

Forms

Forms

- **Forms** can be used to send data across the web and are often used to convert information put in by a user into an email
- On their own, forms are useless; they need to be connected to a separate program that will process the data
- There are many such third-party programs but they are outside the scope of the class

Forms

- The tags used to make forms are **form**, **input**, **textarea**, **select** and **option**.
- **form** begins the form, and this tag has a required **action** attribute which tells the form where its contents will be sent when it is submitted.
- The optional **method** attribute tells the form how the data in it is going to be sent and it can have the value **get** (which is the default) or **post**.
- **get** latches the information in the form onto the URL, **post** hides the information.

Form Outline

<form action="somescript.php" method="post">

form elements

</form>

input

The **input** tag is the most commonly used tag in forms, and has the format `<input type="type">` where *type* is one of the following 10 things:

- **text:** standard textbox; can have the **value** attribute, which sets the text in it
- **password:** same as a textbox, but will display asterisks instead of characters
- **checkbox:** standard checkbox, with optional **checked** attribute to toggle on and off
- **radio:** similar to a checkbox, but only one radio button can be selected in a group
- **file:** shows the files on your computer, like when you are saving something
- **submit:** button that submits the form; optional **value** attribute
- **image:** includes an image that will submit the form; requires the **src** attribute
- **button:** standard button that will not do anything without extra code added
- **reset:** button that resets the form fields
- **hidden:** is a field that will not be displayed and is used to pass information such as the page name that the user is on or the email address that the form should be posted to.

textarea

- A **textarea** is basically a large textbox. It requires the **rows** and **cols** attributes.
- Example:

```
<textarea rows="5" cols="20">A large block of text  
here</textarea>
```

The difference between textarea and a textbox is that a textbox is used for inputting something short, like your name, and a textarea is used for something long, like a personal statement, etc.

select and option

- The **select** tag works together with the **option** tag to make drop-down select menus.
- They work like this:

```
<select>
```

```
<option value="first option">Option 1</option>
```

```
<option value="second option">Option 2</option>
```

```
<option value="third option">Option 3</option>
```

```
</select>
```

- When the form is submitted, the value of the selected option will be sent.
- Analogous to the **checked** attribute of checkboxes and radio buttons, an **option** tag can have a **selected** attribute to specify a default selection

Names

- All of the tags mentioned so far will look good presented on the page, but if you hook up your form to a form-handling program, they will all be ignored.
- This is because the form fields need **names**. So, the attribute **name** needs to be added to all of the fields. This is somewhat similar to the id attribute.

```
<input type="text" name="someTextArea">
```

Form example

- The next slide has a sample form
- This form will not work unless there is a “myform.php” file to handle it when submitted
- This sort of php file may be provided by a third party program
- You can think of it as collecting the data from all the submitted forms, and sorting it in an Microsoft Excel spreadsheet

Example

```
<form action="myform.php" method="post">
<p>Name:</p>
<p><input type="text" name="name" value="Your name"></p>
<p>Comments: </p><p><textarea name="comments" rows="5"
cols="20">Your comments</textarea></p>
<p>Are you:</p>
<p><input type="radio" name="gender" value="male"> Male</p>
<p><input type="radio" name="gender" value="female">
Female</p>
<p><input type="submit"></p>
<p><input type="reset"></p>
</form>
```