

Action and method attributes of <form> tag

See MindTap Reader 7-3; book p505 (Carey 6e).

Forms are used to collect data from the user. (Example: customer purchase information) The action and method are attributes of the form tag. What are the action and the method?

action (2 types) - the action performed on the form data

1) **action="mailto:your_email_address"**

Example: <form name="bike" id="bike" action="mailto:perel@ecc.edu" method="post">

Action that occurs: The data is bundled by the browser as name-value pairs and placed in an email message window.

2) **action="web_address_location_of_a_server_program"**

Example: <form name="bike" id="bike" action="http://aaa.bbb/bikeorder" method="post">

Action that occurs: The data is bundled by the browser (as name-value pairs) and sent to the named program (**bikeorder**) on the web server (**http://aaa.bbb**). The program runs with the data from the form as input. (Example: Data from a purchase includes a customer's last name, first name, address and credit card number. These 4 pieces of information are bundled as name-value pairs that come from each of their corresponding tags. A server program processes the transaction with these inputs and returns a receipt.)

When one clicks the Submit button in the form, the form data is bundled and sent over the Internet to the server where the program **bikeorder** is run using the data as input. Server programs are written in C, Java, PHP, Python, and ASP, to name some languages. CGI scripts are written in Perl. CGI stands for Common Gateway Interface.

method (2 types) – the way in which the form data is sent

1) **method="get"**

--the form data is bundled in name-value pairs and sent as a string appended to an URL, the URL specified in the action.

2) **method="post"**

--form data is bundled in name-value pairs and sent as a separate data stream. (More stable method.)

Tips for forms on your website: 1) If you want to use forms on your website, consult your web hosting company and ask them how to go about doing this. A web hosting company is careful about making the server available for things like form processing because of security reasons and for management of its server workload. 2) In CS103 we just create the form on the client-side and will not learn server-side programming. [Apache is a free web server. You could install it on your "client" computer if you wanted to learn server side stuff on your own.]