The formenctype attribute

A WORD ABOUT THE ENCTYPE ATTRIBUTE OF THE <FORM> ELEMENT

The enctype attribute existed before HTML5. It is often used together with forms that contain file input fields. For sending files to a remote server, we use "multipart" forms. This special



encoding of forms needs to be specified using the <code>enctype</code> attribute, as shown in the example below:

Online example at JS Bin

Note that when you send form content using Ajax, this attribute is not needed, as you will specify the type of data sent to the remote server in JavaScript, using for example the newFormData object.

```
USED AS AN ATTRIBUTE OF THE <INPUT TYPE="SUBMIT" ENCTYPE=...> ELEMENT
```

Since HTML5, this attribute can also be used in <input type="submit"> input fields.

If an <input type="submit"> field has this attribute, then, when submitted using method=POST, the browser will send the form content encoded with the method specified by theformenctype attribute. And this overrides the value of theenctype attribute specified in the <form enctype=...>element (or its default value, if not present).

TYPICAL USE

The possible values for this field are:

- application/x-www-form-urlencoded: all characters are escaped/encoded before submission, for example, spaces become "+", accentuated characters are transformed into hexadecimal, etc.
- multipart/form-data: encoding is not done. Usually we use this value for submitting binary data such as images, files, etc.
- text/plain: some encoding is done on standard characters like space (that becomes a "+"), nothing is done for special characters.

EXAMPLE

Try this online example at JS Bin

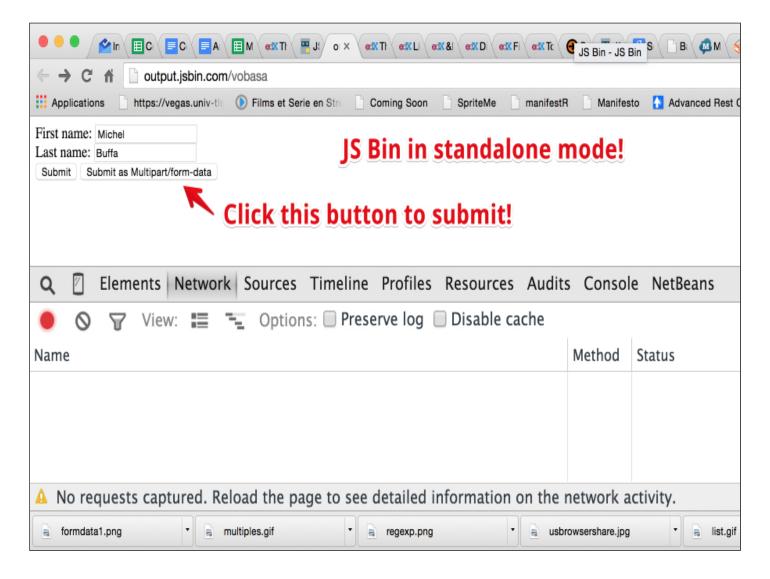
First name: Last name:	
Submit Submit as Multipart/form-dat	а
Note: The formenctype attribute is not supported in IE.	

Source code:

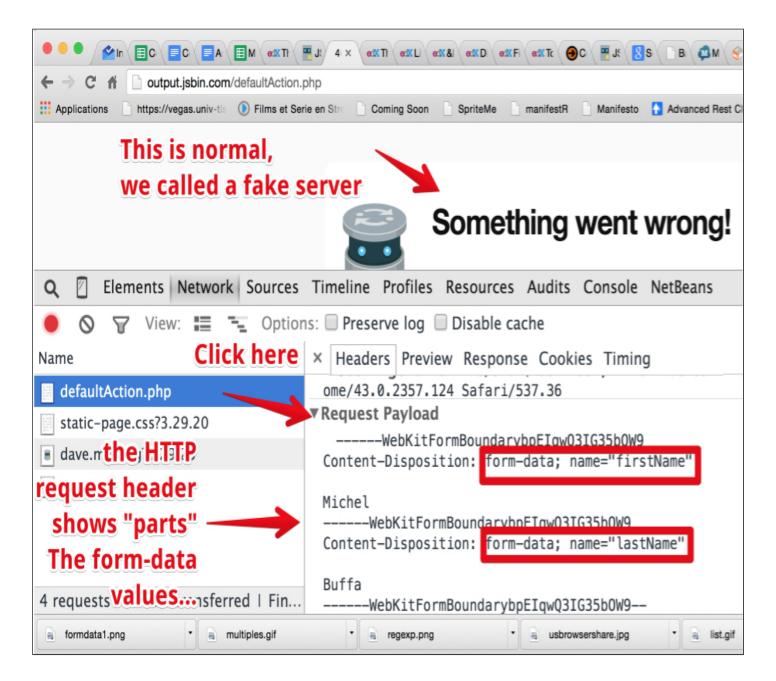
```
<!DOCTYPE html>
    <html>
    <body>
      <formaction="defaultAction.php" method="post"</pre>
            enctype="application/x-www-form-urlencoded">
         <label for="firstName">First name:</label>
         <input type="text" name="firstName"id="firstName"><br>
         <label for="lastName">Last name:</label>
         <input type="text" name="lastName"id="lastName"><br>
         <input type="submit" value="Submit">
         <input type="submit"</pre>
                formenctype="multipart/form-data"
                value="Submit as Multipart/form-data">
    </form>
15.
    <b>Note:</b> The formenctype attribute is not supported by
    all browsers.
    </body>
    </html>
```

Explanations and how to see the difference between the two submissions

If you run this example in the JS Bin standalone mode (click the black arrow on the top right of the output tab, in JS Bin), you should see this:



Then, open the devtools and go to the "Network" tab, click on the POST request. Once done, click on the right on the "Header" tab to see the HTTP headers, and scroll down, you should see the form-data entries in the header, like in this screenshot:



And if you start again and click on the left submit button, the one without the formenctype attribute, you should see that the form content has been submitted "normally" (default value is "urlencoded", spaces are replaced by "+", etc.). Here is a screenshot of what you should see:

