

## ***Planning Your Web Site***

### **Objectives**

*Using the five step planning process, write a plan for your web site project.*

1. Describe in your own words the five planning steps.
2. List three questions you should ask when defining your web site goals.
3. Define the term **navigation**.
4. Describe three items to consider when designing navigation.
5. Define the terms **asset** and **collection**.

### **Introduction**

When you begin creating a web site, you should follow five planning steps to make sure your site is successful. Even if you create a personal site that only friends and family will see, it can be to your advantage to plan carefully. Then, you ensure everyone will be able to easily use it.

In this lesson, we will explore the five planning steps and how to make the most of them for your web site project.

### **Five steps to planning your web site:**

1. Create goals for your site
2. Organize the folder structure
3. Create a look
4. Design a navigation theme
5. Collect asset files and request a collection

## Terms to Know:

**Web site** – A set of related web pages stored on a server.

**Web design software** – A program that helps you create web pages.

**HTML** (Hypertext Markup Language) – The language web developers use to create web pages.

**Navigation** – A set of text or graphic links that viewers use to move between the pages of a web site.

**Assets** – Files that are not web pages, such as images, audio files and video clips.

**Collection** – A “folder” on www.cmu.edu where your web site resides.

## Creating Goals for Your Site:

The first step in planning a web site is to create your goals. Ask yourself these questions:

1. Why is the web site needed?
2. Who will view the pages?
3. What do I want my visitors to take away?

Make sure to write down your goals. They will help you focus your web site needs. For example, a web site that provides news about a specific subject should have a different look and navigation than a web site that sells products. The complexity of your goals will affect the navigation, the media that you use and even the look and feel of your site.



**Write your web site goals here.**

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## Organizing the Folder Structure:

Organizing your site from the start can save you frustration and time later on. If you begin creating documents without thinking about where in your folder hierarchy they should go, you may end up with a huge, cumbersome folder full of files OR with related files scattered through similarly named folders.

The usual way to set up a site is to create a folder on your local hard disk that contains all the files for your site and to create and edit documents within that folder.

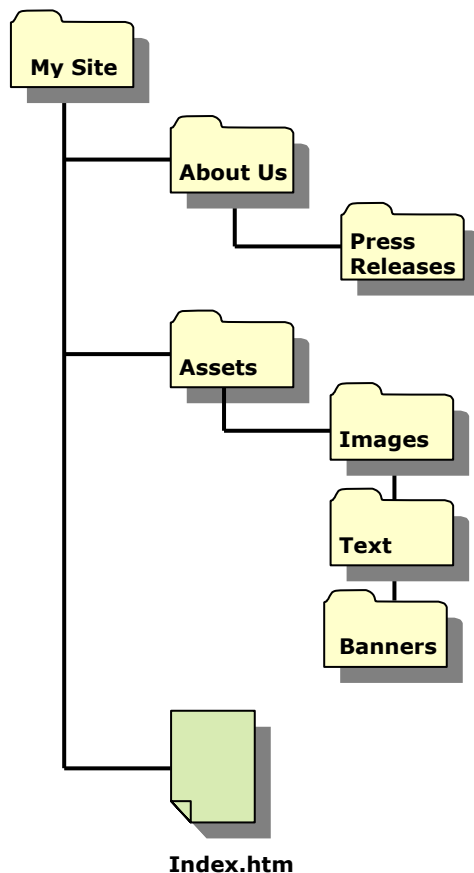
Break down your site into categories and put related pages in the same folder. For example, press releases, contact information, and job postings might all go in one folder titled *About Us*. This type of organization will make your site easier to maintain and navigate.

Decide where to put images, text files and sound files. It's convenient to place all your images in one location. Web designers usually place all of the non-HTML items in a folder called **assets**.



**Note:** Your local site and your remote web site should have exactly the same structure.

### Sample web site structure:





***Draw a folder structure for your web site.***

## **Creating a Look:**

Create a model on paper of how you want the site layout to look and then follow it as you build your site. Maintaining consistency in your page layout and design helps to ensure a good user experience. The user should be able to *click* through the site pages without getting confused. If all the pages have a different look OR the navigation is in a different place, it can frustrate the user.

Here at Carnegie Mellon, a Web Publishing Style Guide was developed to assist the university community in designing web sites that support Carnegie Mellon's identity. Several templates, wordmark images and guidelines are available for your use. The Web Publishing Style Guide can be found at [www.cmu.edu/home/styleguide](http://www.cmu.edu/home/styleguide).



***Draft a model of your site layout here.***

## **Designing a Navigation Scheme:**

As you design your site, think about the experience you want your visitors to have. Think about how a visitor will be able to move from one area to another. Navigation should be consistent throughout your site.

### **Consider the following points with regards to navigation:**

- Visitors should know where they are in your site and how to return home.
- Search features and indexes make it easier for visitors to find information.
- Feedback features provide a way for visitors to contact the relevant people associated with the site.



### **Notes:**

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## Collecting Asset Files:

Once you know what your design and layout will look like, you can create and gather the assets that you need. **Assets** can be images, text, or media. Make sure you have all of these items before you begin developing your site. Otherwise, you'll have to stop development to find an image or create a button.



### **Asset checklist:**

- buttons/navigation bar
- rollovers
- clipart
- logo
- animations
- text files

## Requesting a Collection

At Carnegie Mellon academic and administrative departments can publish their official content to [www.cmu.edu](http://www.cmu.edu). First, your department must request a **collection**, a “folder” on [www.cmu.edu](http://www.cmu.edu) where your web site resides.

You can request a collection by using the web collection request form [www.cmu.edu/computing/documentation/webpub\\_2002/Collectionrequest.html](http://www.cmu.edu/computing/documentation/webpub_2002/Collectionrequest.html).



### **Notes:**

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## Resources

### **CMU Web Style Guide**

[www.cmu.edu/home/styleguide](http://www.cmu.edu/home/styleguide)

### **Web Collection Request Form**

[www.cmu.edu/computing/documentation/webpub\\_2002/Collectionrequest.html](http://www.cmu.edu/computing/documentation/webpub_2002/Collectionrequest.html)

### **Web Publishing at Carnegie Mellon**

[www.cmu.edu/computing/documentation/index\\_web.html](http://www.cmu.edu/computing/documentation/index_web.html)

### **Adding a Search to Your Web Page**

[www.cmu.edu/search/webmasters-frameset.html](http://www.cmu.edu/search/webmasters-frameset.html)

### **Carnegie Mellon Photo Archive**

[www.cmu.edu/photos](http://www.cmu.edu/photos)

### **Web Accessibility in Mind**

[www.webaim.org/techniques](http://www.webaim.org/techniques)

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Five planning steps adapted from Emily Ricketts' article *Planning Your Web Site Design*,  
Macromedia.com.