

L9

Portfolio Design I

elements, basic setup,
platforms, planning &
cognition

Elements of a **web portfolio**

- Platform
- Template
- URL
- Work
- You

Elements of a **web portfolio**

- Platform >> where is it?
- Template >> how does it look?
- URL >> what is it called?
- Work >> what is it actually?
- You >> who are you?

Elements of a **web portfolio**

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Choosing a platform

Previously, if you wanted a website your options were...

- Build one
 - Requires knowledge of HTML, CSS, PHP, + other languages
- Hire someone to build one for you
 - They charge you **\$\$\$** because they know HTML, CSS, PHP, + and you don't

However, now you can build a website without having the slightest knowledge of web-programming languages...and sometimes it is even free

- But **how?** You ask...



Choosing a platform

Nowadays it is very simple to use a **website platform** to create a custom site

Platform here is used colloquially to mean any tool used to facilitate website creation such as...

- **Development platforms** > *language-based*, including ASP and PHP, both of which are simply languages used to build websites
- **Content management systems (CMS)** > very popular; provide a means to create a site and manage its content. **E.g.** *WordPress, Joomla, Tumblr*
- **Templated website builders** > platforms developed by a company that typically incorporate hosting and design into one singular product. Often use a WYSIWYG designer that makes styling your website very easy, especially for those who are illiterate in web-programming languages. **E.g.** *Squarespace, Weebly, Wix*

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Advanced

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Beginner

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Choosing a platform

Most of you will be using the Templated Website Builder option and there are a bevy of choices therein...

Important considerations when choosing a platform

- **Cost**

- Free options are often sufficient for the needs of students, but lack any robustness in terms of features or customer support
- Paid options are typically full-service, meaning they take care of hosting and provide some kind of customer service. Sometimes they even purchase your domain name for you (i.e. Squarespace)

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- **Image hosting**

- Important because all of your projects will be visual and packaged in the form of hi-res image files (e.g. PNG, JPG, TIFF). I always recommend using a platform with built-in image hosting because they are now more rule than exception
- A sub-consideration in this vein is whether the platform supports hi-res images. Given the visual nature of your work, you always want the option to supply press-quality versions of your work

Choosing a platform

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- **Overall aesthetic & website templates**
 - One of the most important aspects to consider is the quality of the templates provided. The better the templates, the better your site will be and the easier it will be to create. So if the platform's proprietary website is janky, you can mostly assume their templates will be junk as well
 - Are the templates responsive? We'll cover this in detail later, but my recommendation is to never use non-responsive templates

Choosing a platform

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- **Customer support**

- This may seem unimportant, but website creation—especially for the uninitiated—comes with a steep learning curve. So a robust customer service apparatus (i.e. Squarespace) can make or break the experience. When you simply cannot find a solution to your quandary, having access to someone who can is a true luxury

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Choosing a platform

Digging deeper...

- [Wix vs Weebly vs Squarespace vs Jimdo](#)
- [A truly comprehensive exploration of nearly all website platforms](#)

Other opinions

- <https://99designs.com/blog/tips/best-web-platform-small-business/>
- <https://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2484510,00.asp>

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What is a template?

- A website template is basically a premade webpage – or set of webpages – that can be customized with images, videos and other style elements to create a complete website
- Often created by web developers, the template includes everything needed (i.e. HTML, CSS, and any other code required) for it to function. It simplifies the whole web development process, making it easy for people who have little or no programming experience to build their own websites
- While templates are the central feature to ‘Templated Website Builder’ platforms from previous slides, many CMS platforms offer templates as well (i.e. Wordpress)
- **For you, the template will essentially represent the overall style and functionality of your website, so it is important to consider this carefully...**

What constitutes a good template?

As you step through the process of putting your website together, the most important consideration for a template is that it be **RESPONSIVE...**

What does that mean?

