

HTML5 Select List Box and Radio Buttons

One item that you can change from the original HTML file is the entry of the dog breed. The American Kennel Club currently has over 150 breeds listed on its web site. You can type an option value line for each breed in the HTML file. However, this would be time consuming. Also, if a breed changed, you will have to go back and adjust the list. A better option is to place the breeds in a file and then use that file to populate a select list. If a breed changes or is added, you simply update the one file in one place and all programs that use it will access the new list automatically. If this file is hosted on the web server, you can also use the same file in the dog.php code to verify that a correct breed has been passed to the web server from the user.

Example 4-5. The breeds.xml file

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<breeds>
<breed>Affenpinscher</breed>
<breed>Afghan Hound</breed>
<breed>Airedale Terrier</breed>
<breed>Akita</breed>
<breed>Alaskan Malamute</breed>
<breed>American English Coonhound</breed>
<breed>American Eskimo Dog</breed>
<breed>American Foxhound</breed>
<breed>American Staffordshire Terrier</breed>
...
</breeds>
```

Security and performance—Providing the user a list of possible values to choose from on an HTML form provides more validity and security than using text boxes. If the user can only pick from a list, they cannot choose incorrectly, nor enter invalid or harmful information.

The breeds.xml file contains simple XML code (two tags—breeds and breed) listing all breeds. If you were creating a true dog breed site, you probably would want to include more information in this file. You could add more information later without it affecting this program.

You now want to use the XML file (from Example 4-5) to populate a select list box. Since this file will reside on the server, you need to create a program on the server to call and retrieve the information. You will assume that this file has been secured on the server for read-only access. You will not attempt to update or delete any information in the file itself.

You can create a PHP program that will retrieve the information you need with just a few lines of code.

Security and performance—Remember, security is a team effort. Not only does the program need to be secured, but the web server and its file structure must also be properly secured.

Example 4-6. The getbreeds.php file

```
<?php
$breed_file = simplexml::load_file("breeds.xml");
$xmlText = $breed_file->asXML();
print "<select name='dog_breed' id='dog_breed'>";
print "<option>Select a dog breed</option>";
```