

Mail Form Tutorial

This tutorial will show you how to make use of SIUE's mail form script to allow web users to contact you via e-mail regarding anything you wish. This script is most useful for receiving questions, comments, or requests.

When you have selected where you would like the form on your web page, insert these lines of code to start:

```
<form name="mail" method="post" action="http://www.siu.edu/cgi-bin/FormMail.pl">
```

```
<input type="submit" value="Submit"></form>
```

Everything you enter for the form will fall between these two lines of code.

To tell the script where to send the form to once it is filled out insert this line:

```
<input type="hidden" name="recipient" value="somebody@siue.edu">
```

You will want to replace "somebody@siue.edu" with the individual you would like to receive the e-mails.

Regardless of what your purpose for the form is, you will most likely include a name field as well as a return e-mail address in case you should wish to contact the individual.

```
<input type="text" id="realname" name="realname" onfocus="this.value=''"><label  
for="realname">Name</label>  
<input type="text" id="email" name="email" onfocus="this.value=''"><label  
for="email">E-Mail</label>
```

Neither one of these fields is required, however, if you choose to omit the e-mail address field there is a good chance the SIUE spam filter will catch it as the e-mail appears to be sent from no one. To keep your form accessible to users with disabilities, include the id tag label tags. The id of the field should match the for attribute in the label. In this case, the id "realname" matches the for attribute "realname".

The onfocus="this.value=''" lets you put text in the field and have it disappear when the user clicks within the field to enter their own data. In the above examples the place holder text would be Name and E-Mail. This text would appear in the text box initially, but disappear when the user clicks inside the box. This is helpful to all of your users.

Any fields you wish to add other than these, simply use the same syntax and change it to fit your needs. Such as:

```
<input type="text" id="color" name="favorite color" onfocus="this.value=''"><label  
for="color">Favorite Color</label>
```

You can also insert a similar box for larger entries, such as comments, like this:

```
<label for="comments"></label>
<textarea name="comments" id="comments" rows="10" cols="40" id="comments"
onfocus="this.value=''">Please Enter your comments.</textarea>
```

You could also present the user with options, such as checkboxes or radio buttons instead of a text field, like this:

```
<input type="radio" id="pizza" name="Favorite Food" value="Pizza"><label
for="pizza">Pizza</label>
```

```
<input type="radio" id="steak" name="Favorite Food" value="Steak"><label
for="steak">Steak</label>
```

```
<input type="radio" id="edible" name="Favorite Food" value="Is it Edible?"><label
for="edible">Is it Edible?</label>
```

```
<input type="checkbox" id="sports" name="I like the following" value="Sports"><label
for="sports">Sports</label>
```

```
<input type="checkbox" id="tv" name="I like the following" value="TV"><label
for="tv">TV</label>
```

```
<input type="checkbox" id="cooking" name="I like the following" value="Cooking"><label
for="cooking">Cooking</label>
```

There are many configuration options as well for this form. For instance, you can require a user to fill in certain fields before submitting the form, such as email and realname, like this:

```
<input type="hidden" name="required" value="email,realname">
```

A popular option is to redirect the user to a new page to confirm the form submission.

```
<input type="hidden" name="redirect"
value="http://www.siue.edu/yourspace/yourthankyoupage.html">
```

If you used all of the above options your form would look like this when you're done.

```

<form name="mail" method="post" action="http://www.siue.edu/cgi-bin/FormMail.pl">
<input type="hidden" name="recipient" value="somebody@siue.edu">
<input type="hidden" name="required" value="email,realname">
<input type="hidden" name="redirect"
value="http://www.siue.edu/yourspace/yourthankyoupage.html">

<input type="text" id="realname" name="realname" onfocus="this.value=''"><label
for="realname">Name</label>
<input type="text" id="email" name="email" onfocus="this.value=''"><label
for="email">E-Mail</label>
<input type="text" id="color" name="favorite color" onfocus="this.value=''"><label
for="color">Favorite Color</label>
<label for="comments"></label>
<textarea name="comments" id="comments" rows="10" cols="40" id="comments"
onfocus="this.value=''">Please Enter your comments.</textarea>
<input type="radio" id="pizza" name="Favorite Food" value="Pizza"><label
for="pizza">Pizza</label>
<input type="radio" id="steak" name="Favorite Food" value="Steak"><label
for="steak">Steak</label>
<input type="radio" id="edible" name="Favorite Food" value="Is it Edible?"><label
for="edible">Is it Edible?</label>
<input type="checkbox" id="sports" name="I like the following" value="Sports"><label
for="sports">Sports</label>
<input type="checkbox" id="tv" name="I like the following" value="TV"><label
for="tv">TV</label>
<input type="checkbox" id="cooking" name="I like the following" value="Cooking"><label
for="cooking">Cooking</label>
<input type="submit" value="Submit">
</form>

```

You will obviously want to do some formatting with breaks, paragraphs, or a style sheet as this would probably be pretty messy and not very descriptive the way it is.

Here is an example for you to reference if you should need to. You can right click anywhere on the page and choose view page source to see the code.

http://www.siue.edu/web/form_example.shtml

Below are the other configuration options along with a brief description.

