Layout Tools

The Form Editor features a number of tools to facilitate quick and easy form design. The following features are discussed in this section, in the order that they appear in the Editor Toolbars: layering, group/ungroup, setting alignments, space distribution, same element size, and anchoring.

In This Chapter

- Arranging Element Layers
- Grouping/Ungrouping Elements
- Setting Alignments
- Setting Space Distribution
- Setting Element Sizes
- Setting Element Anchors
    - Visualizing the Anchoring Indicators
    - Setting the Anchoring Property

Arranging Element Layers

Elements can be arranged from the front to the back layers using the **bring forward** (1), **send backward** (2) **send to front** (3) and **send to back** (4) buttons on the Layering toolbar. The first two buttons send the selected item front or back one layer at a time; the latter two buttons send items all the way to the front or back of form.

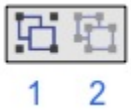


To set element layering:

1. Select the item(s) that you would like to be in front or at the back of other items in the layout. You can select multiple items by click-dragging a selection box around the item(s), or by holding down the CTRL key while clicking on the items.
2. Click on the desired Layering button.

Grouping/Ungrouping Elements

Elements can be grouped using the **group** (1) **ungroup** (2) buttons on the Reorganize toolbar.

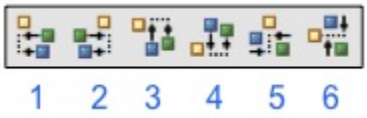


To group/ungroup elements:

1. Select a group of elements that you wish to set to the same height or width by click-dragging a selection box around them, or by holding down the CTRL key while clicking on each element.
2. Click on the appropriate button on the Reorganize toolbar.

Setting Alignments

The Align toolbar contains buttons for aligning elements (1-left, 2-right, 3-top, 4-bottom, 5-center, and 6-middle).



To align a group of elements:

1. Select a group of elements that you wish to align by click-dragging a selection box around them, or by holding down the CTRL key while clicking on each element.
2. Click the appropriate alignment button on the Align toolbar.

- In most cases, items will be aligned according to the outermost element (for example, if you choose **align left,** the elements will align to the leftmost item among the selected group; if you choose **align top,** all items will align to the topmost element.)
- **Align center** arranges the elements along the horizontal center of the selected elements; **align middle** aligns the elements to the vertical middle of the selected elements.

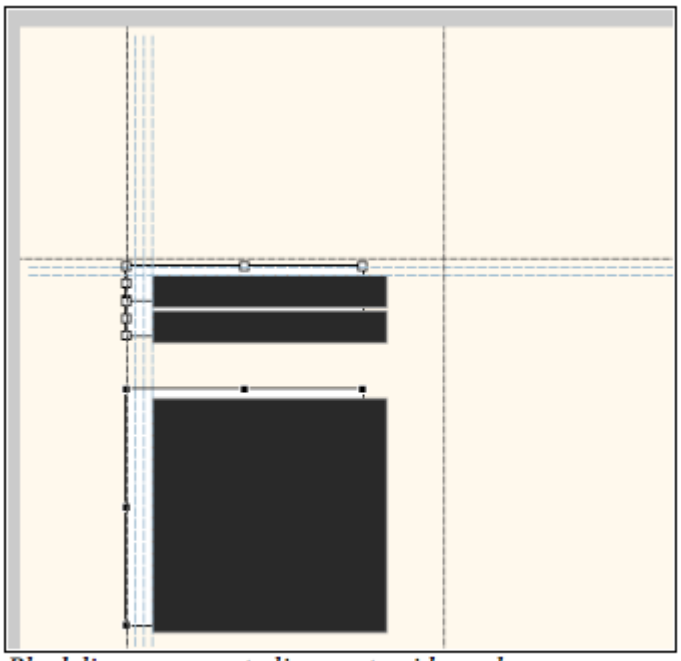
You can also use alignment guides to align elements:

1. Click on the horizontal or vertical ruler to create an alignment guide.

- A ruler mark will appear, which you can drag left or right (horizontal ruler) or up and down (vertical ruler) to the location that you would like to use. The guide can be removed from the ruler by selecting it in the ruler and pressing Delete.
- You can change the ruler units by accessing the Preferences pane from the contextual menu (right-click)

2. Select the items you want to align and drag them towards the alignment guide.

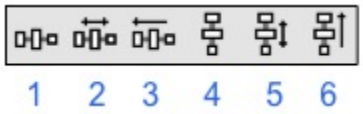
- The default snap-to-guide threshold is 3px.
- You will see small, medium, and large offset guides as you drag the items towards the alignment guide. The default offsets are 5, 10, and 15 px respectively (see image below). These offsets can be modified via the Preferences pane in the contextual menu.



Black lines represent alignment guides; when you move an element or group of elements close to the guides, gray lines appear showing the small, medium, and large offsets.

Setting Space Distribution

The Distribute toolbar contains buttons for setting space distribution of selected elements.



To distribute elements equally:

1. Select a group of elements that you wish to distribute by click-dragging a selection box around them, or by holding down the CTRL key while clicking on each element.
2. Click on the appropriate Distribute button on the toolbar.

- Items can be equally distributed based on horizontal/vertical spacing between element edges or element centers:
  - **Horizontal Spacing (1)** creates equal spaces between elements, keeping the leftmost and right most elements' horizontal positions fixed.
  - **Horizontal Centers (2)** creates equal spaces between the horizontal centers of each element.
  - **Vertical Spacing (4)** creates equal spaces between elements, keeping the topmost and bottom elements' vertical position fixed.
  - **Vertical Centers (5)** creates equal spaces between the vertical centers of each element.
- Items can also be distributed equally from the left or from the top
  - **Leftward (3)** creates equal spaces between elements while bringing items to the left.
  - **Upward (6)** creates equal spaces between elements while bringing items to the top.

Note: The default spacing for these two options can be changed by accessing **Preferences** in the contextual menu and setting the Small Offset value to the desired spacing.

Setting Element Sizes

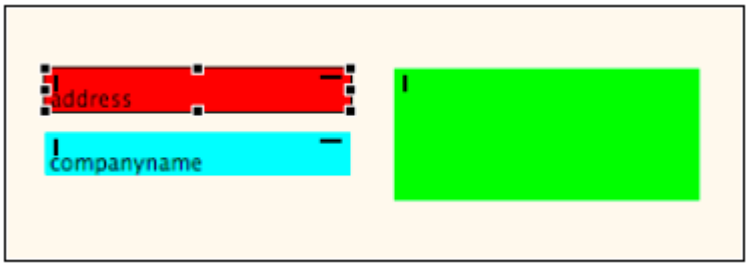
The Same Size toolbar allows you to set the same width (1) or same height (2) for the a group of selected elements.



To set the same width or height:

1. Select a group of elements that you wish to set to the same height or weight by click-dragging a selection box around them, or by holding down the CTRL key while clicking on each element.
2. Click on the appropriate button on the Same Size toolbar.

- If you have **Show same-size indicators** active (you can change this setting via the Toggle toolbar), elements with the same width will have a vertical bar on the top left corner when an item is selected. Conversely, elements with the same height will have a horizontal bar on the top right corner, as seen in the figure below:



Setting Element Anchors

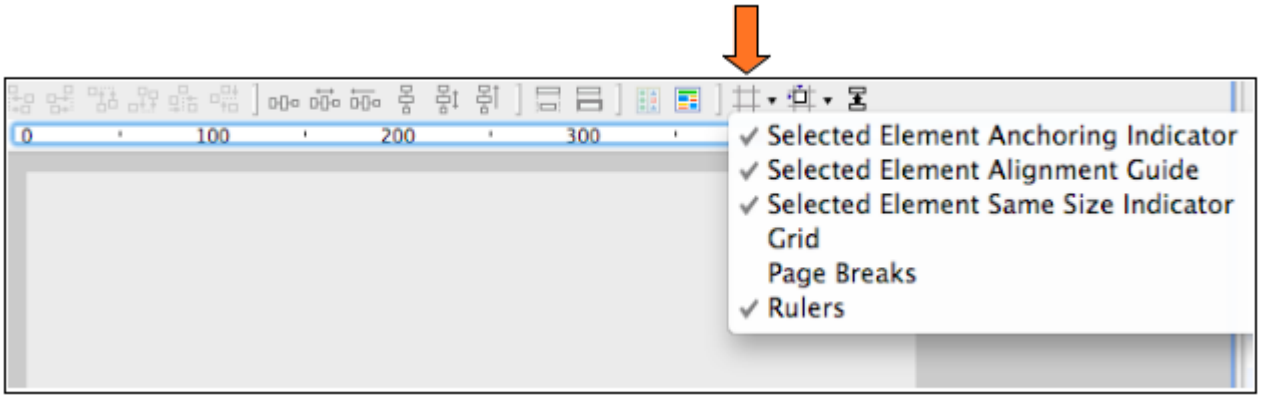
Anchor settings determine how the layout of elements change when an end-user resizes the application window.

- By default, elements placed on a form are anchored to the left and to the top---meaning that their position is fixed to the left and the top.
- Elements can also be anchored to the bottom or to the right, which will give the elements a fixed position relative to those settings.

> WebClient/NGClient has a special scenario when anchoring bottom/right an element in a form which is bigger than its parent container. In certain situations, the element will be anchored to the viewport rather than to the whole form. In this scenario, you should also anchor element top in order to enforce its anchoring to the form and get desired layout.

Visualizing the Anchoring Indicators

The Editor Preferences toolbar allows you to visualize anchoring indicators, which can then be used to modify anchoring settings for an element.



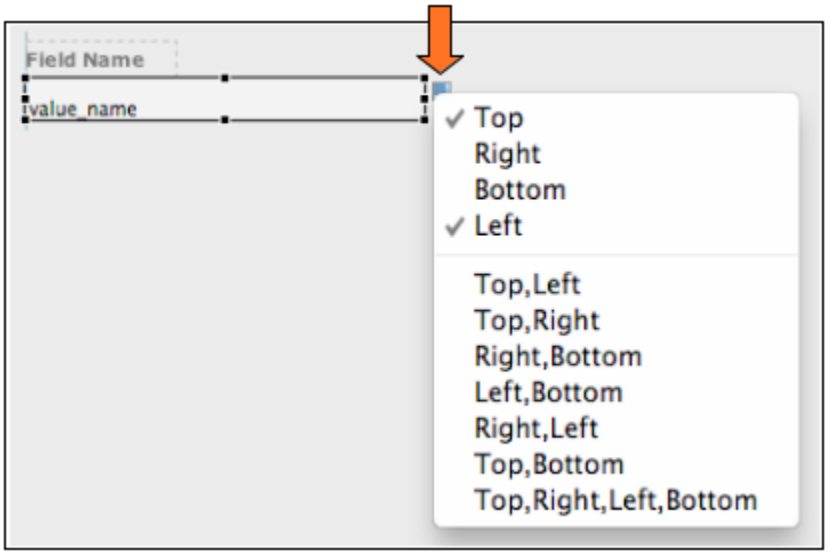
The anchoring indicator appears as a gray box to the top right of the selected element.

Setting the Anchoring Property

To set the desired anchoring option:

1. Click on the gray box to reveal the menu.

2. Select your anchoring preferences from the drop-down list (see image below).



Note: If you want the elements to grow or shrink when the window is resized, you need to set opposite anchors (for exampleSetting Element Sizes, anchor TOP,LEFT; or anchor BOTTOM, RIGHT).