Computation Lab Presentation for Dart 444

Resources & Tips for portfolio website creation

To help you design & build a web presence for your work.

The Computation Lab

❖ What is the Computation Lab?

❖ Coordinator: Sabine Rosenberg

❖ Website: clab.concordia.ca

❖ Location: EV7-760 (behind Cafe-X)

❖ Available Equipment & Resources

❖ Workshops

Presentation Goals

❖ Outline a step-by-step guide for building an online presence for your work

❖ Present various techniques for designing a *website* with the help of online solutions & tools

Requirements

❖ A *web domain name:* people need to be able to find you on the internet

❖ The *website* to be *hosted:* files must be stored on a *public* server

❖ Implement some *web pages*: content, layout, structure …

❖ Implement some *features/plugins*: i.e. blogging tools, a gallery, contact & feedback forms…

❖ The website should be *optimized for search engines*: visible and easily retrieved by keyword queries

Overview of Options

- Option 1: Full Control

  - Aquire a domain name and hosting package

  - Design webpages using WYSIWYG editors & tools

- Option 2: Use a CMS + Independent Hosting

  - Aquire a domain name and hosting package

  - Download, and maintain a CMS (i.e Wordpress), through the hosting provider. The hosting provider may offer direct support for some CMS solutions.

  - Utilize a website builder (off-the shelf web design tools) provided by hosting provider.

- Option 3 : Use a Hosted CMS

  - Find a CMS solution which provides hosting and full support.

Step 1: Register a domain name

❖ Domain name: the name for your website.
i.e: *sabineRosenberg.com*

❖ Need to pay an annual fee (approx. $10.00 per year)

❖ Register name with the *web hosting provider* or directly with the *domain name registrar*

❖ Having a domain name *does not* mean you have a website.

Step 1: Register a domain name

❖ To register your domain name: see the following links -(there are many more…). You can register online with a credit card or Paypal account.

❖ GoDaddy.com

❖ Register.com

❖ Host1Plus.com

❖ hover.com

Step 2: Choose a web host

- ❖ **A web host:** the company which stores your website on their servers. When you place your website on their servers, the website is made *public.*

- ❖ To sign up - you need to pay a monthly fee - depending on the services offered, and type of account you choose.

  - ❖ Starting fees are approx. $6.00 per month.

- ❖ If you already have a domain name (independently acquired) - you will need to point your domain name to the web host's *domain name servers.*

  - ❖ *Your web host will provide you with the necessary details when you sign up with them.*

Step 2: Choose a web host

❖ To sign up for an account with a web hosting company: see the following links - (there are many more…).

❖ GoDaddy.com

❖ netfirms.com

❖ lunarpages.com

❖ Host1Plus.com

Step 3: Build your web site

- ❖ Content Management Systems (CMS)

- ❖ Website Scaffolds

- ❖ Create web pages using text editor or WYSIWYG editor

Content Management Systems

❖ A software system which provides website authoring, collaboration and admin tools designed to allow users to create and manage website content with relative ease.

❖ Separation of content (images, text…) & style (layout, colour choices, font choices… etc.)

❖ Content is usually stored in a *database,* and is combined with the visual representation (a set of *templates*) when the page is loaded.

❖ Enables the user to develop and use *themes* to change the appearance of the website independently of the content.

❖ A theme is a set of files (PHP, CSS, …), that are assembled dynamically, with the resulting HTML styled using CSS.

How to use a CMS

❖ A CMS may be downloaded, maintained and run by the user (through the host provider). The web host provider may offer direct support for some CMS solutions (for a fee) and extra setup is required.

❖ CMS solutions usually alternatively provide options to host and support the website themselves (a fee may apply).

❖ Upon signing up with a given CMS, you choose a default theme, and add/manage the content through the administration web interface (not locally on your machine).

❖ You may choose the option to customize or even create your own theme.

WordPress

- ❖ One of the most popular CMS solutions: wordpress.org (independently hosted) and wordpress.com (hosted option)

- ❖ Comparison of the two WordPress *flavours*:

- ❖ The initial software is free & open source.

- ❖ Setup and installation on a custom web host is straight forward.

- ❖ Numerous plugins/widgets available to extend the website capabilities and functionality.

- ❖ Extensive theme directory for adding new themes

- ❖ Content, functionality and basic styling management accessible via the admin interface

- ❖ Disadvantage: Creating a new theme or customizing an existing theme may be overwhelming to a new user - however the online documentation and online tutorials are extremely useful.

