**ASSIGN A CUSTOM DOMAIN NAME TO YOUR WEBSITE**

**What is a domain name?**

In the last unit, you deployed your site and [GitHub](https://www.codecademy.com/resources/docs/general/github) Pages assigned your site a default [URL](https://www.codecademy.com/resources/docs/general/url), or domain name.

In this unit, you’ll purchase your own custom domain name and assign it to your GitHub Pages website. At the end of the unit, you’ll be able to access your site using both your new domain name and your default GitHub Pages domain name.

Before you choose a custom domain name, it’s important to first understand what domain names actually are.

Domain names are human-friendly names that identify servers on the Internet. A global system known as the Domain Name System (DNS) is used for storing which domain names correspond to which servers.

For example, Codecademy’s domain name is www.codecademy.com. When you type the domain name into your browser, your computer asks the [DNS](https://www.codecademy.com/resources/docs/general/dns) to identify which servers should receive the request in order to load our website.

**Note:** This unit is optional. We’ll walk you through the steps required to purchase a custom domain name and assign it to your GitHub Pages site. If you do not want to purchase a domain name, you won’t have to. However, feel free to follow along to see what steps are required to do so (for future reference).

**Instructions**

Observe the diagram to the right.

In the top portion of the diagram:

1. Bob wants to call Sue, but does not have Sue’s phone number memorized.
2. Bob types “Sue” into his phone and his phone identifies the phone number associated with Sue.
3. The phone call is then made. Sue’s phone receives a request (it rings). If Sue answers, Bob and Sue are connected and can now communicate.

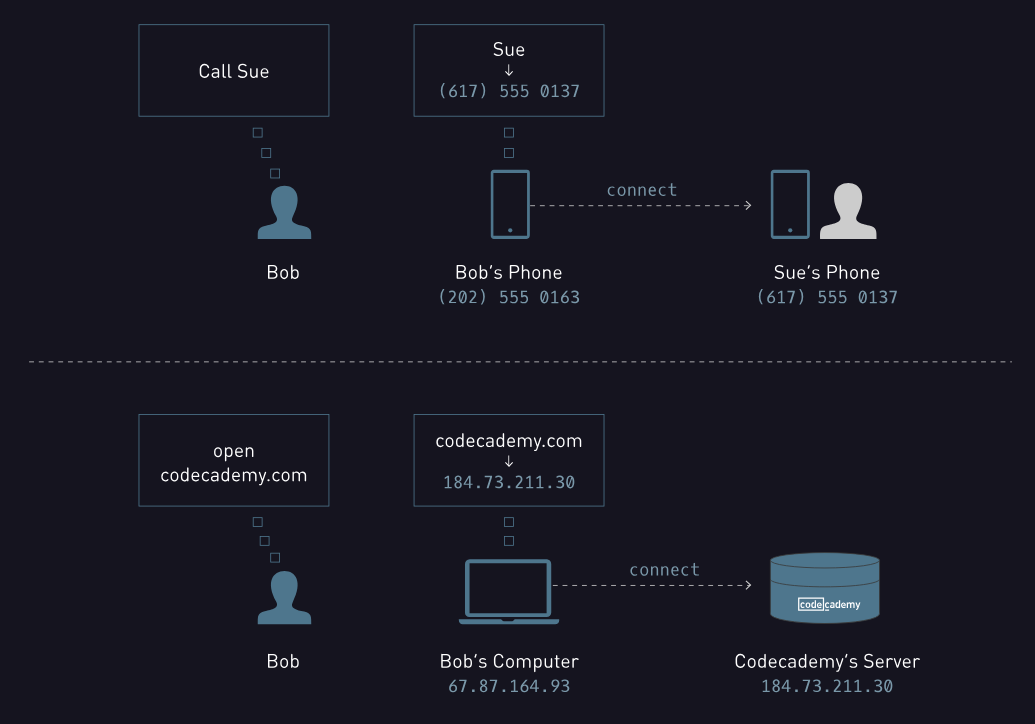
Your computer communicates with websites in a simliar fashion.

In the bottom portion of the diagram:

1. Bob wants to load the Codecademy website, but does not have Codecademy’s IP address memorized.
2. Bob types www.codecademy.com into his browser and the DNS then identifies the IP address associated with www.codecademy.com.
3. The request to load Codecademy’s website is then made. If the server successfully responds, Bob can now load and communicate with Codecademy’s website.

For more details, read the following Codecademy resource:

1. [HTTP Requests](https://www.codecademy.com/articles/http-requests)



### Custom Domain I

Often, the most time consuming part of buying a domain name is actually deciding what you’d like it to be. Be aware that not all domain names are available; many have already been claimed by others.

We’re going to use [Amazon Web Services (AWS)](https://aws.amazon.com/) to purchase your custom domain.

AWS is an industry standard suite of web infrastructure services used frequently by developers. The specific service we’re going to use to purchase your domain name is called Route 53.

### Instructions

If you don’t already have an account, create one at [https://aws.amazon.com](https://aws.amazon.com/).

AWS uses a thorough verification process. You’ll have to confirm the following:

1. Contact information
2. Payment information (no purchase is necessary to open an account, but a debit or credit card is)
3. Identity verification (a PIN entered via a phone call)
4. Support Plan (there is a free plan)

Remember, creating an AWS account is free — there are no required purchases. The only purchase that you’ll (optionally) make will be the purchase of your custom domain name.