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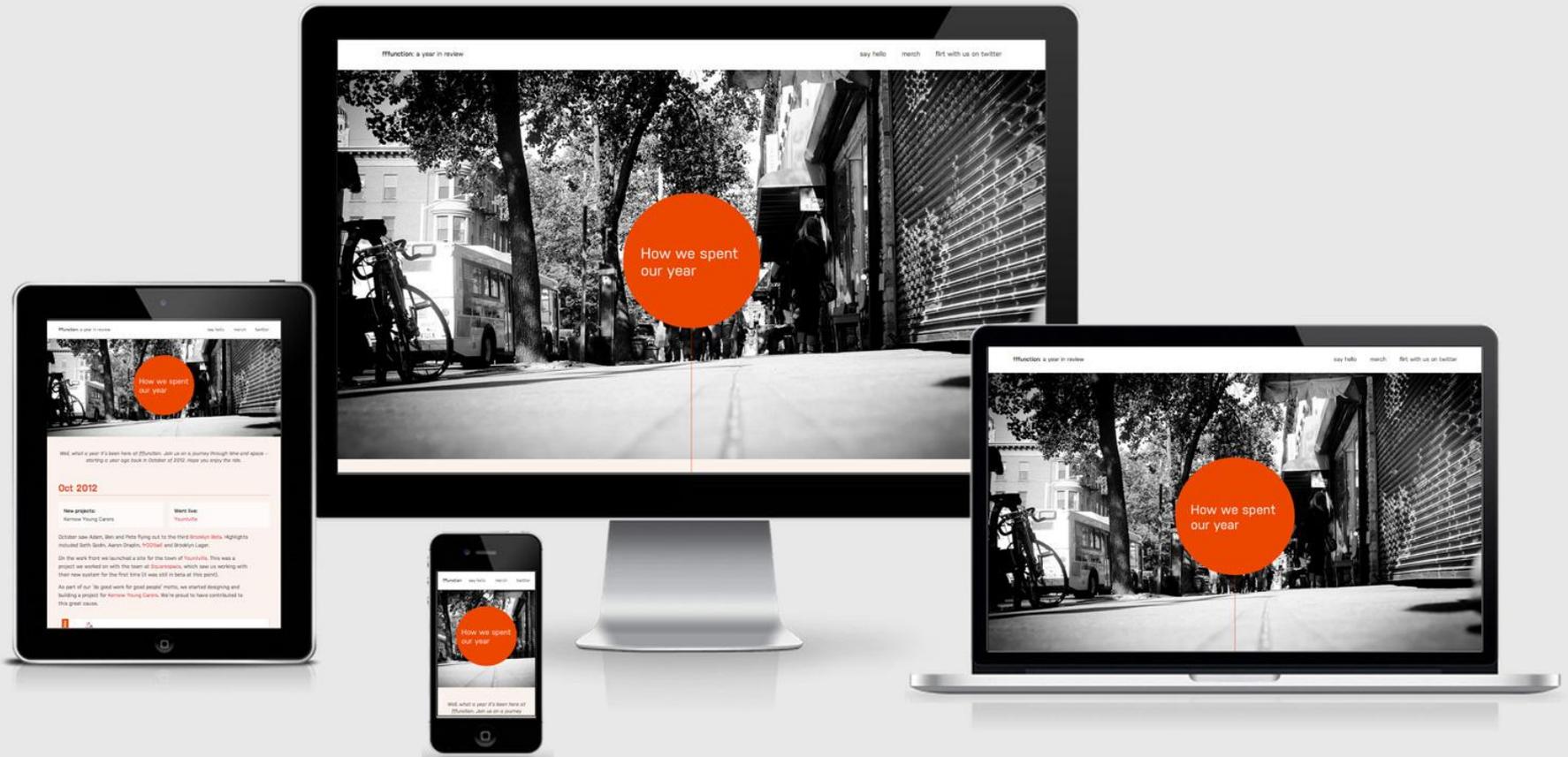
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But what does that mean?

What constitutes a good template?

Responsivity



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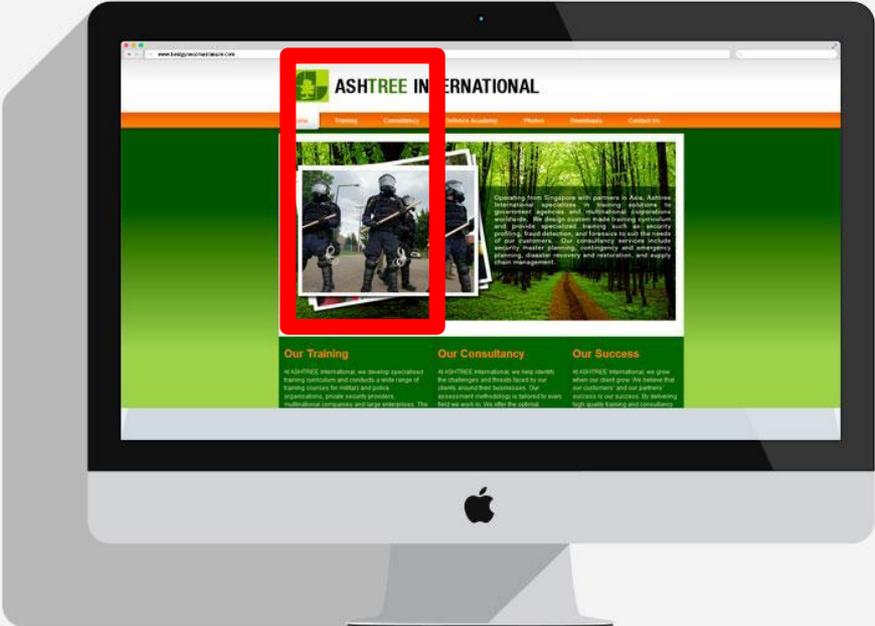
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Other considerations