Resources for using WordPress

❖ Word Press Documentation:

  ❖ codex.wordpress.org/Main_Page

  ❖ codex.wordpress.org/Installing_WordPress

  ❖ codex.wordpress.org/Page_Templates#Custom_Page_Template

❖ Using WordPress specifically for an on-line portfolio:

  ❖ onextrapixel.com/2010/06/14/the-ultimate-guide-for-an-online-portfolio-using-wordpress/

  ❖ elegantthemes.com/blog/tips-tricks/creating-a-killer-online-portfolio-website-using-wordpress

  ❖ smashingmagazine.com/2009/04/29/ultimate-guide-to-using-wordpress-for-a-portfolio/

  ❖ creativebloq.com/web-design/wordpress-tutorials-designers-1012990/

  ❖ wpvkp.com/best-wordpress-portfolio-themes/

❖ Learning WordPress:

  ❖ premium.wpmudev.org/blog/teaching-wordpress-to-absolute-beginners-part-1-the-build/

  ❖ lynda.com/WordPress-3-0-tutorials/Create-an-Online-Portfolio-with-WordPress/83096-2.html

  ❖ learn.wordpress.com

  ❖ code.tutsplus.com/tutorials/create-a-multi-layout-portfolio-with-wordpress--net-20304

  ❖ www.presscoders.com/wordpress-theme-customization-guide/

  ❖ www.adobe.com/devnet/dreamweaver/articles/dw_wordpress_pt1.html

Other popular CMS solutions

❖ drupal.org

❖ joomla.org

❖ These solutions are similar to WordPress - however they are more complex to use and manage. Consequently, they provide the capability for building more complex sites.

❖ Comparison of the three solutions:

   ❖ www.rackspace.com/knowledge_center/article/cms-comparison-drupal-joomla-and-wordpress

Smaller CMSs

❖ CMS solutions like WordPress may prove to be too complicated and extensive for your needs.

❖ Luckily, there exist many *smaller* CMS solutions which provide support and functionality targeted for specific website genres.

❖ These Content Management systems do not necessarily offer the extensive features, rather they provide more custom, directed and easy to use solutions.

❖ These systems are sometimes free or are subscription based, and may also offer the option to host and maintain the website for you.

Smaller CMSs

❖ **squarespace.com**

   ❖ free or limited subscription, offers a diverse range of website designs and themes tailored for different occasions and industries. All the templates are compatible with mobile devices as well. Offers hosting options. You must pay and subscribe to SquareSpace, but you can also use its free trial with limited options.

❖ **wix.com**

   ❖ Based on a user-friendly drag-and-drop editor, Wix also offers rich media capabilities, with both Flash and HTML5 support. Hundreds of quite advanced templates are available. The service is based on a *freemium* model: users create free accounts, and upgrades cost between $4 and $16 per month for features like custom domains , hosting and e-commerce designs.

❖ **subfolio.com**

   ❖ A do-it-yourself portfolio tool, allowing users to implement, maintain and configure portfolios on their own servers. The service is best for designers with significant development skills: it's a PHP5 file browser application that lets users manage settings, file types, themes, and more. Subfolio reads the files you place within a directory folder and then turns the content into a website, turning folders into sections and files into pages. It's currently in private beta, though you can request an invitation <u>here</u>

❖ **weebly.com**
An easy to use platform which allows users to create a mobile friendly website quickly and easily. Users can select from a database of pre-designed themes and then customize the look and feel. Has free and paid features/options i.e. blogging tools, e-commerce, hosting…

More Smaller CMS links

- portfoliobox.net

- imcreator.com

- koken.me

- krop.com

- foliodrop.com

- coroflot.com

- carbonmade.com

- virb.com

- cargocollective.com

- viewbook.com

- dunked.com

- Comparision & Review of Popular Options

    - ca.complex.com/pop-culture/2012/01/the-9-best-services-for-building-an-online-portfolio/

    - http://graziadiovoice.pepperdine.edu/8-tools-for-creating-an-online-portfolio/

    - http://www.noupe.com/business-online/freelance/building-an-online-web-design-portfolio-tools-themes-and-templates.html

Summary: CMS Solutions

❖ CMS solutions provide the user an almost immediate web presence: layout, structure, advanced feature options and support.

❖ Hosted CMS solutions are secure, as well as providing services such as automatic back ups.

❖ Some CMS solutions require the web host provider to support specific technologies (PHP, SQL, etc…) so you need to make sure to choose the right package.

