# PHP

## EXERCISE 2: RECEIVING VALUES FROM THE CLIENT

PHP can receive values from the client in a number of ways. The simplest of these is directly in the URL. Values are given names and attached to the end of the URL with a ? in the form name=value. For example, the URL…

**myscript.php?firstname=mike**

…would call up the PHP script myscript.php and give it the value *mike* for the name *firstname*. To send more than one value they must be separated with the **&** character like this:

**myscript.php?firstname=mike&lastname=child**

Values attached to the URL are received by the script in a special array with the name $\_GET. Unlike the examples of arrays given earlier, the elements are not accessed using a number but by using the name. So in the example above the script could access the first name using $\_GET[‘firstname’] and to access the last you would use $\_GET[‘lastname’].

Try adding the line…

**print "<p>Hello ".$\_GET['firstname']." ".$\_GET['lastname']."!</p>\n";**

…to the top of your existing **time1.php** script. Refresh the page and see what happens. Note that if you don’t supply the values the script expects it prints out a warning message[[1]](#footnote-1) (one for each) and the value received is essentially nothing. Add the values to the URL in the browser address bar one at a time in order to see the script picking up the values.

### IF statements

If statements work much like in other languages. Refer to the language reference if you need to: Read up on the for control structure in the language reference at <http://www.php.net/manual/en/language.control-structures.php>.

We can use the **isset()** function to tell if a variable or array element exists or not, hence you can prevent your page from producing warnings when the URL does not contain the required values. Try this, instead of just printing the names straight off:

**if ( isset( $\_GET['firstname']) && isset( $\_GET['lastname'])) {**

**print "<p>Hello ".$\_GET['firstname']." ".$\_GET['lastname']."!</p>\n";**

**} else {**

**print "<p>You didn't tell me your first and last names!</p>\n";**

**}**

Many PHP scripts have to make a lot of effort to check that the user has provided the information they expect and respond sensibly if they have not.

One important technique that should be mentioned is that PHP scripts can print out links to themselves and provide the values for them. Try adding this line somewhere:

**print "<a href='?firstname=already&lastname=filledin'>Click here</a>\n";**

Notice that the **href** attribute does not give the name of the script at all, just the values. This makes it call the current page with those values added. You could also call another script with some values.

### Feelings Page Task

Visit the **feelings.php** page at [**http://daydream.lsbu.ac.uk/myweb/childm/dba/feelings.php**](http://daydream.lsbu.ac.uk/myweb/childm/dba/feelings.php). You should have all the information you need to recreate this page in your own web account. To do so, save the three pictures and examine the HTML source code for each of the versions of the page. Of course this HTML does not include the PHP code, only its output, but you should be able to figure out how to edit it and add equivalent PHP back in. Make sure you get the date and time displayed correctly. Try and avoid any warnings when visiting the page without specifying a value for ‘feeling’.

Include your finished PHP code in your report.

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| **EXERCISE 2: RECEIVING VALUES FROM THE CLIENT** |
| ***Required in your report (basic exercise).*** |
| * Clickable link to updated time1.php page on Daydream (which will probably be the same as previously given). * An explanation of what the **isset()** function does and why it’s needed. * The full PHP code of your implementation of the feelings.php page and a clickable link to it in your Daydream account. * Reflection on the tasks and all activities involved. |
| ***Extended Tasks*** |
| * Add a fourth ‘feeling’ to the feelings page, with its own title, image and link. |
| *Original additional work:*  *Investigate and experiment with any related subject matter that interests you.* |

1. PHP can be configured to NOT display errors or warnings so it is possible that you do not see a warning and the values are just empty. Hopefully Daydream is configured to show warnings. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)