Website Documentation | Mobile Bay DSA

Last Edited 10/16/2025

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Part I

Hosting

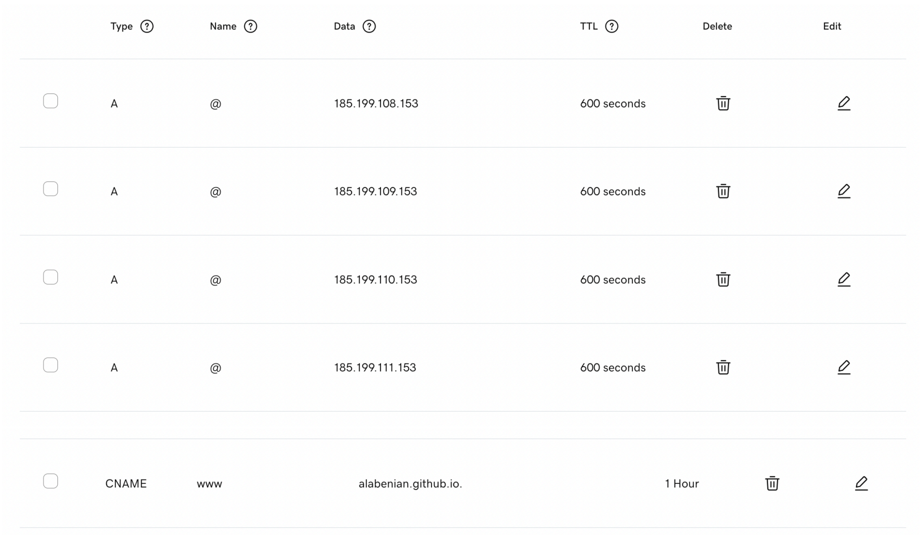
Introduction

Our website is built with Jekyll, Tailwind, and Markwhen; hosted with Github Pages from https://github.com/alabenian/mobilebaydsa; and presented to https://www.mobilebaydsa.org/ for the public to see. This little book exists to help members work on the site and consider any alternatives to the current setup if needed.

Chapter 1

Basic Hosting Information

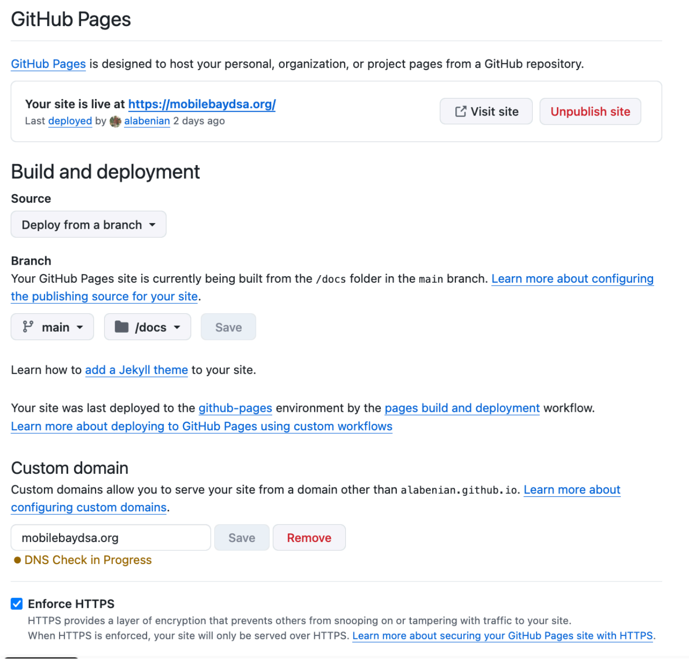
Our domain name `mobilebaydsa.org` is registered through Godaddy and currently presents the Github Pages site at https://alabenian.github.io/mobilebaydsa. It could present any other source, but I chose to use Pages because our Godaddy plan did not come with a site builder and other options would cost some money while Pages was free, and because it gives us complete control over the site as long as it's static (i.e. as long as we don't need to store data on the fly, and all processing can be left to the user's computer, unless an additional outside service is used). Godaddy is told where to get the website using four `A`-type "@" DNS records which give it the IP range of Github and one `CNAME`-type "www" record which tells it to use `alabenian.github.io`:



	Type	Name	Data	TTL	Delete	Edit
☐	A	@	185.199.108.153	600 seconds		
☐	A	@	185.199.109.153	600 seconds		
☐	A	@	185.199.110.153	600 seconds		
☐	A	@	185.199.111.153	600 seconds		
☐	CNAME	www	alabenian.github.io.	1 Hour		

All this is available from Domain/DNS/DNS Records at the `mobilebaydsa.org` control page in Godaddy; a more in-depth tutorial is available at this Medium page. Part of the original process involved also deleting the DNS records for the fallback site generated by Godaddy.