❖ CMS solutions can provide a new community - new contacts and exposure. They may also provide tools for marketing your web site (i.e Google AdWords).

Static Website Builders

❖ An alternative solution to a CMS is to use a *static website builder*

  ❖ Provide off-the-shelf, self contained web site solutions

  ❖ No hand-coding needed: code is generated by the website builder.

  ❖ Some options will allow for integration with a CMS (hosted/non hosted options).

  ❖ May provide contemporary & *responsive* (i.e mobile ready) web solutions:

    ❖ <u>webflow</u>:
      monthly subscription ($14), multiple hosting options

    ❖ <u>adobe edge reflow</u>:
      Part of Adobe Creative Cloud family: need a monthly subscription, currently no hosting option.

    ❖ <u>macaw</u>:
      $179 - no monthly plan, no hosting

Website Scaffold Solutions

❖ If you are not convinced by a CMS solution, and want to have more control in the implementation of your website: content, functionality, layout and design.

❖ If you are still weary of terms like HTML, CSS & Javascript …

❖ A Web Scaffold solution may be the answer for you.

Website Scaffold Solutions

❖ Provide a framework consisting of a combination of HTML, CSS and Javascript files, making it easy to build robust websites without a lot of extra coding.

❖ User is required to download and install the framework (free) on to a local machine.

❖ The user has the responsibility for finding a hosting solution, and designs and implements the website on a local machine, using a text editor.

❖ In order to make the website *live* - the user is required to upload the site to the web host via an FTP program.

  ❖ FileZilla

  ❖ Cyberduck

  ❖ Transmit

Bootstrap

- ❖ The Bootstrap framework: getbootstrap.com

- ❖ Provides extensive documentation, installation guide and examples.

- ❖ Uses a default grid system which can be customized for a specific layout.

- ❖ Comprehensive CSS - allowing for elegant styling of buttons, tables, navigation and text.

- ❖ Incorporates Javascript plugins such as JQuery: enabling for interactive elements to be easily implemented.

- ❖ Supports *Responsiveness* - Bootstrap automatically adapts the web pages for different screen sizes.

- ❖ The Framework may be extended upon and customized by the user.

Alternative Website Scaffold Solutions

❖ gumbyframework.com

❖ www.getskeleton.com

❖ html5boilerplate.com

❖ lessframework.com

❖ foundation.zurb.com

❖ compass-style.org

❖ sitejam.com

❖ …

HTML /CSS Tools & Editors

❖ Brackets (Free)

  ❖ Runs on Windows, Mac OS X, Linux

❖ Google Webdesigner (Free)

  ❖ Runs on Windows, Mac OS X, Linux

❖ Text Wrangler (Free)

  ❖ Runs on Mac OS X

❖ Sublime Text (Trial)

  ❖ Runs on Windows, Mac OS X, Linux

❖ Adobe Dreamweaver (Not free)

  ❖ Runs on Windows, Mac OS X, Linux

❖ Less (css preprocessor tool): provides extensions to css

  ❖ Used on the command line via node, downloaded as a script file browser usage or can be used in a wide variety of third party tools

❖ Sass (css preprocessor tool): provides extensions to css

  ❖ Requires a supporting application to run or use through the Command Line Terminal

Some Javascript Libraries

❖ JQuery

❖ d3

❖ snap.svg

❖ fullpage

❖ modernizr

❖ waypoints

Search Engine Optimization

❖ The acronym *SEO (Search Engine Optimization)* describes a series of techniques which improve the visibility of a website in search engine result pages.

❖ The goal of such optimization is to rank as highly as possible for a certain search query...

❖ Invaluable resource of tutorials for implementing SEO:

  ❖ webdesign.tutsplus.com/series/seo-fundamentals-for-web-designers--webdesign-9715

❖ A high level discussion of tips and tricks for SEO:

  ❖ webdesignerwall.com/general/seo-guide-for-designers

❖ More tips and tricks:

  ❖ malphursinteractive.com/10-simple-seo-tips-for-web-developers-designers

Learning Web Design Resources

- ❖ W3 Schools
  - ❖ HTML, Javascript, CSS …
  - ❖ w3schools.com
- ❖ Code Academy
  - ❖ Interactive tutorials in HTML, Javascript, CSS …
  - ❖ www.codecademy.com
- ❖ Coursera
  - ❖ coursera.com
- ❖ Udacity
  - ❖ multiple courses in web based applications
  - ❖ udacity.org
- ❖ Udemy
  - ❖ multiple courses in web based applications
  - ❖ udemy.com