

Creating Basic HTML Forms in Microsoft® FrontPage®

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DOC090: Creating Basic HTML Forms in Microsoft® FrontPage®

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Introduction

Including a form in your web site allows you to solicit a wide range of information from your visitors. You can request suggestions, complaints, or questions, you can set your form up as a guest book so visitors can submit their contact information, or you can create your form as a registration page so certain visitors can view access-controlled pages of your web site. These are only a few of the options at your disposal when you create a form using Microsoft® FrontPage® 2003.

This guide will lead you through the process of creating and customizing a form and designating a location to store form results. The following instructions were created for individuals who have a working knowledge of FrontPage®; if you are unfamiliar with FrontPage®, please consider enrolling in *Introduction to Microsoft® FrontPage®*, a short course offered by Computer Services Training and Documentation, before you work with this guide.

The following is an example of a form you could create using the instructions in this guide:

Computer Services Training and Documentation Short Course Evaluation Form

Name: Email:

Status with the University:

- Faculty
- Staff
- Student Worker
- Graduate Assistant

In which Short Course(s) have you enrolled?

(Press control to select more than one)

▾

Please let us know what you think about the Short Courses offered by Computer Services Training and Documentation:

Creating a Form

Every form consists of at least three elements:

- a form field that collects visitor input
- a submit button
- a submission confirmation page

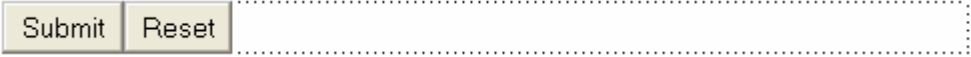
FrontPage® has built-in methods for creating these elements, and the following sections will show you how to use FrontPage® to create usable and functional forms.

Inserting a Form

To Insert a Form

- Click **Insert**, point to **Form**, and click **Form**.

FrontPage® automatically inserts a form that includes submit and reset buttons. Notice that dotted lines appear around your buttons; these only appear in Normal view and will not show on your published web page. Your form should look similar to the following:






You can now add fields to this form, which are discussed in the next section.

Inserting Form Fields

To Insert Form Fields

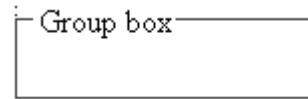
- Click **Insert**, point to **Form**, and click any of the form fields in that menu. The form field appears within your form.

The following is a list of commonly used form fields:

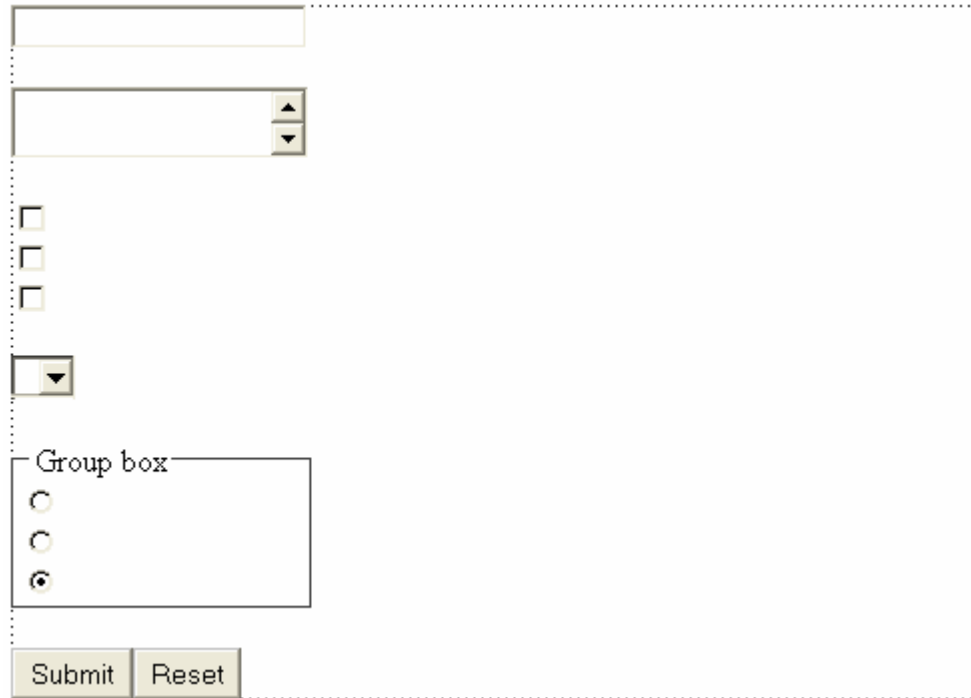
Field	Purpose	Example
Text Box	Field that is suitable for short input, such as names, email addresses, and phone numbers.	
Text Area	Field that is suitable for longer input, such as comments, questions, or messages.	
Check Box	Field that enables visitors to select one or more options out of a group of options.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Option Button	Field that enables visitors to select only one option out of a group of options.	<input type="radio"/>
Drop-down Box	Field that enables visitors to make a selection from a group of options in a list.	