Github makes things easy to set up on its end: we publish the site to Github as a repository (https://github.com/alabenian/mobilebaydsa), enable Github Pages, which will automatically deploy it to `[username].github.io/[repository name]`, then tell it to use the domain name `mobilebaydsa.org` and enforce HTTPS:



GitHub Pages

GitHub Pages is designed to host your personal, organization, or project pages from a GitHub repository.

Your site is live at https://mobilebaydsa.org/
Last deployed by alabenian 2 days ago

Build and deployment

Source

Deploy from a branch

Branch

Your GitHub Pages site is currently being built from the /docs folder in the main branch. Learn more about configuring the publishing source for your site.

main /docs

Learn how to add a Jekyll theme to your site.

Your site was last deployed to the github-pages environment by the pages build and deployment workflow.
Learn more about deploying to GitHub Pages using custom workflows

Custom domain

Custom domains allow you to serve your site from a domain other than alabenian.github.io. Learn more about configuring custom domains.

mobilebaydsa.org

● DNS Check in Progress

✓ Enforce HTTPS

HTTPS provides a layer of encryption that prevents others from snooping on or tampering with traffic to your site.
When HTTPS is enforced, your site will only be served over HTTPS. Learn more about securing your GitHub Pages site with HTTPS.

This should then automatically add a `CNAME` document containing "`mobilebaydsa.org`" to the repository. The only other setting I've changed here is to have it deploy from the `/docs/` folder of the repository rather than the root. Here `/docs/` is just a renamed version of the `/_site/` output of Jekyll; this is deployed as a static site pre-built by Jekyll locally rather than one where Github runs Jekyll itself after changes are made to the repository, due to an incompatibility with one of the plugins I was using for our events posts (jekyll-leaflet). *I will explain this more later, but for now, it's not relevant.*

Part II

Basic Structure & Working on the Repository

Chapter 2

Setup

There are three command-line tools in total used to build the site: **Jekyll**, **Tailwind**, and **Markwhen**. Installing Jekyll takes the greatest priority, as it is necessary to build the site at all. Tailwind is second, because it creates the `.css` file used by the rest of the site for styling. Because this file has already been created, Tailwind is only necessary for *editing* it. Finally, Markwhen is only used to render and update the timeline used on the Calendar page of the site, and is only necessary to someone who is adding or removing events on the calendar.

Jekyll (https://jekyllrb.com/) simplifies work on the site by structuring the files by root directory markdown (or HTML) files containing the contents of each page, `_layout` HTML files which are referenced in each to determine how the contents are presented, and `_include` HTML files which are referenced in either the layout or content files to display some extra piece of the website (e.g. a navbar or a commonly-occurring button or icon). The resulting file structure of the site will be discussed further in "Repository Structure." It requires Ruby (installation information here) and RubyGems (which should be included with Ruby) to install via `gem install bundler jekyll` in the terminal. After installation, the site can be built by opening the repository folder in the terminal (or `cd`-ing into it) and running `bundle exec jekyll serve`. I've used some additional plugins on the site, so it will throw an error on the first build and prompt you to install those; from there any work with Jekyll should be smooth sailing!

Tailwind (https://tailwindcss.com/) simplifies writing CSS for the site by supplying a set of classes with short and easy-to-remember names. It can be installed as a CLI tool with `npm install tailwindcss @tailwindcss/cli`. (This uses `npm`, so unfortunately you'll need to install Node first: https://docs.npmjs.com/downloading-and-installing-node-js-and-npm) To use it on the site, just open the folder in another terminal tab (or, again, `cd` into it) and run `npx @tailwindcss/cli -i ./styles/initstyles.css -o ./src/finalstyles.css --watch`. It will then replace the "`@import "tailwindcss";`" in the initial styles file and watch for future changes to re-run the command in that terminal instance. This adds so much extra hassle for getting set up to edit styles, I may remove it in the future – it made the process of designing the site much easier for me because I had already installed it and knew its classes.

Markwhen renders the markwhen file `calendar_source/main_calendar.mw` into `calendar_source/timeline.html`, which is embedded on the Calendar page. Run it using `npm i -g @markwhen/mw` (this also requires Node – see instructions for Tailwind). After installation, all you need to do is run `mw calendar_source/main_calendar.mw calendar_source/timeline.html` to update the timeline if changes to `main_calendar.mw` have been made. See the "Events & Posts" chapter for more information about editing the timeline.