

Exercise – Web Development

We've already had a look at creating a website by hand, using HTML and CSS. It's great to be able to do this, but it's also good to take advantage of tools which can help us reach our goals more quickly.

In this exercise we will design and create a website using a hosted Content Management System.

Activity 1 - Design concepts:

The first step in creating a new web site is designing it. For our purposes we will use a simplified design process, as outlined in the lecture. It is worth keeping in mind that this general process is useful for more than just websites, too!

1. **Write down the requirements for your website.** You will use these to guide and evaluate your design. *Hint: See the lecture slides for a list of things to consider for your requirements.*
2. **Create three paper or digital concept mockups for your web site.** These mockups should be sufficiently different from one another to explore a variety of design possibilities. Make sure that your mockups each cover:
 1. Layout
 2. Navigation
 3. Colour scheme

Note that some concepts may require more than one image as a part of its mockup, such as if different pages in your site are to have different layouts.

3. **Compare the mockups to your requirements and select the one which is the best fit.** Note that in a professional design process there would be multiple iterations of concepts before a final selection is made.

Activity 2 - Select a CMS:

Now you have a good idea of what you're trying to build. Rather than build it by hand, we're going to use a "Content Management System" to help us build it. There are a huge number of CMS web site tools available, so our first step is selecting one.

1. **Identify at least 3 CMS hosting providers.** There is a list of some providers in the lecture slides, but you don't have to stick to those.
2. **Evaluate each for a fit with your design.** Take notes on the pros and cons of each, and whether you may have to compromise on your design if you use a particular CMS.
3. **Select one of the CMSs to build your site.** Note that in a professional process there would be more here to consider, such as licensing terms and a fit with existing IT systems. For our purposes, though, it is enough to consider just pricing (pick something free!) and functionality.

Activity 3 - Build your site:

Details will vary depending on your selected CMS host. The broad process generally similar to the following:

1. **Register with your CMS host of choice.** You will need an email address you can use for this. You will also need to select a username and either a domain or sub-domain name for your site.
2. **Select an existing template.** These templates will provide the majority of a design's implementation while providing some degree of customisation for you. This is where you bring the template as close to your selected design mockup as you can. This may involve font selections, colour selections, resizing or moving areas, adding or removing pages, and editing and uploading images.
3. **Provide content.** Once the site is configured and styled, it is time to provide content. For our purposes we don't need much content - a simple one or two page site with a few sentences about one of your game projects and a screenshot will be sufficient.

Note: You do not have to publish the site as a part of this exercise.