

Database driven Web content

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Main points

- ◆ Developing database-driven Web site content can be a challenge.
- ◆ A good knowledge of Access and Dreamweaver can help greatly
- ◆ An understanding of ODBC is useful
- ◆ Dogged determination and good research skills can get you through
- ◆ The benefits of providing content through database-stored information outweighs any tribulations endured

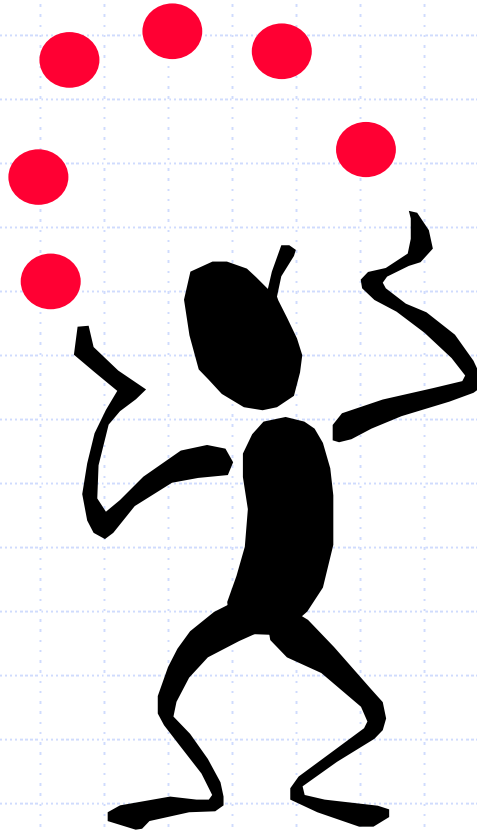
Getting to there from here



Why database content?

- ◆ Easier to keep constantly-changing info up-to-date
- ◆ Data already exists in database
- ◆ Want to tailor the visitor's Web experience more
- ◆ Don't have the manpower to handle e-mail form input

Steps involved



Adding db content (insert record)

- ◆ Plan the database
- ◆ Enter test data in db
- ◆ Note the location and path to this db
- ◆ Download and install Microsoft PWS
- ◆ Open UltraDev 4
- ◆ Create an add data to a db form
- ◆ Open the page in design view
- ◆ Select Insert>Live objects>Record Insertion Form
- ◆ In the dialog box, specify the db table into which the record should be added
- ◆ Select the connection (cnDBname)
- ◆ Select the table in the Insert into Table box

Adding db content (insert record)

- ◆ In the “after inserting, go to” box enter the page to open after the record is added to the db
- ◆ To create the form, continue completing the items in the Form Fields area
 - ◆ Specify the form objects you want to include on the form
 - ◆ Specify which columns in the db table each form object should update
 - ◆ UltraDev creates a form object for each column in the db table you select—remove the unique key ID by using the minus button

Adding db content (insert record)

- ◆ You can remove other objects by using the minus key
- ◆ You can change the order of the objects on the form by highlighting and clicking the up or down arrow
- ◆ Specify how each data entry field should display on the form by clicking a row on the Form Fields table and entering the following:
 - Label—enter a descriptive label
 - Display As—choose a form object (text, menu, checkbox). For read-only entries choose text
 - Submit As—choose the data format expected by the db table
 - Set the form object's properties
 - Click OK
- ◆ UltraDev adds the form and an Insert Record server behavior

Adding db content (insert record)

◆ Test and preview

- Make sure PWS is running
- In UltraDev select View>Preview live data
- A new toolbar should display near the top, with a small gear icon

◆ If all went well you will see data displaying from the db

◆ If unsuccessful an error message will display

◆ Troubleshoot, repair and repeat

Adding db content (insert record)

- ◆ Once successful move the db and the test insert record form to the Web server
- ◆ Have an ODBC connection made on the Web server to the database (cnDBname) [provide the location and path to the db]
- ◆ After the ODBC connection is made the test can proceed
 - Edit the insert record form and substitute the connection name and data source name to point to the db on the Web server
 - Then test and preview
 - If errors display troubleshoot, edit and repeat

