

Introduction to Website Building



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Digital Integration Teaching Initiative (DITI)
GRMN 1101
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Workshop agenda

- ❑ Understand best practices in website creation.
- ❑ Understand the strengths of building a website with WordPress and Wix.
- ❑ Learn how to build a website with Wix

Handouts and slides are available at:

<https://bit.ly/sp26-fuchs-grmn1101-wix>

Website building vocabulary

- ❓ **Pages:** these are the main areas of your website that your audience will be able to navigate in your site's menu
- ❓ **Domain:** your domain name is the unique URL that leads to your website
- ❓ **Design:** the aesthetic choices for your website, including colors, font, and more

Thinking Critically about Website Building

Why are you building a website?

- ❑ A website is just like a research report or an essay—it needs to clearly communicate its message or purpose to a specific audience.
- ❑ Critical first steps in website design are to consider **who** your audience is, **what** they will need to be able to find and do on your site, and **how** they will move through the site.
- ❑ It can be tempting to add media and components to a website that don't contribute to the site's message/purpose, but resist this temptation. Going into any site-building platform with a clear idea of what your site needs is essential! Anything unnecessary is likely to be distracting.

Starting points: Questions to consider

- ❑ **Who** is this site for?
- ❑ **Why** would your identified audience(s) visit your site?
- ❑ **How** will they find what they need, and navigate around?

Starting points: Questions (cont.)

- ❓ **What is the purpose** of this site?
 - How can you communicate this clearly in the site's content and design?
- ❓ **Can *everyone* use your site effectively?** Is it accessible on mobile devices, and to people with disabilities?
- ❓ How can you make **smart design choices** to enhance the site's
 - Look
 - Navigability
 - Functionality
 - Accessibility

Considerations when planning your website

❑ Structure

- Audience (Message/Purpose)
- Content (Posts, Bio, Images)
- Navigability (Headers, Pages, Menus, Hyperlinks)
- Accessibility (Color scheme, Readability, Alt text)

❑ User Experience and Impact

- Look (Font size, Typeface)
- Media (Images, Embedded elements)
- Other Functionalities (Widgets, Buttons, etc.)

Website building tools: WordPress and Wix

What is Wix?



- ❑ Wix is a professional **website-building tool** that lets you build your own website
- ❑ It provides a free **domain name** with “wixsite” in the URL (it has a paid version that allows you to make your own domain without “wixsite” in it, but it is unnecessary for this class)
- ❑ It supports **themes** and **apps** to customize your website
- ❑ Similar to Wix, **WordPress** is another popular website-building tool that has different advantages.

WordPress versus Wix



WordPress	Wix
Often used for academic websites	Often used for businesses and artistic websites
Template-based design (You can change your theme at any time)	Customizable design that is less template-bound (You cannot change your template on an existing site)
Better for websites with a blog component (has features for tagging and categorizing)	AI Design feature—recommends features to you

WordPress and Wix examples

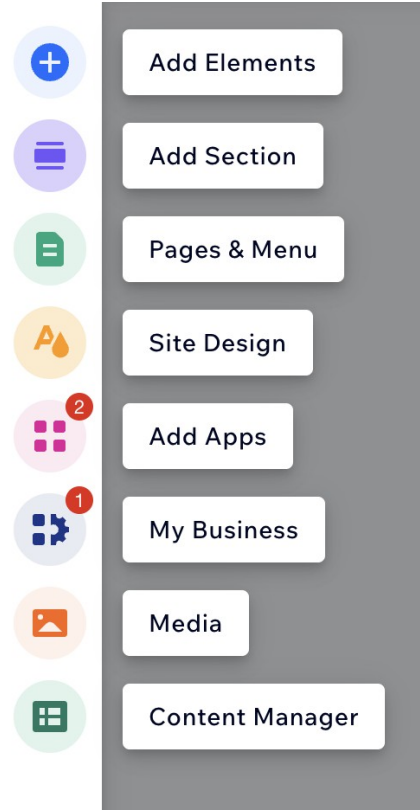


WordPress	Wix
https://madisonwaldron.WordPress.com/	https://bellama9.wixsite.com/website
https://jordanwlai.WordPress.com/	https://johnsonmaryb.wixsite.com/firstyearwriting2020
https://web.northeastern.edu/nulab/	https://www.helenakruger.com/
https://dsg.northeastern.edu/	https://www.laurabaross.com/
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	https://rawans2.wixsite.com/srawandigitalprofici

