



**Ltsn**  
Learning and Teaching  
Support Network

**Using Active Server  
Pages to handle  
information submitted  
to a web form**

## Psychology

This document is designed to provide an overview of creating an automated data entry system. Data is entered using an HTML web form. The web form exports to an Active Server Page, which places the data in a database. This document assumes an acquaintance with HTML.

### Before you begin

Make sure that your web server can run ASP scripts of the type used in this document: your web server needs to be running at least version 4.0 of Microsoft's Internet Information Systems web server: <http://www.microsoft.com/WindowsServer2003/iis/default.msp>.

### Step One

#### Create your web form

[This example is attached as **form.htm**]

Your web form is a standard HTML webpage. Here is an example of a form that collects booking information. The following code should be inserted into the <BODY> tag of an HTML document.

```
<FORM name=BookingForm  
action=http://your_server/your_script.asp  
method=post>  
  
<P>On-line booking form</p>
```

The <FORM> element marks the beginning of a form. Its name is 'BookingForm'. The destination of the form – what happens when the user eventually selects *submit* – is the URL of an ASP file. Thus, the data in the form will be submitted to the ASP script at the location defined in the URL.

Next, add some input fields. Here we will add 'Name', 'Department' etc. These fields will appear as text boxes by default. Note that each fieldname is prefixed with '\_F\_'. This is simply a handy marker for the ASP script that will eventually deal with these fieldnames.

```
<P>Name:<INPUT name=_F_name></P>
<P>Department:<INPUT name=_F_dept> </P>
<P>Institution:<INPUT name=_F_institution></P>
<P>Email:<INPUT name=_F_email></P>
<P>Title:<INPUT name=_F_title></P>
<P>Any special dietary requirements:<INPUT name=_F_diet></P>
```

The final stage is to add the standard *submit* and *reset* buttons. If the user clicks *submit*, the action defined above (submit the data to the specified URL) will be executed. If the user clicks *reset*, all the text boxes will be cleared.

```
<P><INPUT type=submit value=Submit name=submit1>
<INPUT type=reset value=Reset name=reset1></P>
```

Put the web form on your server.

## Step Two

### Create your database

[This example is attached as **example.mdb**]

In this example, we will use Microsoft Access. Access is useful because Active Server Pages incorporate a number of shortcut functions that greatly reduce the effort involved in dealing with databases. If we were to use Microsoft Excel, this process would be much more difficult.

Create a new database.

- Ensure that it contains a table called 'data' (of course, the table can be called anything you like, but make sure that the ASP script in the next section has been altered so it knows which table to find).
- Ensure that each field in your web form corresponds in both **name** (e.g. name, dept, institution), **type** (e.g. text, number) and **size** (this last is only for text fields; fields in the form must be shorter or equal in length to fields in the database). In the example HTML in Step One, we prefixed each field with '\_F\_' - this is just to help the ASP script do its job. The real name of field is the fieldname with '\_F\_' removed. Thus, if you refer to '\_F\_name' in your form, the corresponding field in

the database must be called 'name'. Be very careful to use the same spellings and types for a given field; where there are mismatches, the script will not work. Note also that, in Access, 'text' fields are shorter than 'memo' fields, so if you expect a large amount of text to be entered into a form, its corresponding record field characteristic in the Access database should be 'memo'. In this simple example, all Access fields are 'text' because we don't expect very long replies.

Put the database on your server.

## Step Three

### Create your Active Server Page

[This example is attached as **script.asp**]

Create an Active Server Page like the one below. The bits that you need to customize are highlighted in **bold**. This particular script is VBScript. ASP can also be written in C and Javascript, amongst others.

```
<%  
dim cn  
dim adoRS  
dim intRecordCount  
  
set cn = server.CreateObject("ADODB.Connection")  
set adoRS = Server.CreateObject("ADODB.Recordset")  
  
cn.ConnectionString = "Provider=Microsoft.Jet.OLEDB.4.0;Data  
Source=E:\Databases\Example.mdb; "  
  
cn.Open  
  
adoRS.LockType = 2 'optimistic locking  
  
adoRS.Source = "SELECT * FROM data"  
  
Set adoRS.ActiveConnection = cn  
adoRS.Open  
    adoRS.AddNew  
  
    for each item in Request.Form  
        if instr(item, "_F_") = 1 then  
            'Response.Write item & "<br>"  
            strFieldName = Replace(item, "_F_", "")  
            adoRS.Fields(strFieldName) = request(item)  
        end if  
    next  
  
    adoRS.Update  
adoRS.Close
```

```
cn.Close

%>

<H1>Thank-you.</H1><p> Your submission has been received.</p>
```

There are two parts of this form that you need to examine. The first is the line:

```
cn.ConnectionString = "Provider=Microsoft.Jet.OLEDB.4.0;Data
Source=E:\Databases\Example.mdb; "
```

You need to change this to the path of the your database (as seen from the computer that will be running the script).

The second item to change is this line:

```
adoRS.Source = "SELECT * FROM data"
```

This portion contained within the quotes is actually an SQL query. It means: *select all records from the table called 'data'*. If you call the table in your database something other than 'data', this is where you need to make the corresponding change in the ASP script.

## Tips

- Never open a 'live' database that might be accessed by the ASP script while you're browsing. If this happens, the database may become corrupted. Always make a copy and browse the copy instead.
- The example ASP script will also handle tick boxes, list boxes, and other types of form information.

## References

### ASP Resources Online

<http://www.aspobjects.com/>

<http://www.asp101.com/>

<http://www.aspin.com/>

<http://www.devguru.com/home.asp>

<http://www.aspfree.com/examples/1980,1/examples.aspx>

<http://www.scriptsearch.com/>

## **ASP.Net (New-fangled ASP) Resources Online**

<http://www.411asp.net/>

<http://www.asp.net/Default.aspx?tabindex=0&tabid=1>

## **Internet Information Systems**

<http://www.microsoft.com/WindowsServer2003/iis/default.msp>