



Guide to updating dynamic content

Most sites created by Chirp have some form of updateable content. Over recent years we have built some sophisticated code libraries that allow for various formatting effects to be achieved while keeping the rules as simple as possible.

paragraphs

In its most basic form, the filter converts text input into standard HTML. Each line break is converted into an HTML line break and the entire text wrapped in a paragraph. This does not include apparent line breaks caused by the 'wrapping' of text inside the input box - these have no effect on the output.

Our goal is output HTML that meets the standards set by the W3C ("World Wide Web Consortium"). That ensures that all of the content on your site is accessible to search engines and to all classes of web browser, from mobile devices and 'screen readers' to the standard Internet Explorer and Mozilla-based browsers.

simple formatting

You can make use of simple HTML formatting to add emphasis to words or to create headings. The most commonly used tags are:

`bold`

`<I>italic</I>`

`<U>underline</U>`

`<big>big</big>`

`<small>small</small>`

`<H1>Heading 1</H1>`

`<H2>Heading 2</H2>`

`<H3>Heading 3</H3>`

`<H4>Heading 4</H4>`

It's also possible to combine tags (up to two at a time):

`<I>bold italic</I>`

The actual appearance of 'tagged' text will depend on the style sheet (CSS) applied to your site. If you wish to add coloured text or have other requirements then the style sheet can be modified, allowing you to apply special formatting using other tags:

eg.

`emphasis` # might be formatted as red, bold, italic
`strong` # might be formatted a blue, bold, underlined

special characters

If you use a program such as Microsoft Word to prepare your text, or copy and paste text from an existing Word or PDF document, you may be inserting 'invalid' characters such as 'smart quotes' and various other symbols that are not recognised in standard HTML. The filter detects and converts the most common of these automatically.

Some symbols such as custom list bullets will not be identified and may cause problems in the output. These characters should be examined and replaced using other characters or formatted as a list (see below).

Characters for which there are special codes in HTML (eg. é, ü) will be sometimes appear in the input box as ((eacute)), ((uuml)) and so on. They will appear in the HTML however as the proper HTML entity. We are working to make this aspect of the filter more transparent.

customisation

We can set up custom 'keywords' for your site that are automatically replaced with other content. For example, a certain name could become an email link; a company name can become a link to their website; an abbreviation be automatically expanded; and so on.

lists

A simple 'unordered list' can be created by starting consecutive lines in the input with an asterisk (*) followed by a space. The format of the list when displayed will be dependent on the style sheet (CSS) for your site.

links

You can insert a hyperlink by entering a complete URI ("Uniform Resource Identifier") that starts with a scheme name ('http://', or 'https://' for secure sites) followed by a URL (eg. www.chirp.com.au). Links will be displayed without the scheme name and, with the exception of links that are within the current website, will open in a new browser window.

email links

A valid email address will be converted into a live 'mailto' link. A custom JavaScript method is used to ensure that email addresses cannot be easily 'harvested' by spammers.

labelling links and email links

When a link is followed immediately (with no break of any kind) by some text inside square brackets ('[]'), the text inside the brackets will be used as the link, and the actual URL or email address will not be displayed.

eg. `duncan@example.net[Duncan Crombie]` => [Duncan Crombie](mailto:duncan@example.net)

eg. `http://www.chirp.com.au/[Chirp Internet]` => [Chirp Internet](http://www.chirp.com.au)

Information on developments at Chirp can always be found on our website. If you have any questions or specific requirements regarding the formatting of dynamic content on your site, don't hesitate to ask.