Group Box

A visual border that organizes elements into sections of related terms. You would place additional form fields, such as check boxes or option buttons, inside the group box.



If you insert a text box, a text area, several check boxes and option buttons, a drop-down box, and a group box, your form might look similar to the following:



Including Text with Form Fields

You should include text with each form field to let visitors know what kind of information you want them to input.

To Include Text with Form Fields

1. Click to place your cursor where you want your text to appear.
2. Type a description of the information you want visitors to input in that field, such as Email: .

A text box with this description should look similar to the following:

Email:

Attaching Labels to Check Boxes and Option Buttons

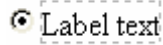
Because check boxes and option buttons are small, people sometimes have problems selecting them with the mouse. To make selecting options easier for your visitors, you can attach a text label to a check box or option button. These labels enable visitors to select an option by clicking the text rather than clicking the box or button.

To Attach Labels to Check Boxes and Option Buttons

1. Click to place your cursor where you want your text to appear.
2. Type the text you want to associate with the check box or option button.

3. Highlight both the text and the check box or option button.
4. Click **Insert**, select **Form**, and click **Label**.
The text is now attached to the check box or option button as a label.

The following is an example of an option button with a label:



Note: The dots around the label text only appear in Normal view.

Resizing Form Fields

You can easily resize text boxes, text areas, drop-down boxes, and group boxes using your mouse.

To Resize Form Fields

1. Click the text box, text area, drop-down box, or group box you want to resize. Black squares appear on each corner; these are known as handles.
2. Click and hold down the left mouse button on any of the handles; a double-sided arrow appears. Drag the form field to the appropriate size.

Note: Text boxes can only be resized horizontally. Check boxes and option buttons cannot be resized.

Editing Form Field Properties

FrontPage® enables you to edit form field properties, and these properties are different for each type of field. You can edit the appearance of the form fields, and you can also attach specific text to them that will make processing form information easier.

To Edit Form Field Properties

- Right-click the form field, and click **Form Field Properties**.

The following information describes the properties you can edit for each form field:

Text Box Properties

- **Name:** In the Name field, you can give the text box a name that will be used internally when the form is processed. By default, text boxes are named “T” plus a number corresponding to the number of text boxes you have inserted into your form. You will probably want to change the name to something that will better identify the information visitors input into the text box. For example, if the text box collects first names, you might want to name it “FName.”
- **Initial value:** In the Initial value field, you can input text that you want to appear in the text box when a visitor first opens or resets the form. This field is blank by default.
- **Width in characters:** In the Width in characters field, you can specify how many characters you want to fit in the text box. This value is automatically adjusted when you resize the text box with your mouse.
- **Tab order:** In the Tab order field, you can specify the text box’s place in the tab sequence. When visitors fill out your form, they can use the tab key to move from one form field to another. By default, the order in which your form fields appear in your form is the order in which visitors tab through them.
- **Password field:** You can select whether or not you want the text box to be a password field. When visitors input information into a password field, that information does not appear on their screen. Instead, their input appears as a series of dots, which should look similar to the following:

Password:

Text Area Properties

- **Name:** In the Name field, you can give the text area a name that will be used internally when the form is processed. By default, text areas are named “S” plus a number corresponding to the number of text areas you have inserted into your form. You will probably want to change the name to something that will better identify the information visitors input into the text area. For example, if the text area collects questions, you might want to name it “Questions.”
- **Initial value:** In the Initial value field, you can input text that you want to appear in the text area when a visitor first opens or resets the form. This field is blank by default.
- **Width in characters:** In the Width in characters field, you can specify how many characters you want to fit horizontally in the text area. This value is automatically adjusted when you resize the text area with your mouse.
- **Number of lines:** In the Number of lines field, you can specify the vertical height of the text area. This value is automatically adjusted when you resize the text area with your mouse.
- **Tab order:** In the Tab order field, you can specify the text area’s place in the tab sequence. When visitors fill out your form, they can use the tab key to move from one form field to another. By default, the order in which your form fields appear in your form is the order in which visitors tab through them.