Building your website with Wix

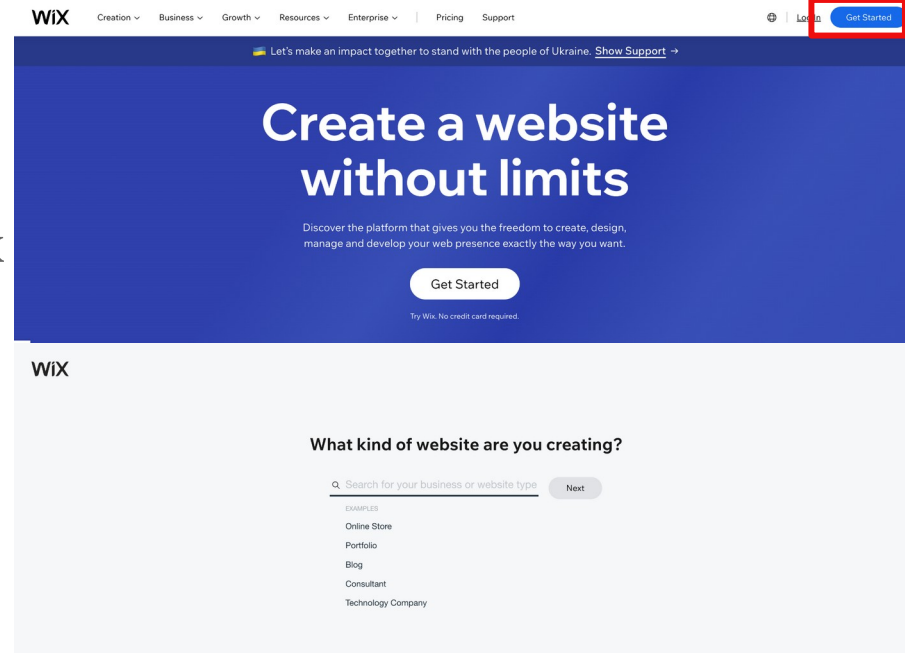
Wix vocabulary

- ❓ **Element:** the basic unit of content for your site. Headings, paragraphs, media, buttons, lists, galleries etc.
- ❓ **Section:** pages are divided into large chunks of content called “Sections.” They can be easily repositioned to change the layout of the page.
- ❓ **Pages & Menu:** pages are collections of sections and the menu lets a user navigate between them. For ex: “Home” page, an “About Me” page, and a “Projects” page
- ❓ **Site Design:** this is where you can apply themes to coordinate your website’s aesthetics across pages.
- ❓ **Apps:** these are Wix-specific widgets designed for businesses, including ordering platforms, live chats etc.



