



Advanced Form Handling Basic

User's Guide

Version 3.00

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1 Advanced Form Handling Overview

This software runs on your web site. It solves the problem of what do I do with my form after I have created it. It has all these facilities and more:

- Use your form and send emails of the completed information.
- Send email to any address and to the person who completes the form
- Send attachments
- Generate a link to a file or document
- Redirect a specific page
- Display a “Thank you” message
- Display results back to the responder
- Change the error messages to your language.
- Convert field names to proper English
- Validate the fields in the form

1.1 Professional Version

This guide covers the Advanced Form Handling Basic facilities only. For details on Advanced Form Handling Professional, please download the Professional User’s Guide:

www.hkprog.com/afh/afhusersguide.pdf

Professional Version includes the following additional facilities:

- Forms Creation
- Form data stored in database
- Editing and printing results from database
- Exporting database
- Form Search
- Creation of complex form fields such as US states, Canadian Provinces
- Use of Captcha

1.2 Requirements for Advanced Form Handling

Advanced Form Handling is written in Microsoft’s Active Server Page (ASP) language. This means it can run only on Windows Hosting Company. It can also run on your own PC if you have Windows XP Professional or Windows Vista that has Internet Information Server installed on it.

ASP is Microsoft’s language for the web. It is a combination of HTML and program logic. However, not every hosting company can run ASP.

1.3 Installation

When you receive the Advanced Form Handling software, it will come as a zip file. You simply unzip it to any folder you choose. It is then installed. It does not modify your system in any way. It is simply a collection of files. There is no .exe file.

1.4 *Where do I go from here*

Before you can use Advanced Form Handling, you need to describe what you want done. For example if you want to take an existing form and use it to send mail to yourself, you need to tell Advanced Form Handling your email address.

This is done using what we call configuration options. These are described in the next section.

2 Configuration Options

The configuration is used to describe what you want done. A configuration is one line of information that looks like this:

```
config_emailaddress="me@mysite.com"
```

This says that my email address is me@mysite.com.

2.1 Location of Configuration values

- All configuration options start with **config_**
- Configuration options can be placed into your own form has hidden fields. For example:

```
<input type=hidden name="config_emailaddress" value="me@mysite.com">
```
- Configuration options can be placed into a plain file. In that case they look like:

```
config_emailaddress="me@mysite.com"
```
- Configuration options can be placed in a specific file called config_forms.asp. This allows you to put common information that would be used in many forms into one location.

If both hidden fields and a file are used, the hidden fields take precedence. Examples of both are shown below.

2.2 Examples using hidden fields

Hidden fields reside in the actual form itself. The disadvantage of using them is that each time you want to change a value, you must change the form and possibly upload it to your server.

```
<input type=hidden name="config_emailaddress" value="formtest@aaaxxx.com">
<input type=hidden name="config_emailname" value="Your Name">
<input type=hidden name="config_emailsubject" value="Form Completed">
<input type=hidden name="config_emailsystem" value="mail.xxx.com">
<input type=hidden name="config_emaildriver" value="aspmail">
```

Or

You can add one hidden field to your file

```
<input type=hidden name="config_configfile" value="myform_options.txt">
```

In addition, within myform_options.txt you would have five lines.

```
config_emailaddress="test@mysitexx.com"
config_emailname="Test Person"
config_emailsubject="Form Test"
config_emailsystem="mail.mysitexx.com"
config_emaildriver="aspmail"
```

3 How do I use my form and have it send mail

You can use Advanced Form Handling in minutes. Simply do the following:

- Take an existing form and change the **Action** statement
- Create a file with the mailing configuration options.
- Your form will now send emails to you

3.1 Change the Action Statement

Every form has an action statement. This tells the form what to do when the button is pressed. You need to change the Action statement to point to Advanced Form Handling program called **afhaction.asp**.

1. Take any existing form that you have and change the ACTION field to **afhaction.asp**. For example:

```
<form method=Post action="afhaction.asp">
```

If you have put Advanced Form Handling in a different folder (for example myfolder) from your form, then make sure the action="myfolder/afhaction.asp"

3.2 Define Common Options that apply to most forms

Edit file **config_forms.asp** and change five lines. This will describe your name, your email address, the subject of your email and two site-specific details.

```
config_emailaddress="test@yoursite.com"  
config_emailname="Test Person"  
config_emailsubject="Form Test"  
config_emailsystem="smtp.yourmailserver.com"  
config_emaildriver="aspmail"
```

Configuration name	Description
Config_emailaddress	Your email address where the response will be sent
Config_emailname	Name to appear in the email
Config_emailsubject	The subject to appear on the email
Config_Emailsystem	The name of the mail system. Normally in form mail.xxx.com. Only your web hosting company can supply this information
Config_emaildriver	One of the many ASP email driver's that need to be installed on your server for email to work: CDONTS, CDOSYS, JMAIL, JMAIL44, ASPMAIL, ASPEMAIL, OCXMAIL

3.3 What else do I have to do

Advanced Form Handling is ready to use. There are numerous other configuration options for mailing. Only the required configuration options are shown above. Your form is ready to send emails.

