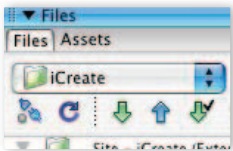



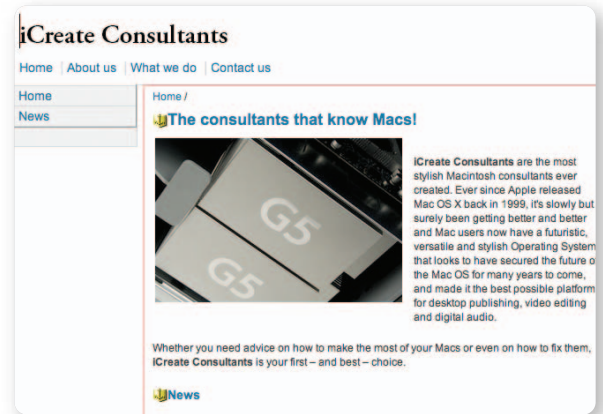
Tutorial: Add interactivity to your Web pages

You want feedback, but an email link isn't enough? A form may be just what you need. Learn how to help others tell you what they think

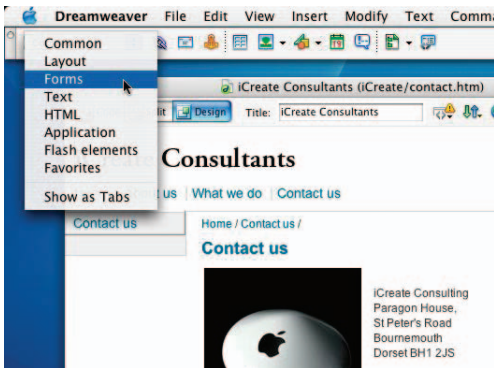


Aim of this section
Task: Add a feedback form to a Web page
Difficulty: Beginner
Time needed: 40 minutes

 Interactivity is one of the most important aspects of the Web. Whether it's creating a poll or survey, providing a competition entry form, or simply letting customers update you with their details, you'll often want some way to get information out of people that's better than an email. The WYSIWYG capabilities of Dreamweaver allow you to create any kind of form you could want using simple buttons. By the end of this tutorial, you should know how to create a feedback form to let people tell you what they think of your site. Unfortunately, you'll need to have some way to process the form, and .Mac is too basic. So while you can learn the theory, to see it work in practice, your Web host will need to support PHP.

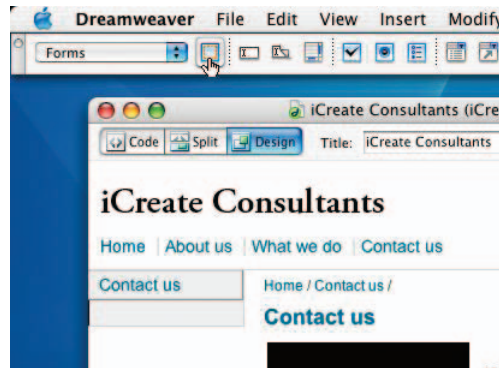


Step-by-step Dreamweaver MX Adding a form to your Web page



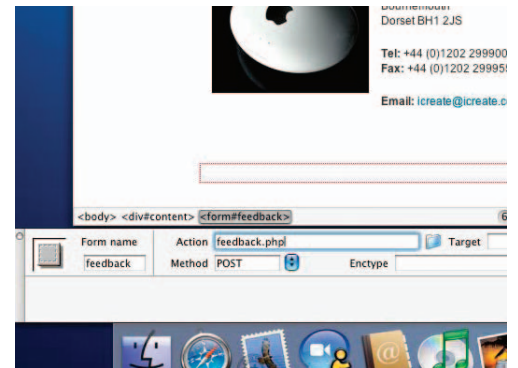
1. Get the Forms tool

Find the resource files on the disc and open 'contact.htm' using the Files palette. In the toolbar at the top, change the buttons shown from 'Common' to 'Forms'.