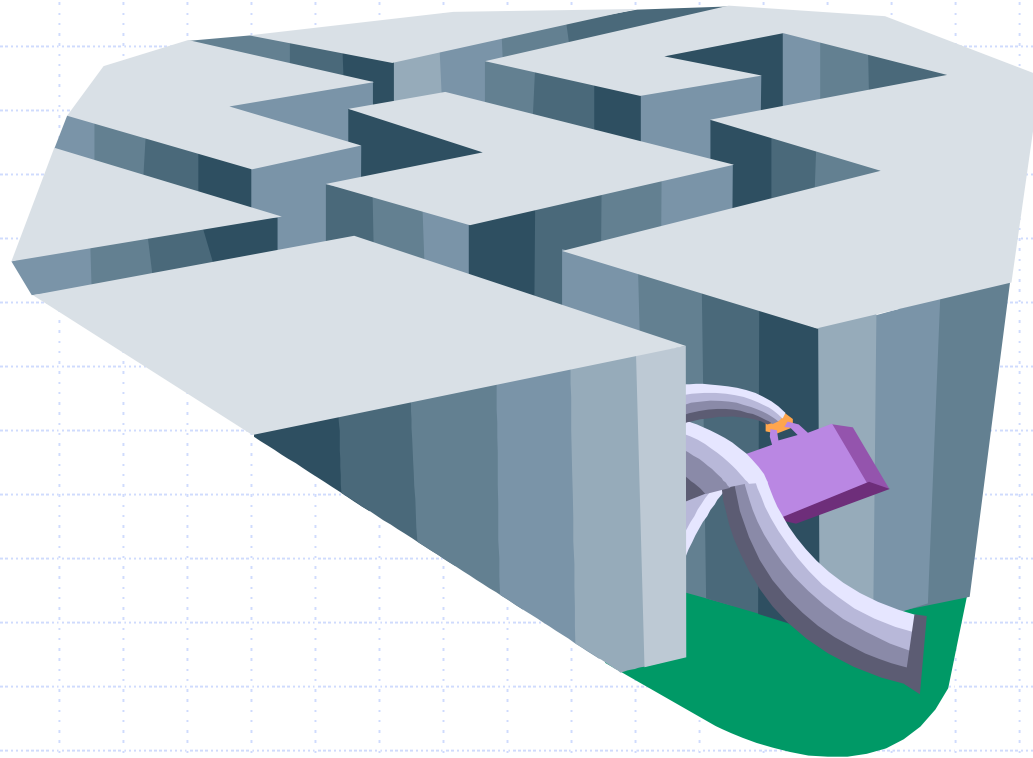
Problems.....



..need solutions

- ◆ Just because someone wrote a book on it doesn't mean the book will be useful—you may have to search a bit to find the info you need
- ◆ Knowledge of good database design **before** you start your database is best
- ◆ Know the difference between ASP, ODBC, VB to help in problem-solving
- ◆ Patience and determination will get you through any problem you encounter

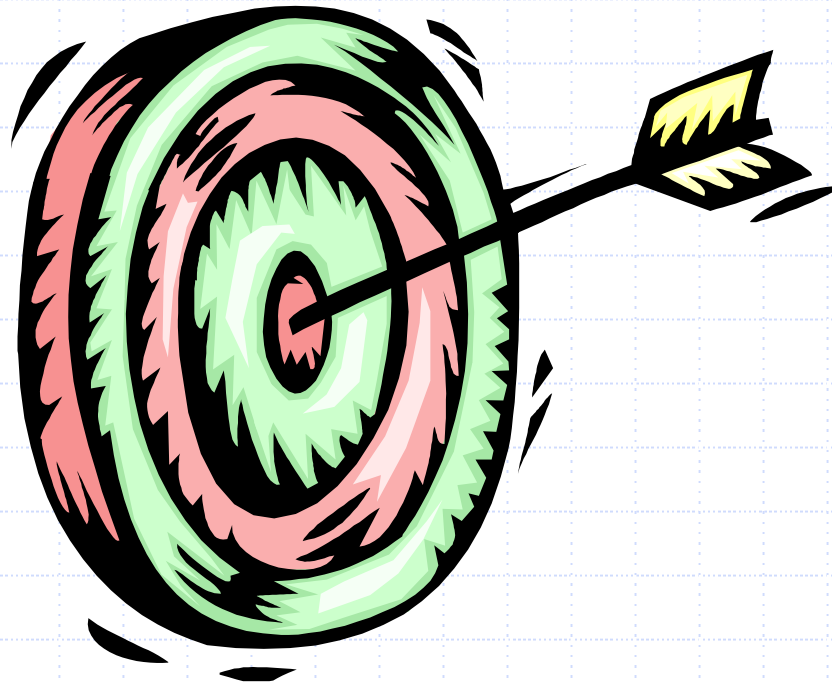
Troubleshooting



Tips

- ◆ Keep Web sites bookmarked for quick retrieval—the UltraDev site, Microsoft's tech support for ASP and VB, and any others you find helpful
- ◆ Take notes as you work of the steps you did so you can duplicate it or work out any bugs
- ◆ Test and retest
- ◆ Starting from scratch sometimes is all it takes to eliminate annoying errors

