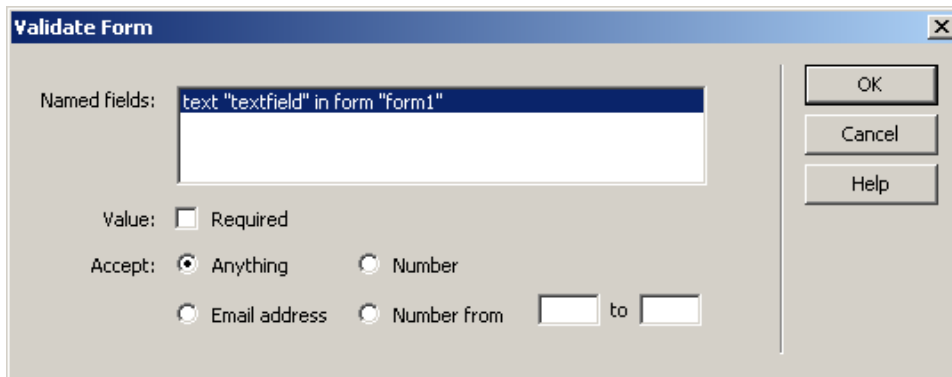
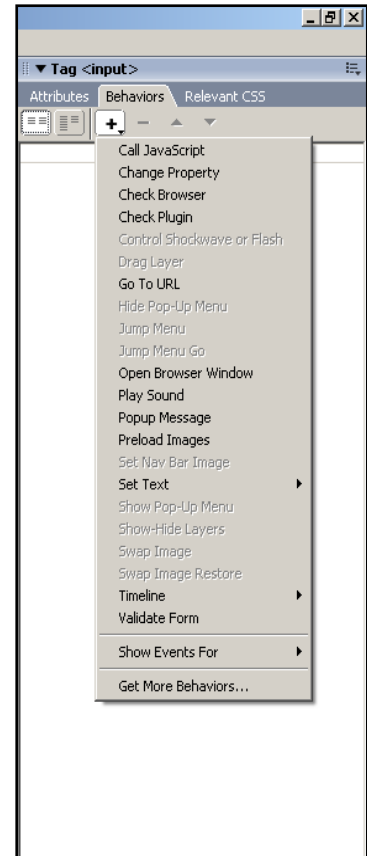
Buttons (L) can be used to Reset (clear) a form, Submit a form or other behaviors may be attached to a button. Give the button a name, enter a descriptive Label and decide what Action you want the button to cause when it is clicked. Choose None if you are adding a separate behavior.



Validating a Field

Text Fields can be set up as a required field and can be validated to make sure the right type of information is entered.

To use the validate property you must have at least one text box and one submit button. In the Behavior panel, click on the + to add a behavior. Choose Validate Form. Select the field you want to validate and choose the desired options. The field can be required. If the field is not filled in a warning box will pop up to tell you it must be filled in. If you do not make any other restrictions, as long as something is entered, it will be accepted. But, for example, if email address is checked, a warning box will pop up if the text entered is not in email format.



Making Forms Work

In order to gather the information from the form, you must have a script that the form points to. Different scripts will result in different actions. We added the script path when we set up our form.

Customizing the Script

There are a few things to set up to make the script function. We need to add the email address which is to receive the information. These fields can be hidden fields. Hidden Fields are used for the form, but do not show on the form. One way of inserting hidden fields is to use the insert hidden field button (C.).

You would then enter the rest of the information using the properties inspector. It is important to make sure that the **hidden field symbols** for these fields are at the top of the screen. If you don't see the hidden field symbols, go to the menu option **View > Visual Aids** and make sure **Invisible Elements** is selected. The name of each hidden field is specific to particular item and correlates to the script you are using. In our script:



- **recipient** is the email address of the person you would like the form delivered to.
- **subject** is what will show up as the subject of the email.
- **redirect** allows you to add a Thank you page with no identifying details.