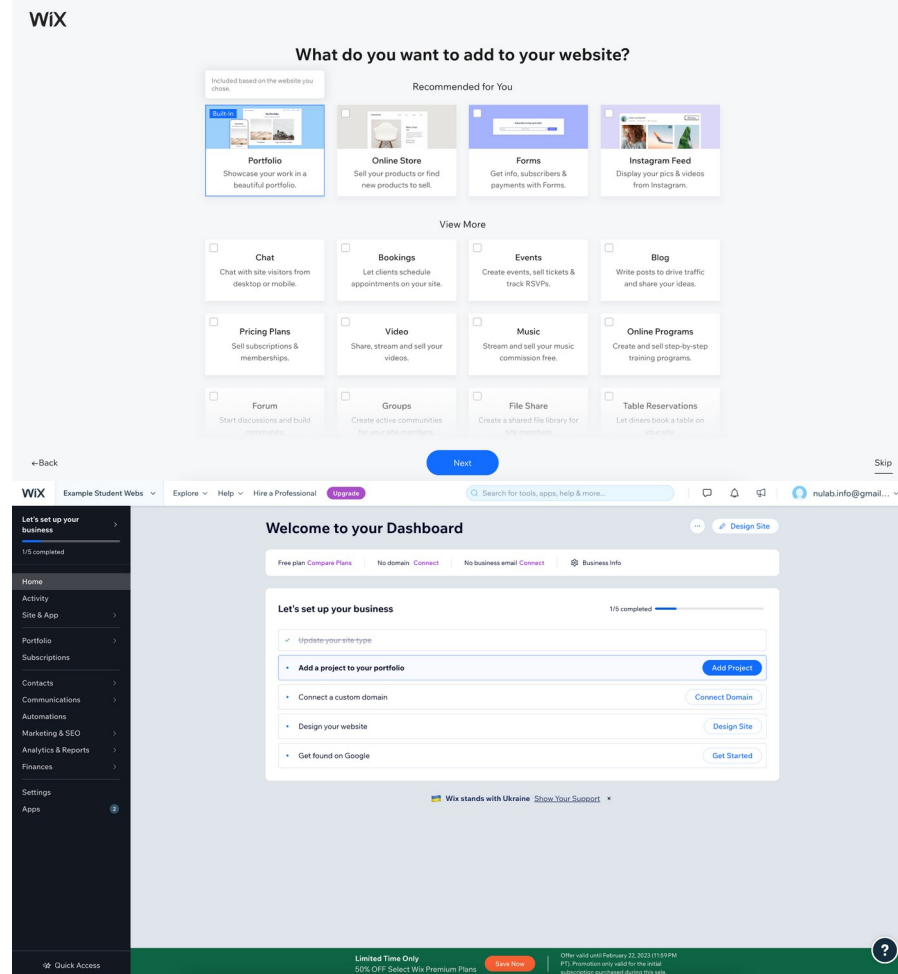
Getting started (1/2)

- ❓ Go to <https://www.wix.com/> and click “**Get Started.**” Sign up for a Wix account using your professional email.
- ❓ Click “**Create New Site,**” and then select what kind of site you want to create (e.g. “**Portfolio**”).
- ❓ Give your site a name (this doesn’t need to be the domain name).
- ❓ **Note:** You do not need to create a domain. You do not want to use AI to build your site for this project.



Getting started (2/2)

- ❑ Select any elements you want to include (e.g. “Online Store,” “Forms,” “Events”). You can edit these later.
- ❑ Select “Go to Dashboard” to go to the back-end hub of your website.
- ❑ From here you can design your website, connect a domain that you might own, and add type specific content (e.g. projects for a portfolio).



Designing your website

- ❓ Once you click on “Design Site” in the dashboard, you will be asked to choose a starting point: customizing an existing template, or generating a design with AI
- ❓ We recommend choosing a template, as you have more creative and operational control in the Wix Editor.

WIX | < Back

How would you like to design your website?



Customize a Template

Browse thousands of designs, then pick one to customize.