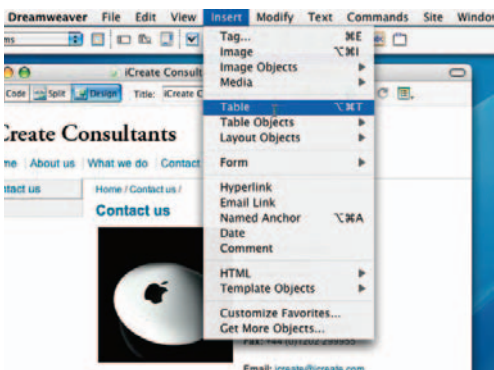
2. Add a form

Place your cursor in the red rectangle at the bottom of the page and then click on the first button in the toolbar. This will add a form.



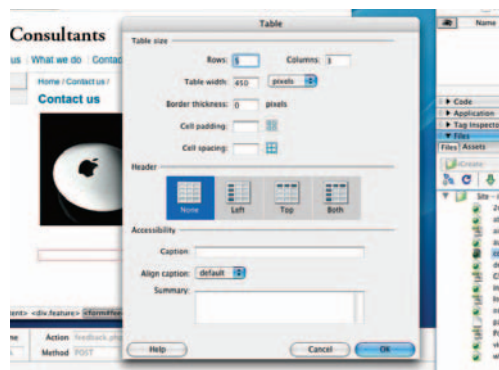
3. Tell the form what to do

In the properties palette at the bottom, name the form 'feedback' and set its action to 'feedback.php'. Leave the method as 'POST'.



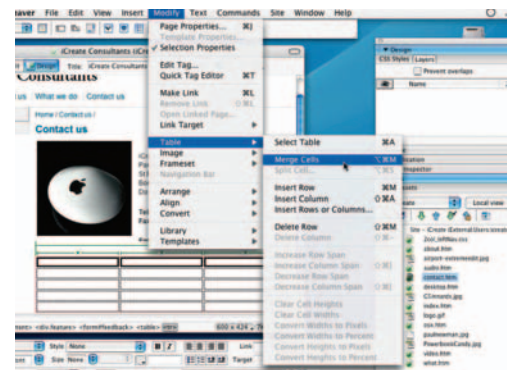
4. Add a layout table

With your cursor inside the form, select 'Table' from the 'Insert' menu. We're going to use this to line up the elements of our form.



5. Set up the table

In the next dialogue box, set 'Rows' to '5', 'Table width' to '450' and 'Border thickness' to '0'. This will make the table outlines invisible and give our fields room.



6. Make space for the heading

We want the heading across the whole table so click on the three cells in the first row with the shift key held down. Then select 'Modify', 'Table', 'Merge Cells'.

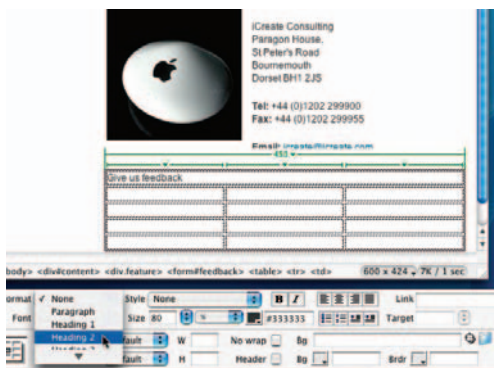
How we added a form to our Web page

Top of the form
A toolbox of delights
 The Forms toolbar lets you create forms with a click of a button. All the common tools are here, including text fields, radio buttons, checkboxes and submit/revert buttons.

Knowledge Base: Server-side includes (SSIs)
Custom jobs
 Sometimes, you'll want to customise your pages for each user. If there's information you need on the server, you won't be able to use JavaScript. But by adding special SSI tags to your Web page, you can make your Web server re-write the page before sending it to a browser. PHP, ASP and JSP are all common SSI technologies.

