

Script Parameters

(and the developers who love them)

FMUG

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What we will cover

- Background and need
- Basic setup
- Demonstrate examples
- Best practices
- Advanced example: “dynamic sorting”

Background

(or, why should I care?)

- Script parameters introduced in v7
- Review: pre-v7, one table = one file
 - Many similar scripts between and within files
- Starting with v7, one file = as many tables as you want
 - “Old” way of scripting = huge number of scripts
- Need way to “reuse” functionality to keep number of scripts manageable
- Hence the need for script parameters!

Basic Idea

- Script parameters let you give a script context on how to carry out its task.
- Method:
 - Specify parameter in Specify Script dialog box
 - Read information into script using function
Get (ScriptParameter)

Examples

(see demo file)

- Send Mail
- Open URL
- Layout Navigation
- Sorting
- “Dynamic” Sorting

Complete Method

(with best practices)

- Specify parameter in “Specify Script” dialog box, either in button setup or subscript call
- Declare local script variable with descriptive name and give it the value `Get (ScriptParameter)`
- For tasks that do the same thing regardless of the parameter value, you’re done.
 - Ex. Send Mail (To: \$email)
- For tasks that do different things depending on the parameter value, use `If / Elself` statements to switch behavior.
- Check for invalid parameter using `Else` statement

Dynamic Sorting

- Many applications (especially websites) enable “dynamic sorting:”
 - Click on a column name to sort by it.
 - Click it again for a reverse sort.
 - Display an arrow graphic indicating the sort column and sort order.
 - Example: eBay
- Can do this in FileMaker too...tricky, but do-able!

Dynamic Sorting (cont'd)

- Store Sort Order:
 - New global field: **zg_last_sorted_by**
- **Sort Script:**
 - Send column name as script parameter. eg: “last name”
 - Check **zg_last_sorted_by** to see if previous sort was on that column
 - Perform appropriate sort based on **zg_last_sorted_by**
 - Set new value for **zg_last_sorted_by**. eg: “last name A” (for ascending order)
- Graphics:
 - New table for images: **z_graphics**. Define global container field: **zg_hilite_library** (2 repetitions). Insert arrow images.
 - Back in main table, define calculated container fields for each sort column: **zc_hilite_<column name>**. eg: **zc_hilite_last_name**. Calculation looks at **zg_last_sorted_by**. If same column, grabs appropriate arrow image. Ex: **zg_last_sorted_by** = “last name A”; **zc_hilite_last_name** will display “up” arrow.

Wrap-up

- Slides and demo file available online
 - <http://web.mit.edu/is/help/filemaker/fmug>
- Contact info
 - Stu Dietz, DCAD FileMaker Developer
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 - <http://web.mit.edu/ist/dcad>