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PHP Example - AJAX Live Search

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AJAX can be used to create more user-friendly and interactive searches.

AJAX Live Search

The following example will demonstrate a live search, where you get search results while you type.

Live search has many benefits compared to traditional searching:

- Results are shown as you type
- Results narrow as you continue typing
- If results become too narrow, remove characters to see a broader result

Search for a W3Schools page in the input field below:

[CSS background Property](#)
[CSS border Property](#)
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The results in the example above are found in an XML file ([links.xml](#)). To make this example small and simple, only six results are available.

Example Explained - The HTML Page

When a user types a character in the input field above, the function "showResult()" is executed. The function is triggered by the "onkeyup" event:

```

<html>
<head>
<script type="text/javascript">
function showResult(str)
{
if (str.length==0)
{
document.getElementById("livesearch").innerHTML="";
document.getElementById("livesearch").style.border="0px";
return;
}
if (window.XMLHttpRequest)
{// code for IE7+, Firefox, Chrome, Opera, Safari
xmlhttp=new XMLHttpRequest();
}
else
{// code for IE6, IE5
xmlhttp=new ActiveXObject("Microsoft.XMLHTTP");
}
xmlhttp.onreadystatechange=function()
{
if (xmlhttp.readyState==4 && xmlhttp.status==200)
{
document.getElementById("livesearch").innerHTML=xmlhttp.responseText;
document.getElementById("livesearch").style.border="1px solid #A5ACB2";
}
}
xmlhttp.open("GET","livesearch.php?q="+str,true);
xmlhttp.send();
}
</script>
</head>
<body>

<form>
<input type="text" size="30" onkeyup="showResult(this.value)" />
<div id="livesearch"></div>
</form>

</body>
</html>

```

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PHP Quiz

Source code explanation:

If the input field is empty (str.length==0), the function clears the content of the livesearch placeholder and exits the function.

If the input field is not empty, the showResult() function executes the following:

- Create an XMLHttpRequest object
- Create the function to be executed when the server response is ready
- Send the request off to a file on the server
- Notice that a parameter (q) is added to the URL (with the content of the input field)

The PHP File

The page on the server called by the JavaScript above is a PHP file called "livesearch.php".

The source code in "livesearch.php" searches an XML file for titles matching the search string and returns the result:

```
<?php
$xmlDoc=new DOMDocument();
$xmlDoc->load("links.xml");

$x=$xmlDoc->getElementsByTagName('link');

//get the q parameter from URL
$q=$_GET["q"];

//lookup all links from the xml file if length of q>0
if (strlen($q)>0)
{
    $hint="";
    for($i=0; $i<($x->length); $i++)
    {
        $y=$x->item($i)->getElementsByTagName('title');
        $z=$x->item($i)->getElementsByTagName('url');
        if ($y->item(0)->nodeType==1)
        {
            //find a link matching the search text
            if (strstr($y->item(0)->childNodes->item(0)->nodeValue,$q))
            {
                if ($hint=="")
                {
                    $hint="<a href='\" .
                    $z->item(0)->childNodes->item(0)->nodeValue .
                    \"' target='_blank'>\" .
                    $y->item(0)->childNodes->item(0)->nodeValue . "</a>";
                }
                else
                {
                    $hint=$hint . "<br /><a href='\" .
                    $z->item(0)->childNodes->item(0)->nodeValue .
                    \"' target='_blank'>\" .
                    $y->item(0)->childNodes->item(0)->nodeValue . "</a>";
                }
            }
        }
    }
}

// Set output to "no suggestion" if no hint were found
// or to the correct values
if ($hint=="")
{
    $response="no suggestion";
}
else
{
    $response=$hint;
}

//output the response
echo $response;
?>
```

If there is any text sent from the JavaScript (strlen(\$q) > 0), the following happens:

- Load an XML file into a new XML DOM object
- Loop through all <title> elements to find matches from the text sent from the JavaScript
- Sets the correct url and title in the "\$response" variable. If more than one match is found, all matches are added to the variable
- If no matches are found, the \$response variable is set to "no suggestion"

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