Pick a Template



Generate a Design with AI

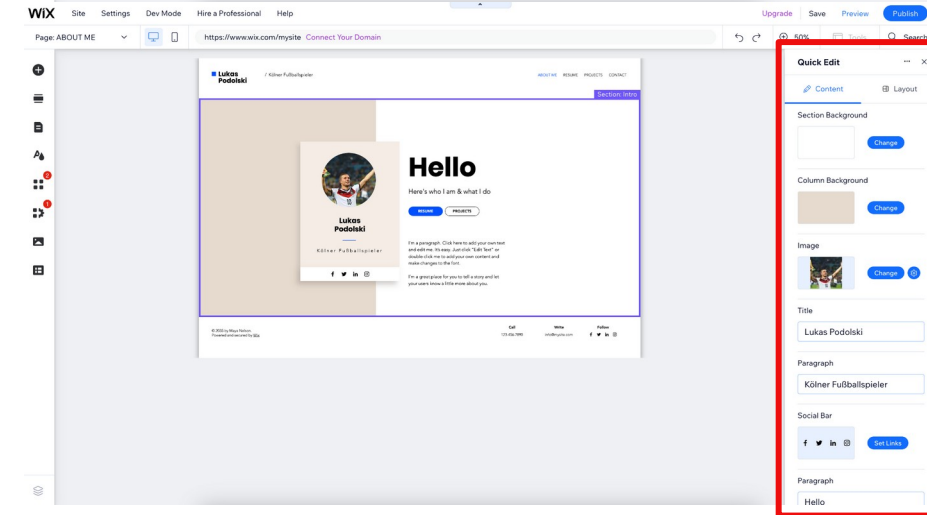
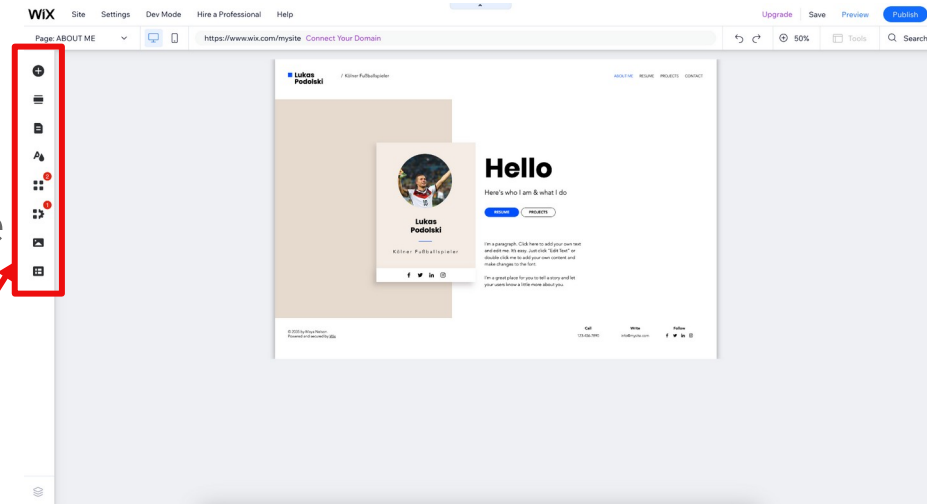
Get a personalized site design in seconds.

Generate a Design


[Continue with Setup for Now](#) →

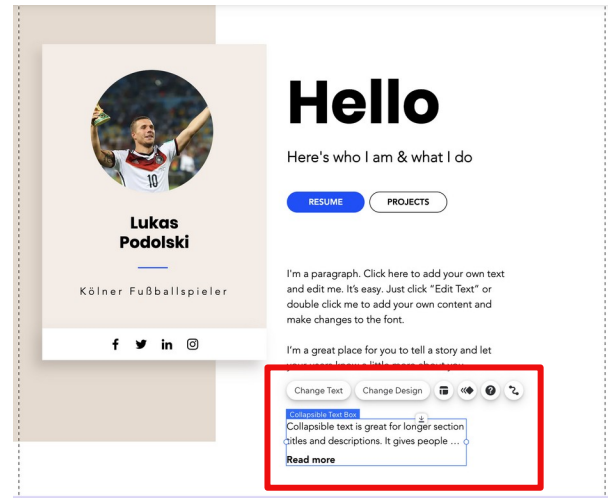
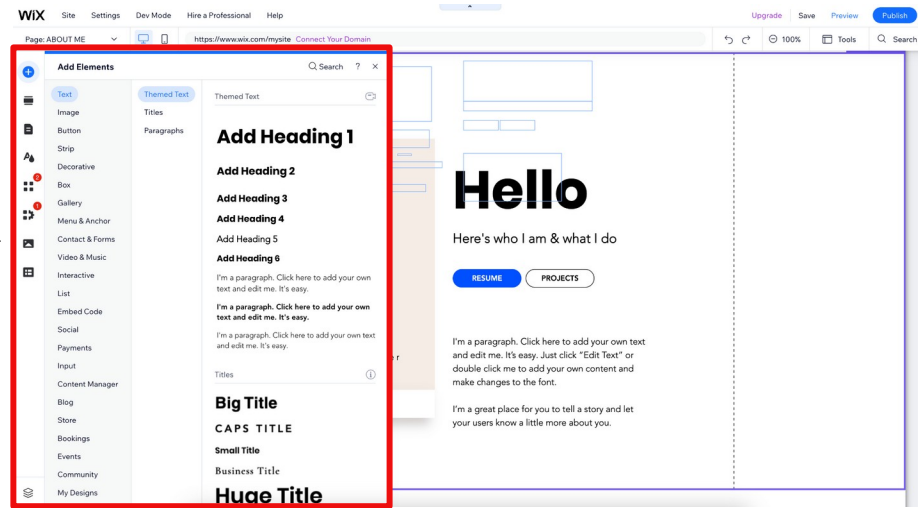
Wix Editor