Field: subject

Description: The subject field will allow you to specify the subject that you wish to appear in the e-mail that is sent to you after this form has been filled out. If you do not have this option turned on, then the script will default to a message subject: WWW Form Submission

Syntax:

If you wish to choose what the subject is:

```
<input type="hidden" name="subject" value="Your Subject">
```

To allow the user to choose a subject:

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

Field: email

Description: This form field will allow the user to specify their return e-mail address. If you want to be able to return e-mail to your user, I strongly suggest that you include this form field and allow them to fill it in. This will be put into the From: field of the message you receive. If you want to require an email address with valid syntax, add this field name to the 'required' field.

Syntax:

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

Field: realname

Description: The realname form field will allow the user to input their real name. This field is useful for identification purposes and will also be put into the From: line of your message header.

Syntax: <input type="text" name="realname">

Field: redirect

Description: If you wish to redirect the user to a different URL, rather than having them see the default response to the fill-out form, you can use this hidden variable to send them to a pre-made HTML page.

Syntax:

To choose the URL they will end up at:

```
<input type="hidden" name="redirect" value="http://your.host.com/to/file.html">
```

To allow them to specify a URL they wish to travel to once the form is filled out:

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

Field: sort

Description: This field allows you to choose the order in which you wish for your variables to appear in the e-mail that FormMail generates. You can choose to have the field sorted alphabetically or specify a set order in which you want the fields to appear in your mail message. By leaving this field out, the order will simply default to the order in which the browser sends the information to the script (which is usually the exact same order as they appeared in the form.) When sorting by a set order of fields, you should include the phrase "order:" as the first part of your value for the sort field, and then follow that with the field names you want to be listed in the e-mail message, separated by commas. Version 1.6 allows a little more flexibility in the listing of ordered fields, in that you can include spaces and line breaks in the field without it messing up the sort. This is helpful when you have many form fields and need to insert a line wrap.

Syntax:

To sort alphabetically:

```
<input type="hidden" name="sort" value="alphabetic">
```

To sort by a set field order:

```
<input type="hidden" name="sort" value="order:name1,name2,  
name3,etc...">
```

Field: print_config

Description: print_config allows you to specify which of the config variables you would like to have printed in your e-mail message. By default, no config fields are printed to your e-mail. This is because the important form fields, like email, subject, etc. are included in the header of the message. However some users have asked for this option so they can have these fields printed in the body of the message. The config fields that you wish to have printed should be in the value attribute of your input tag separated by commas.

Syntax:

If you want to print the email and subject fields in the body of your message, you would place the following form tag:

```
<input type="hidden" name="print_config" value="email,subject">
```

Field: print_blank_fields

Description: print_blank_fields allows you to request that all form fields are printed in the return HTML, regardless of whether or not they were filled in. FormMail defaults to turning this off, so that unused form fields aren't e-mailed.

Syntax:

If you want to print all blank fields:

```
<input type="hidden" name="print_blank_fields" value="1">
```

Field: title

Description: This form field allows you to specify the title and header that will appear on the resulting page if you do not specify a redirect URL.

Syntax:

If you wanted a title of 'Feedback Form Results':

```
<input type="hidden" name="title" value="Feedback Form Results">
```

Field: return_link_url

Description: This field allows you to specify a URL that will appear, as return_link_title, on the following report page. This field will not be used if you have the redirect field set, but it is useful if you allow the user to receive the report on the following page, but want to offer them a way to get back to your main page.

Syntax:

```
<input type="hidden" name="return_link_url"
      value="http://your.host.com/main.html">
```

Field: return_link_title

Description: This is the title that will be used to link the user back to the page you specify with return_link_url. The two fields will be shown on the resulting form page as:

```
<ul>
```

```
</li><a href="return_link_url">return_link_title</a>
</ul>
```

Syntax:

```
<input type="hidden" name="return_link_title"
value="Back to Main Page">
```

Field: missing_fields_redirect

Description: This form field allows you to specify a URL that users will be redirected to if there are fields listed in the required form field that are not filled in. This is so you can customize an error page instead of displaying the default.

Syntax:

```
<input type="hidden" name="missing_fields_redirect"
value="http://your.host.com/error.html">
```

Field: background

Description: This form field allows you to specify a background image that will appear if you do not have the redirect field set. This image will appear as the background to the form results page.

Syntax:

```
<input type="hidden" name="background"
value="http://your.host.com/image.gif">
```

Field: bgcolor

Description: This form field allows you to specify a bgcolor for the form results page in much the way you specify a background image. This field should not be set if the redirect field is.

Syntax:

```
For a background color of White:
<input type="hidden" name="bgcolor" value="#FFFFFF">
```

Field: text_color

Description: This field works in the same way as bgcolor, except that it will change the color of your text.

Syntax:

For a text color of Black:

```
<input type="hidden" name="text_color" value="#000000">
```

Field: link_color

Description: Changes the color of links on the resulting page. This works in the same way as text_color and should not be defined if redirect is.

Syntax:

For a link color of Red:

```
<input type="hidden" name="link_color" value="#FF0000">
```

Field: vlink_color

Description: Changes the color of visited links on the resulting page. This works exactly the same as link_color. Should not be set if redirect is.

Syntax:

For a visited link color of Blue:

```
<input type="hidden" name="vlink_color" value="#0000FF">
```

Field: alink_color

Description: Changes the color of active links on the resulting page. This works exactly the same as link_color. Should not be set if redirect is.

Syntax:

For a visited link color of Blue:

```
<input type="hidden" name="alink_color" value="#0000FF">
```

Any other form fields that appear in your script will be mailed back to you and displayed on the resulting page if you do not have the redirect field set.