



Website: www.chestysoft.com

Email: info@chestysoft.com

Using an Image with Text to Verify a Form

REQUIREMENTS

The csImageFile DLL (trial version) must be registered on the server.

The following files must be placed in the same folder which must be web shared:

codeimage.asp
form.asp
verify.tif

DESCRIPTION

This is a demonstration of how to use an image containing text to check that a form has been completed by a real user and not a programme. It uses csImageFile to draw the image and this image can be customised to use any colours or any font that is installed on the server. It would be possible to load a previously designed image and draw the text onto this. The value of the text is stored in a session variable so that it can be generated in one script and used in another.

The starting page is **form.asp**. The code at the start of this script generates a random text string and stores it in a session variable. The code for generating the random string could be customised. In this example it has been kept simple and consists of four upper case letters.

The image is generated by **codeimage.asp** which uses csImageFile to create a new image and it draws text on it getting the text string from the session variable. The appearance of the image can be changed here by changing the colours or the brush style.

When the form is submitted it is posted to **verify.asp** which checks the form field against the session variable. It is important to check for the case where the session variable is empty and so the verification fails if the form field is empty.

Some automated form submission software is able to use optical character recognition to read these images. It is possible to do more to disguise the text, by drawing the characters separately and using different sizes and rotation angles, but this can also make it difficult for the user to read the text and that can be counter productive.

TROUBLESHOOTING

If this demo does not work here are some possible reasons.

1. This page requires the csImageFile trial component which is not included with the script. If you have not downloaded it you can get it from the Chestysoft website - www.chestysoft.com. The component must be registered on the server.

2. Some permissions may need to be set. The Internet Guest User must have Read and Execute permission on the DLL file.

3. The trial csImageFile component has an expiry date and it will not work after this date. **form.asp** will fail to display an image if this is the case.

4. There are two versions of csImageFile supplied with the trial, the 32 bit, csImageFileTrial.dll and the 64 bit csImageFile64Trial.dll. The example script uses the 32 bit version and the Server.CreateObject command must be modified if the 64 bit version is used.

5. An ASP session variable is used and this requires the browser to support cookies. The session variables themselves are stored on the server but the session ID is stored as a cookie.

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