

Getting our web pages on the Internet

We can create our web pages or files using any text or code editor. You could even use notepad.

We can open our html pages by going into a browser and opening them. I use a Ctrl+O or Command+O to open the html file. The browser will render the page, but they are not live on the internet. Notice the URL or web address is just a local path referring to the location on your computer's hard drive where the html file is saved. No one else on the internet can see your page.

Here is another way you could open a locally saved web page. I'm in VS Code which is a more advanced code editor. The editor is using an extension called live server that allows me to open the html file in my browser but again look at the URL or web address. It's using a localhost address (or your own computer location) not a live internet page.

Opening your web pages this way is fine as you are developing them and want to see what they look like. But how do you get your web pages onto the internet so anyone can see them? This requires **a place to store your files where they can be retrieved by anyone**. This is called **hosting**. You can pay a hosting company and they will let you store your files on their servers or you can purchase your own web server to store your files.

Even with hosting, a place to store your files, you will also need a **domain name**. This is **the .com or .org site names that you can visit to see the home page of a company's websites**. The domain name must be unique from any other domain or site name. The domain you choose, and purchase is registered with the **DNS or Domain Name System** that **keeps track of where the files are stored that goes with that domain name**. The company you purchase hosting from, can usually help you purchase a domain name as well or offer one for free with your hosting.

There are a number of different companies that would be happy to host your files for a fee. Here is a hosting company called HostGator. I can choose a plan and see if a domain name you like is available. If no one else has chosen that domain name (or in other words, it's not registered with the Domain Name System) then you can register it with your HostGator hosting. Then it will have you create an account and enter your payment method. Once you have an account you can log in and **transfer your files from your computer to their server**. This is called **file transfer protocol or ftp**. The hosting sites usually have ftp options available to you. Or you can use an application like FileZilla to connect to your hosting and drag and drop files from your hard drive to the hosting server.

Once they are stored on the hosting site when a user types in the name of your domain they will see the home page of your site. The home page or default page users see when they type in a domain name is usually called `index.html`. What is nice about paying for hosting is with the payment you make for hosting, you usually get a free or discounted domain name and access to customer service help that will help you get your account set up and help you with getting your files transferred to their server.

There are a few hosting companies like Glitch or GitHub pages that let you publish your content for free and without a domain name. However, you will not have your own original domain name. For example, with Glitch, your site would be the name of your project followed by `.glitch.me`. Or with GitHub pages you have the name of your repository followed by `.github.io`. But they are a free alternative to buying hosting and a domain name.