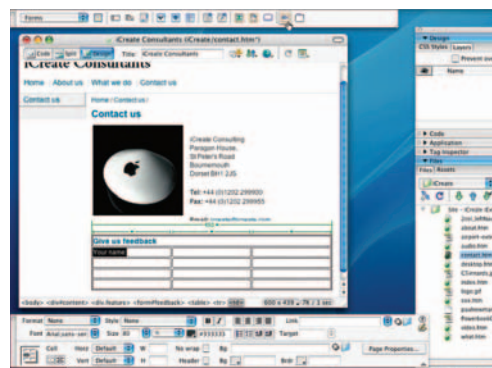
Feedback for thought
Invisible boundaries
 We can use Dreamweaver to add an invisible table to a Web page that lines up page elements neatly, including text, buttons and form fields.

Flip the script
A mixed bag of files
 In addition to HTML files, Dreamweaver is also capable of creating and working with PHP and other dynamic Web pages. We've written one to send form information to ourselves.



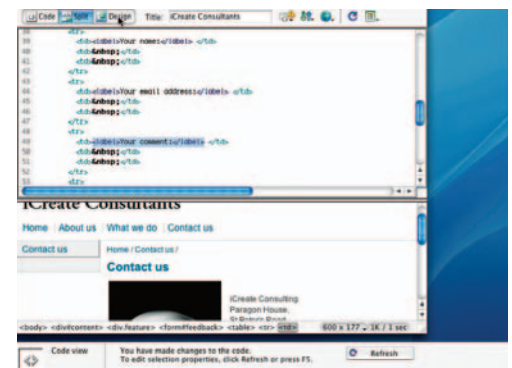
7. Add the heading

Write 'Give us feedback' in the area you've just made and set it to 'Heading 2' format in the Properties palette.



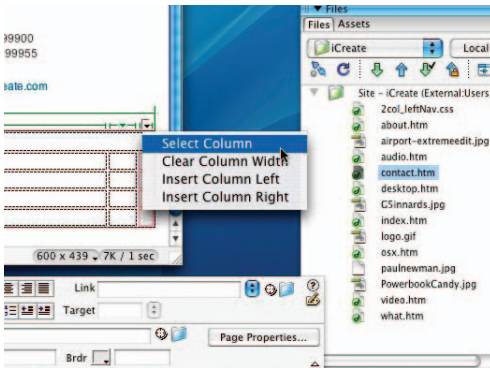
8. Add a label

In the first cell of the next row, write 'Your name:'. Highlight it and then click on the penultimate button in the toolbar to turn the text into a label.



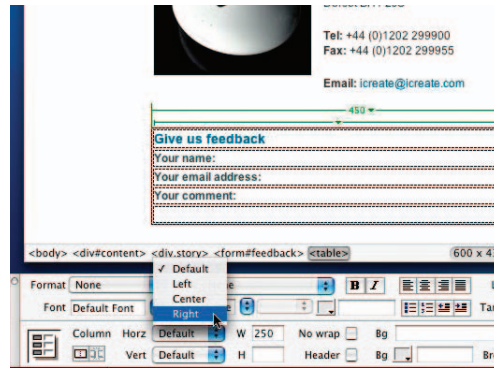
9. Add more, then switch back

Do the same with the next two rows, adding 'Your email address:' and 'Your comment:'. Each time you'll switch to Code view, so switch back with the Design button.