Check Box Properties

- **Name:** In the Name field, you can give the check box a name that will be used internally when the form is processed. By default, check boxes are named “C” plus a number corresponding to the number of check boxes you have inserted into your form.
- **Value:** In the Value field, you can input the information that appears in the results file when the check box is selected. By default, the value is “ON.” You might want to change it, though, to correspond with the label text that appears with the check box on the form.
- **Initial state:** In the Initial state field, you can select whether or not you want the check box to be checked by default when the form is first accessed or when it is reset.
- **Tab order:** In the Tab order field, you can specify the check box’s place in the tab sequence. When visitors fill out your form, they can use the tab key to move from one form field to another. By default, the order in which your form fields appear in your form is the order in which visitors tab through them.

Option Button Properties

- **Group Name:** In the Group name field, you can input a name that will be shared by all option buttons in that group. By default, the group name is “R” plus a number corresponding to the number of option-button groups you have inserted into your form. Every option button in a group must have the same group name because the common name ensures that only one button in that group can be selected.
- **Value:** In the Value field, you can input the information that is sent by the individual option button when it is selected. This value makes each option button unique within its group. By default, the value is “V” plus a number that is one more than the number of the previous option button in the group. You might want to change it, though, to correspond with the text that appears with the option button on the form.
- **Initial state:** In the Initial state field, you can select whether or not you want the option button to be selected by default when the form is first accessed or when it is reset.
- **Tab order:** In the Tab order field, you can specify the option button’s place in the tab sequence. When visitors fill out your form, they can use the tab key to move from one form field to another. By default, the order in which your form fields appear in your form is the order in which visitors tab through them.

Drop-down Box Properties

- **Name:** In the Name field, you can give the drop-down box a name that will be used internally when the form is processed. By default, drop-down boxes are named “D” plus a number corresponding to the number of drop-down boxes you have inserted into your form.
- **Choice:** In the Choice field, you can create the list of items that will appear in the drop-down box. To add an item, click **Add**, which opens the Add Choice dialog box. Type a list item into the choice field. In the value field, you can input the information that is sent by the list item when it is selected; by default, the text you type into the choice field is the text that is sent by the list item when it is selected. In the Add Choice dialog box, you can also choose whether or not the list item is selected when the form is first opened or when it is reset.
- **Height:** In the Height field, you can specify how many list items you want to show simultaneously. By default, the height of the drop-down box is 1. If you increase the number, the form field changes from a drop-down box to a menu list. If the number of list items is greater than the height of the form field, the menu list will include a scroll bar. If the number of list items is less than or equal to the height of the form field, all items will show.
- **Allow multiple selections:** In the Allow multiple selections field, you can select whether or not to allow visitors to choose more than one item from the list by using a method appropriate to their browser and operating system. For example, if your visitors are on a Windows® system, they will press the Shift key to select several neighboring items, and they will press the Control key to select noncontiguous items.

Group Box Properties

You can edit group box properties by right-clicking the group box and clicking **Group Box Properties**.

- **Label:** In the Label field, you can type the text that will appear at the top of the group box.
- **Align:** In the Align field, you can choose the placement of the label text: default (which is left aligned), left, right, or center.

Validating Form Input

FrontPage® enables you to manage the quality and quantity of information you receive from your site visitors. The following instructions will teach you how to manage the type of data visitors input, how to change the display name of a text box or text area, how to require users to fill out certain form fields, and how to limit the number of characters a form field can contain.

To access the validation dialog box

1. Right-click the text box or text area you want to add validation features to, and click **Form Field Properties**.
The Text Box Properties dialog box opens.
2. Click the **Validate** button.
The Text Box Validation dialog box opens.

FrontPage® enables you to specify the type of data that users input into a form field. You can choose from text (which can include numbers and letters), integers (which can only include whole numbers), or numbers (which can include whole numbers and decimals).

To specify data type

- In the data type drop-down box, select either **No Constraints**, **Text**, **Integer**, or **Number**.