3.4 What if I do not get any email from my form

If you do not get any mail, the most common problem is that the values for **config_emailsystem** or **config_emaildriver** are not correct. Remember these are specific to your web hosting company and we cannot tell you the exact value to use.

We do supply a test utility called **testafh.asp**. This allows you to test mailing without the need to use your own form. See Testafh.asp later in the book.

If you still cannot get mail, send us an email to support@hkprog.com and we will work with you and your web hosting support staff to resolve the issue.

3.5 Testform.htm

A sample form, testform.htm is supplied. You can reference it from the home page (index.htm) in the folder where you installed Advanced Form Handling

Quick Links <ul style="list-style-type: none">Technical DetailsGetting StartedPurchaseDownload DocumentationHelp and SupportPlay with a test FormLicense AgreementTesting mail	<p style="text-align: center;">Advanced Form Handling 2.50 Free Version.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Thank you for evaluating the most comprehensive form mailing software.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">This version provides extensive email facilities for your own forms. If you need features not found in this software, please contact us at support@hkprog.com Support is free and we welcome pre sales questions. www.hkprog.com</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;">This is a cut down version of the Basic Version</p>
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3.6 Mailing with Testform.htm

By completing the fields in testform.htm, you can also test if Advanced Form Handling is working.

Advanced Form Handling Test Form

This is a simple form to allow you to test mailing and view the configuration
Contact us if you have any questions.

First Name	<input type="text"/>
Last Name	<input type="text"/>
Email	<input type="text"/>

Comments

3.7 Mailing Using your Form - Continued

More configuration options can be used to control your form..

How do I send to multiple email addresses?

Separate the addresses by a comma in the configuration.

Config_emailaddress="address1@xxx.com,address2@somewhere.com"

How do I add an attachment?

Use the following. The location must be a full physical address.

Config_emailattachment="c:\mywebsite\myfile.zip"

How do I format the emails to my exact specifications?

Create a file, for example, myformemail.txt that you want the person to see. Wherever you want a substitution from the actual form change the field name to [formfieldname]. See template section for more details.

Config_emailtemplate=""myformemail.txt"

How can I have the email automatically formatted for me?

This is automatic unless you specify a template as above.

How do I display a "thank you" message?

Config_completiontext="Thank for completing our survey"

How do I redirect to my own page?

The redirection can be a full URL as shown or a filename on your site.

Config_completionurl=<http://www.thisismysite.com/completion.htm>

How do I provide a download link to a file or document after the person completes the form?

Config_completionlink="myfilew.pdf"

How do I Email a response to the person completing the form?

Use three configuration options?

Config_emailresponder="Yes"

This says to email the responder.

Config_emailresponderfield="email"

This says which field in the form is the persons email address.

Config_emailrespondertemplate="testform_mailresponder.txt"

This is optional. The template formats the email

How do I make certain fields required?

This configuration is a list of required fields.

Config_fieldrequired="field1,field"

How do I validate individual fields?

Create one line for each field to be validated. See validation section below.

val_field1="date"

val_emailaddress="email"

val_cardnumber="Creditcard"

How to I have errors display informative messages and not just field names?

Make sure the form has a name with this configuration option.

config_formname="Myformname"

Edit afhlanguage_english.asp and add 1 line per field name

Myformname_firstname="First Name"

myformname_lastname="Your Surname"

How do I echo back the responses to the browser?

Config_completionformat="Yes"

If you want the software to generate the response.

Config_completionformattemplate="myresponse.htm"

If you want to format the response to your own specifications.

How do control the order of the fields in the email?

The best way is to create a template. But if you simply want to list the fields in a specific order use the following.

Config_fieldorder="fieldxxx,ffieldyyy,..."

How do I exclude fields from being sent in the generated email?

This is only required if you do not use an email template?

config_fieldexclude="Submit"

How do I generate a template?

Use you favorite editor or use supplied program afhgeneratetemplate.asp once to get started.

See Template generation in the Template section.

3.8 Mail Configuration Summary

The following mail configuration allows you finer control over events and formatting.

