The `formenctype` attribute

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

The `enctype` attribute existed before HTML5. It is often used altogether with forms that contain file input fields. For sending files to a remote server, we use **"*multipart*" forms**. This special encoding of forms need to be specified using the `enctype` attribute, as shown in the example below:

Online example at JS Bin

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html lang="en">
<body>
 <form action="default.php" method="post"enctype="multipart/form-data">
      First name: <input type="text" name="fname"><br>
      Last name: <input type="text" name="lname"><br>
      <input type="submit" value="Submit">
   </form>
</body>
</html>
```

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 encrypted with the method specified by the`formenctype` attribute. And this overrides the value of the`enctype` attribute specified in the `<form enctype=...>`element (or its default value, in not present).

TYPICAL USE

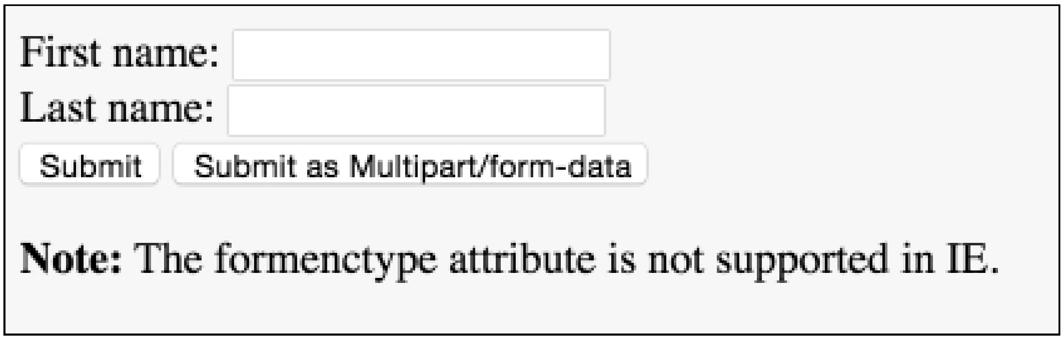