If you have not chosen to specify a name for your form field in the Text Box Properties dialog box, you can give the field a display name in the Validation dialog box that FrontPage® uses to

identify the field to users if they enter invalid data. For example, if you have a text area with the display name "Telephone Numbers" that is set to accept only numbers and a user types letters into the text area, the following message will appear when the users attempts to submit the form:



Note: You cannot enter a display name for a text box or text area until you have selected some validation constraints.

To enter a display name

- Type a display name in the Display Name field.

You may want to require users to input information into certain fields before they can submit your form. FrontPage® enables you to easily set up a form field as a required field.

To require a form field

1. Click the **Required** check box under Data length.
2. In the Min length field, enter the minimum number of characters you are requiring site visitors to enter into the form field.
By default, the minimum number of characters is 1.

It's a good idea to set a maximum number of characters that can be entered into a text box or text area so you can protect your form from inadvertent or intentional misuse. You should give site visitors plenty of space to enter the data they need to submit, but don't allow more space than is necessary.

To enter a maximum length

- In the Max length field, enter the maximum number or characters users can input into the form field.

Creating a Confirmation Page

A confirmation page displays when visitors successfully submit your form and allows them to review the information they submitted to confirm that it is correct. FrontPage® provides a default confirmation page, which should look similar to the following:

Form Confirmation

Thank you for submitting the following information:

C1:
C2:
R1:
D1:
B1: Submit

[Return to the form.](#)

If you edited the form field properties by adding names to your form fields, the default confirmation page might look something like this:

Form Confirmation

Thank you for submitting the following information:

Name:
Member:
Job Title:
BI: Submit

[Return to the form.](#)

You can also create a custom confirmation page that includes a more personal message for your form visitors.

To Create a Custom Confirmation Page

1. Click **File**, and click **New**.
2. In the Task Pane, click **More Page Templates**.
The Page Templates window appears.
3. Click **Confirmation Form**, and click **OK**.
The blank confirmation page should look similar to the following:

Dear [Username],

Thank you for sending us your [MessageType] about our [Subject]. If you have asked us to contact you, we will be using the following information:

E-mail: [UserEmail]
Telephone: [UserTel]
FAX: [UserFAX]

If any of this information is incorrect, please go back to the feedback form and change it. We thank you for taking the time to help us be a better company.

Sincerely,

Manager, Customer Services

You can now modify the page's text and the existing confirmation fields, which are set off by brackets.

To Change an Existing Confirmation Field

1. Right-click the bracketed text, and click **Confirmation Field Properties**.
2. When the Confirmation Field Properties dialog box appears, type in the name you assigned to a field when creating your form page. Click **OK**.
The new name appears in the brackets.

To Add a New Confirmation Field

1. Click **Insert**, and click **Web Component**.
2. In the Component type menu, select **Advanced Controls**.
3. In the Choose a control window, double-click **Confirmation Field**.
4. When the Confirmation Field Properties dialog box appears, type in the name you assigned to a field when creating your form page. Click **OK**.
The field name appears in brackets.

Working with Form Templates

FrontPage® offers several templates for pre-designed forms. If you want to create a standard type of form, these templates might be a good starting place for you.

To Open a Form Template

1. Click **File**, and click **New**.
2. In the Task Pane, click **More Page Templates**.
The Page Templates window appears.
3. Select from one of the following form templates:
 - **Feedback form:** This form is designed to solicit comments from visitors. It allows them to offer complaints, problems, suggestions, or praise.
 - **Guest book:** This form enables site visitors to record comments for other visitors to see. By default, the guest book form sends results to an HTML page that can be viewed by visitors to your web site.
 - **Search page:** This form is a one-field text-string search form used in conjunction with FrontPage's® built-in text search engine.
 - **User registration:** This form enables visitors to enter a user name and password so they can gain access to a designated access-controlled web site.

Using the Form Page Wizard

FrontPage's® Form Page Wizard helps you quickly create a sophisticated form. The Form Page Wizard guides you through a series of dialog boxes in which you define a list of questions and select methods for gathering information.

To Open the Form Page Wizard

1. Click **File**, and click **New**.
2. In the Task Pane, click **More Page Templates**.
The Page Templates window appears.
3. Click **Form Page Wizard**.
4. Follow the instructions the Form Page Wizard provides to create your form.

