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A guide to

# Connecting Flash Map to a Database

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# Abstract

This manual provides general guidelines to assist and explain how to link the flash mapping application with your database or MLS listings and show dynamically generated data on the map. You will find out how to make the map read data directly from a script (ASP, JSP, PHP, etc.), instead of the static configuration files.

## Who Should Read this Manual

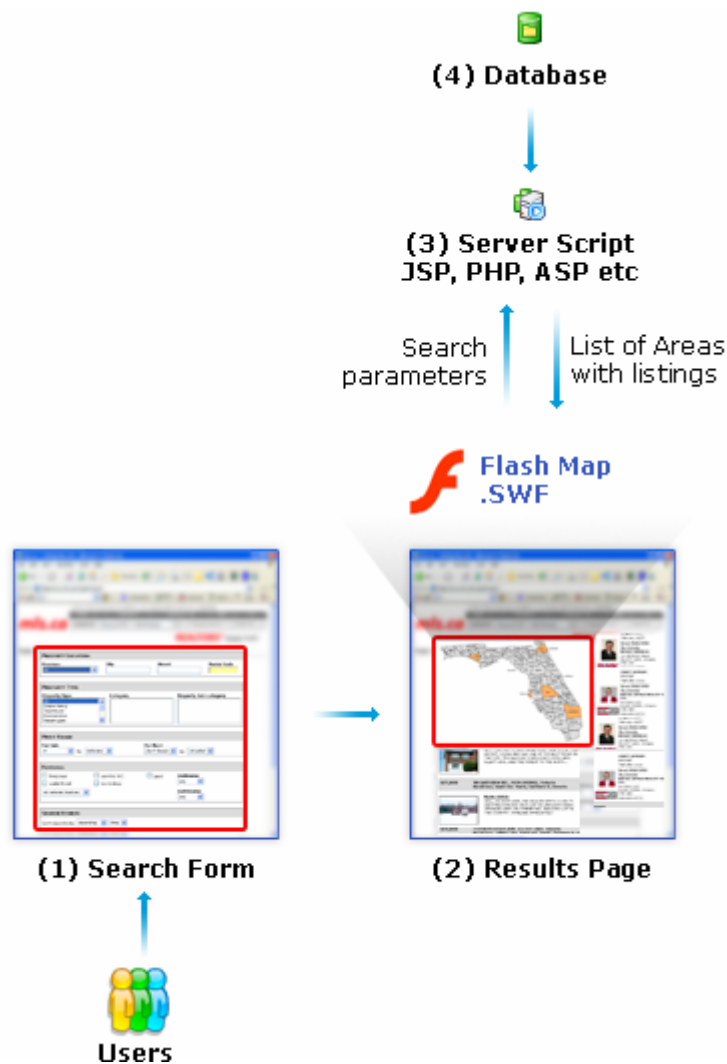
USFlashMap.com welcomes customers (Demo and Commercial orders) and their partners to implement search functionality for:

- USA Real Estate Map
- USA Statistics Map
- USA Dealer Locator Map
- XML Locator Family (World, USA, Canada) Maps

# Introduction

This Manual contains common explanations, instructions, and visual overviews. If you store the information in a database or another source of data, in the manual we will show you how to organize search functionality and display search results on the map. Search results may be displayed by plotting matching locations, coloring areas with matches, fading the rest of the territories. There are two basic options. You can:

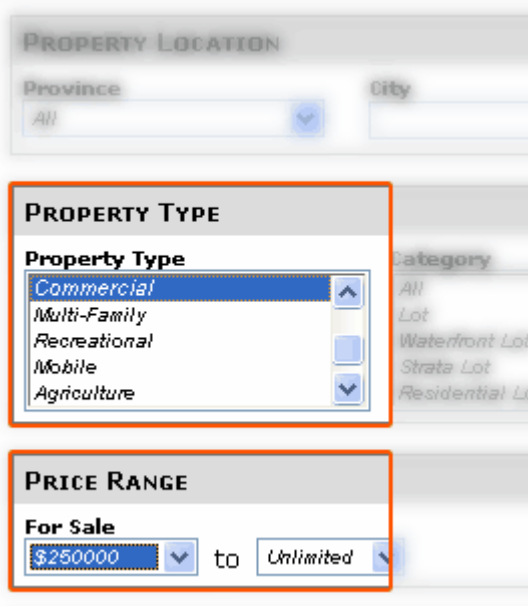
1. Overwrite data files for the map every time you update the database.
2. Configure the map in the way it could read data directly from a server script (JSP, ASP, PHP etc). This feature enables delivering different data sets for different user requests.



# Getting Search Criteria from the User

HTML form is the most common way to show available options, ask users to specify the search criteria, and use POST method to pass the parameters to the results page.

Example: Real Estate website with the following search options:



The screenshot shows a search form with three main sections:

- PROPERTY LOCATION:** Includes a 'Province' dropdown menu (set to 'All') and a 'City' text input field.
- PROPERTY TYPE:** A dropdown menu with options: Commercial (highlighted), Multi-Family, Recreational, Mobile, and Agriculture.
- PRICE RANGE:** A 'For Sale' dropdown menu (set to '\$250000') followed by a 'to' separator and another dropdown menu (set to 'Unlimited').