Config_emailtemplate="testtemplate.txt"	The name of the template that controls the formatting of the email sent to you.
Config_emailresponder="Yes"	Yes/No If Yes, then the person who responded to the form gets a confirming email.
Config_emailresponderfield="email"	The form field that holds the responder's email address.
Config_emailattachment="c:\someplace\xxx.zip"	The name of the file to be sent to the responder. This must be a full disk address. It cannot be a url in form http://xxx
Config_emailrespondertemplate="testform_mailresponder.txt"	The template used to email responder. One is automatically generated if not supplied.
Config_emailfromresponder="Yes"	The email to the merchant will have the responders email address. Many web hosting companies will block such emails. If you are not receiving emails, set to No
Config_fieldexclude="aaa,bbb"	List of fields to be excluded from email. If you are not using your own template file, this would normally be the submit button name

3.9 Configuration Response Actions

Once the person has completed the form and advanced form handler sends emails and optionally stores the data into the database, you have numerous choices on what happens next.

- Write a simple text message
- Generate a hyperlink
- Redirect to another page or site
- Write a complex message.

Config_completionurl	The URL where AFH will redirect after a response
Config_completionlink	A hyperlink that is generated. Normally used in conjunction with config_completiontext
Config_completiontext	Text to be displayed after a response
Config_completionformat	Yes or No. If yes the form fields are displayed on the browser after the form is completed
Config_completionformattemplate	The name of a template used to display results back to the responder after the form is completed. This can be used instead of the above option.

3.10 Form Validation

The purpose of validating the data is to insure that all required fields are entered and that the format of the data is correct. The following validation facilities are available.

- Select those fields that must be entered
- Select specific fields whose format should be validated
- Check for numeric
- Check for alphabetic
- Check for valid date
- Check for valid email address
- Check for valid credit card format
- Check if required

3.11 Required Fields

This is a list of field names that are required to be completed.

<code>Config_fieldrequired="field1,field"</code>	This says to verify that form fields called field1 and field2 are completed.
--	--

3.12 Validate specific fields

To specify which fields should be validated and what type of validation add 1 line for each field in the form

<code>val_fieldname="type"</code>	Each field that needs to be validated
-----------------------------------	---------------------------------------

`val_year="numeric"`

3.13 Validation Types

The validation types used by Advanced Form Handling are shown in the table below.

Numeric	Checks to see if value is numeric
Alphanumeric	Can be numbers or letters
Alpha	Must be all letters
Creditcard	Must have valid credit card format
Email	Basic email format
Date	Must be a valid date

3.14 Using your Form

Start your browser and type in the location of your form.

<http://www.yoursite.com/yourform.htm>

When you click the button on your form, the Advanced Form Handler now takes over. Takes your form fields, formats them and emails the results.

3.15 Example testform_options.asp

We supply an example testform.htm. It uses configuration options testform_options.asp for its configuration options. You may wish to look at these files to help your understanding.

```
config_emailtemplate="testform_mailsite.txt"
config_emailrespondertemplate="testform_mailresponder.txt"
config_emailresponderfield="email"
config_fieldrequired="firstname,lastname,email"
config_fieldexclude="submit"
config_completionformattemplate="testform_displaytemplate.htm"
config_formname="Testform"
```

4 Templates

Templates provide a method of formatting the email being sent back to you or the email sent to the responder. A template can be a plain text file or it can be HTML. In either case, a template works by substituting values from the form into the file to create a complete body of the email.

Templates are also used to display the form results on the browser.

4.1 Sample Templates

The following templates are provided as an example.

Testform_mailsite.txt	Template to mail to site owner
Testform_mailresponder.txt	Template to mail to responder
Testform_template.htm	Format response for administrator
Testform_displaytemplate.htm	Format response for responder

4.2 Sample template

Below is a simple text template. The items with [] are the form fields. So [firstname] tells the software to substitute the value received on the form field firstname.

In addition to form fields, additional fields can be used to add information to the email, that may not be included on the form. For example add the date of the response use [special date]

```
Advanced Form Handling Sample Template
Any fields in the form can be used
```

```
First name: [Firstname]
Last name: [Lastname]
Email Address: [Email]
Comment: [comment]
```

4.3 Template Substitution

The purpose of the template is to take the information from your form and format it the way you choose. To distinguish ordinary information from form information you use [...]. The item in brackets is a field name in your form.

In the example above sample template [firstname] will substitute the actual first name of the person and replace it with their real name.

4.4 Formatting information- Advanced

You may wish to format some of the data. For example, one of the responses may be a currency value. To format the data use the following controls.

[format number fieldname]	Formats the data into xxx.yy
[formatdate fieldname]	Formats the field into date form using the configuration value config_dateformat
[formattime fieldname]	Formats data into short time hh:mm

<code>[formatcurrency fieldname]</code>	Formats data into currency format
---	-----------------------------------

4.5 *Generating a template*

A template is just a file. It can be created using your favorite editor. If you have a large form with many fieldnames, a tool is provided to generate all you field names in the correct template format.

