Using online forms

You use online forms to do things like apply for services, pay bills or shop online.

What is an online form?

Many application forms are now online for a range of good reasons.

- The form you've completed is online for easy future access.
- Postage costs are saved.
- There's no danger of the form being lost in the mail.
- Often a formal acknowledgement is automatically sent to you on receipt.

Most online forms use one or more of these elements:

- Text boxes – called **fields** – where you type in details.
- **Radio buttons**, **drop-down** lists and **checkboxes**, for choosing from a fixed range of options.

Filling in your details

You may have to complete an online registration form to use a website. Here's what you can expect:

- Enter the requested information in the text boxes.
- Any box marked with an **asterisk (*)** is compulsory.
- You will usually have to think of a password. Choose one memorable to you but hard for others to guess. A mix of letters, some uppercase, and numbers will be more secure.
- When you've entered a password, it will usually be replaced on the screen with asterisks so no one can see what it is.

Drop-down box form

Please select your date of birth:

Day: [1   ▼]

Month: [January   ▼]

Year:
```
Year                 ▲
1980
1979
1978
1977
1976
1975               ▼
```

Drop-down Lists

Check-box form

What hobbies/activities do you enjoy?

☐ Reading Books   ☑ Baking

☑ Craft making   ☐ Sport

☐ Outdoor Activities ☐ Art

☐ Photography   ☑ Travelling

What colours do you like?:

☐ Red ☑ Blue ☐ Green ☑ Yellow

Checkboxes

Radio button form

Please select your gender:

○ Male   ● Female

Please select your age range:

○ 0-25   ● 26+

Do you wish to receive email updates?:

● Yes   ○ No

Radio Buttons

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- Sometimes, when you start typing in a field, the computer might suggest how to complete it. This is called **auto-complete**. Make sure it's what you want before you accept it.
- Some forms have a time limit. Make sure you have anything you need handy.
- Some forms let you upload a document, such as your CV. Follow the instructions in the form.

Example registration

First Name*:
Barbara

Surname*:
Baise

Email Address*:
b.bai

b.baise77@yahoo.com

Password*:

Confirm password*:

Continue

Here's what you can expect in an online form

Multiple choices

Online forms let you type text into fields and select options from several different kinds of lists. These might include:

- **Drop-down lists**, where you choose one item from a longer list of options, such as year of birth.
- **Radio buttons**, where you can select only one from a shorter list of two or more options.
- **Checkboxes**, where you can tick more than one option from a shorter list of two or more options.
- **List boxes**, where you can choose more than one option from a longer list of options.

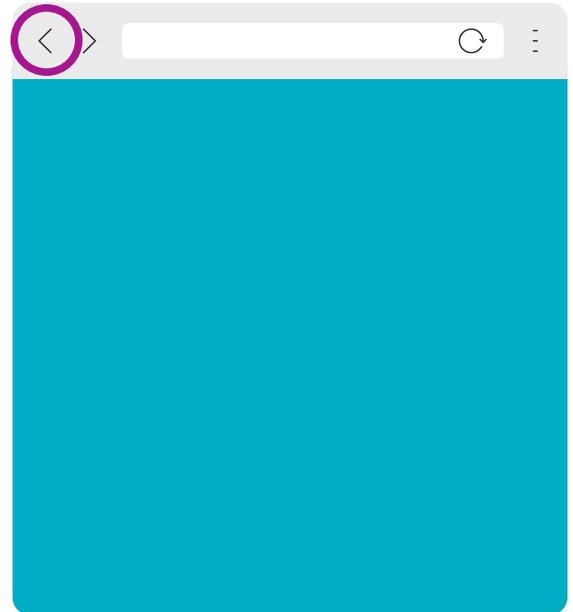What happens if you click the wrong item in a list?
- If it was in a drop-down list or an option with radio buttons, click the right item to correct it.
- If it was a checkbox, then you need to click the wrong item to undo it and click the correct item.

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How to correct a mistake

As with any form, sometimes we can make a mistake.

- Many online forms check the entries when you submit them.
- If you've left out a required field (marked with an **asterisk**) the form will usually highlight the error and ask you to correct it.
- If you need to return to a previous page, look for a **Back** button on the page, rather than using your browser's back button.

Browser back button

Many forms help you avoid making a mistake in the first place.

- Some forms include a search feature which can do things such as look up your postcode or address from the information you've typed.
- Don't forget to click the **Submit** and **Confirm** buttons when you've finished the form.