Another way to set up hidden fields is to go into the HTML code of the document.

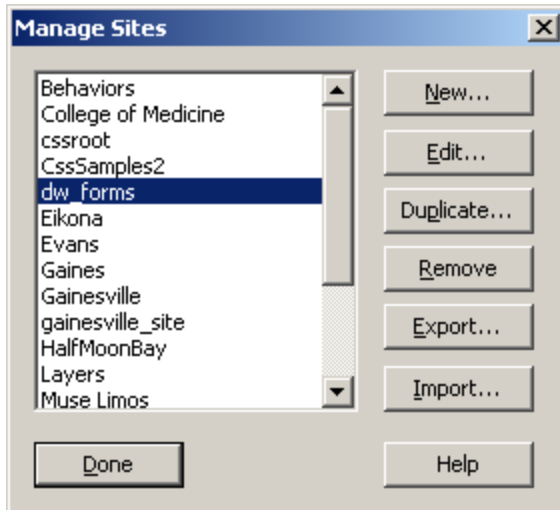
Look for the beginning of the form script. Look for **form** id or name. Make the following changes. For the email script we are using today, it should say...

```
<Form name="name" action="https://webapps.health.ufl.edu/cgi-bin/FormMail.pl"
method = "post">
<Input name="recipient" type="hidden" value="dmillic@vpha.health.ufl.edu">
<Input name="subject" type="hidden" value="Training Survey">
<Input name=redirect type=hidden value=path to the thank you page>
```

Make sure all punctuation marks are added such as "" and = and < >

Putting the page on the Web

In order to actually use this page it must be "live" on the internet. To do that, go to **Site > Manage Sites** in the Dreamweaver menu.



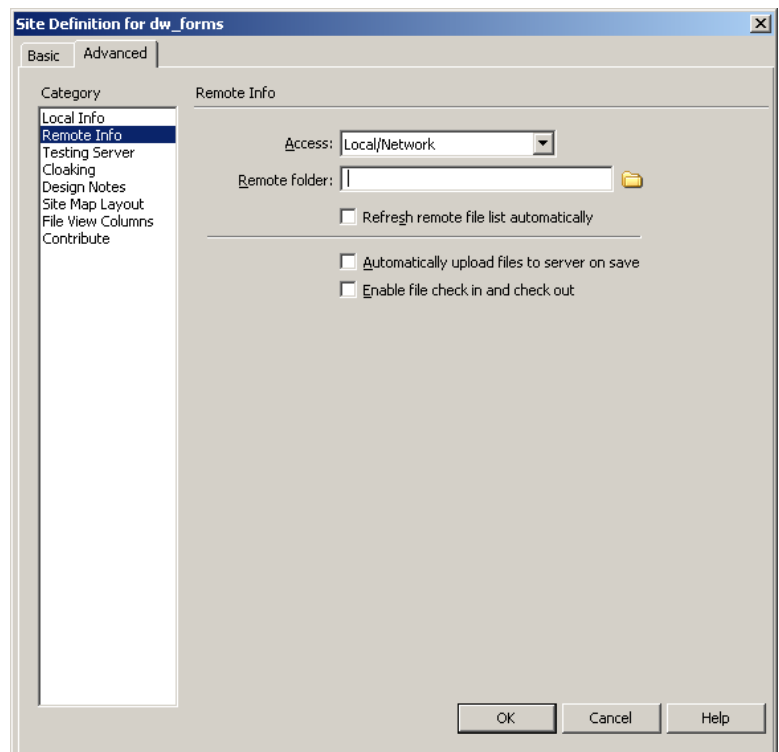
In the pop up dialog box choose the correct site and click **Edit**.