- Take any existing form that you have and change the ACTION field to **afhgeneratetemplate.asp**.

For example:

```
<form method=Post action="afhgeneratetemplate.asp">
```

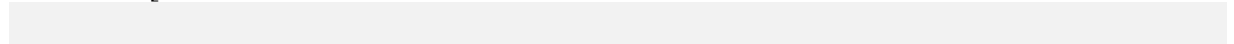
Then use your form and the following will appear on your browser. Copy and paste them into a plain text file. Then Modify the file as necessary.

First Name: [Firstname]

Last Name: [Lastname]

Email: [Email]

comment: [comment]



5 Look and Feel

The Advanced Form Handler was designed to allow you to alter the look and feel to match your site requirements. This can be done in a number of ways:

- Change the Logo
- Change the top, left, right and bottom navigation for any page displayed by AFH
- Change fonts and colors

5.1 Page formatting – headertrailer.asp

The page formatting when AFH displays information is controlled by one file called, **headertrailer.asp**. You can alter this file or replace it with your own. It is plain HTML except a few lines, which tell AFH when to display the top and left side and the page. Then display the bottom and right side of the page.

The items in bold, need to be added to your own replacement HTML page.

<code><% Sub AfhHeader %></code>	Put at very top of your file
<code><% end sub %></code>	Put at very bottom of your file
<code><% end sub Sub AfhTrailer %></code>	Put where the left navigation ends and middle, bottom and right start

5.2 Changing the logo

The default logo has the file name `afhlogo.gif`. You can replace that file or change this line in `headertrailer.asp`

```
<a href="index.htm"></a>
```

6 Testafh.asp - Test Utility Program

Advanced form Handling comes with a tool called testafh.asp. It is designed to test three things:

- Test Mailing
- Test reading the configuration File

6.1 Secret Key

To protect your site from hackers, the testafh.asp file requires that you provide a secret key before it can be used. To set-up your secret key, edit file **testafh.asp**, locate the following line and add your own key.

```
const secretword="yourwordhere" | Put your word between the quotes
```

This diagnostic tool allows you to test the mail and database facilities.
You can also test reading the configuration file.

Secret Word

To protect against hackers
you must provide your secret word.
If you have not set one up, see the AFH documentation.

We also recommend you delete **testafh.asp** after you are finished using it.

6.2 Testing Mail

Mailing is a basic portion of the Advanced Form Handler.

Email System	mail system name provided by your web host <input type="text" value="smtp.yourownsystemxx.com"/>
Email Interface	Driver name <input type="text" value="cdosys"/>
Sender email address	Email address of sender of this email <input type="text" value="me@myplace.com"/>
Receiver email address	The email address where test message is to be sent <input type="text" value="receiver@def.com"/>
Receiver email name	The person's name to whom message is to be sent <input type="text" value="My Friend"/>
<input type="button" value="Test Mail"/>	

Email system	The mail server. This is a name supplied by your web hosting company
Email Interface	The mail driver used to actually send mail. This is the name of an external interface that your web host will have installed so that ASP programs can communicate with the mail server. Valid values are: ASPMAIL, ASPEMAIL, CDONTS, CDOSYS, JMAIL, JMAIL44, OCXMAIL.

6.3 Test Configuration Reading

The configuration file **config_forms.asp** holds many of the default values. This test simply reads and displays those values. If the file cannot be read then AFH will not work properly.

Configuration File Configuration file to be read and displayed

7 Language Handling -Advanced

Whenever Advanced Form Handling needs to write a message or caption back to you, it will use the language table. The default language table is **afhlanguage_English.asp**.

Advanced Form Handlings not providing translated files. But if you want to use AFH in Spanish, simply translate the phrases in afhlanguage_English.asp and create a file called afhlanguage_spanish.asp. Then change the configuration value:

<code>Config_language="Spanish"</code>
--

The new file you just created will now be used instead of the default file.

7.1 Language file

The language file has values in the following format. The lang..., should not be changed. Simply translate the values between quotes (“xxx”)

```
langinvalidreferer="Invalid referer address "  
langrequired=" is required"  
langbackup="Use the Browser back button to correct form."  
langmailerror="Error writing email message "  
langmaildriver="Unknown mail driver. No mail sent."  
langadminuserid="Userid  
langadminpassword="Password"  
langlogin="Login"
```

7.2 Captions

When displaying the form results on the browsers either at the completion of a form or later when using the administration to view the results, you can convert the field names into more readable format long names. To do this adds your own values to the language file in the form:

Formname_fieldname

The formname is the name of your form.
The fieldname is the form field name

For example say you want to change the form field expdate into the words “Expiration Date”, add a link to the afhlanguage_english.asp file on the form

```
Myform_expdate="Expiration Date"
```