- ❓ Once you have chosen a template, the Wix Editor will open.
- ❓ To add elements, sections, apps etc., use the panel on the left.
- ❓ Hovering over any part of the page will allow you to open the “Quick Edit” panel, in which you can edit the content of the template.




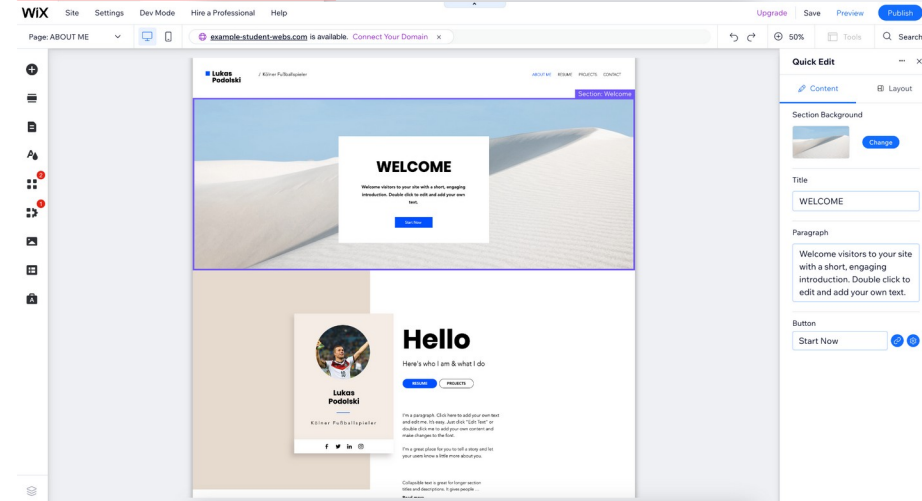
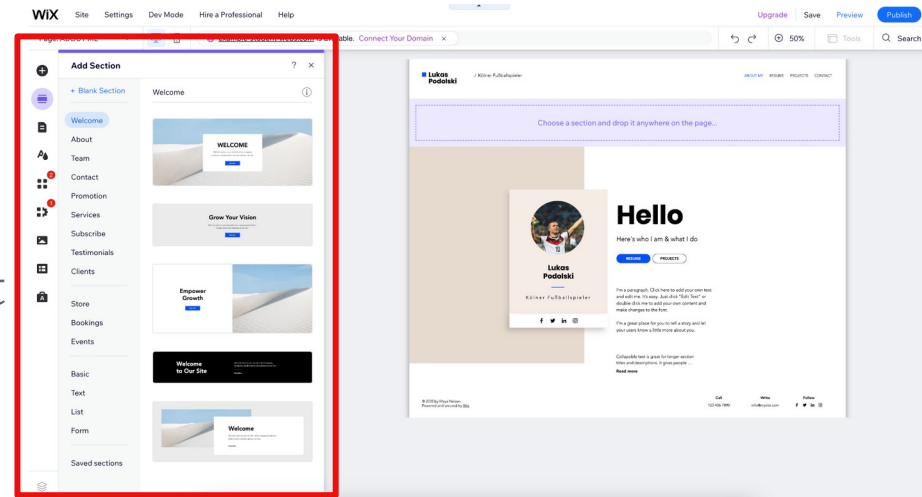
Adding Elements