This will bring up the **Site Definition** dialog box that was used to set up the local site originally. This time choose **Remote Info** Category on the **Advanced** tab. For our class and for many departments there is a public folder that is on a network server. In the Access list, choose Local/Network. For the Remote folder, browse to the server where the web page will be located (if a folder is not already created, create

that folder now). An alternate method to get the site root folder on to the server is to drag it from your computer and dropping it in the public folder. Choose the remote root folder.

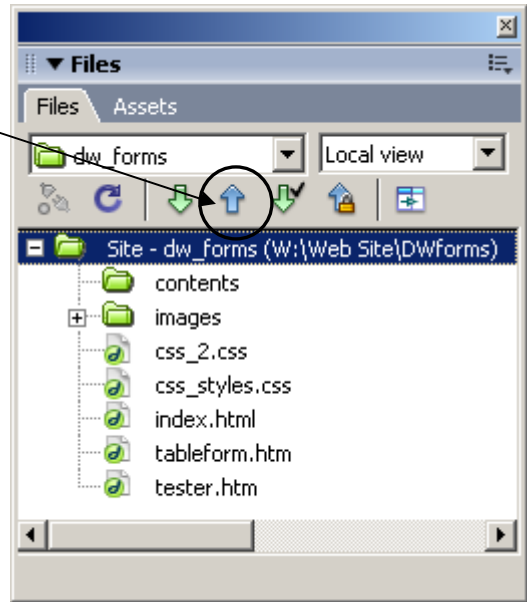
To have the remote file list update each time you add a file, check the Refresh remote file list automatically box. This may slow down the copying of the files and the list can be refreshed manually by clicking on the refresh button or using the shortcut F5

Your pages can be uploaded to the server each time you save them or you can upload manually when you are sure they are the way you want. Enable check in and check out is appropriate if more than one person is working on the web site. This would prevent two people working on the same page at the same time. Each time someone "checks out" a page no one else can work on it on the server at the same time.

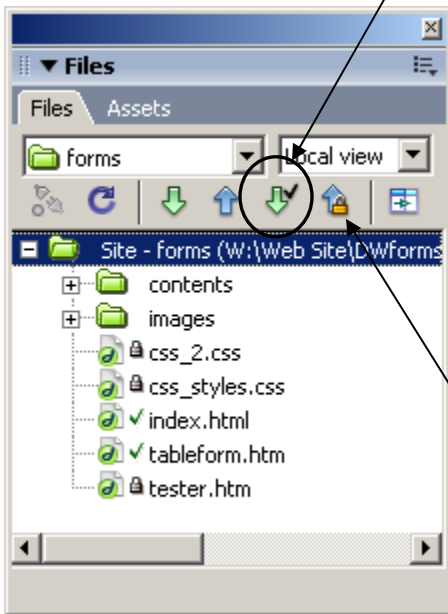


Click on **OK** on the **Site Definition** box and **Done** on the **Manage Site** box.

Once the Remote Site is set up any time changes are made to the local site you **Put** your files to the Remote site by clicking the blue arrow in the **Files** panel. If you need to get files from the server use the Green arrow.



If you are using **Check in and Check out**, when you Check out files use the green arrow with the check mark.



When you finish, Check in using the Blue arrow with the lock symbol. In the files panel all of the files that have been put are now marked with a lock symbol and as you open the pages to work on them, the lock changes to a green check.

For this class we have a public server set up on the classroom computers. To access this file go to **My Computer** and locate drive **W: Web**. Open up the drive so you can see the root folder you have created on your desktop. Click on your root folder and drag to the W drive. Once it has been copied, close the W drive and open **Internet Explorer**. There is a link at the top of the page called **T-Web**. Open that page and locate your computer by name. Open your file and double click on your home page. Fill out your form and submit it. You should get a response immediately and you will get an email with your responses as well.

Employees of UF have web space access on the Plaza Server. For help or information go to <http://help.gatorlink.ufl.edu/webserv.html>. Your web space address would be **http://plaza.ufl.edu/your_username**. You place your information on the server using FTP services.