```
<form action="defaultAction.php">
  ...
  <input type="submit"formenctype="multipart/form-data"
        value="Submit as Multipart/form-data">
</form>
```

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



Note: The formenctype attribute is not supported in IE.

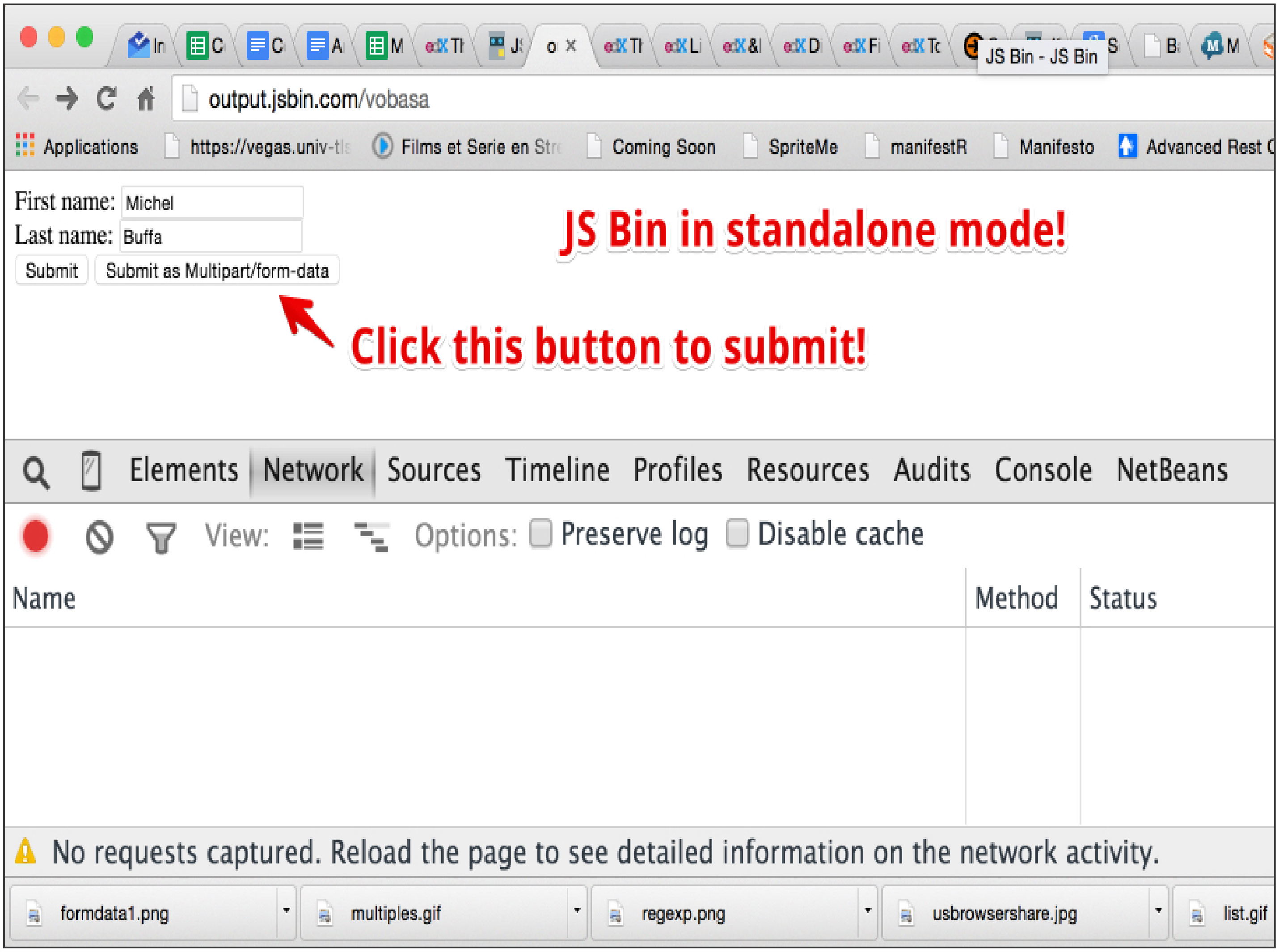
Source code:

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
<body>
  <form action="defaultAction.php" method="post"
        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"
            formenctype="multipart/form-data"
            value="Submit as Multipart/form-data">
</form>

<p><b>Note:</b> The formenctype attribute is not supported by all browsers.</p>
</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:



First name: Michel
Last name: Buffa

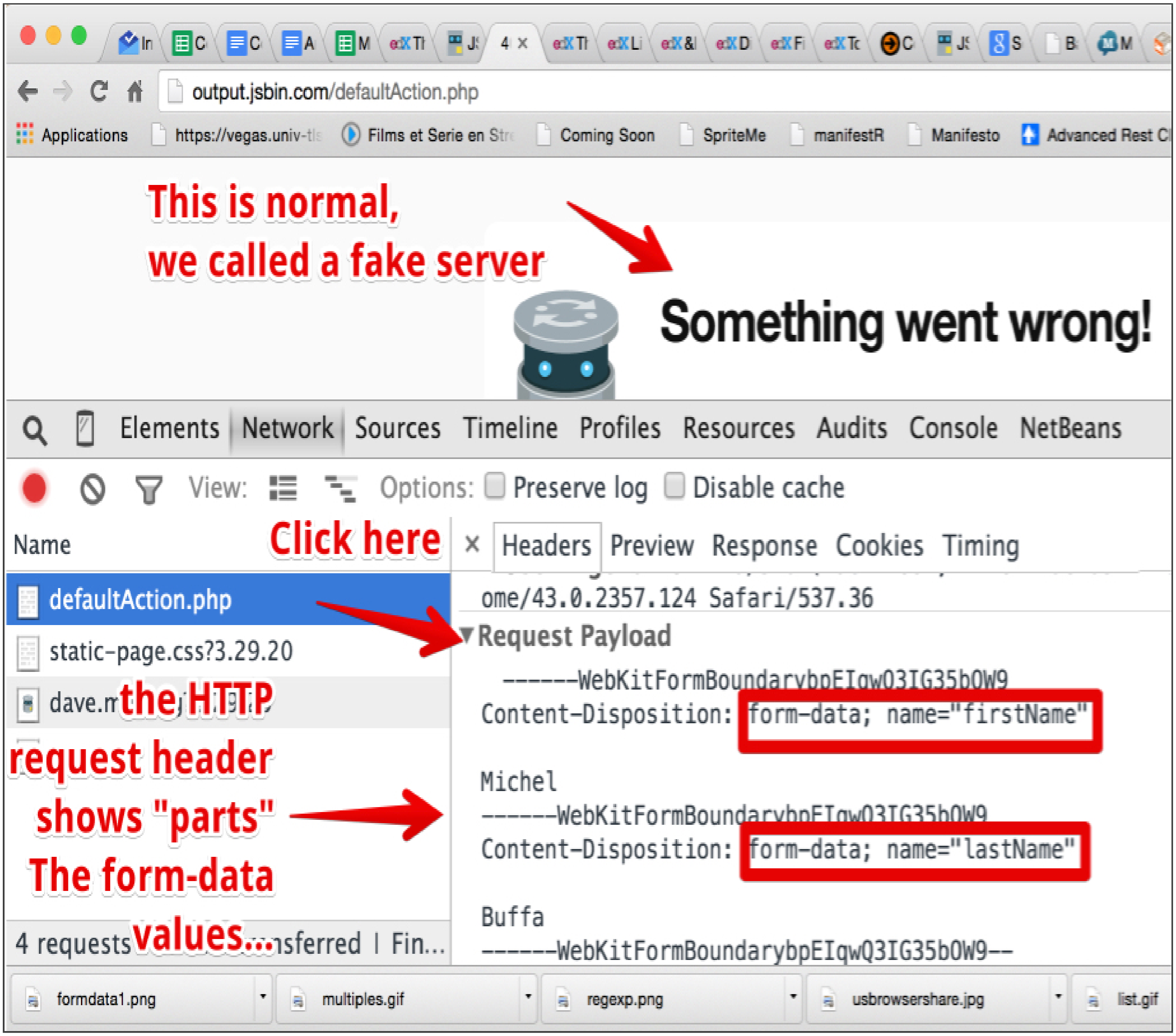
☐ Preserve log ☐ Disable cache

JS Bin in standalone mode!

Click this button to submit!

No requests captured. Reload the page to see detailed information on the network activity.

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:



