Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Department of Urban Studies and Planning

11.204: Planning, Communication & Digital Media
Fall 2004

Lab 1:
WWW Portal Page Building

Assigned: Recitation 1
Due: Recitation 2

I. Scenario

Throughout your 2 years at DUSP, you will be encouraged to present your thoughts and ideas to the world and to interact with a diverse range of scholars and practitioners who have interests similar to your own. Designing and launching a web-based portfolio on the WWW (World Wide Web) is one way to achieve these goals.

This lab exercise asks you to build a set of pages using Macromedia Dreamweaver. For this exercise, you will not work out all of the design-related aspects of your web site. Rather you will focus your attention on learning how to use Dreamweaver and successfully posting a few pages on the WWW. You will, however, develop a more sophisticated design and populate your portfolio (see Project 1) throughout the semester.

II. Directions

1. Start Dreamweaver [Help].

2. You need to create a "site" within Dreamweaver [Help]. A site refers to a set of HTML and image files.

3. Create a web page (i.e. one HTML file) as your portal page [Help].

- A portal page for a web site is something like a cover sheet for your resume, or an entrance to special place. It should contain elements that orient the visitor.
- Make sure to name this file "index.html" - this is a default name and web servers look for "index.html" when no specific file is requested. For example, "http://web.mit.edu/" is indeed "http://web.mit.edu/index.html". Because the portal page for MIT is saved as "index.html," visitors do not need to type "index.html" at the end of the URL.

4. Prepare an image file for your portal page [Help].

- Unlike word processing software, you need to prepare separate files for images and graphics.
- If you are familiar with Adobe Photoshop and other image processing software, try to prepare one by yourself.
- If you are not familiar with image processing, we have prepared several image files for you. They are available at the MIT Server.

5. Embed the image on your portal page [Help].

6. Create one or two additional pages within your site [Help].

- Their contents can be anything that relate to your interests. However, you should follow the MIT rules.

7. Create hyperlinks on the portal page to the other pages [Help].

8. Create a hyperlink to the MIT home page (http://web.mit.edu/) on your portal page [Help]. MIT's home page should open in a separate window.

9. Exit from Dreamweaver. Copy your files (both HTML and images) into your "www" folder on your H drive.

- Copy your files (both HTML and images) into your "www" folder on your H drive. By doing so, everyone on the Net will be able to

browse your page.
- The "index.html" file should be saved directly under the "www" folder.
- Your portal page should be able to be browsed .
- If you don't remember how to publish your web pages, refer to the instructions you received during the MCP orientation.

III. Things to ponder

- Who is your target audience?
- What kind of information should be included on your portal page?
- What is the relationship between your portal page and the other pages?
- What keywords would the viewers use to "google" your site?
- Quantity is not the aim. A portfolio, a collection of work, derives from a tradition of showcasing accomplishments. It is important that you select and make available your best work. For example, we do not expect you to post every paper or homework assignment that you complete this semester on your site. You should post your best work -- and that's something that only you can decide. Also, keep in mind that your portfolio is a container for your planning-related endeavors; a product for potential employers that communicates your professional self.

IV. Materials to submit

This lab is due at the end of Recitation 2.

You are to submit the URL of your portal to your TA.

V. Grading criteria

We will evaluate your work based on the following criteria:

- Your portal page is publicly accessible on the WWW.
- Your portal page indicates your full name.
- At least one image is embedded and displays on your portal page.
- Your web site has at least 2 other pages. The contents of the other pages do NOT affect your grade as long as they are in compliance with MIT guidelines.
- Your portal page has operating links to other pages in the site.
- Your portal page has an operating link to the MIT web portal page (http://web.mit.edu/).
- Each page has an appropriate title (appearing in the title bar of the web browser).

You may receive extra points if your site is designed exceptionally well, however, if you meet the requirements above you will receive 5 points.

Lab 1 is worth a total of 5 percentage points toward your final grade.

VI. To learn more

First, browse through the reference page by MIT IS/T.

To learn more about the operation of Dreamweaver, visit Element K. It provides a range of courses that will guide you through the advanced features of the software. To obtain a user ID, visit this page (MIT-IS/T) to request one. If you want a further hands-on training, MIT IS/T offers a course on web design and Dreamweaver. If you will be in Cambridge in January (during the Independent Activities Period), you might find some interesting courses on web site development. Browse the IAP web site when the time comes.

If you are somewhat familiar with programming and interested in "hard coding" the HTML file, there are several free resources on the Web. Web Monkey has very concise yet comprehensive directions on writing HTML code. If you want commercial-free tutorials, visit "a beginner's guide" by NCSA or "getting started with HTML" by WWW Consortium.

Created June 2004 by Masa Matsuura. Modified July 2004 by Lorlene Hoyt.