

Making forms using Contact Form 7 in Wordpress

Overview:

These are your various forms

Copy this code and paste it into your post, page or text widget content.

[contact-form 1 "Contact form 1"]

This is what you paste into the page you want this form to appear on

Illustration 1

You access your various forms using the *Contact* tab in the admin section of Wordpress. If you have multiple forms on the site, they will be listed across the top. Just below that, in the brown stripe is the shortcode to call up the form. This shortcode is copied and pasted in whichever post, page or widget you want the form to appear.

This is the actual code. Unfortunately you do have to work with this bit manually, but it's not that difficult...just copy'n'paste with a little bit of typing.

This is the bit to generate code for the various input boxes etc. for your form (in square brackets in the code window). Select the sort of input you want and another screen will open with the options for that input type. Fill in the options and Contact Form 7 will generate some code (in square brackets) to paste into the code on the left. There will also be code generated for you to format your email, and it's best to do this at the same time.

Illustration 2

Underneath that are the sections for the code for the form and also the *Generate Tag* for adding new bits. The code looks a little imposing at first glance, but it can be broken down into simple sections, each one of which (except captcha which has 3 lines because there's text, number/letter display and an input box) has the format:

```
<p>Text<br />
[code] </p>
```

The `<p>` and `</p>` parts are HTML for start paragraph and end paragraph. This just puts a little bit of space around the whole section.

The `
` goes to the next line

The `Text`, you type in yourself and is the question you're asking your visitors Eg *Email*, *Name* etc.

The `[code]` is the clever bit, and you generate that using the *Generate Tag* button in the right-hand pane

And there's one more bit to introduce you to:

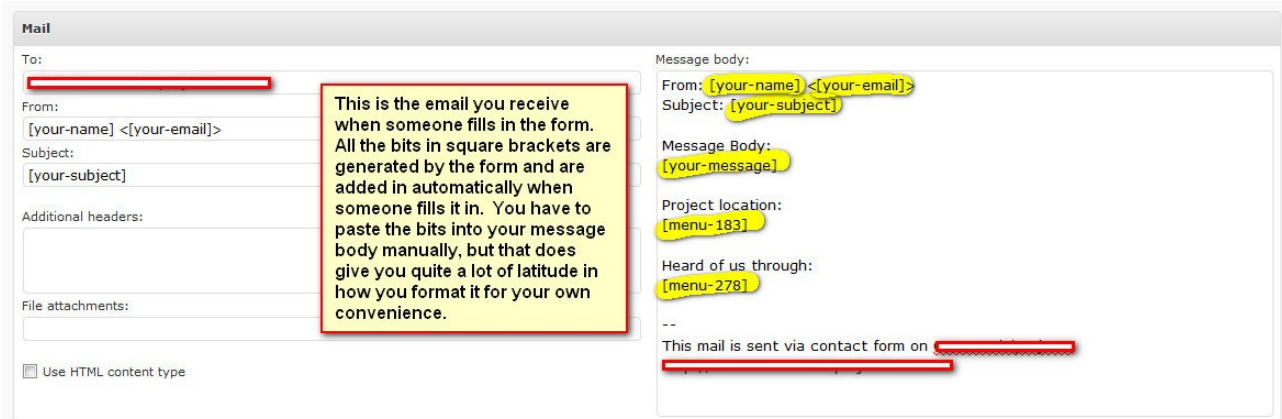


Illustration 3

...and that's the email you receive when someone has filled in the form. For a standard contact form the work is pretty well all done, but any customisation you'll have to add in manually. In the case of the form in the example above there are 2 extra bits: *Project location* and *Heard of us through*. In both cases, I typed in the text and just cut'n'pasted the code when I was doing that part of the form.

Hint: *It's important to remember to do the email part as you go along as you only get shown the email code once when you're generating the tag. If you forget to put a bit in, your visitor will fill in the form, but you'll never see the answer.*

Another trifling note is that there's a slight tense change. For instance on the form, you're asking the visitor *How did you hear about us?* which -in the email you're sending to yourself this turns into *Heard of us through*. It doesn't really matter how you phrase the email as long as you understand it, but it's best to get the form part right.

Putting it into practise:

OK, we know where all the important bits are and roughly what they do. Let's add -for example- radio buttons on the contact form asking the visitor what their favourite animal is.

The workflow goes like this:

- Select the form you want to modify
- Select/find the place in the form you want to add the new section. In this case, it's going almost at the end, but above the captcha
- Paste your blank code in
- Amend the text
- Generate the shortcode
- Paste the shortcode into the form code
- Paste the shortcode into the email
- Save the form

Here's your blank code again, for ease of use:

```
<p>Text<br />
[code] </p>
```

We know that it's the contact form we want to modify, so let's paste our blank code in the right place:

```
Form
[text your-subject] </p>
<p>Your Message<br />
[textarea your-message] </p>
<p>Where is your project located?<br />
[select menu-183 id:project_location "Please select one:" "Sydney"
"Melbourne"] </p>
<p>How did you hear about us?<br />
[select menu-278 id:how_did_you_hear "Google" "Flyers" "Seen a project of
ours" "Seen our office" "Friend referred me" "Other"] </p>
<p>Text<br />
[code] </p>
<p>Please type in the letters and numbers<br />
[captchac captcha-653] <br />
[captchar captcha-653] </p>
<p>[submit "Send"]</p>
```