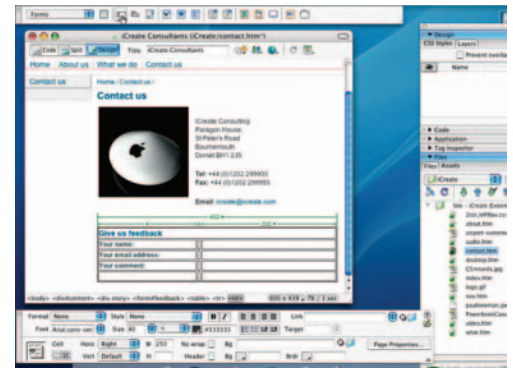
10. Everything in a line

We want to ensure that the fields all line up. Select the table's end column by clicking on the arrow above it and choosing 'Select column'.



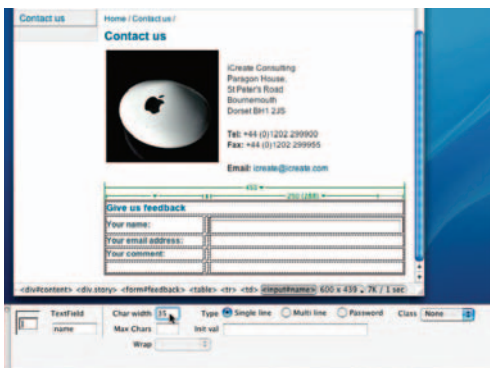
11. Fix the width

In the Properties palette, set the column width to '250' pixels using the 'W' field at the bottom and right-align it.



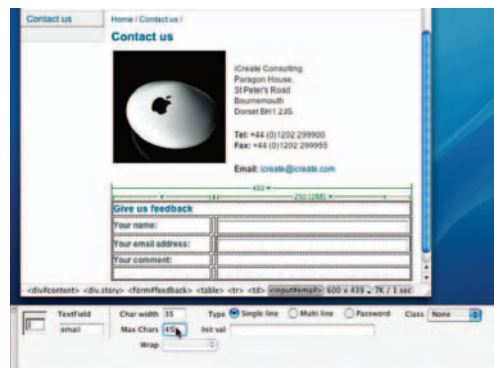
12. Add a text field

Now we have to provide somewhere to enter information. Put your cursor in the end column of the second row and click on the second button in the toolbar.



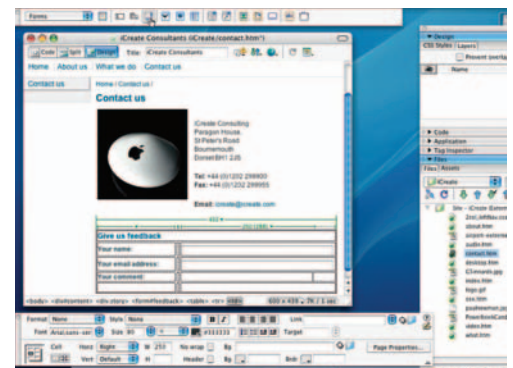
13. Size it up

In the Properties palette, set the size of the field to '35' and call it 'name'.



14. Add an email field

Do the same in the next row, but call the field 'email' and give it a maximum size of 45 characters in the Properties palette.



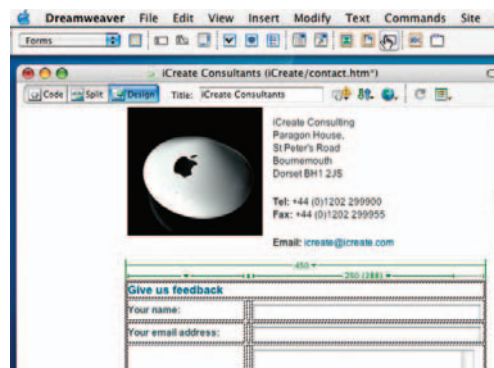
15. Room for comment

It's hard to enter long messages in a text field. We need a text area. Put your cursor in the third row's last column and click on the 'text area' button in the menu bar.