- ❓ To add Elements, click the top icon on the left panel. 
- ❓ This will open the Elements menu and you can choose from a huge variety of options.
- ❓ Adding an element will float it in the center of your page, but you can drag it into position and edit it.
- ❓ NB. To embed external media (like a StoryMap), add the “Embed” element from this menu.



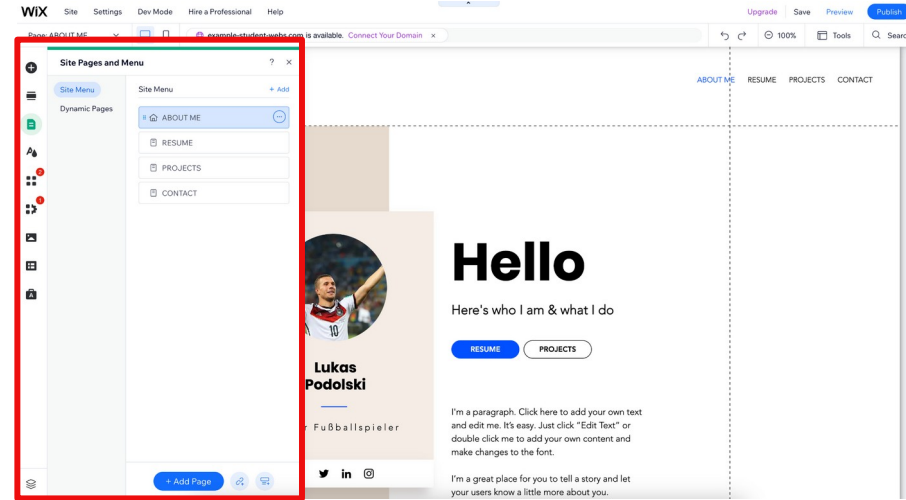
Adding sections

- ❓ Adding Sections works in the same way. Select the second icon on the left panel to open the menu. 
- ❓ You can choose from various sections, such as “Welcome,” “About Us/Me,” “List” and “Testimonials.”
- ❓ Edit sections in the same way: hover over a section and open the “Quick Edit” panel or reposition it as desired.



