

Using a dropdown for your blogroll

By Cal Henderson

Linking to other weblogs is a way of showing you read them and like them. When you read quite a few, your "blogroll" can become quite big and start to take up a lot of space. A quick hack to save space is to change your blogroll from a list of links, into a dropdown. This only works for javascript enabled browsers, so if you're worried about accessibility, then there's a suggested fix afterwards, for the non-javascript crowd.

Your current blogroll probably looks something like this:

```
<a href="http://iamcal.com/">iamcal</a><br />
<a href="http://plasticbag.org/">plasticbag</a><br />
<a href="http://kottke.org/">kottke</a><br />
```

You'll need to convert each link into an `<option>` tag within a single `<select>` tag:

```
<select>
<option>Choose a weblog...</option>
<option value="http://iamcal.com/">iamcal</option>
<option value="http://plasticbag.org/">plasticbag</option>
<option value="http://kottke.org/">kottke</option>
</select>
```

Then, using the *onchange* event of the `<select>` tag you can tell the browser to launch the selected site:

```
<select onchange="window.open(this.options[this.selectedIndex].value);
this.selectedIndex=0;">
```

To enable this to work on all browsers, you'll also need to wrap the whole thing in a `<form>` tag:

```
<form onsubmit="return false;">
<select onchange="window.open(this.options[this.selectedIndex].value);
this.selectedIndex=0;">
<option>Choose a weblog...</option>
<option value="http://iamcal.com/">iamcal</option>
<option value="http://plasticbag.org/">plasticbag</option>
<option value="http://kottke.org/">kottke</option>
</select>
</form>
```

So there you have it - your blogroll reduced into a single small dropdown.

But what if you want it to work without javascript enabled? Well, it will require a little bit more work. In this example we'll be using PHP, but you can use any serverside language.

The first thing to do is to enable the form as a normal html form, pointing to a php script:

```
<form action="blogroll.php" method="get" target="_blank">
<select onchange="window.open(this.options[this.selectedIndex].value);
this.selectedIndex=0;" name="link">
<option>Choose a weblog...</option>
<option value="http://iamcal.com/">iamcal</option>
```

```
<option value="http://plasticbag.org/">plasticbag</option>
<option value="http://kottke.org/">kottke</option>
</select>
<input type="submit" value="Go" />
</form>
```

Now, when javascript is not enabled, the user can select a blog, then click the submit button (labeled 'go'). This, in turn, will cause a new window to open, with the address *blogroll.php?link=http://iamcal.com/*

By creating a simple script called *blogroll.php*, you can get php to forward the user to the URL passed in the link parameter:

```
<?php
header('location: '.$HTTP_GET_VARS['link']);
exit;
?>
```

If you don't have a serverside language installed, but are using Apache with *mod_rewrite*, then you can do the following instead, inside your *.htaccess* file:

```
RewriteEngine on
RewriteCond %{QUERY_STRING} ^link=(.*)$ [NC]
RewriteRule blogroll\.php %1 [R=permanent]
```

These rewriting rules act exactly as the *blogroll.php* script does - they take a url of the form *blogroll.php?link=http://iamcal.com/* and convert it to *http://iamcal.com/*.

(end of article)