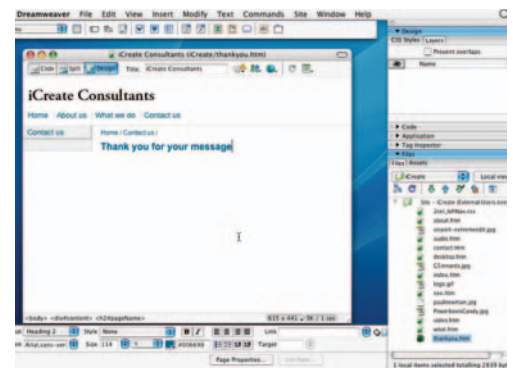
16. Customise the text area

Set the size of the text area to '33', call it 'message' and make it five rows deep using the Properties palette. Finally, set wrap to 'virtual'.



17. Add a submit button

To let the user send their message, add a 'Submit' button to the bottom row using the button tool in the toolbar.



18. Create a thank you page

Save the page then use 'Apple+D' in the Files palette to duplicate 'contact.htm'. Name the new file 'thankyou.htm'. Open it and replace the text with a thank you message.

The mysteries of PHP explained

<?php

Beginning and end
<?php and ?> mark out PHP code: a server will only rewrite the text in between. You can add PHP code to any HTML page which has a filename that ends in '.php'.

mail

Send a message
This line tells PHP to send an email. Change `icreate@icreate.com` to your own email address to make this script work for you.

header

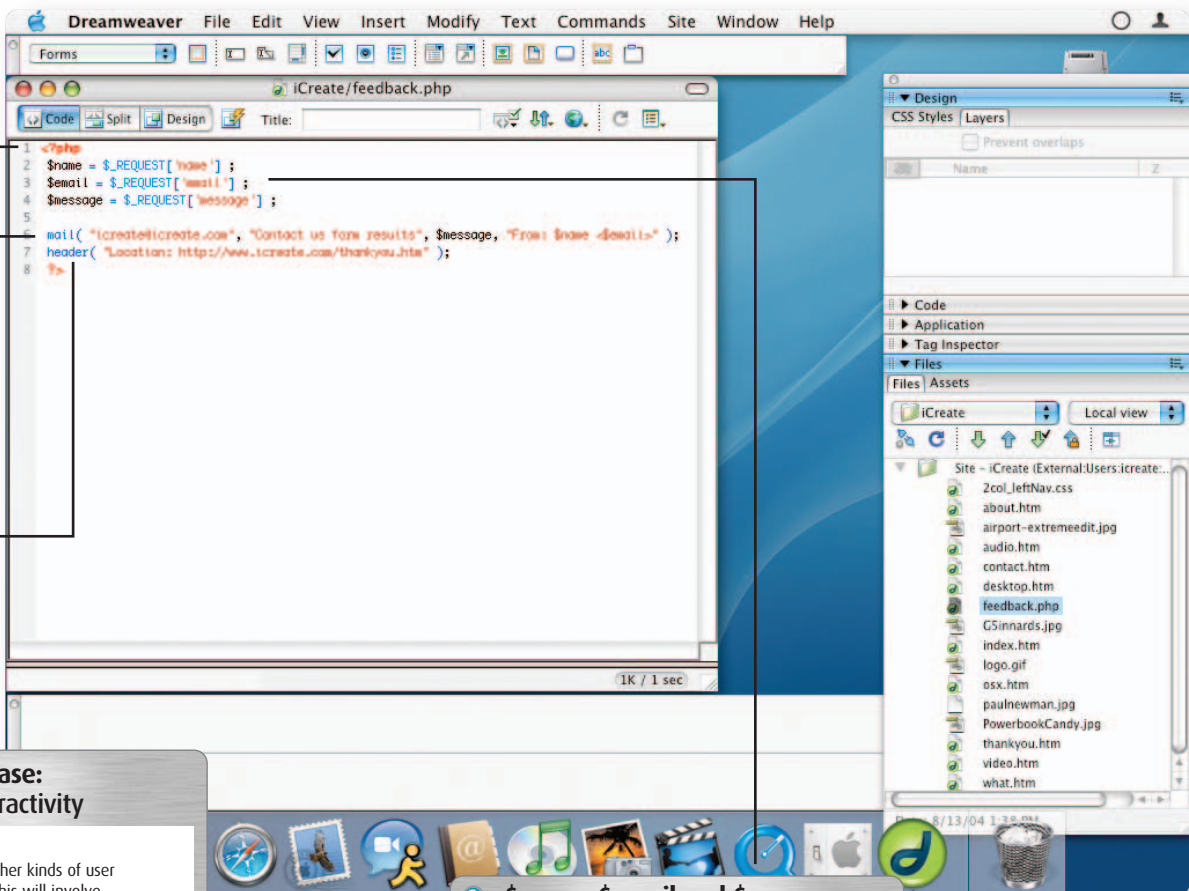
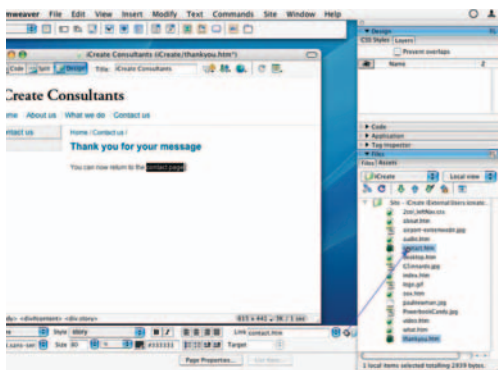
Move along
'header' sends special commands to Web browsers. The Location header redirects browsers to another location, but it needs a full URL to work. Change `www.icreate.com` to your own server.