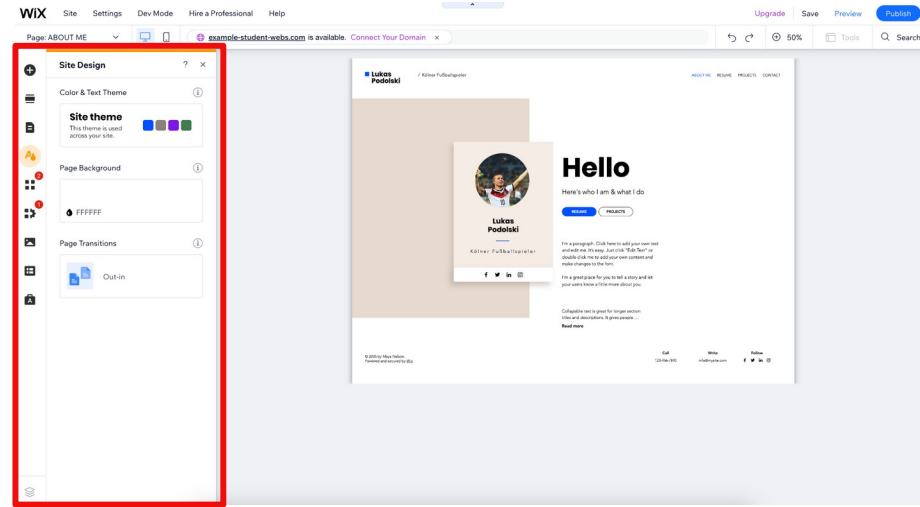
Adding pages, editing the menu

- ❓ To add pages and edit the menu, select the third icon on the left panel to open the menu. 📄
- ❓ Your template will have a selection of pages, and you can navigate to them here.
- ❓ Edit these pages in the same way using Elements and Sections.
- ❓ Adding a new Page will automatically add it to the Menu.




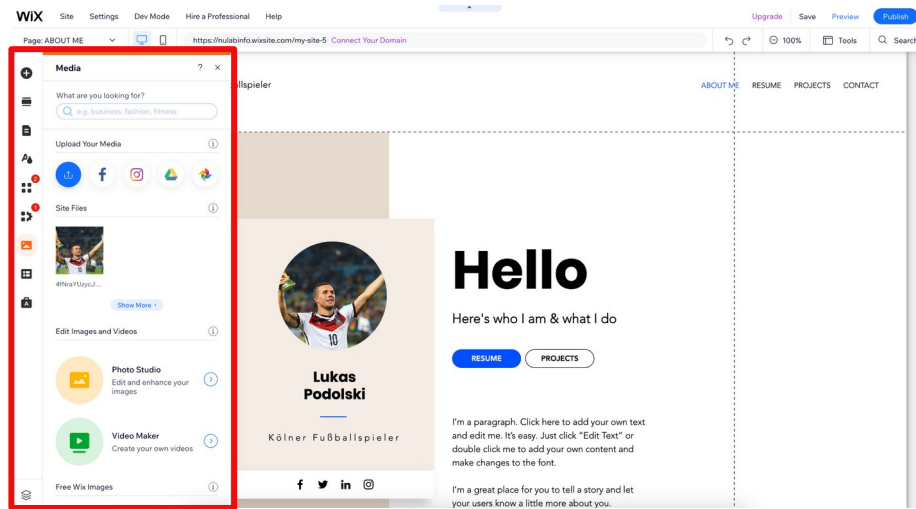
Site design

- ❓ Selecting the Site Design icon allows you to change the appearance of your website. ^A
- ❓ Editing the theme will change the color and text across your pages.
- ❓ You can also customize the transitions between your pages.



