ELSEVIER

CREATING A SIMPLE AND EFFECTIVE ACADEMIC PERSONAL WEBSITE

Today, creating an academic website goes hand-in-hand with creating your CV and presenting who you are to your academic and professional peers. Creating and maintaining your website is an essential tool in disseminating your research and publications. Use your academic personal website to highlight your personality, profile, research findings, publications, achievements, affiliations and more. In addition, by using some of the many social media tools available, you can further amplify the information contained in your website.

An academic personal website takes you a step further in terms of increasing your visibility, because it is an ideal place to showcase your complete research profile. You will attract attention to your publications, your name recognition will increase and you will get cited more. Moreover, a website is also useful for networking and collaborating with others, as well as for job searching and application.

This guide helps you to take that next step and informs you on how to easily create an effective academic personal website.

Getting Started - The Technicalities

Registering the Domain Name
Think of a few good domain names which you would like to use for your website. Try your name or a combination of initials and last name. The domain name should be simple, preferably without hyphens or numbers, and easy to spell. Registering a domain name is never free, but it is low cost and worth it. Select a domain name with '.com' if it is available.

- You can check availability of domain names and register them on sites such as: www.godaddy.com, www.register.com, and www.do mainregistry.com.

Getting Hosting for the Website

After registering a good domain name, you need to buy hosting, i.e. the virtual location and server where your website is stored and managed. Some of the domain registration companies also offer hosting. See the next section on 'Creating the Website' for a list. Among the items offered in most hosting packages, one or more free e-mail addresses at the domain name you registered is included and a certain amount of storage space is also provided.

- Some examples of companies where you can get hosting are: www. register.com, www.godaddy.com, www.justhost.com, and www.ipage. com.

- For a list of more hosting options, visit http://www.top10bestwebsite hosting.com/ or Google 'web hosting'.

Creating the Website

Once you have registered a domain name and secured web hosting, you can start creating your website. It does not have to take a lot of time or technical knowledge to create a good website today, because there are several easy-to-use platforms or Content Management Systems (CMSs) available.

- Sites where you can create your academic website include: www.jibr. com, www.wordpress.com, www.squarespace.com, www.weebly.com, www.blogger.com, www.yola.com, www.jigsy.com and www.drupal. org.

Some website platforms also offer web hosting. Sites such as Jibr, WordPress, Blogger and Yola are among those that do.

Look and Feel of your Website

Your academic website should be a clean presentation of you academically and professionally. It should not be too cluttered, but it should also be thorough since it is essentially a detailed CV.

- Choose a simple layout offered in the several templates available on the website platform or CMS you have selected. Choose a layout which appears straightforward to edit and is not too colorful. Two or three colors are sufficient.

- Chooser a light colored background and a dark font color to ensure the text is easy to read; never the reverse.

- Use a legible standard font type and size for your site. It is best to use one, maximum two, font types. Using bold, italics and underlining for emphasis is suitable, but don't overdo it. Be consistent in the use of these embellishments.

- Present the text in a spacious, organized manner. Use ample spacing and bullet points, and do not include numerous lengthy paragraphs of text.

What Information to Include on your Website

As your academic website is a reflection of you academically and profession-ally, you can use the same elements as those on your CV. On the website, you can be more detailed in explaining items. Although, do not write more than a few sentences, or a short paragraph, on each element. Include bullet points and links where possible to save on writing too much text.

Items to address on your personal academic website:

- Profile and expertise
- Links to all types of publications (journal, book, etc.)
- Current research and research goals
- Honors and achievements
- Funding awards
- Professional and academic affiliations
- Teaching and other relevant professional experiences
- Forthcoming speaking appearances
- Presentations, videos, photos
- Links to your blog, academic social networks and institution
- Social media widgets for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, blog, etc.
- Links to your blog, or enable blog posts to appear on your website
- Basic contact information
- Any other information you deem relevant

Broadcasting your Website

Once you have completed your website, you should share include a link to your website in your e-mail signature. Including the URL of your website on your business card is also helpful. and links where possible to save on writing too much text.

Also, be sure to share the link to your website on all of your online and social media profiles to gain maximum exposure. Share links to your new website on Academia.edu, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and beyond. Most, if not all, website

platforms offer social media widgets enabling visitors to click and easily share your post or website link in their social media networks. Be sure to add these widgets to your website and place them ideally at the bottom of the page, in the sidebar, or at the top right.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) of your Academic Website

You can use certain keywords to increase the number of visitors who find your page through search engine searches. This process of tailoring the words to increase visits is called search engine optimization (SEO). Figure out which keywords are best to use with regard to your academic field using the Google AdWords keyword tool and Google Analytics. You only need to use some of the top searched keywords a few times on your website.

Furthermore, simply by keeping your website and publication links up-to-date will increase the SEO of your website. The links on your website which link back to the publications are captured by Google's algorithmic tools and help to increase the ranking and visibility of your publications and, in turn, the ranking of your academic website.

Tracking the Outreach and Effectiveness of your Website

It is important to measure the effectiveness of your website and understand the behavior of your visitors. Google Analytics is one of the tools which enable you to measure the impact of your site. You can see how frequently it is visited, the physical locations of visitors to your site, the most visited pages of your site, and more. Tracking the visitors to your website can help you tailor it to further increase the traffic to your website.

Useful Sources

http://www.top10bestwebsitehosting.com/

http://townsendlab.berkeley.edu/thl-administration/lab-blog/personal-academic-webpages-how-tos-and-tips-better-site

http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=413005

http://assett.colorado.edu/resources/create-your-website

http://ltlatnd.wordpress.com/2011/02/13/three-easy-ways-to-make-academic-websites/

http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/do-you-need-your-own-website-while-on-the-job-market/35825

http://jbdeaton.com/2011/how-to-build-a-great-academic-website/

http://www.ehow.com/how_4884357_create-academic-website.html

http://web.library.emory.edu/blog/ins-and-outs-professional-academic-website

http://www.createchange.org/