1. Category
  - a. Residential Properties (1)
  - b. New Homes and Resorts (2)
  - c. **Commercial Properties (3)**
2. Price
  - a. \$100,000
  - b. **\$250,000**
  - c. \$500,000

# Displaying Search Matches to the User

This chapter explains how to redefine the map to read data directly from the search script.

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## The Search Script

The Search script connects to your database (or another data source) and finds the matching records. The script usually has a predefined set of parameters that are passed with the POST method. It returns a list of matches as an output, which can be an html page or just a plain text.

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## Formatting Data for the Flash Map

The search script returns data for the map in the predefined format. The list of products and object entities recognized by the map is given below.

You may use existing flash map data file structure or study Installation and Customization Manual of your product (configuration file syntax section) to generate a well formatted data file.

### USA Real Estate Map

USA Real Estate Flash Map gives a possibility to manipulate areas (States and Counties You can:

- Create a list and description of clickable states and counties, matching the search criteria with content on mouse over or click: HTML Description may include a number of properties per state or county, other html text with images, color scheme etc).
- Create a list of empty states and counties with 0 matches to disable user interaction and avoid showing empty reports on click.

### USA Dealer Locator Map

USA Dealer Locator Map allows manipulating states and locations. You can:

- Show a list of states with locations and description
- Show a list of empty states (fade out)
- Display existing locations on the national and the state views

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**Note:** Dealer Locator Map is delivered with the Administrative area tool. We have designed it specifically to help you manage locations.

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## XML Locator Map

The XML Locator product family (World, Europe, USA) has a possibility to manipulate the following objects:

- Active Countries and Regions (based on a custom list of countries).
- Empty Countries and Regions (disable click)
- Locations by longitude/latitude coordinate (on the Global and Local view). Locations are lined to countries and can be categorized by different types (legend component).

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## The HTML Results Page

This page is generated dynamically and returned by the web server to your browser as an HTML page, using the search parameters entered on the previous page.

Sample search results pages with the map:



Real Estate example



XML Locator Example

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## Changing Configuration Filenames

When generating the search results page, you must redefine configuration filenames/URL for the flash map object: Replace default URL with the search script URL and search parameters. For proper syntax please refer to Redefining configuration filenames section of your product manual.

### Example

Your search script is used with the following parameters:

[www.yourdomain.com/search.php?categoryID=3&price=250000](http://www.yourdomain.com/search.php?categoryID=3&price=250000)

### Default HTML code

```
<param name="FlashVars"  
value="skinColor=0x000000&backgroundURL=applicationdata/backgro  
und/bentley.jpg" />
```

and

```
<embed src="main.swf"  
FlashVars="skinColor=0x000000&backgroundURL=applicationdata/backg  
round/bentley.jpg" quality="high"
```

**Search results HTML code:**

```
<param name="FlashVars"  
value="skinColor=0x000000&backgroundURL=applicationdata/backgro  
und/bentley.jpg&areasURL=www.yourdomain.com/search.php?category  
=3%26price=250000"/>
```

and

```
<embed src="main.swf"  
FlashVars="skinColor=0x000000&backgroundURL=applicationdata/back  
ground/bentley.jpg&areasURL=www.yourdomain.com/search.php?cate  
gory=3%26price=250000" />
```

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**Note:** Because of the file syntax, you must replace '&' with '%26' in the filenameURL.

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# Frequently Asked Questions

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## Can the flash map show real time changes from the database?

Yes it is possible to read data from real time data stream and apply/show changes on the map. This way the map will monitor all events that take place every second and use this information to highlight corresponding area. Areas with older events make fade out slowly. Feel free to contact us for a custom project using the online form [http://www.usflashmap.com/contact/contact\\_general.php?subTopic=custom](http://www.usflashmap.com/contact/contact_general.php?subTopic=custom)

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## Where do I get the product manual with configuration file structure?

Please study your product folder carefully. Most demo versions and commercial orders are delivered with installation and configuration manual in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) or Microsoft Word (DOC) format. You may also check website product page for 'documentation' content block.

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## Can you help with integration, what is the cost and turnaround time?

USFlashMap.com may provide installation and customization services of our products to most of web servers and platforms.

### Basic Installation package

You have no database; however you still need assistance in inserting you product to your website page.

Required Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• your login to USFlashMap.com user area (email you used to make the purchase)</li><li>• FTP access info</li></ul>
Cost	\$50
Turnaround Time	Up to 3 days

## Advanced Installation package

You have a DB driven website and need to connect the map with your database to display custom information based on a specific criteria

- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Required Information</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• your login to USFlashMap.com user area (email you used to make the purchase)</li><li>• DB scheme (for preliminary analyses)</li><li>• FTP access info</li></ul> |
|-----------------------------|---|

<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$100 and more</b>
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<b>Turnaround Time</b>	<b>Up to 3 days</b>
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## Exclusive Customization services

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|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Required Information</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describe your request</li><li>• Provide server access info (if exists, to check the platform)</li></ul> |
|-----------------------------|---|

<b>Cost</b>	<b>Depending on the project scope. Our standard price is 25\$/hour</b>
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<b>Turnaround Time</b>	<b>Depending on the project scope</b>
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