- Supports hi-res images (mentioned previously)
- Supports metadata for projects (i.e. *tags*)
- Ease of navigation
- Supports image 'galleries'
- Thumbnails?
- Integration with type foundries
- Well designed >> ***obviously***

Digging deeper...

- [How to choose a template](#)
- Awesome [comparative matrix](#) for all Squarespace 7 templates
- Squarespace [template bible](#)

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URLs irl!

URL > **U**niversal **R**esource **L**ocator, colloquially termed a web address, is a reference to a web resource that specifies its location on a computer network and a mechanism for retrieving it

E.g.

<http://www.example.com/index.html>

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Protocol	Host/domain name	File name
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- The main decision you will need to make is whether to purchase a custom domain name, or use the proprietary one provided to you upon registering for the platform

`www.yourname.com`  *custom*

`www.tumblr.yourname.com`  *proprietary*

URLs irl!

Benefits of a custom domain name

- Professionality
- SEO (search engine optimization, essentially how do you appear in google search results)
- Personalized email (e.g. *adam@adamjessup.org*)
- Strengthens 'personal brand' identity
- Easier to remember than proprietary domain names

Where to purchase one?

- Godaddy (+ other similar sites)
- Google domains
- ...some templated website builders (i.e. Squarespace) will buy you a custom domain upon registration for their service

URLs irl!

A word of caution here...if you're inexperienced in the world of website creation/management, AND you want a custom domain name, it is **highly recommended** that you use a full-service platform

The reasoning here is that setting up a custom domain via GoDaddy or Google requires a bit of doing...once you've purchased the domain you will need to 'point' it at your website

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The Work *must* work

Some people may conceive of their personal website as a repository for **ALL** the work they've ever completed

But this is a mistake...

The guiding principle here is this

Present your **best work**

- Requires taking a critical/curatorial approach to your evaluation process
- Show a range of skills (not all GIS, not all personal projects, but a *mélange*)
- Tailor the work you are highlighting to align with your stated career goals (*i.e. make the kind of work now that you hope to be paid to do later*)

The Work *must* work

However, showing your best work is only half of the equation for success...

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Yes, the work should be of a high quality, but where possible/appropriate, you should provide context for your work via explanatory text that—in the case of an academic lab assignment—would simply give a brief overview of what you did, why you did it, and discuss briefly the implications/results of your analysis etc.

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Context is *key* ...*what the heck does that mean?*

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But why?

- Makes it easier for viewers from different disciplines to understand what you do
- More importantly >> this shows that you actually have an interest in what you do, that you're not simply completing assignments blindly but that you're actively engaged with the intellectual culture/discourse surrounding your profession

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You, know thyself

Your personal portfolio website is just that...it's **PERSONAL**

As such, it should convey something about **YOU**

- Your style/aesthetic
- Your approach to work
- Your interests/passions/hobbies
- ...and so on

However, remember moderation. Your goal is to remain professional while showing a bit of personality >> **essentially proving you're not an automaton**

Offices are dynamic environments so a potential employer is going to evaluate you not only on the strength of your applied skills, but also by how well they think you will 'fit' into their system/environment

You, know thyself

The easiest way to do this is by creating a brief **Bio page** on your website

- Include a photo of yourself
- Provide a few insights into your life, why you care about what you do, etc.
 - The goal is to draw people in a bit, to foster some amount of curiosity in YOU as a "BRAND"
- Be sure to provide relevant contact info

Other personal elements to include

- Logo (if you have one/if appropriate)
- CV/Resume
 - This shows why you're qualified for a job "on paper"
- Awards/Honors
 - Are you great? If so tell people why
- Links to social media accounts (if you participate, if you don't...you should consider doing so)
- Blog
 - A great way to demonstrate intellectual interest in your field, not to mention the world at large

You, know thyself

Whatever you do, don't be this →

- If you don't put thought and effort into crafting your 'digital presence', you can easily come off as bored, bland, and disengaged...in other words about as exciting as sliced bread

