

Web Form Accessibility

The <label> tag

Visually impaired people use so called adaptive web browsers or screen readers to navigate through form fields on a web page. These screen readers identify the type of form element that is currently selected and provide users means to complete, select, de-select, or submit that form .

However, when navigating through the form, there is often no indication as to what information is requested with the particular selected form item. Sometimes it is almost impossible for screen reader users to understand whether to submit their name, address, phone number, a message, or any number of other things

This can be solved by associating form **labels** to form items on the page. The label should almost always be located adjacent to the form item itself. When a screen reader accesses a form item that has a <label> element associated with it, it will read the text within the <label> element and indicate the type of form item it is (e.g., "First Name. Text box" or "Age. Check box"). Labels are needed for all form elements, except for buttons; the screen reader reads the text that is on the button (e.g., "Submit button").

There are two ways how you can add a label tag.

1. You can wrap a label tag around the form item, as follows:

```
<label>City: <input type="text" name="city"></label>
```

2. You can attach <label> tag using for attribute:

```
<label for="city">City:</label><input type="text" name="city" id="city">
```

Notice that in this case you have to assign an id to a form field and use the for attribute to associate the label with the form field.

This choice causes the browser to render text associated with a input box with a focus rectangle, and enables the user to select the form field by clicking anywhere in the label instead of just the control. This is the preferred option for accessibility, especially when the label and the associated form control located in different table cells or different DIVs.

Fieldset and Legend tags

When you have several associated form elements, they can be grouped together by something called a **fieldset**. Each fieldset should have a **legend**. The legend is the text that works as a label for the associated group of form items. The legend is read by the screen reader associating the legend with each form control within the fieldset.

In addition, fieldset and legend help to logically organize the form fields. The fieldset generates a visual border in the web browser that surrounds the contents of the fieldset.

To create a fieldset, wrap fieldset element around all the elements that you want grouped together, and add the legend tag at the start of the <fieldset> tag.

```
<form action="" method="post">
```

```
<fieldset><legend>Personal info</legend>
```

```
Name: <input name="name" type="text" /> Email: <input name="email" type="text" />
```

```
</fieldset>
```

```
<fieldset ><legend>Interests</legend>
```

```
<input type="checkbox" name="web" value="web"/> Web Design <input type="checkbox"
```

```
name="art" value="art"/> Art <input type="checkbox" name="progr" value="programming"/>
```

```
Programming
```

```
</fieldset>
```

```
</form>
```