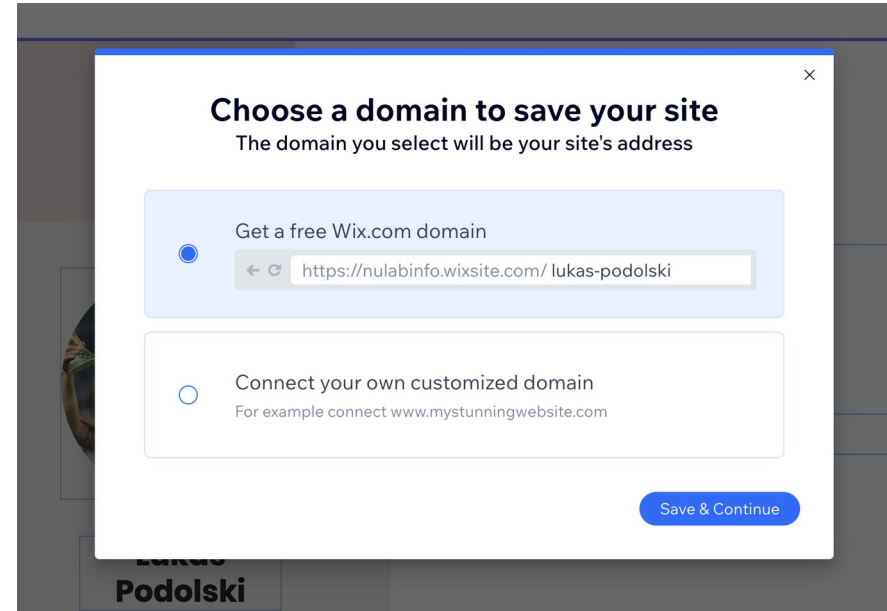
Adding media

- ❓ You can add media from the “Element” menu, but also by selecting the media icon. 
- ❓ You can select free images from Wix or Unsplash, upload files from your computer, link to URLs, or connect to social media.
- ❓ You can drag and drop media within sections, and apply filters, effects, and otherwise edit it on the page.



Publishing your website

- ❓ Click “**Save**” from the top menu and select the domain name for your site. Free Wix sites will always have the “wixsite.com” suffix.
- ❓ Preview your page, and, when you’re ready, click “**Publish**” in the top right to take your site live.
- ❓ You can edit your website and monitor traffic from your dashboard.



Website Development Best Practices

Presentation and design

- ❑ Always remember your audience and **think about how you want to represent your identity** and your work to that audience.
- ❑ Use the “**Preview**” button to see how your site will appear to your audience.
- ❑ **More isn't necessarily better.** You want your website to be easy to navigate, informative, and appealing.
- ❑ Pick a theme/format that is **compatible with mobile phones**.
- ❑ Design choices should be based on the **content** you are communicating.
- ❑ For maximum readability, **use simple fonts and a high color contrast** between text and background color. This is particularly important for accessibility.

Good

Good

Not so good

Not so good

Accessibility

- ❑ Some themes are accessibility-ready
 - Some themes support screen readers and keyboard navigation
- ❑ [Use accessibility references](#) to ensure your site has sufficient color contrast
 - Use solid and consistent background colors
- ❑ Select fonts that are responsive and can resize automatically for different windows
- ❑ Make your page layouts consistent and predictable
 - Keep images and text blocks in similar spots page to page
- ❑ Another useful resource: “[Five Steps toward Making your WordPress Site Accessible](#)”

Accessibility tips: Links and media

? Links

- Use descriptive links ("[the NULab homepage](#)" and not "[here](#)")
- Use bolding or underlining, not just color, to make links visually distinct.

? Images and multimedia content

- Include captions and alt text for any images that are not purely decorative
- Include captions and, if possible, transcripts for multimedia content
- Avoid putting text over images; this is usually difficult to read

How to assess accessibility:

- ❑ **Accessibility Checker** (<https://www.accessibilitychecker.org/>): provides a list of specific problems and information on how to fix them
- ❑ **WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool** (<https://wave.webaim.org/>): shows the structure of the web page, with accessibility features and issues flagged
- ❑ **Also of interest: Color Contrast Checker** (<https://contrastchecker.online>): lets you enter specific text and background colors and check for readability
- ❑ **Natural Reader** (<https://www.naturalreaders.com/online/>) lets you test your site with screen reader technology

Media sharing and permissions

- ❑ It is important to verify that you are allowed to use images before you put them in your exhibit if you will be publishing it online.
 - ❑ Search for media that is public domain or shared with permissions that allow re-use.
 - DITI recommends [Wikimedia Commons](#) and DPLA ([Digital Public Library of America](#)).
 - ❑ Ensure proper credit/attribution is given for all media
- For more information on copyright and reuse, please see:
<https://bit.ly/diti-fair-use>

For further exploration

[Handout: Accessibility in Digital Content](#)

[Handout: Copyright and Fair Use](#)

[Handout: Data Privacy](#)

[Handout: WordPress](#)

[Handout: HTML](#)

Thank you!

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- ❑ For more information on the DITI, please see: <https://bit.ly/diti-about>
- ❑ Schedule an appointment with us! <https://bit.ly/diti-meeting>
- ❑ If you have any questions, contact us at: nulab.info@gmail.com
- ❑ We'd love your feedback! Please fill out a short survey here: <https://bit.ly/diti-feedback>