

6 STYLING FORMS AND DATA TABLES

Top 15 Playlist		
Track Name	Artist	
1 Hide You	Kosheen	Resi
2 .3845	Thievery Corporation	Sou
3 Fix You	Coldplay	X&Y
4 Maps	Yeah Yeah Yeahs	Fevi
5 Ask me how I am	Snow Patrol	Fina
6 PMT	Deeper Water	Gloi
7 Four Kicks	Kings of Leon	Aha
8 Gravity	Embrace	Out
9 Lyla	Oasis	Don
10 All For You, Sophia	Franz Ferdinand	Taki
11 Look What You've Done	Jet	Get
12 Chicken Payback	The Bees	Free
13 Walkabout	Blue States	Bar
14 Oh My God	Kaiser Chiefs	Emp

Your Contact Details

Name: (Required)

Email Address:

Web Address:

Comments

Message: (Required)

Simple Form

Your Contact Details

Name: (Required)

Email Address:

Web Address:

Comments

Message: (Required)

As more and more interactivity is called for on the Web, forms are becoming an increasingly important part of modern web applications. Forms allow users to interact with systems, enabling them to do everything from registering feedback to booking complicated travel itineraries. As such, forms can be as simple as an email address and a message field, or they can be hugely complex, spanning multiple pages. Form layout has traditionally been done using tables; however, in this chapter you will learn that even complicated forms can be laid out using CSS.

Tables are slowly regaining their rightful position purely as a way of displaying tabular data, rather than a means of page layout. As well as needing to capture user data, web applications increasingly need to display this data in a usable and an easy-to-understand format. Form and data table design have been relatively neglected in favor of higher-profile areas of design. However, good information and interaction design can make or break a modern web application.

In this chapter you will learn about

- Creating attractive and accessible data tables
- Creating simple and complicated form layouts
- Styling various form elements
- Providing accessible form feedback

Styling data tables

Even relatively simple data tables can be hard to read if they contain more than a few rows and columns. With little separation between data cells, information blurs together, resulting in a jumbled and confusing layout. For instance, in Figure 6-1 the track name and artist name for track 11 blur into one long sentence. The same is true for the artist and album names on track 2. You can read this information if you concentrate, but it does slow down how quickly you can read and process the information on the table.

Top 15 Playlist		
Track Name	Artist	Album
1 Hide You	Kosheen	Resist
2 .38.45	Thievery Corporation	Sounds From the Thievery Hi-Fi
3 Fix You	Coldplay	X&Y
4 Maps	Yeah Yeah Yeahs	Fever To Tell
5 Ask me how I am	Snow Patrol	Final Straw
6 PMT	Deeper Water	Global Underground Moscow
7 Four Kicks	Kings of Leon	Aha Shake Heartbreak
8 Gravity	Embrace	Out of Nothing
9 Lyla	Oasis	Don't Believe the Truth
10 All For You, Sophia	Franz Ferdinand	Take me Out
11 Look What You've Done	Jet	Get Born
12 Chicken Payback	The Bees	Free the Bees
13 Walkabout	Blue States	Bar Lounge Classics
14 Oh My God	Kaiser Chiefs	Employment
15 Rock Scene	Athlete	Tourist

Figure 6-1. Compact data tables can be very confusing at first glance.