Knowledge Base:
Adding more interactivity

Off the shelf
You may want to add forums, polls and other kinds of user interaction to your site. Typically though, this will involve programming or downloading and installing packages and databases onto your server, then customising them. It's usually far easier to use third-party systems such as Bravenet's (www.bravenet.com) to add these abilities by copying and pasting code into your pages. We'll go into this in more detail in a later issue.

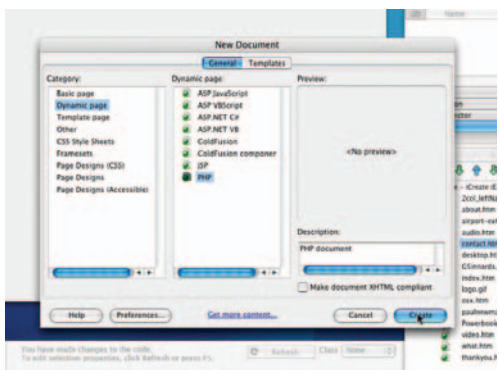
\$name, \$email and \$message

Everything has a place
We need to work out what's been sent. Anything from the form is labelled by PHP as a request, so we capture all the requests we're interested in accordingly.

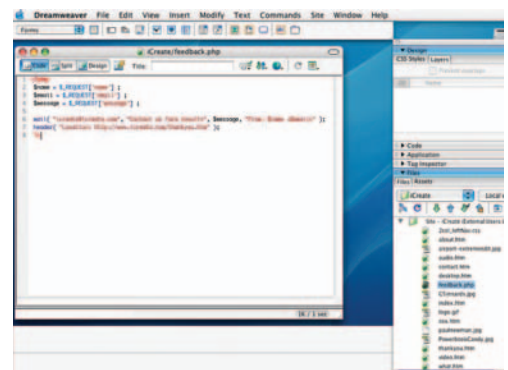
19. The journey home

Let the users know they have to leave the page. Highlight the link text and then click and drag from the link properties 'target' to 'contact.htm' to link them.



20. Create a mail program

Now we just need a way to send the form results to your email address. Select 'New' from the 'File' menu, but choose a PHP rather than an HTML file.



21. Add the code

Last of all, switch to code view and replace everything with the code shown in the large screenshot at the top of the page. Now save the file as 'feedback.php'. You're done!