Final result



Final result

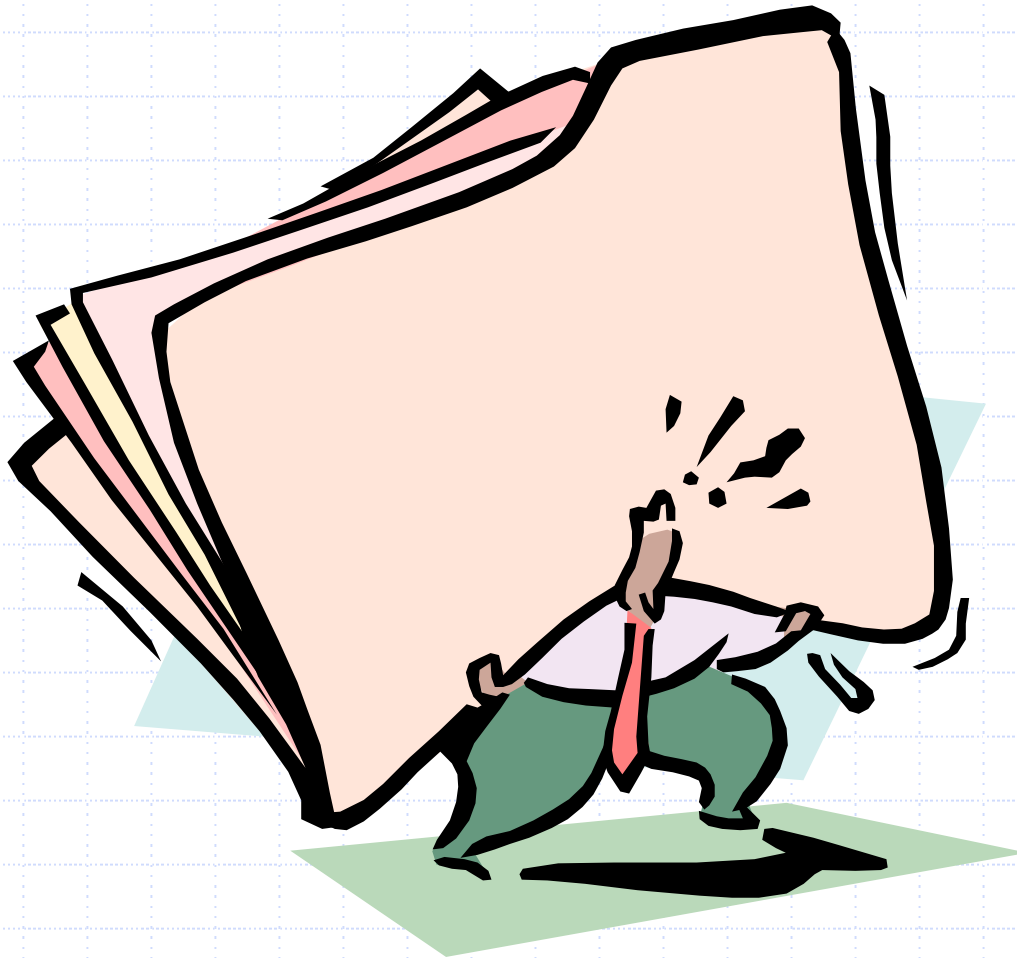
- ◆ On the testbed everything went well, but I was not able to give the project the final touches and mount it on the Web server
- ◆ As with any Web project a db project will need ongoing tweeking and improvement
- ◆ Mounting db-driven content is well worth the trials and troubles
- ◆ EZProgram was available at http://midhudson.org/test_directory/EZProgram/ezcentral_new.asp

What did I learn



- ◆ Plan what you want from the database before you create it
- ◆ Think about how the data would be used by users before planning the database
- ◆ A Team approach for testing and debugging helps you see different perspectives
- ◆ Committee-development of Web forms can be frustrating and counter-productive

Resources



Books

- ◆ Harris, Stuart. *Dreamweaver UltraDev 4 for dummies.*
- ◆ Nicholson, Sean. *Inside Dreamweaver UltraDev 4.*
- ◆ Paddock, Rob and Spencer Steel. *Foundation Dreamweaver UltraDev4 .*
- ◆ Ray, John. *SAMS teach yourself Dreamweaver UltraDev in 21 days.*

Web sites

- ◆ FAQs listing at Dreamweaver FAQ.com, at <http://www.dwfaq.com/FAQ/default.asp>
- ◆ Foundation Dreamweaver UltraDev book support site, at <http://www.friendsofed.com>
- ◆ Macromedia's Dreamweaver UltraDev support site, at <http://www.macromedia.com/support/ultradev/>

Web sites

- ◆ Microsoft's site for PWS download, at <http://www.microsoft.com/ntserver/nts/downloads/recommended/NT4OptPk/default.asp>
- ◆ UltraDev 101 : Formatting and Repeating Records, at http://www.virtual-fx.net/ultradev/workshop/ultradevshop_06.html
- ◆ UltraDevGuru.com: UltraDev Tutorials - Some useful links, at <http://ultradevguru.com/links/udlinks.htm>
- ◆ Macromedia Dreamweaver UltraDev Technical Help Forum, at <http://www.tek-tips.com/qthreadminder.cfm/lev2/4/lev3/31/pid/770>

Other

- ◆ LITA's *Regional Institute on Database-Driven Web sites*, regional institute information available at <http://www.lita.org/institut/index.html>

Questions?



Thank you!