Processing Form Input

Before you publish your form to the web, you need to designate the location to which form results will be sent. FrontPage® enables you to send results to a file, to an email address, or to a database. The following sections describe each of these options.

Sending Results to a File

You can send results to a file in one of several file formats, enabling you to view form results with programs such as Excel® and Notepad. The file that collects results appears in the _private directory of your FrontPage® web, which you can access through the folder list.

To Send Results to a File

1. Right-click anywhere in your form, and click **Form Properties**.
2. Make sure the **Send to** option is selected.

FrontPage® automatically gives the results file a name and a .csv file format extension. You can change the file format so that the results can be opened in a different program. The following is a list of file formats and their corresponding programs:

File Format	Results Open in...
.txt	Notepad
.csv	Excel
.htm	Your browser

To Change File Formats

1. Highlight and delete the file format extension already attached to the file name. (For example, if your file name is "Feedback.txt," you would highlight "txt" and delete it.)
2. Type in the new file format extension. (For example, if you want your form results to open in Excel®, type "csv" as the new file format extension.)

To View Results Sent to a File

1. In your FrontPage® folder list, click the plus sign to the left of the _private directory.
2. Double-click the file that contains the results.
The file opens in its corresponding program.

Sending Results to an Email Address

Sending results to an email address enables you to be instantly alerted when a visitor submits information through your form. FrontPage® provides an easy method for emailing form results.

To Send Results to an Email Address

1. Right-click anywhere in your form, and click **Form Properties**.
2. Make sure the **Send to** option button is selected, and type the appropriate email address in the Email address field.
3. Click the **Options** button.
The Saving Results dialog box opens.
4. Click the **Email Results** tab.
You can edit the following properties:
 - **Include field names:** Make sure this option is marked if you want to send field names along with input values.
 - **Subject line:** You can type the text you want to appear in the subject line of the form results email, or you can designate a form field whose value you want to appear in the subject line by selecting the Form field name check box and

- **Reply-to line:** If you want to reply to the email address of the person who submitted the email results, make sure the Form field name check box is selected, and type the name of the form field that collects email addresses in the Reply-to line field. However, if you want to send email results to another person in your organization, uncheck the Form field name option, and type the appropriate email address in the Reply-to line field.

Sending Results to a Database

FrontPage® can generate an Access® database to record form results. This Access® database has a .mdb file format extension and is stored in the fpdb folder in your folder list. FrontPage® creates a Results table in the Access® database, connecting fields with names that match the form fields you have created.

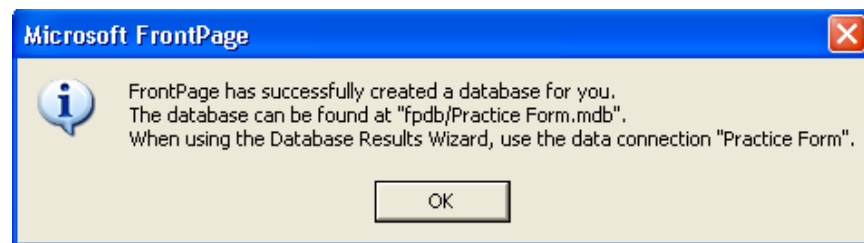
To Send Results to a Database

1. Right-click anywhere in your form, and click **Form Properties**.
2. Select the **Send to database** option.
3. Click **Options**.

The Options for Saving Results to Database dialog box opens.

4. Click the **Create Database** button.

FrontPage® automatically creates a database for you and names the database file after the page name. When FrontPage® has finished creating the database, a message similar to this should appear:



Note: FrontPage® will prompt you to change your form file extension from .htm to .asp when you create a database to save your form results. Click **OK**.

To Open the Results Database

1. In your FrontPage® folder list, click the plus sign to the left of the fpdb directory.
2. Double-click the database file (with the .mdb file extension).
Microsoft® Access® opens.
3. Double-click **Results**.
The results table opens, showing the results of every submission of your form.

If you make a change to your form after you have created your database, you can easily update your form to reflect those changes.

To Update the Results Database

1. Right-click anywhere in your form, and click **Form Properties**.
2. Click the **Options** button.
The Options for Saving Results to Database dialog box opens.
3. Click the **Update Database** button.
FrontPage® updates your database to reflect any changes to your form.

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