

Creating a Homepage -- a Document for Users

Note 1: This information is for creating a home page in the Math department web site. For creating a web site at the university level see e.g. [NUSITES](#)

Note 2: Important, in order to be able to transfer files to the Math department web site ask your system administrator to be added to the list of users with access permissions to vlunt.

This document is intended as a short description of how to set up your home page (and related documents if you wish). It is not a primer on writing HTML, there are many of those -- some are listed below. Instead it deals with what to do with a homepage document after it is created to put it "on the Web."

If you have not created a home page here is a bare bones one you can copy to expand on later:

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN">
<html>
<head>
<title>John Doe's Homepage</title>
</head>

<body>

<h1>John Doe's Homepage</h1>

This is the story of my life and accomplishments...

</body>
</html>
```

To find out more about composing HTML documents consult e.g.:

- [W3Schools](#)
- [HTML Goodies](#)

Your home page and any other files you want to serve must be located in a particular subdirectory of your home directory (your home directory is where you are when you first login) on the system which is running the web server. Usually this subdirectory is called `public_html`. Next we will see how files in that directory can be edited. A few users may have the capability to edit directly those files in place (see below), but in the most common case you will need to create and edit the files on your computer and then transfer them to the server. This can be done basically in two ways, using a *GUI*, or using the *command line*.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Transferring files from outside the NU network.

Note that if you need to transfer files to or from our system while working from outside the university network then you may need to start VPN on your machine first - see:

[Use VPN for a Secure Connection](#)

Create and edit your web site remotely using a GUI

The first step is of course to create and edit the files for your web site on your computer. If you are editing your html files with a word processor you may want to save them as plain text because the word processor formatting may interfere with the html code - unless the editor has the option of saving the files directly in html format (in which case you don't need to worry about inserting html tags since that will be done automatically by the editor). Then, when ready, transfer them to the server using a *file transfer program with a GUI* such as [FileZilla](#) (NOTE about downloading FileZilla: the version downloaded using the big green button may come with adware, i.e., ad generating software; we recommend to go to "Show additional download options" to get a link to an adware-free version of FileZilla.). Below we indicate the parameters to use in the connection.

- If you use the *Quickconnect* method, enter the following connection parameters:
Host: vlunt.math.northwestern.edu
Username: (your math system username)
Password: (your math system password)
Port: 22
- If you use the *Site Manager* method (File > Site Manager...), enter the following connection parameters:
Host: vlunt.math.northwestern.edu
Port: (leave it blank)
Protocol: SFTP - SSH File Transfer Protocol
Logon Type: Ask for Password
User: (your math system username)
Password (when asked): (your math system password)

Here are a few tutorials about how to use FileZilla for maintaining a web site - keep in mind the instructions in the tutorials may not be exactly the same you need to use on our system, in particular remember to use the connection parameters indicated above.

- [How to Use FileZilla \(FTP Tutorial\)](#) (14 min)
- [How to upload Website to online Server Using Filezilla \(English\)](#). (5 min)

- [How to use Filezilla FTP Client to Connect and Upload to a Server \(10 min\)](#)

Remember that the files must be transferred to the public_html subdirectory of your home directory on the server.

Keep and edit the original files on your computer and transfer them again to the server whenever you make changes to them.

What is your URL?

So once your homepage is functional, how do you access it? Well, your webpage address (called a URL which stands for "Uniform Resource Locator") is made up from the name of your host and your user name. For example, if your user name is jdoe and the computer on which the server is running is named www.math.northwestern.edu then the URL for your homepage is

`https://www.math.northwestern.edu/~jdoe/`

There are a couple of things to notice about your URL.

First it has a synonym

`https://www.math.northwestern.edu/~jdoe/index.html`

This is because whenever a URL ends in '/' the server knows it is referring to a directory (in this case your public_html directory) and looks for the default file "index.html" in that directory. Thus if you want to put some files in subdirectories of public_html that is fine. But keep in mind that if you create the directory "mydir" in public_html

then `https://www.math.northwestern.edu/~jdoe/mydir/` will really refer

to `https://www.math.northwestern.edu/~jdoe/mydir/index.html` and to refer to a file "foo.gif"

in mydir you should use `https://www.math.northwestern.edu/~jdoe/mydir/foo.gif`. You should not use the URL `https://www.math.northwestern.edu/~jdoe/mydir` referring to a directory but with no '/' at the end.