Illustration 4

Then we change the text to ask the visitors the question:

```
Form
[text your-subject] </p>
<p>Your Message<br />
[textarea your-message] </p>
<p>Where is your project located?<br />
[select menu-183 id:project_location "Please select one:" "Sydney"
"Melbourne"] </p>
<p>How did you hear about us?<br />
[select menu-278 id:how_did_you_hear "Google" "Flyers" "Seen a project of
ours" "Seen our office" "Friend referred me" "Other"] </p>
<p>What is your favourite animal?<br />
[code] </p>
<p>Please type in the letters and numbers<br />
[captchac captcha-653] <br />
[captchar captcha-653] </p>
<p>[submit "Send"]</p>
```

Illustration 5

Now we generate the code using the *Generate tag* button. In this case it's for a radio button, but all the options work more or less the same. Some types (text, email, textarea) don't need any options and some (drop-down list, radio buttons, checkboxes) you'll need to put in the choices for visitors to select from:

The screenshot shows a form editor interface. On the left, there is a vertical scrollable area containing HTML code for a form. The code includes fields for subject, message, project location, how the user heard about the project, and a radio button question: "What is your favourite animal?". The radio button code is highlighted in yellow and reads: `<p>What is your favourite animal?
[radio radio-700 id:Animal "Badger" "Hamster" "Jellyfish"]</p>`. On the right, a "Generate Tag" dialog box is open for the "Radio buttons" tag. It has a "Name" field with "radio-700", an "id (optional)" field with "Animal", and a "class (optional)" field. The "Choices" field contains "Badger", "Hamster", and "Jellyfish". There are checkboxes for "Put a label first, a checkbox last?" and "Wrap each item with <label> tag?". Below the dialog, a brown stripe contains the generated code: `[radio radio-700 id:Animal "Badger" "Hamster" "Jellyfish"]`. A green stripe below that contains the shortcode: `[radio-700]`. A red arrow points from the generated code in the dialog to the corresponding code in the form editor.

Illustration 6

...and paste the shortcode generated (brown stripe) into your HTML.

We're nearly finished now. We just need to change the email so that you get sent the new information:

The screenshot shows an email preview window. At the top, there are instructions: "Copy this code and paste it into the form left." followed by a brown stripe with the code `[radio radio-700 id:Animal "Badger" "Hamster" "Jellyfish"]`. Below that, it says "And, put this code into the Mail fields below." followed by a green stripe with the shortcode `[radio-700]`. A red arrow points from this shortcode to the email body. The email body is titled "Message body:" and contains the following text: "From: [your-name] <[your-email]>", "Subject: [your-subject]", "Message Body: [your-message]", "Project location: [menu-183]", "Heard of us through: [menu-278]", and "Visitor's favourite animal is a [radio-700]". The last line is highlighted in yellow. At the bottom, there is a red box containing the text "This mail is sent via contact form on" followed by a red box containing a date and time.

Illustration 7

When the email is sent, you'll get the new data. Notice how the formatting is slightly different? It's totally arbitrary and you can format the email for your own convenience. Split the form results into sections, or drop the form results into a sentence or whatever works for you.

Finally you save the form. There's save buttons at the top and bottom of the form editing page. Just hit one and you're done.

Final note: *A brief guide to the types of form inputs:*

- Text Field - A short one-line field for people to type in -say- their name
- Email Field - A short one-line field, but this one checks that the input looks like an email address
- Text Area - A larger multi-line field that people can type longer messages into
- Drop-down Menu - A drop-down list of choices of which the visitor can choose one. You have to remember (usually) to include a blank option in case none of the choices apply to the visitor
- Checkboxes - An array of choices of which the visitor can choose none, one or several options. This is used in a “Tick any that apply” question
- Radio Buttons - An array of choices of which the visitor can choose only one option. Best to include a blank option.
- Acceptance - A box which must be ticked before the form will submit as in “I agree to the licence terms and agree that Company X can send someone out to spank me if it later turns out that I was lying”
- Quiz - You can use this to set up your own captcha using simple questions and lightweight arithmetic. Visitors won't be able to submit the form unless they get the question right, however, so you have to be careful about how difficult you make the questions. You don't want to lose customers just because they don't know the flight speed of an unladen European Swallow.
- CAPTCHA - Automatically generated “type the letters and numbers in to prove you're human and not a spam-bot”
- File Upload - Use this if you want visitors to be able to attach files to their messages. Some caution is advisable here as you open the door to be sent nastygrams and viruses. Unless you have a specific reason for it, best to wait until you've established a dialogue and just deal with attachments through normal email. You can limit types of acceptable files and filesize (max filesize changes from server to server, but 30Mb seems to be about normal); but even so it's a risk.
- Submit button - every form needs one and they are added in automatically when you start a new form, so you don't normally have to think about this bit.

Contact Form 7 documents are at:

<http://contactform7.com/docs/>