

Steven Knight Training December 2003

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Form Data processing

Once you have created your form you need to consider where the data goes. When you submit a form the data is sent from your computer to the server. It is directed to a nominated page which includes instructions to process the data.

There are two common approaches.

Option 1

The most common approach is to have your form results sent to a nominated e-mail address. This is accomplished by a form handling script on the server which takes your data and uses it to create an e-mail which is forwarded to the nominated address.

Most leading Hosting services will provide commercial customers with a standard form to mail script using CGI and Perl. Similar results can be achieved using other server side technologies eg ColdFusion or ASP.

In this guide we will look at using a typical form handling script as provided by a hosting service. These should be tested, reliable and easy to use.

Note

If your web hosting service doesn't provide a standard form handling script, you need to review your planning processes! In your web site planning you need to identify the features you wish to provide on your site. Then select a hosting service that supports the technologies required to deliver those features. Don't shop for hosting on price alone!!!

Option 2

You may wish to have the form data entered into a database. Dreamweaver MX can create pages to achieve this using many leading server side technologies including ASP. Contact your account manager at IT&T Education for details of the training I can provide to assist you in this area

Setting up you form to use a form to mail script

Preparation

Contact your hosting service (check their on line knowledge base or FAQ's if the have one). You need to know the following

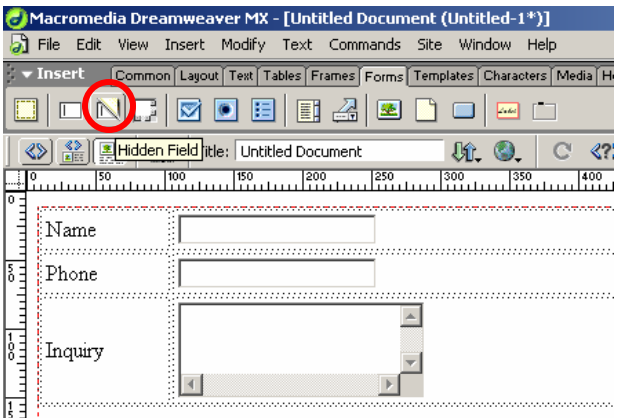
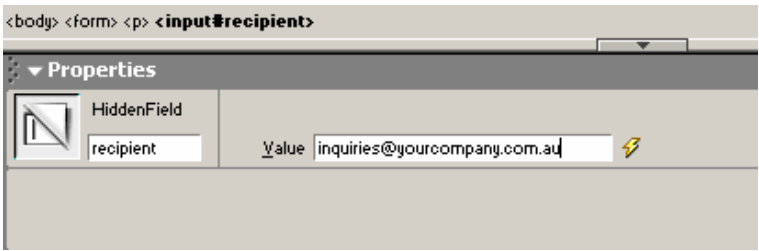
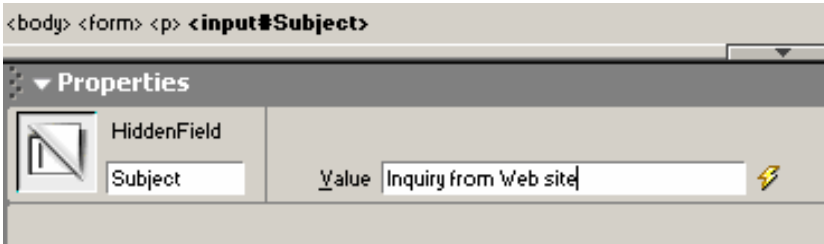
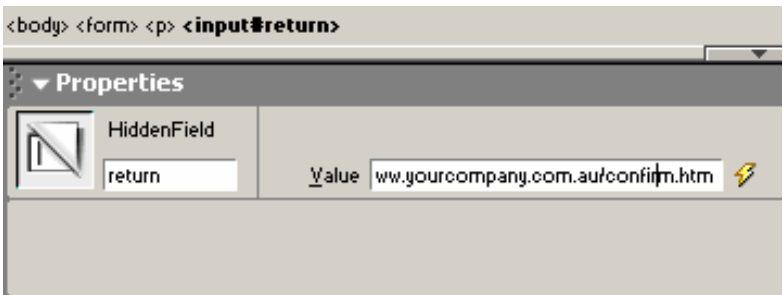
- The full URL of the form handling script (this will something look like `http://www.yourhost.com.au/cgi-bin/formail.pl`
or
`http://www.yourdomain.com.au/cgi-bin/formail.pl`)
- Names of hidden fields used for
 - Recipient address,
 - Subject,
 - Confirmation page (get exact spelling).
- Method used by form (answer will be POST or GET)
- Copy of worked example (this is optional, the HTML of a worked example is a useful guide)

Create your form adding fields for the information you need. Save your form.

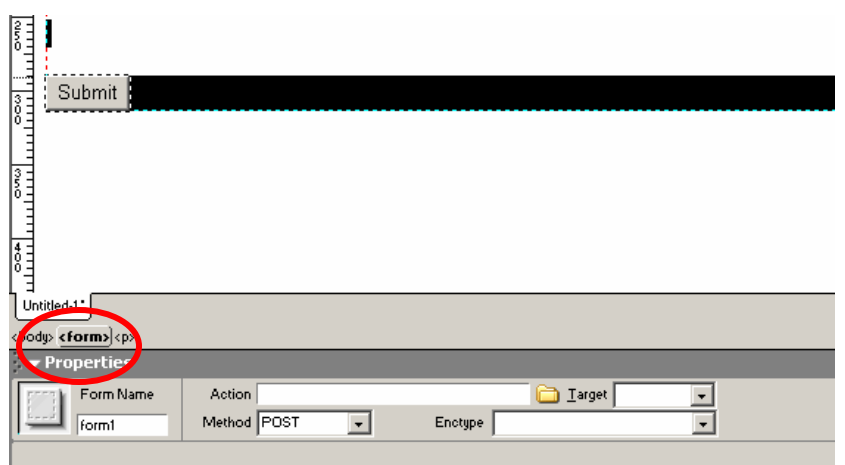
Create a confirmation page. This page will be displayed to the user once the form has been processed.

Adjust the field names in instructions below to match the details provided by your web hosting service. Note this guide is generic and will not exactly match your situation. Read carefully the information and samples provided by your web hosting service.

Setting up your form

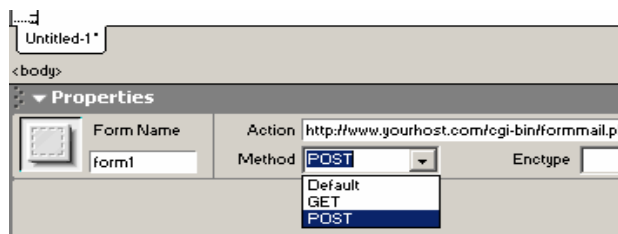
<p>Open the form in Dreamweaver</p> <p>Set the Insert Bar to show the form tools</p> <p>Add a hidden field</p>	
<p>Using the properties panel change the name and value as shown. This field will tell the form handling script what e-mail address to send the data to.</p>	
<p>Add another hidden field and adjust the properties as shown opposite. The subject field will be used as the subject for the e-mail.</p>	
<p>Add another hidden field and adjust the properties as shown opposite.</p> <p>The return field is a full URL identifying the confirmation page</p>	 <p>http://www.yourcompany.com.au/confirm.htm</p>

Select the form



Click in the action field and enter the full URL of the form handling script

Set the Method to GET or POST as advised in the information supplied by your ISP



Publish and Test

Upload both the form and confirmation page to your site and test.