

Validate, Test, and Export Your Website

CA 155 – Personal Website Project

In this lab exercise, we'll be checking our website code and testing how the website looks with and without CSS. These steps will help us to test the functionality of our website and ensure that it will work as expected on as many computers as possible. Once you've done these steps, you'll be ready to export and submit your website once you're done with all your designing.

Part Zero: Locate Your Website Files

Instead of providing a common set of demo files for us all to work with, you'll be using your own current website project for the next steps of the lab exercise. Once you're completely finished with your website and ready to submit, you'll just need to follow the instructions on this handout.

1. Find the website directory that all of your files have been saved into. If you followed along with the instructions at the beginning of the unit, your website directory is likely in one of the following locations:

```
/Volumes/XSAN/Users/Undergraduates/[Your NetID]/Sites/[website-name]  
/Users/[Your Local Username]/Sites/[website-name]
```

2. Take a moment to look through your directory for any files that you are no longer using as part of your website. It's best practice to clear out any old/unused files so that your website directory only contains currently in-use files. (But instead of deleting any unused files, I recommend you move them to a different folder. This way if you do decide to re-add an old file, you don't have to start over from scratch)

Part One: Validate Your HTML and CSS

Up until this point, you've likely been testing your website by opening the browser preview and checking that each page looks like you expect it to. However, it is still possible that the browser has made a "good enough" guess at interpreting mis-typed code or missing attributes. Checking that your code has proper syntax and formatting is a good way to ensure that your website will work well on as many computers as possible.

1. We'll be using the W3 HTML Validator. You can access this service online at: <https://validator.w3.org>
2. Choose the "Validate by File Upload" option and choose your "index.html" file. Click "Check" to submit your HTML code to the validator service
3. The results of the test will now be displayed. It's perfectly normal for your website to not pass validation at first! Part of the reason we use a code validator is to help us check for errors that we may otherwise overlook.

There are two main types of results you might see: **errors** and **warnings**

Errors are sections of your code that contain invalid HTML. These are significant issues that will likely affect the overall functionality of your website.

Warnings are sections of the code that contain valid HTML, but *may* cause minor issues for some web browsers. You can leave these as-is and still have valid HTML, but you should look at each warning carefully and decide whether additional edits are necessary.

For both errors and warnings, the validator will display the exact line number that the error occurs on. This will help you find the code when you go back to edit it in Dreamweaver. The validator will also include a link to online documentation that explains the message (and often provides example solutions!)

4. Repeat steps 1-3 for all of the HTML files in your website.
5. To validate the CSS code, we'll need to use a different validation service that understands CSS code: <https://jigsaw.w3.org/css-validator>
6. Choose the "Validate by File Upload" option and choose your "style.css" file. Click "Check" to submit your stylesheet to the validator.
7. Just like the HTML validator, the CSS validator will display **errors** and **warnings** that it detects, along with the line number. Read the messages carefully to decide how best to resolve your CSS code.
8. Repeat steps 5-7 if you have any additional CSS files.

Part Two: Preview Your Pages With (and Without) CSS

Dreamweaver's built-in browser preview is convenient for checking your website while you're coding, but it doesn't always handle links and images correctly. In this step we'll open your web pages separately, as well as check how the structure holds up without the CSS code.

1. Locate your website directory and double click on "index.html" to open this page in your Web browser
2. Check that your page looks and functions as you expect it to. Test your hyperlinks and make sure that images load.
3. Next, we'll test how the page looks and functions if you disable the external stylesheet. Testing this will give you an idea for how your site will function if there's a problem loading the CSS, or what some users might experience if they browse the web without loading external stylesheets (such as those who use screen readers).

To disable the external stylesheet, we'll just comment out the <link> element within the <head> of each page:

```
<!-- <link href="style/style.css" rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" /> -->
```

4. Be sure to save your edits after you've commented out these lines!
5. Open "index.html" in your browser again to see what your website looks like without the stylesheet. Your website will look very different than how you've been designing it. Instead of focusing on the differences in the visual look of the website, ask yourself whether the *content* of the website is still clear. Can you tell what each page is for? Can you find the menu to navigate around the website? Are different sections of the page clearly labeled?
6. Once you're done testing the website without CSS, don't forget to re-enable the <link> element by removing the <!-- and -->

Part Three: Test on an Additional Computer

Finally, we'll test how the website functions when we copy it onto a different computer. This is a good way to verify that your external assets (CSS and images especially) are linked properly!

- First we'll create .zip archive of your entire website. A .zip file compresses many files to take up less space, and also is a convenient way to move an entire folder from one computer to another.

On a Mac, right-click on your website directory and select "Compress Items"

On Windows, right-click on your website directory and select "Send to -> Compressed Zip Folder"

(If you're using a laptop or another computer without a right mouse button, hold down the control key and click)

- Copy this .zip file onto another computer. Here are a few ways you can do that:
 - Put the .zip file in a folder on the XSAN. Open the XSAN on another computer and copy it to the Desktop
 - Email the file to yourself
 - Use a USB flash drive
- 3. On this new computer, open the .zip file to access your website files
If you're on a Mac, you can just double click the .zip file
If you're using Windows, you should right click (or Control + Click on a laptop) the .zip file and select "Extract Here..."
- 4. Double click "index.html" to open your website in the Web browser. Check that the website looks and functions as expected.

Troubleshooting Common Errors

- None of my CSS styles load! — check that your CSS is all in a stylesheet *in* the CSS folder *in* your website directory. Double check you've typed the exact file path in the <link> element
- None of my images load! — check that all images are located *in* the images folder *in* your website directory. Double check you've typed the exact file path in the element
- My website layout is all different! — did you set a width: attribute for your container elements? If no, it's likely that a different sized screen will display your content in a drastically different way.



Ben Pettis, March 2022
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