This is normal, we called a fake server

Click here

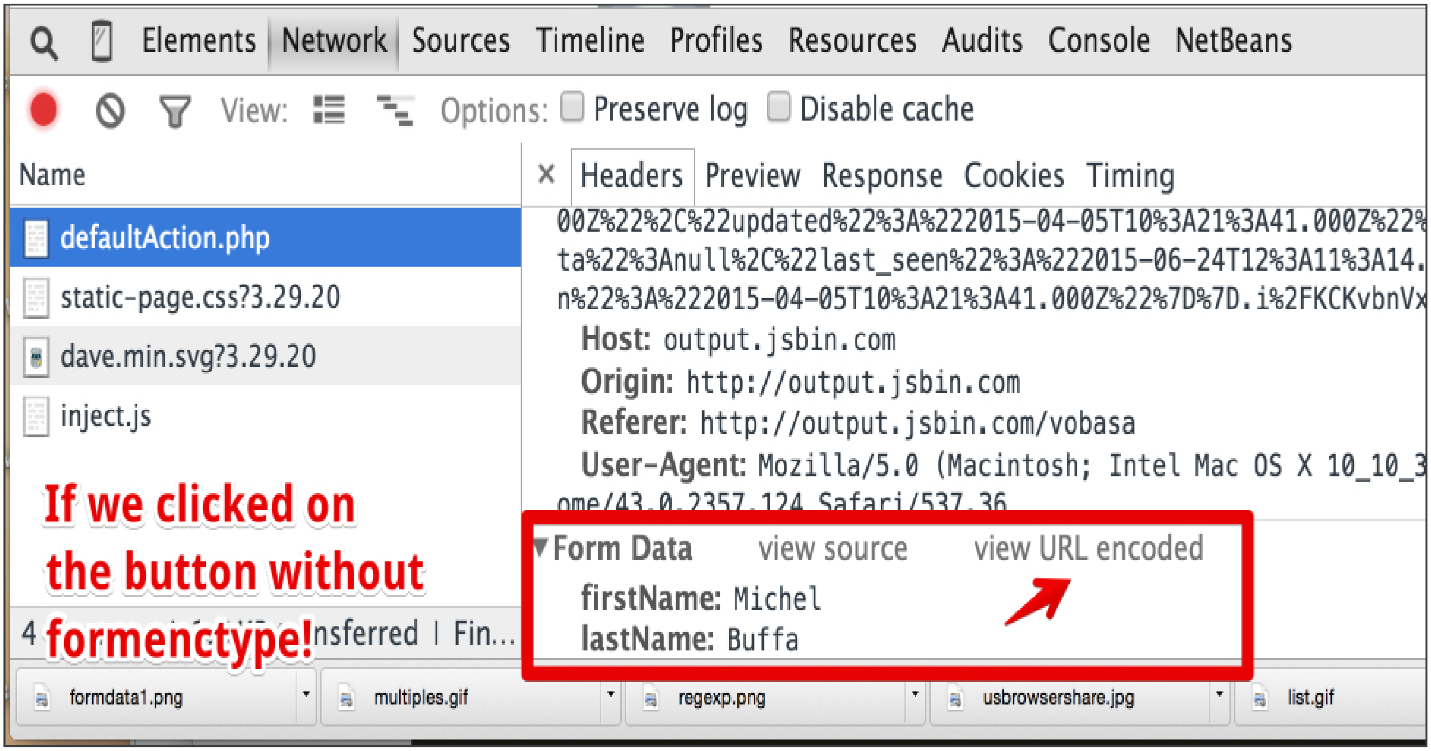
the HTTP request header shows "parts" The form-data values...

```
ome/43.0.2357.124 Safari/537.36
▼Request Payload
 ------WebKitFormBoundarybpEIqwQ3IG35b0W9
Content-Disposition: form-data; name="firstName"

Michel
------WebKitFormBoundarybpEIqwQ3IG35b0W9
Content-Disposition: form-data; name="lastName"

Buffa
------WebKitFormBoundarybpEIqwQ3IG35b0W9--
```

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:



```
00Z%22%2C%22updated%22%3A%222015-04-05T10%3A21%3A41.000Z%22%
ta%22%3Anull%2C%22last_seen%22%3A%222015-06-24T12%3A11%3A14.
n%22%3A%222015-04-05T10%3A21%3A41.000Z%22%7D%7D.i%2FKCKvbnVx
  Host: output.jsbin.com
  Origin: http://output.jsbin.com
  Referer: http://output.jsbin.com/vobasa
  User-Agent: Mozilla/5.0 (Macintosh; Intel Mac OS X 10_10_3
ome/43.0.2357.124 Safari/537.36
▼Form Data     view source     view URL encoded
  firstName: Michel
  lastName: Buffa
```

If we clicked on the button without formenctype!