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**"The Power Of CGI Forms" (Part 3)**

**By Larry Johnson**

**"The Power Of CGI Forms" (Part 3) by Larry Johnson**

This is the third in a series of "How-to-do-it" articles for the beginner or pro online. It outlines the resources for making CGI Forms.

In our previous article we discussed the power of using CGI forms and the importance of them to your site for many of your daily tasks.

Forms have a variety of potential uses. Among them are:

- Sales
- Subscriptions
- Requests for information
- Surveys
- Questionnaires
- and many other potential uses

This article details some resources for developing your own CGI forms for your site.

Creating your own forms can be both fun and intimidating. There are several steps to creating a form and getting it to function correctly.

The basic construction of an html form is this...

begin a form  
ask for information in several ways

...there can be as many input areas as you want.  
end a form

Of course, there is a lot more to creating forms than that simple bit of HTML.

Here are some great resources for learning how to do forms:

[http://www.webcom.com/html\\_utor/forms/start.shtml](http://www.webcom.com/html_utor/forms/start.shtml)

<http://mastercgi.com/howtoinfo/formtutorial.shtml>

<http://www.webmastercourse.com/articles/html-forms/part1/>

<http://html.surfnet.nl/designer/intertut/formtut1.html>

[http://www.htmlgoodies.com\\_utors/forms.html](http://www.htmlgoodies.com_utors/forms.html)

[http://activewebmarketing.com\\_tools/cgi\\_installation/index.html](http://activewebmarketing.com_tools/cgi_installation/index.html)

Also, here is an online generator to aid in the work:

<http://www.webschematics.com/html/formmaker.html>

Some find the task to be just too time-consuming and demanding. Others have a webhost which does not allow CGI forms.

A simple, quick way to use forms without all of the work of creating and uploading them to your site is to use a remotely-hosted script you will find for free at this site:

<http://www.response-o-matic.com/>

Here are many more remotely hosted resources at this site:

[http://www.cgi-resources.com/Remotely\\_Hosted/](http://www.cgi-resources.com/Remotely_Hosted/)

Whichever path you take, be sure to recognize the importance of using forms in your online work.

They are worth the effort to set up and use for gathering all kinds of information in a fairly secure way.

Larry Johnson, author

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## **Forms: The next level in e-mail communication!**

**By Raphael Pirker**

### **Forms: The next level in e-mail communication! by Raphael Pirker**

Everyone knows that communication is an essential part when you want to make profit online. It sometimes takes up to 10 follow-ups through e-mail to actually make a sale from your site, since the visitor has the choice between many similar products or services. I've seen people provide a link to their e-mail address and wait for the questions to roll in. Are you doing the same? Then consider changing that rapidly. Why? There are 8 reasons why you should switch to Forms right now:

1. The Forms are easier to fill out for your visitor
2. The visitor can ask his questions more targeted sine Forms limit the questions he can ask
3. You can answer the questions more quickly because the questions are more specific and structured
4. Forms allow you to track what questions are asked more often than others because Form-inquiries can be archived more easily in databases than plain e-mails
5. Thanks to Forms you can have different types of inquiries sent to different e-mail addresses all on one Form. This

allows you to assign each question to a certain category and respond accordingly

6. Forms can build the Subscriber–base of your products–announcement newsletter. How? Have you ever seen those "Yes, I want to receive product updates" questions inside Forms?

7. Because Forms require the user to be specific, in some cases you can answer the questions, point to FAQs or simply notify that you'll be answering his request shortly using Autoresponders

8. Personalization accompanied with Automation. While there are many e–mail Autoresponder systems available on the market, which one allows you to address the visitor with his name? Or furthermore, which one gives you the opportunity to use any other information of the actual inquiry in the Autoresponder? Any simple Autoresponder that works together with a Form can do this and more!

You can see that Forms are a great way of growing your business and managing your time efficiently. But there's one thing worth considering when deciding whether to use Forms or not: In order for the Forms to be really efficient, you need them to be

processed through CGI. But no need to worry if you don't have a CGI bin! I will list a CGI script which you can install on your account (if you have CGI capabilities) and give you the link to the service created for people without CGI bin.

Matt Wright's FormMail [free]

A very powerful CGI script which has many customization features and loads of security measurements. It is easy to install, the documentation is very helpful and you have the ability to run an unlimited amount of Forms through a single script.

Link: <http://www.worldwidemart.com/scripts/formmail.shtml>

Whiz–Mail [free]

Allows you to do the same even when not having access to a CGI bin. How does this work? The service is remotely–hosted, so you can host it from virtually anywhere, no matter if you have CGI access or not. The Form remains on your site and after the submission, the user will return to your page. You can completely configure the way the service should act. You can add Autoresponders and implement subscription management into your Forms (as mentioned in reason #6)

Link: <http://www.whiz-mail.com>

Whether you use the Script which is hosted on your server or you make use of the remotely-hosted service, it is essential that you automate the task of customer-satisfaction to the greatest without losing a lot of personalization on your site. Personalization is a key factor to the success of your business – online and offline.

Raphael Pirker, WebMaster of Web Resources Visit his site at [www.nr1webresource.com](http://www.nr1webresource.com)



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